

**The Leadership Experiences of Child Welfare Supervisors in the State
of Maryland Department of Human Resources:
Impacts on the Dynamics of Retaining Supervisory Leadership**

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Title: **The Leadership Experiences of Child Welfare Supervisors in the State of Maryland Department of Human Resources: Impacts on the Dynamics of Retaining Supervisory Leadership**

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Abstract

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This is a study about the leadership journey of public child welfare supervisors. The purpose of this research is to conduct a qualitative research project with public child welfare supervisors that examines their leadership experiences and ascertains if, and to what extent these experiences impact the key decisions they make including the intent to stay. The leadership literature review yielded vast numbers of leadership studies, but only a few focused on the public child welfare supervisor that opts to stay employed in public service. Specifically, this study seeks to understand the leadership journey of public child

welfare supervisors, and the construction of meaning leadership has for mastering the context of their work. It explores the extent, to which their understanding of leadership and perceptions of leadership experiences impacts their intent to stay. Fourteen child welfare supervisors working in the public sector in Maryland were asked through in depth interviews to provide stories regarding perceptions of their own leadership experiences and the importance of leadership as it relates to their intent to remain employed in child welfare.

Themes and patterns were coded using a computerized database, NVIVO 8, which was helpful analyzing similarities, patterns, and differences. A focus group and content analysis of the NASW Code of Ethics corroborated the themes and patterns.

Recommendations were offered pursuant to credibility of the interpretations of the a data by persons with extensive field and supervisory experience in public child welfare .

This qualitative, interpretive study using narratives, explored leadership experiences of fourteen child welfare supervisors from two jurisdictions in the state of Maryland.

Interpretation of the data provided an understanding of the relationship between self defined leadership, mastery of specific contextual elements in public child welfare leadership, and the intent of child welfare supervisors to remain employed in public child welfare. Leadership involves more than the event of promotion. Retention involves more than the act of remaining on the job. Leadership and retention are both complex processes that represent a series of steps in unique professional learning, and adaptability. The meaning of these experiences and leadership as a critical phenomenon of professional commitment is at the core of this research.

Child welfare supervisors are personally and professionally challenged to develop strong perceptions of themselves as leaders to navigate organizational changes and turbulences in their practice. Through their leadership journeys, supervisors develop, and facilitate professional cultures in public organizations that foster their development and growth and also that of others. Leadership is subsequently an interdependent developmental process.

The differentiation of oneself as a leader and meanings attributed to leadership experiences are a manifestation of the affective connection one has with his/her profession, and organization. To this extent leadership is an affective interpersonal developmental process.

Professional commitment has been validated in the literatures as a factor tied to retention. Values, norms, mores and ethics, are defining features of the profession that impact professional commitment and the evolution of supervisorial leadership in this study. Subsequently, this study argues a conceptual link between, professional commitment, leadership and intent to stay.

Child welfare supervisors see themselves as leaders. Their shared stories are filled with descriptions of behaviors that indicate they are practicing differential leadership in their work groups and in their organizations. Their commitment to the profession of social work and to child welfare strongly impacts their intent to stay. Moreover, the data from this study indicates that leadership is a cultural process that in the public sector is initially tied to the profession and evolves in stages into personal transcendence, allowing the public child welfare supervisor to adapt, and to resolve organizational stressors that influence their growth as leaders.

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents, Claud and Elizabeth Johnson, who encouraged me to seek knowledge and ask the hard questions, and to my daughter, Kim and my granddaughter Nitara, the first to call this project **my discovery**.

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For my family, we made it though this discovery. It really seems strange not to say “I can’t, I am working on my dissertation”. I will have more time to get into your affairs now. I love all of you. Special thanks to California, you always had my back, became my legs, and took care of me through this. You are the best.

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Chapter I

Supervisory Leadership: A Real Time Problem for Public Agencies

This is a study about how child welfare supervisors describe, perceive and construct meanings of their own leadership. Specifically, it seeks to understand the importance of leadership journeys of line supervisors. It drills down to examine whether and to what extent constructions of their leadership understanding impact their mastery of the context of public child welfare. It explores the role of leadership in their decision making, including their intent to stay. Falling numbers of credentialed social work supervisors has resulted in a recruitment and retention crisis in child welfare. The most recent view from the field of public child welfare is that an exodus of child welfare supervisors has been occurring across the country, and simultaneously, states are not meeting the mark in the effective provision of child welfare services. Problems with retention of child welfare staff are often uncovered through public accounts of severe injury or death of children. State and local administrative agencies responsible for delivering child welfare services are adversely affected by instability of the workforce, reduction in service oversight, and growing expenditures for training and retraining. The most damaging effect of the inability to retain effective professional supervisory staff is a failing child welfare system that begs for reform, and demands increased public scrutiny.

National and state concern has also been expressed in reports from the GAO about the problems of the dwindling child welfare workforce, and the lack of preparedness of existing supervisory staff (GAO 03-357 2003 16-17). Research regarding

turnover in Maryland indicates an upward turnover trend rather than one that has held steady over the past several years (Hopkins 2007 7). While the literature and practice experiences of child welfare agencies document the problem, and some link it to poor supervision, the answer to more effective retention in public agencies appears elusive. Coaching and classes in supervision have also been initiated across the country. The retention problem is a complex one that seemingly does not lend itself to “throwing money at the problem”. Significant signing bonuses for example have failed to impact retention rates.

If agencies are to effectuate a culture of retention in public child welfare organizations, they must concurrently address why supervisors leave, as well as understand reasons professional supervisors stay in the field. Efforts to build capacity at the line level in child welfare have focused on mastery of the tasks and the clinical expertise associated with supervision. Credentialed, competent supervisors impact the service delivery, retention of skilled staff, policy and practice innovations, and the overall culture of the public organization. Few approaches to retention of professional line supervisors have considered who these individuals are as professionals and leaders.

The public welfare organization has a responsibility to create and nurture leadership. Child welfare supervisors are personally and professionally challenged to develop strong perceptions of themselves as leaders to navigate practice, and through their leadership, develop professional cultures in public organizations that foster their development and growth. Leadership is subsequently an interdependent developmental process.

Unfortunately the public welfare organization has not been perceived as most supportive of professional socialization. Over seventy –four federal consent decrees monitoring the service delivery of child welfare were filed in 31 states by 1995 (Mezey 2000 ix.). Largely prescriptive, these consent decrees have wrecked havoc with the public perception of public child welfare, and the capabilities of the public agency to effectively administer public child welfare programs. Policies and procedures growing out of consent decrees require rigid standardization and reduce the professional judgment calls of the child welfare supervisor. The challenge of public child welfare is to respond to the public and legal oversight of services, and simultaneously support and nurture the skills, autonomy, credibility, and leadership development of professional staff. Herein lies the problem.

Background of Study

The research project herein addresses whether and to what extent self defined leadership, also called *leadership consciousness or leadership self reference* in this work, has meaning for the public child welfare supervisor, This is especially as it relates to navigating changes and turbulences in the agency and the field , and decisions to remain on the job. The central research question for this study is **how do child welfare supervisors, in public child welfare, describe, and perceive their own experiences as leaders?** Several sub questions influenced by the literature review and informal discussions with professional social workers drill down to the importance of the leadership experience for public line supervisors.

The research question evolved from reading leadership literature, social work administration literature, nursing, and education research literature, and examining leadership theory. Moreover, witnessing the ongoing retention problem in practice that appeared to be linked to personal and professional growth of line staff, was pivotal in solidifying my interest in this topic. In addition, this project grew from personal conversations for over thirty years with peers about professional growth, leadership, and resilience in public service and critiquing my personal leadership journey in public service. The study follows suggestions from the field of public administration and social work that call for more research with line supervisors in the public sector (Stivers 2000; Ellett 2003; Mary 2005; Fisher 2005; ISWRA 2006; and Hopkins 2007).

Location of Study in Current Retention Research

This study is located within current leadership scholarship and study that addresses the changing role of leadership. Contemporary emergence leadership theory, and retention and recruitment of social work staff are also relevant. Specifically, the major Maryland Workforce and Retention Study completed two years ago was most helpful, and informed the direction of this study. During the legislative session of 2006, the Maryland State legislature responded to the loss of staff, poor state performance on the Child Welfare Services Federal Review (CSFR), as well as several high profile child deaths and critical injury cases, by ordering the Department of Human Resources to study recruitment, selection, hiring and retention. The Maryland Child Welfare Accountability Act of 2006 (SB 792 Chapter 31) was passed by the legislature, and required a

comprehensive study of the child welfare workforce in Maryland that would lead to “actionable recommendations for change” (Hopkins 2007 5).

The University Of Maryland School Of Social Work conducted the mandatory study which involved over 1,200 participants. The chief investigator was Dr. Karen Hopkins from the School of Social Work. A team of local leaders in child welfare and representatives from The Department of Human Resources, (DHR), local agencies, as well as renowned researchers in the field participated. The study, *Maryland Child Welfare Workforce Recruitment, Selection and Retention Study*, (Hopkins 2007) was a twelve month investigation of the status of the child welfare workforce in Maryland. It was a mixed method study that made use of survey and focus group data.

One of the goals of the study was to “identify organizational, personal, and other factors contributing to retention or turnover” (Hopkins 2007 5). The study looked at worker, supervisory, and administrative levels of child welfare staffing. The main finding from the research was consistent with that of other studies, that although “there are personal elements, commitment to child welfare, self efficacy, and low emotional exhaustion that impact recruitment and retention, a significant number of elements related to retention are organizational” (Hopkins 2007 5; DePanfilis and Ziotnick 2008). The study made recommendations to improve retention. Some of these have been implemented by the Department of Human Resources to address retention in child welfare.

The Maryland study also uncovered numerous individual behaviors that, through hierarchical regression analyses, were found significant to recruitment and retention. One

very interesting example is that both workers and supervisors in the study gave responses to administered survey questions that indicated high levels of disengagement with their work (Hopkins 2007 10). Disengagement in the study referred to a continuum of job withdrawal and work withdrawal behaviors. Behaviors such as excessive lateness, not completing tasks, not attending meetings and making excuses to go somewhere else rather than attend to work tasks are illustrations of disengagement behaviors. While neither group indicated plans to leave or transfer from their jobs, supervisors and workers reported disengagement and dissatisfaction with their work, and engaged in job disengagement behaviors at generally the same level (Hopkins 2007 10-11).

It could be anticipated that supervisors would score much lower in disengagement behaviors, because they are supervisors, leaders in child welfare. The data indicated otherwise. In the analysis of job commitment data, disengagement behaviors were found to be statistically important to intent to stay and turnover (Hopkins 2007 10). The lack of marked differences in disengagement behaviors of the line supervisors and worker level staff across the jurisdictions in the State of Maryland, and the tendency for supervisors to leave employment at generally the same rate as workers in child welfare, provided a compelling reason to conduct a study dedicated to child welfare supervisors that opt to stay in public welfare agencies.

The first challenge for this research project was to reach beyond traditional reasons attributed to turnover in child welfare, such as personal issues and changes in life circumstances, large caseload sizes, or poor salaries, and brainstorm possible factors that may impact the supervisors' intent to stay. The 2007 Maryland study had

comprehensively addressed many of the issues above and found that in Maryland the salaries and caseloads were comparative to those in other states. It appeared that something else was at work for professional supervisors to remain on the job. The question could be asked, who are the folk that opted to stay? What were their leadership stories? While many variables were covered, the Maryland study did not address the phenomenon of leadership.

Meta analyses, recent empirical studies, and articles in nursing and social work trade journals, as well as seminal writings in turnover and retention linked variables such as professional commitment, differentiation, self efficacy, and professional independence, to the possible mix of factors that influence retention. These are relevant to leadership. In addition, the psychological or psychodynamic approach to leadership contributed to the development and direction of this research study. This approach stressed that leadership is a way of viewing the work world and interacting with the environment, including the people. It focuses on the individual leader as a person. Many of the variables mentioned in the retention studies were personal variables critical to understanding leadership.

The work of Dr Linda Hill of Harvard Business School (1990) that chronicled a psychological journey of leadership became the role model study for this project. She likened the process of leadership to an awakened “new identity”. The participants in her study through an evolutionary development process learned the scope of leadership, and developed their own theories that gave meaning to their leadership experiences. The argument woven throughout the project herein, that leadership is a complex personal journey that creates a map for mastering the context in which the line leader works, was

fueled by the Hill study and other scholarship. Self referenced leadership may have a role in the decision to remain on the job as a line supervisor, to continue with the host organization, and in navigating the tasks, values, mores, and changes of the profession of social work. Certainly the survival of the public organization is dependent upon retaining an effective credentialed supervisory staff.

Prior studies point to personal and organizational variables that impact child welfare staff turnover (Cousins 2004; Cahalane and Sites 2008; Caselman and Brant 2007; Dill, 2007; and Ellett 2007). These studies have addressed variables like, organizational climate, lack of training, job attachment, and stressors that are inherent in the job. The Barak Meta analyses provided “research based aggregate portrayals of the main antecedents of intention to leave and turnover among child welfare, social work and human services workers”. The major antecedents were categorized as ‘demographic, professional perceptions, and organizational conditions’ (Barak, Nissly, and Levin 2001 629). Professional perceptions were the stronger of the antecedents. Professional perception as a concept would provide a piece of the leadership journey that was beginning to formulate as an integral parts of this leadership study. The notion of an evolving leadership identity within the context of forming and validating a professional self was very intriguing.

Dr. Alberta Ellett in a comprehensive examination of retention in Georgia examined personal and organizational factors contributing to turnover of child welfare staff. She maintained that the “strongest bi variant correlation of measures was between the Intent to Remain Employed Measure and the Professional Commitment Subscale. She

concluded that those respondents in her study that have stronger professional commitment have stronger intentions to remain in child welfare” (Ellett, Ellett and Rugutt 2003 183). In a Meta Analysis, Lee, Carswell, and Allen (2000) explored a review of occupational commitment. “Commitment to ones occupation is conceptualized as a psychological link between a person and his or her occupation that is based on an affective reaction to that occupation. The emotional connection that the person feels with the occupation has implications for various work behaviors and importantly, for whether the person wants to remain in the occupation” (Lee, Carswell and Allen 2000 5).

The resulting study herein integrates existing work and makes a leap linking professional commitment to leadership for the public line supervisor. As Meg Wheatley, organizational theorist, indicated “in organizations we create or enact our [own] organizational realities [by selecting], what we choose to worry about, notice, [or] embrace (Wheatley 1979 37). The question was do public child welfare supervisors embrace self referenced leadership?

Problems related to transition from worker to supervisor, and supervisor to leader are frequently expressed by supervisors in informal conversations around the water cooler. The complexity of their leadership experiences and attached meanings for child welfare supervisors provide a rich conceptual and research platform that touches on a myriad of concepts. These include empowerment, competency, self efficacy, professional identity, organizational commitment, power, and retention.

Informed by the rigor of Meta analytic retention studies and leadership scholarship, this project links leadership to interpersonal processes within professional

commitment. Rich theoretical leadership literatures, in public administration, social work, nursing and education addressed psychological elements of leadership and fueled my growing interest in this area of study. To a large extent nursing research scholarship clearly linked leadership perceptions with competency and intent to stay. The concept of self referenced leadership and its importance to social work supervisors however, remains an elusive phenomenon and is thus worthy of study.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative, interpretive research project is to examine self referenced leadership in depth. Leadership in this study is identified as one element of a larger construct, professional commitment. The goal is to obtain an understanding of the challenges, barriers or supports that encourage or limit child welfare supervisors to self define, and function as leaders in the public child welfare agency. Specifically, the study examines how public child welfare supervisors describe and perceive their personal leadership experiences and whether, from their perspectives, leadership has meaning in their practice decisions, and their intent to stay employed in child welfare. The intent is to identify and interpret elements of the leadership journey for supervisors in public welfare. To accomplish this goal it is necessary to build a framework that encourages supervisors to tell their leadership experiences and perceptions in their own words, to examine the supervisors' intent to stay, and to connect leadership understanding to their actions and decisions embedded in their brief stories.

The differentiation of oneself as a leader and meanings attributed to leadership experiences is a product of the connection one has with his/her profession. Values,

norms, mores, ethics, attitudes, and knowledge are defining features of the profession and impact professional commitment. These same factors impact leadership understanding. This study therefore argues a conceptual link between leadership, professional commitment, and intent to stay.

Epistemological Framework

This study developed from a constructivist epistemological framework. As articulated by Creswell, the constructivist researcher's "intent ...is to make sense of or interpret the meanings that others have about the world" (Creswell 2003 9). The constructivist view is that the individual makes meaning from his/her experiences. It represents one of several interpretive paradigms found in the literature. This framework is especially relevant for this study in that it proposes both individual sense making of experiences and a collective sense making of reality. Thomas Schwandt's discussion of the eclectic constructivist paradigm proved helpful in establishing and reaffirming the epistemological view point from which the research question was posed, and the design developed over time. It was helpful in determining the type of data needed, most appropriate methods of collecting rich data, and later the type of coding scheme that made most sense. The research interview protocol for both individual interviews and focus group interviews, as well as the coding and planned analyses were influenced by this paradigm. Several properties of the paradigm critical to this study are highlighted below: (Denzin and Lincoln 1994 129)

- Constructions are attempts to make sense of or to interpret experience , and most are self-sustaining and self-renewing

- The range of information available to and the sophistication with which one approaches the information will determine the nature and or quality of the construction
- All constructions must be considered meaningful.
- One's constructions are challenged when one becomes aware that new information conflicts with the held construction or when one senses a lack of intellection sophistication needed to make sense of new information.
- An essential point in this approach is that a collaborative role of the researcher and narrator exists. p.129

The construction of leadership from the respondents represents a continuum of reality that moved from immediate acknowledgement of self referenced leadership to acceptance of leadership only after it was mentioned as an option during the narrative interview. In addition there was a flat refusal to acknowledge leadership as relevant for supervisors in public child welfare. All of these constructions were considered important and meaningful.

Characteristically, this study may be identified as a hybrid. The study is neither a true ethnological nor phenomenological study, but has been influenced by both perspectives. This study is dedicated to understanding the nature, meaning and impact of supervisory leadership experiences using narratives from the child welfare supervisors themselves. It provides the possibility of teasing out leadership experiences, and meaning for current supervisors working in the field of public child welfare. The work world for the line supervisor especially in public child welfare is a complex one. This study intends to make the leadership challenges for public line supervisors clearer. The objective is to understand the leadership journey, through narratives that provide the units of data. It

does not seek to draw theories up from the data but rather to gain a better understanding of what leadership means to the public line supervisor.

Theoretical Lens

Emergence theories provide a broad theoretical platform for this study. Contrary to a cause and effect model, "... emergence theory asks us to shift the level of our discourse about organizations from the political level to the psychological level where the nature of beliefs about self invariably influences beliefs about the nature of the social order" (Harmon and Mayer 381). Theories of Emergence represent several perspectives, "integrative, natural selection and retrospection, and transformational end to hierarchy and competition" (Harmon and Mayer 1998 337-338). Emergence refers to new structures, meanings, processes, and patterns that come into being as the result of dynamic complex interactions. "Human systems are practically suited to study emergence because the human being is at the center of the nexus of complex energies that provide a lens to the manifold aspects of our experiences" (Hazy, Goldstein, and Lichtenstein 2007 6). "Leadership is an emergent event, an outcome of relational interactions that are innovative, contextual and occur across social systems" (Lichtenstein 2006 2). "Leadership is a vessel for the emergence of new adaptive orders" (Hazy, Goldstein, and Lichtenstein 2007 25).

Several European organizational theorists offered an interesting approach for public leadership within an emergent theory and assert, "[in] order to cope with newly emerging problems and cope with rapid change, public management must become an adaptive, evolutionary process" (Metcalf and Richards in Eliassen and Kooiman 1993

108). They go on to express that public management is an evolutionary learning process that through experience, ‘crystallizes values, and assumptions , theories and world views, and bring forth flexible responses that are distinctively public management ’ (Eliassen and Kooiman 1993 108). Relationships, adaptability, evolution, flexibility, and transformation appear to be the most critical elements in current public administration leadership theory and are embodied in emergence theory.

Leadership scholarship over the past twenty years has theoretically linked individual, personal, organizational, and environmental antecedents (Northouse 2007, Kouzes and Posner 1995, Sashkin and Sashkin 2003, Hill 1992). Recent debates in the field have identified traditional leadership theories as archaic and ineffective in lieu of rapid changes, and needs of organizations (Keene 2000; Lichtenstein 2006; Wheatley 1994; van Wart 2003). The primary debate centers around the notion that leadership theory has failed to keep pace with the transformations in public and private organizations (Lichtenstein et. al 2006 2). Harmon and Mayer and other theorists call for a vigorous theory of public leadership. As noted by Betty Rogers Stage and Dean Mahnaz, the challenge for public leadership is to [move from] “its habitual proclivity to want to predict and control outcomes to embrace a [process] that accepts nonlinear relationships as noted in public administration literature” (Stage and Mahnaz 2000 1). The “nonlinear relationships” expressed in emergence theory are a critical contribution to the definition and understanding of leadership in this study.

Judith Englebert, (2001) maintains that there is a “dichotomy between theory and practice, an interdependence that exists, even if the leaders fail to articulate it”

(Englebert, 2001 371-374). This study seeks to present an understanding of the connecting issues, concerns, and values attached to supervisory leadership experiences. It explores a rich conceptual and contextual understanding of public line leadership, and a convergence of practice and theoretical themes that may help to crystallize meaning. Agencies may use the understanding from data in this study to help maximize leadership capacities of line supervisors in the public agency. Data may be useful in coaching and training for the line supervisor in public child welfare.

Complexity leadership theory is also a subset of emergence theory in that it calls to the forefront the need for viewing leadership as a complex phenomenon rooted in the relationships of complex adaptive organizations. "...[Our] awareness of the reasons that we act the way we do, rather spontaneously, results from social experiences and it is through reflection we discover what we have done" (Harmon and Mayer 1986 339). Current public administration theory espouses that leadership is not a neat and fixed process. It is the "messiness" of line leadership within the public child welfare agency that this study hopes to understand. A narrative study is rigorous, and rich enough to explore subtle adaptations. Emergence theory pays homage to the leadership journey that allows the individual to transcend confining structures and barriers. Leadership as an emerging process rather than the role of the individual is the focus of contemporary theory.

Retention of professional supervisors is a real time administrative issue for Maryland Department of Human Resources (DHR). An approach that focuses on those supervisors that opt to stay provides valuable information. The study has value for the

organization by providing additional data to support strategic initiatives the Department wishes to implement to reduce the numbers of exits annually. It informs administrative practice and policy development by raising the understanding of the essence and importance of leadership through the eyes of insiders. Retaining and maximizing the contributions of credentialed staff in the public sector is a goal of management in an atmosphere of diversity and change. Overall a compelling reason for this study is to provide information which leads to recommendations regarding how public child welfare organizations may retain and maximize the contributions of credentialed child welfare supervisors. It will be useful by adding actual supervisory input to the leadership discourse for a wide group of persons interested in the complexities of supervisorial leadership in public organizations.

Moreover, this study asserts that leadership is adult work. “People increasingly have to take responsibility for developing themselves; they have to enact themselves in situations and environments where they develop new skills and perspectives” (White, Hodgson, and Cronin 1996 1). Stories of the individual supervisor’s leadership enactment are important to individual sense making, and will help inform the scope of the needs of the participants as they work the journey. Engaging the line supervisors to talk about leadership, and their professionalism will encourage greater supervisory participation in the acquisition of leadership opportunities. This may lead to new approaches to training, coaching and leadership development efforts in their host agencies.

The study uses narratives of fourteen (14) child welfare supervisors currently working in public child welfare services in two jurisdictions within the state of Maryland.

These participants volunteered to participate in the study. Analyses of the data are taken to several levels through coding and analytic cycles. The analyses of coded responses from the individual and group interviews are presented in qualitative reports. It is hoped through the juxtaposition of reflective learning, leadership journeys retold, and systematic analyses of meanings, that a greater understanding of leadership may emerge that maximizes the contribution of the child welfare supervisor , and supports initiatives that positively impact their intent to stay in public child welfare .

Central Research Question and Sub questions

The central research question for study is **how do public child welfare supervisors describe and perceive their own leadership experiences as leaders?** The sub questions for consideration are (a) what is the nature, context , and importance of leadership for public child welfare supervisors (b) whether, and to what extent, the child welfare supervisor's leadership experiences or some other dynamics helps the individual to manage shifts and changes in role, turbulence in the administrative environment, and changes in the norms and mores of the child welfare profession, and (c) whether meanings attached to leadership experiences create a template that facilitates his/her remaining in the field of child welfare and in the host agency? In order to address these questions a dynamic and interpretative research approach using stories from those in the field is used.

Gregory Smith identifies three factors that must be aligned for maximal productivity and retention. These are “personal motivation attitudes and abilities, clarity about the expectations of the job, and an image of how the job will impact the world”

(Smith 2001 38). He argues that when these factors are aligned with the business of the job, the individual makes a psychological connection and retention is heightened (Smith 2001 39) For Smith; many managers are limited by nuances in their belief systems and misguided leadership myths (Smith 2001 55).

Methodology

This project has survived numerous iterations. At one point in the development of the project a quantitative survey methodology was considered. While survey data is widely used in leadership studies, the pre-coded position of a survey tended to move away from the experiential approach that would yield the richest responses to the research question. The research question lends itself to a qualitative approach. Narrative research was therefore selected, with open-ended guide questions and probes. The study is a qualitative, interpretive study. As a method of inquiry, the qualitative approach allows for “flexibility and spontaneous exploration of a phenomenon using the natural setting of the participants” (Rudestam and Newton 2001 33).

Qualitative research in public administration includes at least “three broad strategic classes, explanatory, interpretive, and critical research” (Miles and Huberman 1994 7). The research design is an interpretive design. Interpretive research as defined by Stivers is “research that entails sense –making.”... It puts a frame around a set of situations or events based on conscious assumptions of that which is likely to be important, significant or meaningful... “Interpretive research is characterized by a strong sense of connection between the researcher and the subjects who are part of an

interpretive study” (Stivers 2000 132-6). The primary means of data collection is direct interviews with the participants at their work sites or at selected neutral locations.

The major challenge of the study is to develop a qualitative research process, with well formed means of data collection and analyses. It had to be vigorous enough to capture and understand the experience, context, and importance of supervisory leadership and retention in the public sector. It had to simultaneously be flexible enough to allow the stories to emerge through rich descriptions and interpretations of patterns and themes. The goal is to gain understanding of the meaning and importance of leadership from the participants’ perspectives, and to understand how the leadership culture of the supervisor evolves and the extent, if any, these leadership experiences play in their intent to stay in supervision in child welfare. Actual voices of the participants are emphasized.

Qualitative research is “fundamentally interpretive” (Creswell 2003 182), and appears most appropriate to address the central and supporting research questions. There is congruence between the selected research question and the selected method of inquiry. “The main task [of qualitative research] is to explicate the ways people in particular settings come to understand, account for, take actions, and otherwise manage their day to day situations” (Miles and Huberman 1994 7). Meanings of leadership were sought through recall of actions, feelings and beliefs.

In addition to classes of qualitative study, a variety of approaches including phenomenology, case studies, action research, and ethnography are frequently used in qualitative research (Mc Nabb 2002 276-280.) “Phenomenology focuses on what goes on within the person in an attempt to get to and describe lived experiences” (Bentz and

Shapiro 1998, 96). As a research method it helps to make that which seems mundane and ordinary have greater meaning. Phenomenology's flexibility creates a way to dissect, and analyze the most essential elements of a phenomenon. The essence of phenomenological inquiry is to provide a detailed description of an individual's experience as it is actually articulated by the individual. Some of the literature suggests complex processes including bracketing and extensive enmeshing of the researcher within a phenomenological process (Clarkson 1995; Wertz 2005; Wall 2004; Giorgi 1997). These were outside of the scope of this project. The characteristic that is most helpful to the research is to "obtain meaning and how group members cope with various phenomena" (Mc Nabb 2002 277).

"In public administration phenomenology is used to establish the meanings that social actors apply to work" (Mc Nabb 2002 278). McNabb argues that phenomenology and interpretive research approaches are kindred. This is echoed by Camilla Stivers who indicates," the point of our work [in public administration] in some sense is to understand (meaningfully interpret and critique) the life world of public agencies and the lived experiences of managers, and how these fit into their context. This can only be understood by talking with them" (Stivers, 2000 136). Subsequently there is support in the literature for the use of qualitative methodology with public leaders. Some literature suggests a "natural hand and glove fit" for social work and qualitative research. The researchers that take this position argue that the "two share interdependent agendas" (Shaw and Gould 2001 23).

The methodological approach in this study supports the underlying assertion that "experiences in all of life, including organizational life, consist of stories...

narratives [that] hold the life of the organizational experience and capture organizational life in a way that no compilation of facts ever can” (Czarniawska 1997 21). Individuals living the experience can best explain the experience through their stories. Susan Chase’s chapter on Narrative Inquiry in the *Handbook of Qualitative Research* 4th edition presents a comprehensive explanation. “Narrative research is treated as a distinct form of discourse, the shaping and ordering of a past experience. It is verbal action, a process of storytelling and interpretation in which the voice of the narrator is emphasized” (Chase 2005 651-657).

Daily, line supervisors tell their stories in informal ways around the water cooler, and in the lunch room. The study utilized this naturally occurring behavior in organizational life to gain a better understanding of leadership. It involved gathering individual leadership stories told in narratives within a research context. The narrators decided the depth, scope, chronology, actors, and relevant parts of the story. Research participants explained in their own words meanings of their personal leadership experiences and the influence these may have on their decisions to remain employed as child welfare supervisors. A greater issue is what these stories reveal about the *culture of public child welfare supervision* and the needs public child welfare supervisors have if they are to develop strong self referenced leadership and remain employed in their agencies.

Interviews and reflective recall in narratives are standard tools of practice in social work. The daily work of the social work supervisor is largely reflective and interpretative in nature. Narratives are also a standard element in practice both directly

with clients and with the workers and superiors. Public welfare supervision therefore provides opportunities for rich narrative study using tools that are methodologically familiar to the population. Research using a qualitative narrative approach must be designed to have value for the individual participants and for the organization that hosts the research. The analyses and interpretations must also add to the theoretical understanding of public line leadership.

Watson and Wilcox (Watson and Wilcox 2000 57) indicate that the value of reflection in practice is that the professional is able to learn while conducting professional business. “The professional enhances his/her body of technical knowledge by adding meaning to their experiences” (Watson and Wilcox 2000 58). Large literatures on reflective practice have been synthesized in the literature review to show connections of reflection to differentiated leadership. There needs to be some empirical evidence to document how the turbulence and flux of the professional and organizational context is managed, and what it takes for professional supervisors to stay in child welfare. From the perspective of the individual, recall is important in the *sense making processes* of leadership (Senge 1990 345-346). The study interprets through the stories of the supervisors meaning of their leadership experiences. The big picture for this study is a deep understanding of the nature of line leadership and how it is culturally expressed in the public child welfare agency through the stories of the line supervisors.

The research begins from the position that meaning attached to leadership for child welfare supervisors is a story that has yet to be told. Meaning of their leadership is a complex construction of professional commitment and organizational socialization.

Thus, prior assumptions about what supervisors understand about leadership and if their perspectives impact their intent to stay are placed in reserve. The true understanding of self referenced leadership and its meaning for the public child welfare supervisor remains essentially an enigma.

Individual semi structured questions were developed using the central research question, literature review, and practice experiences of the primary researcher. Following the recommendations of Rubin and Rubin (Rubin and Rubin 2005 135-7), guide questions were developed that translated the central question into topics that the child welfare supervisor would find familiar and be willing to talk about. In addition these were questions that were interesting, but would not “restrict or predetermine answers” (Rubin and Rubin 2005 135). Questions addressed practice and theoretical aspects of leadership. Questions were developed to investigate two limbs of the central research question, namely descriptions of the tasks of supervisory leadership, and the perceptions or meanings attached to these experiences. Inferences regarding how these constructions of meaning have impacted their work, relationships, sense of professionalism, and intent to stay will be made through the analysis of the data.

A creative approach included in the study was that the participants were asked to bring with them to interview an artifact that holds meaning as a memento of their “leadership best”. Kouzes and Posner (Kouzes and Posner 1995 xxi) use a written account, and call this a “personal best leadership experience”. These authors present a model of leadership that does not rest with the leader/position but rather the *processes of being in leadership*. They assert that when leaders are at their best they demonstrate

universal processes that can be seen across professions. The written account reveals a story when that leader functioned at his/her leadership best, subjectively defined by the leader. The Kouzes and Posner tool has been modified for this study from a written experience to having the participants verbally share the artifact's relevance and significance during the individual interviews. The richness and complexities of leadership experiences may be captured in the meanings that the supervisors share about the importance of the artifact.

Artifacts are tangible things that the supervisors hold as illustrative of their leadership best in child welfare. The objective in using the artifacts is to uncover values, themes, and relevance attached to leadership artifacts that corroborate or add to themes discussed in the narrative questions. When participants reflect upon their actions, feelings and decisions, they self define themselves as leaders.

Through the use of qualitative software, the researcher will be able to code large amounts of data and retrieve them in order to interpret individual and collective meanings that the public line supervisors place on leadership.

Once themes and patterns have been identified in the individual interviews, a focus group, comprised of some of the same respondents, was used to corroborate themes, and patterns that emerged in the individual interviews. The participants addressed common as well as rare, unique or outliers in the data. The focus group methodology was selected because it facilitates gathering a large amount of rich data. It has been recognized in the literature as a means of triangulation in qualitative study. Focus group interactions and group dynamics become yet another source of analysis from

which to explore retention and leadership. Observed interactions of individuals within the group context and analyses of group dynamics as participants engage one with another, will provide a collective level of understanding, and open the way for dynamic interpretations. Non verbal interactions provide rich data.

The interviews were audio taped. An impartial observer that had extensive focus group facilitation experience observed the focus group processes and took notes on the interactions. The lead researcher compared written notes, of the focus group dynamics and audio tapes through recall with the observer, and the data was coded in the NVIVO 8 database and included in the analyses. When individual themes and meanings are coded with like meanings, a model of the culture of public child welfare leadership emerges.

Public administration research's lack of focus on the *experiential* leadership journey of the child welfare supervisor appears to be a lacuna. Organizational development literature implies that one reason experiential leadership study is not widely covered is linked to the perception that the work is often considered "soft philosophy" (Carnevale 2003 33). Public administration leadership literature most often supports the rational approach to leadership that tends to examine the acts of leadership rather than processes, or feelings of being a leader. The skills of leadership have been fully documented in public administration scholarship. The value added of a psychological approach to leadership has been widely supported through nursing research literature (Lambert and Loiselle 2007, Kelly and Howie 2007).

As with most narrative research, this design results in what Chase calls "verbal action". "The narratives are the way that the participant shapes, constructs, and

experiences reality” (Chase 2005 656). Narratives, focus groups, and reflective recall exercises provide rich data to address the myriad of leadership dimensions. In this research, triangulation methods, in depth interviews, focus groups and content analysis are utilized to elucidate individual and collective meanings, recurring patterns of behavior, and contextual circumstances surrounding public leadership. Narrative research facilitates verbal action. The manager is frequently asked to explain the reasons for a failed effort but few times are asked to share their leadership experiences (White, Hodgson, and Crainer 1996 3). Walking through the leadership experiences facilitates sense making and recall and brings new meaning for the respondents. This provides data regarding their constructions of leadership.

The design of the study will help to define the importance or lack of importance the supervisor places on leadership experiences within the context of the public agency. The research process herein described is in itself a forum for the child welfare supervisor to specifically address their leadership experiences. Moreover, it facilitates a dialog about linkage between professional commitment, leadership and intent to stay. The perspectives presented through individual narratives, the focus group, and reflective recall constitutes experiences from the insiders.

From a scholarly perspective this study accomplishes three things. It supports a nexus of leadership study in public administration and public child welfare that focuses on self referenced leadership. It benefits the child welfare supervisor in particular, and line supervisors in the public sector by exposing some of the issues around professionalism and public services, and indirectly supports stability of the supervisory

workforce, and finally utilizes theory and practice examples to thoroughly examine and obtain meaning of leadership perceptions.

Selection of the Response Group

A narrative study involves direct contact with the participants. The use of narratives, and focus groups, requires facilitation and direct contact of the researcher with the participants for extended periods of time. The design called for a manageable group that could be interviewed in depth by the principal researcher, with follow-up contacts as necessary for clarity and accuracy. It also made use of a focus group interview session, and data analysis using qualitative software.

A major challenge in the design was the selection and size of the group of respondents. There are roughly three hundred (300+) child welfare supervisors in the state of Maryland. A decision was made to employ the use of a response group. Confidentiality and other limitations did not allow for direct contact with potential participants. In conversations with the host organization, the internal research committee decided that supervisors currently providing direct supervision in public child welfare agencies in the state of Maryland would be the easiest population with which to connect. Current supervisors were also selected by design as the respondents that could best address the research questions. Once DHR approved the study, letters were sent to local agencies across the state advising that the research was approved and that interested supervisors could directly contact the researcher. A letter of invitation from the researcher that explained the intent of the research was also sent so that interested

individuals could contact the researcher directly. The State was clear in the letter that the supervisors were under no obligation to participate.

The local agency directors were the initial points of contact. With competing priorities, this research was not the highest of priorities. Responses came from jurisdictions where the letters filtered down to the staff or where key individuals that learned about the study shared the letters with others. In one jurisdiction the Assistant Director was especially interested in the research and supported her staff to participate in the interviews. In telephone contacts with the interested director that contacted the researcher, it was stressed that the response group was small, ten people, and that respondents needed at least two years of child welfare supervisory experience and possession of a MSW. Supervisors from her division were asked to volunteer. Three other supervisors from another jurisdiction heard about the study and volunteered to participate. The result was a group of current child welfare supervisors that had MSW degrees in social work, had been promoted to the level of supervisor following a period of work as workers in either the private or public sector, had supervised for two years or more, and agreed to talk about their perceptions of leadership.

Fourteen (14) volunteer respondents comprised the respondent group for the research project. The literature recommends six to ten participants due to the time required to elicit, code, and analyze the data (Miles and Huberman 1994; Creswell 2003; Rudstram2001; McNabb 2002). Since respondents represented major child welfare programs in the state, all were included in the study. Expanding the group beyond 10 allowed infants and toddlers and family preservation services to be represented as well as

services to the foster and adoptive parents. It also facilitated supervisors from two very different jurisdictions.

Participants received follow up e-mail or phone calls during which the principal researcher used a scripted explanation of the purpose and intent of the study, the opportunity to bring an artifact to the interview, as well as the confidential nature of their participation. A letter of consent followed in the mail that explained the study process in detail, spelled out the confidentiality safeguards, and obtained written consent to participate. Times and places for the interviews were negotiated. Some participants were granted permission and administrative time to participate in the interview at the discretion of the local administrator. The written consent was subsequently presented just prior to the interview. Demographic data sheets were used to collect basic demographic information and to get responses to special information that related to experiences and education. The individual interviews were audio taped and later transcribed by the principal researcher. The guide questions for the individual interviews and the focus group are included in Appendix A.

The focus group by design was scheduled for several weeks following the individual interviews. One of the issues considered as the design was developed was whether the participants that provided individual interviews would be available. The plan to have the respondents agree to the focus group as well as individual interviews was included in the consent letter. As the study was originally designed the researcher would have had the opportunity to select participants based on their agreement to do both the

interview and the focus group. State limitations and time restraints for the study prevented that role for the researcher.

Despite the expressed interest of several of the participants at the time of the individual interviews, only one of the original participants was present at the scheduled focus group session. Several respondents e-mailed later advising that they did not come due to emergencies on the job and others had family difficulties. To ensure that the original design was met as had been approved by the IRB, the researcher appealed to some of the respondents and a second focus group was scheduled and held after significant urging by the researcher to get their help to finish the project. During this focus group, three of the original respondents grappled with the themes and also gave some recommendations for retention of supervisors based on reflections of their own practice. These three participants included two individuals that expressed an intent to stay in public child welfare and one that was opting to retire. The analyses will include the salient points of corroboration and some recommendations from the focus group.

Selected focus group questions established in the original protocol were used as much as possible to guide the discussion. The meeting was audio taped and transcribed. Codes were revisited and refined based on the input from the focus group participants and the peer support group, as well as new understandings that resulted from *talking the data through* with both of these groups.

A peer group had been developed at the beginning of this project that consisted of child welfare practitioners, experts, who served as a support group for the researcher since the beginning of the project. These were individuals that were not a part of the

study but understood the work of child welfare, or had been involved in federal reviews in the state or/and had previously been supervisors. They were particularly knowledgeable of the role of child welfare supervisors, leadership opportunities in state welfare, and retention efforts in the state. Their main function was to critique and challenge the assumptions and early observations of the researcher. This was a “go to” group that helped to point out researcher biases and identified gaps in the data.

Suggestions from this group would be instructive to the work as the project progressed. The main question for discussion was whether; based on their extensive experiences in the field, saw credibility in the themes and patterns presented by the researcher. Reaction and responses to each of the themes and to the coding processes to get there was presented for discussion. The other task was to discern if anything had been left out in our discussions. This group provided several insights regarding meaning of leadership and push back regarding what is needed to support supervisors in public welfare. It was this group that pointed out the licensure issues for the professional child welfare supervisor. Based on the work of the groups of cohorts, the focus group of participants and the peer support group, several recommendations for retention and hire, and leadership socialization were made.

Final corroborating data was collected through a limited content analysis of selected archival documents from the National Association of Social Workers (NASW). The intent was to determine whether that organization has weighed in on supervision and leadership. Two documents were reviewed and entered into the project in NVIVO for coding and analysis using structured and pattern codes. A code search was done using the

term *leadership*. These documents were the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics, which has been revised and approved only twice within a twenty year period. The content analysis of archival documents was added to help support the coding interpretations of the latent content stories used in this project. The limited content analysis indicated that NASW had not weighed in on the topic of *supervisory leadership* in the Code of Ethics. The paragraphs on supervision used for the search were silent on the issue of supervisory leadership. The only indication of the complexity of administrative supervision was the indication that the social worker shall *assist the organization of hire to comply with the Code of Ethics in policies and procedure* (NASW Code of Ethics 3.3.07).

Analyses

Analyses of the narrative and focus and peer group responses were assisted through the use of QSR NVIVO 8. The value of this computerized qualitative program is that it can store and manage data and allows the instant recall of codes and data to assist the researcher in the analysis. Memos about changes in coding and thoughts about the direction of the research may be written directly into the database. The small size of the respondent group, complexity and utility of data management software, and support for the researcher in the use of the software further influenced the decision to use NVIVO 8. The principle researcher was trained in the use of the NVIVO 8 by the QSR International staff. Working with a new computer program and learning the nuances while attempting to complete the project was a tremendous challenge. Only basic queries and reports were attempted.

Working within a qualitative tradition involves the relearning of thinking especially as it relates to one's understanding of knowledge claims and the traditional presentation of reports. This project was not without such tensions. Evans calls these tensions in thinking "boundary oscillations" (Evans 2000 267-286). They represent a gentle swaying from one epistemological tradition to the other. In a positivist tradition, it would be necessary to identify the limitations and issues of validity and generalizability, to point out the fragility of recall, and the small sample size. The study is small and limited to child welfare supervisors in the Department of Human Resources, in the State of Maryland. Although it will not generate findings that can be widely generalized, it presents an understanding of the perspectives of participating supervisors that may lead to development of a model for a longitudinal study of this important population in public child welfare. Sandelowski and others writing extensively in the field of qualitative research have indicated the importance of respecting the quality of the work without making excuses for the telling of the story (Sandelowski and Barroso 2002 1-40).

The presentations of selected text from the narratives fail to recreate the richness of the interviews. Those exchanges have gone, and cannot be recaptured, but the selected method of presenting the text interspersed with the field notes, memo entries, and analyses, it is hoped, will provide the reader with a feel for the exchange between the researcher and the participant. Where appropriate, additional text to help with the contexts has been included. The narratives presented in the words of the participants are

accepted as true reality for the individual participants. The selection of text to illustrate ideas that cross walk to the research question is a deliberate decision of the researcher.

The use of a focus group with the same participants after the individual interviews had been a deliberate design decision. In some studies the focus group is done first. The focus group as originally planned for this project did not happen. In hindsight, the respondents may have felt coerced to participate. The preponderance of respondents was from a single jurisdiction and most mentioned that their administrator had recommended they participate in the research. It asked a lot of them to meet off site after work to do this project.

Reluctance to participate in the focus group could have also happened because I was concerned about working within the parameters of the agreement with DHR, stressing the fact that participation was voluntary and that they had the option not to participate. As a researcher, I did not spend enough time was spent stressing the value and importance of their participation in getting feedback regarding the themes. There was considerable effort expended therefore to try to stay true to the design. It was critical to get corroborative responses to the themes as a means of demonstrating validity of the observations as accurate. Several respondents were approached to do this last piece and three respondents agreed. The lesson learned is that participants in research have a “shelf life” that must be anticipated as one works through design decisions.

The value added of using input from the peer, group is that I was able to get feedback regarding my efforts to do an additional focus group ,and consensus about themes when we compared their responses to feedback generated from the focus group.

Doing this type of research especially when one has prior experience in the work site, requires critique and support for the researcher. Although my experience and understanding of child welfare enabled me to understand jargon, and I held personal recall of specific changes policies and procedures referenced in the narratives, the need to establish both distance and intimacy with the response group was an ever present issue for me as a researcher.

What has been learned from this research experience? Leadership meaning is embedded in the construct of professional commitment. The leadership experiences described and their implied importance can change over time as the participants gain new perspectives, and new information impacts how they view the experiences. Their responses thus presented a snapshot of their current constructions and their recall at this time, and were accepted as valid and real. Narratives create the opportunity for free flowing stories that get at the meaning of leadership at a given time from the perspective of the participants using their own words. The relationship between leadership self reference and intent to stay is tied to the individual's professional commitment. Also illustrated in the selected texts of the respondents is the fact that leadership differentiation is an amorphous developmental phenomenon sometimes deliberate and conscious and at other times hidden beneath the surface but stitched together by experiences, relationships, values, tacit knowledge, nerve, skills and moreover an understanding of self.

Experiential study of leadership creates a pathway to a host of interdependent phenomena. This is illustrated through much of the literature and the empirical studies that have been reviewed in this project. Most revealing was the adaptability of public child welfare supervisors to reconcile leadership self reference, professional commitment, and organizational indifference, or support with creativity, zest, and nerve to stay in the field and in their host agencies.

Qualitative study has tremendous value as mainstream leadership scholarship. As Sandelowski and Barosso claim, the written report must be “re- conceptualized as a dynamic vehicle that mediates between researcher /writer and reviewer / reader” (Sandelowski and Barosso 2002 3). “Qualitative writers desire to tell “tales of the field” that convey methodological vigor, that are flexible, and maintain an intimacy with, and distance from the subjects” They want their reports to be as true as science is commonly held to be, and yet as evocative as art is supposed to be” (Sandelowski and Barroso 2000 8). The first person is used throughout this project is an effort to communicate the active role of the researcher in the project.

Summary

In summary, this qualitative, interpretive study seeks to explore experiential and pivotal leadership experiences of supervisors in child welfare through narrative analyses. It explores a relationship between self defined leadership, capacities to navigate the landscape of public child welfare, respond to the changes in the field, changes in society, and the intent of child welfare supervisors to remain employed in public child welfare. Leadership involves more than the event of promotion. Retention involves more than the

act of remaining on the job. Leadership and retention are both complex processes that represent a series of steps in unique professional learning, and adaptability. The meaning of experiences of leadership as a construction of their professional leadership journey is at the core of this research effort.

The project is different from existing studies because it uses leadership self definition (also called leadership self reference) as a core concept. It is solely dedicated to supervisory leadership perceptions. This work adds self referenced leadership as another variable in the set of possible professional characteristics impacting retention. The study concentrates on the experiential journey of leadership from the perspectives of the supervisors themselves. It utilizes qualitative interviews to gain a deeper and richer understanding of the values; strengths and impacts leadership experiences and perceptions may have on critical decisions including intent to stay.

Findings from Meta analytic studies have strengthened the conceptual link between *professional commitment* and leadership. The perceived impact leadership has on critical decisions; especially daily leadership behaviors , and finally the intent to stay employed in public child welfare is at the core of the work and remain areas for research. The study explores leadership from an emergence and adaptability lens that adds to the general discourse on public leadership and public child welfare supervisory leadership specifically. It interprets individual and collective meanings of leadership through stories from the participants in an effort to better understand the nature and importance of leadership.

Leadership experiences of line level public supervisors are stories that beg to be told. This qualitative study is designed to encourage participants that are living that story to tell their stories in an effort to increase our understanding of the relevance of leadership in public child welfare agencies through the narratives of the participants. If we understand the metaphors in leadership journeys, we can better support line leadership in public agencies. The **in-vivo** accounts in the narratives capture these metaphors. Analyses of the narratives help to understand how the individual professional child welfare supervisor can transcend real or perceived obstacles to leadership excellence.

Organization of the Study and Tentative Definitions

This study is organized in six chapters. It generally follows the traditional organization for social research. As with many qualitative studies in latter chapters, particularly coding and analysis, the researcher shares her role in the study. Narrative study is a collaborative process and effort is taken to illustrate the involvement and learning of the researcher in this project. The first chapter is the Introduction. The problem for study is introduced and the development of the research study is presented. The epistemological framework and the theoretical lens are discussed.

Chapter 2 is the Literature Review. Using the models of Bruce (2001) Boote and Beile (2005) and Maxwell (2006) the literature review seeks to thoroughly mine the literature and select a body of work that supports the research project. The literature review although lengthy is a synthesized approach that has as the primary goals to support the study herein by placing it within the historical scope of leadership study, and to support and justify the research through selected literature. As the chapters unfold,

relevant introductory literature is included to set the context for specific subsections in each chapter. The Literature Review because it was extensive, was exceptionally helpful in providing initial codes for the coding processes of this study.

Chapter 3 describes the Methodology and Data Collection processes. This section includes a discussion of the selection and engagement of the respondent group and the data collection processes.

Chapter 4 is devoted to a detailed description of the Coding Scheme and identification of the coding processes.

Chapter 5 presents the Analyses of the data and the observations that have been made. Analyses are taken to several levels. In true character of qualitative research, selected text responses of participants that support or refute a theme or pattern in the study are presented. Effort was made to select the best possible illustrations from the corpus of interview data.

Chapter 6 is the Discussion Chapter. It summarized the study, provides perspectives on what was learned, indicates ongoing work in the area of leadership study, and the need for additional study. Anticipated contributions will be introduced and linked back to the central research questions.

Tentative Definition of Terms

The following are definitions of some terms used in this proposal. The literature cautions that the definitions of terms should remain flexible to allow for the meanings that emerge from the data. The analyses address indigenous terms used throughout this study. Some actual phrases used by the participants to stress meaning or address

metaphor or codes in practice occur **in vivo** and are bolded .These are important to the analyses of specific texts. Critical terms and definitions are included below:

Child welfare – service programs that address the safety, well-being, and permanency of children in state custody or at risk of state custody i.e. child protective services, foster care, kinship care, adoption, family preservation out –of- home services. These programs are administered by the Maryland Department of Human Resources (DHR) agencies.
Contextual relevance- as a criterion of literature for inclusion in this review is a characteristic where the body of knowledge focuses on mores, values and nuances of a discipline. Public administration and social work are the main contexts in this work.
Differentiation – a process through which an individual separately defines self, while remaining connected ; self reference and identification as a leader
Emergent epistemology , criterion developed for literature review that pulls from basic rubrics of emergence theory. It is a collection of selected theoretical leadership literature illustrating a world view of leadership that is heavily relational and process driven.
Intent to stay- behavioral and attitudinal attributes that measure the connection the individual has to the job and the field. Manifestation of connections to the job and field through a series of behaviors including attendance, participation of work teams and acceptances of assignments to help the organization reach its goals
Leadership –a complex interpersonal relationship that involve intuition and links individual and organizational goals and values. Leadership is the embodiment of professional identity, competence, and empowerment. It is a <i>process of becoming</i> within the context of one profession Leadership Consciousness- the capacity of the supervisor to gage self development an understanding of leadership internal capacity to regulate behaviors and actions as a result
Leadership style- the behaviors exhibited by a supervisor in relationships to the work, to clients to staff and superiors, and organization
Leadership transformation - a process that involves psychological shifts in perceptions, values, frames of reference and promote new behaviors; it is a unique personal evolutionary experience for the individual
Methodological applicability- criterion of inclusion for literature review refers to scholarship that defines and supports the methods in this study. It presents relevant discourse that supports the utility of qualitative research approaches.
Narrative –a story told by the participant
Professional commitment – affective self-defining attachment to social work as a profession of choice and acceptance of role of child welfare supervisor.
Professional identity – the culmination of transformative processes that merge into a identity for the supervisor that makes clear behavioral demarcation from worker to leader and includes identity as a social work supervisor in child welfare.
Representative normative coverage- criterion for inclusion in the literature review includes leadership scholarship focusing on definitions, approaches, functions, integrating concepts, and scope. Representative of the normative nature of leadership, through a summary of the historical evolution of leadership study
Self Referenced leadership – the supervisor identifies as a leader , and sees the role of public child welfare supervisors as leaders

Supervisor- line manager of child welfare workers in the public agency responsible for oversight of clinical service delivery in the child welfare programs
Transformative processes – a set of actions and experiential processes that create a pathway to the leadership experience. It is an individualized growth process unique to the individual that can be accessed through retrospective recall. Promotes self-awareness as a leader, and clarifies ones role in the organization. Includes dialogue about the changes that the individual has experienced
Transformational leadership style – a set of behaviors that consider and support the needs of the subordinates and clients creating a strong sense of morality and common good within the work group.

A fair amount of public administration literature reviewed examines the impact of leadership behaviors, and retention decisions of subordinates. Few empirical leadership studies have however focused on the experiential processes public supervisors face as they navigate what has been described as ‘white waters’ of leadership (White, Hodgson, and Crainer 1996; Ritvo, Litwin and Butler 1995). In order to address the experiential framework for leadership, it was necessary to examine recent dissertations in which some of the most relevant scholarship regarding experiential journeys of leaders (Hall 2001; George 2004; Wicker 2001; Guajardo 2005; and Ausbrooks 2007). These studies have examined the **interpersonal journeys of leaders**. Some have involved the public sector. The work of these scholars is bent towards exploring the **psychological features of leadership**. Collectively their work presents arguments regarding the importance perceived leadership holds for leaders as they attempt to meet current changes in organizations and in society. This body of work is relevant to this study because it tends to support this study that argues personal experiential leadership stories of public leaders has added value to understanding leadership, its scope, and the complexity public leadership presents.

Self defined leadership arguably is a critical maturation process for the line supervisor. It was not widely addressed in public administration or social work literature. Maturation leadership literature is most often found in the discipline of organizational psychology. The most interesting exploration was in a nexus of social work and religion literature. The core concept of differentiation in Bowen's Family Systems Theory was applied to leadership with the notion that **differentiation** must occur if the leaders is to be "present" in the organization. (Matthews <http://www.leadershipministries.com> Retrieved 5-5-09). Differentiation as a leader gives meaning to the individual's existence in the organization. The process, deeply personal sets one apart from one's peers and subordinates while allowing the individual to remain a part of the whole.

Leadership is a profound evolutionary transformation that impacts the individual, subordinates, and organization (Hill 1992; Mezirow 1991; Stringer 2002). Leadership is a process of professional socialization that moves far beyond professional development. It is a dynamic interpersonal learning process. Leadership expressed in day- to- day practice matters because it "makes a powerful and lasting impact on the climate of the organization and contributes significantly to organizational performance both good and bad" (Stringer 2002 101). Leadership behavior has been identified as the strongest indicator of retention in the work of Buckingham and Coffman (1999), authors of *First Break all the Rules*, a composite of Gallup polls with leaders spanning twenty-five years, who concluded that "workers do not leave companies they leave managers" (Buckingham and Coffman 1999 4). If this is correct, leaders must be developed and nurtured for the survival of the organization.

Self defined leadership as presented in this project, is the key to the child welfare supervisor feeling, and acting empowered, competent, sure of tactic knowledge, and secure in the directing and guiding subordinate staff. It is the manifestation of a **professional self** that allows the line supervisor to work through processes of learning that fosters “self regulation, self definition, connectedness and response to resistance” Matthews [http:// www.leadershipministry.com](http://www.leadershipministry.com) retrieved 5/2/09). It helps to navigate the mores, values and turbulences of social work as a profession, especially in the public agency. Leadership experiences, when defined, and shared by child welfare supervisors both individually and collectively, present an interesting research opportunity to study the journey of leadership and the processes of retention in the public sector agency. Embedded in professional commitment, self referenced leadership becomes the effectual manifestation of ethical professional practice.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Leadership literature is rich in theories and empirical scholarship from diverse academic disciplines, dissertations, manuscripts and popular how-to books. Using the Academic Search Premier Database to search under key word, *leadership*, over 60,000 items are identified. A Quick Search for *leadership transformation* resulted in 868 entries. Each new search provided additional parameters to consider and different aspects of leadership to study. This review is not presented as an all inclusive review. It seeks to provide literature that informs, and supports this qualitative public leadership study. The

goal of the review is to select from the vast body of leadership literature, relevant literature that supports and justifies the selection of the problem, methodology, and design of the study. The objectives are a) to present major discourses and debates in leadership study through a historical review of relevant research that articulates normative elements of leadership b) to place leadership theory within broader public administration and social administration theories over the past 20 years, c) to critically examine and analyze recent qualitative and narrative studies in leadership scholarship that relate theory to practice and d) to justify the connection of the study to similar public leadership studies done over the past 8 years.

Public administration, nursing literature, social work literature, organizational development, organizational psychology and education literatures have been mined as this project has evolved. Meta analyses and systematic reviews on retention have also been reviewed. Scholarship in leadership study is so voluminous that it is important to establish clear criteria for the inclusion and exclusion of literature in this review. Four criteria have been developed to help synthesize the vast literatures. Literature included in this review was weighed against the following criteria operationally developed for this study; *“representative normative coverage”, emergent epistemology, contextual relevance, and methodological applicability*. Brief descriptions of each of the constructs follow.

The first criterion of included scholarship is *“representative normative coverage”*. This section of the review presents a representative coverage of leadership study focusing on definitions, approaches, functions, integrating concepts, and scope.

Meta analyses are cited to provide an understanding of what has been previously done in terms of leadership study. Selected groups of literature in this section present the normative nature of leadership, through a summary of the historical evolution of leadership study. Sets of traditional leadership style literature will be cited and analyzed to identify common vocabulary needed to explore leadership, identify characteristics most often studied, conclusions drawn, and the strengths and weaknesses of differing approaches.

Relevant contemporary and current literatures provide “topicality” (Boote and Beile 2005 7) for the review and covers current issues, and interests in leadership study. The current picture of issues related specifically to public leadership is summarized using current public administration, leadership, and social administration study. The value of continued leadership study is referenced and supported throughout the review.

Emergent epistemology, the second criterion developed for this review is scholarship that is taken from the basic rubrics of emergence theory. It is a collection of selected theoretical leadership literature illustrating a world view of leadership that is heavily process driven. Scholarship meeting this criterion is from the vast body of public administration theory, transformation theory, retention theory and current emergence theory that focuses on the complexity of leadership behaviors. Three basic elements of emergence relevant to the study are highlighted in this literature review. These are integration, retrospection/reflection, and transformation. The scholarship focuses on how the leadership journey develops through managing these processes. The process of leadership rather than skills, are emphasized. Selected leadership literature that

describes, integrates, and ultimately synthesizes leadership process theories, frameworks, and concepts is also included in this section. “Emergence theory asks us to shift the level of our discourse about organizations, from the political level to the psychological level, where the nature of beliefs about self, invariably influences beliefs about the nature of the social order” (Harmon and Mayer 1986 381). The selected works are theories that integrate emotional, maturational and psychodynamic, and relational variables of leadership, and the impact these variables have on the leaders themselves, their followers and the organization.

Many theories converge in emergence theory. Harmon and Myer address this in the formation of a typology that includes “Integrative Theory, Natural Selection Theory, Transformational Theory, and Efficiency and Effectiveness Theory” (Harmon and Mayer 1986 337-386). Complexity leadership theory rounds out the theories included in this review that appear most relevant for the study.

Contextual relevance as used in this review is a characteristic of a body of knowledge that focuses on mores, values and nuances of leadership within a discipline. The contextual argument in the literature selected is that leadership changes if the context changes. Public administration literature cited in this review supports the notion that challenges of public leadership are inherently connected to the contextual nuances of the organization. It specifically addresses contextual parameters of supervisory leadership in the public sector in general, and in public child welfare specifically. Social work literature, especially in the work of Au, argues unique competencies of the profession and the overarching need to have leaders developed from inside the profession. Devoid of

indigenous theories of administrative social work practice the profession has turned to clinical foundations. A set of empirical studies with managers, in public organizations, related health fields, and more specifically studies in social welfare undertaken and /or replicated since 2000 will be summarized, and linked to this study.

Methodological applicability is the final criterion of inclusion for selected scholarship in this review. This construct refers to scholarship that defines and supports the methods in this study. It presents relevant discourse that supports the utility of qualitative research approaches. It included scholarship that helps to define evidence in the project and how it will be collected. Studies that support the use of interpretative inquiry, the use of narrative methodology and utility of combining individual and focus group data are specifically covered. Recent qualitative triangulation approaches, especially the use of narratives and focus groups within a single study are presented. Several tools introduced in current leadership study such as the “leadership best narratives” developed by Kouzes and Posner, and reflective journals have been modified for use in this study.

The studies excluded from this review are studies that focus exclusively on the executive of public organizations. Scholarship that addresses leadership style of managers in the private sector is generally excluded because it tends to move the discourse from discussion of leadership processes and nuances of public leadership that is the focus of this study. The exception is *Becoming a Manager*, the Linda Hill study (1992), which is relevant because despite the sample population of private managers, it

focuses on the evolutionary characteristics of managers and became a role model study for the early development of the study.

Representative Coverage

The Normative Nature of Leadership

Leadership has been one of the most studied topics in public administration literature. The major contribution of this section of the literature review is to present *representative coverage of the normative nature of leadership* through a historical lens. Studies and scholarship herein cited makes the argument that traditional leadership study continues to provide a relevant platform from which leadership may be studied. The study subsequently acknowledges that the selected literature although representative of major normative features of leadership, namely definition, function, scope, and process, does not reflect consensus but rather points to the diversity of approaches defining the nature of leadership.

Rino Patti asserted that there are two leading approaches of leadership research. The first approach is the *influence processes approach, where traits, style and contingency are emphasized to meet a goal*. This approach embodied the dominant definition of leadership for some time. The second approach called the ‘new leadership approach’ focuses on *reciprocity of needs and values of leaders and followers and the inclusion of rich complex interrelationships* (Patti 2000 305). The literature selected for review highlights both; although selected literature in the reciprocity approach directly supports the study.

The first set of literature addresses concepts that define what leadership is and what it ought to be. Theoreticians define leadership according to their individual orientations. Johns and Moser indicate that the “plethora of terms and the conflicting definitions of leadership create a research dilemma, [and that] research conclusions are based on different definitions of leadership, and thus the researcher must acknowledge this limitation before making generalizations” (Johns and Moser 2001, 116). A synthesis of leadership literatures in health, public administration and management supports definitions of leadership that are multidimensional, interpersonal, and interdependent (van Wart 2003; Pruitt 2004; Meniffee 1994; Feldman and Khademain 2001; Wheatley 2004). Leadership is defined as a process, and involves reciprocal influence... [It] is “an intriguing amorphous phenomenon ... is always dependent upon the context but the context is established by the relationships we value” (Wheatley 1992 144). The demands of current organizations call for leadership that is integrative, interdependent and merges shades of management and leadership to reach goals.

Definitions of leadership involve influence, a social process, and the attainment of a goal. As far back as the early writings of Mary Parker Follett social dimensions of leadership were defined (Fry 1989 111). The seminal writing of Mary Parker Follett pointed to the reciprocal process of leadership. Authority, she says is a “process, not the final moment of decision ...and involves a long series of interrelated activities prior to the act of decision” (Follett in Fry 1989 111). Leadership for Mary Parker Follett was a social process bringing together the needs of the organization and those of the individual. She believed that integration of needs was good for the employee and employer. In

Creative Experience she inferred that the task for management is to promote ‘progressive integration’ ... “What we care about is productive life, and the first test of the productive power of collective life is in the nourishment of the individual... (Follett 1929 xii). The individual and his/her environment are enhanced by reciprocity and ever changing processes that lead to integration of needs.

Mining the vast normative leadership literatures, some of the following writers have helped to synthesize the influence processes relevant to the definition of leadership. Peter Northouse, a leadership scholar for over 20 years, frequently cited in the literature, has indicated that there are numerous ways to conceptualize leadership. He identified “four basic components that have been repeated throughout the development of leadership study. These are that leadership is a “process, [that] involves influence, it occurs in a group context and it involves attainment of a goal” (Northouse 2007 3). “Process definitions of leadership suggest that leadership is a phenomenon that resides in the context and makes it available to everyone. As a process, leadership can be observed in leader behaviors” (Northouse 2007 5).

Leadership, defined by James MacGregor Burns, is “the *reciprocal* process of mobilizing, by persons with certain motives and values, various economic, political, and other resources, in a context of competition and conflict,... in order to realize goals” (Burns 1978, 425). Newstrom and Davis go a step further and indicate that the leadership process is an *enthusiastic one* that moves others to the objectives (Newstrom and Davis 2002 163).

Employing the historical lens, early leadership studies may be categorized in three main categories: trait studies, style studies, situational studies. Trait study was the predominate approach in very early work. It was thought that some men were born with leadership traits that set them apart from non-leaders and that a distinguishing set of characteristics could be identified (Northouse 2004 15-34). A great deal of leadership study went towards attempting to prove the trait theory. Researchers of the day were challenged to come up with the unique set of traits that would guarantee an effective leader. Work like that of “Professor Tead of Columbia developed a litany of leaders’ qualities including *physical* and nervous *energy, faith, sense of purpose and direction, friendliness...and affection*” (Johns and Moser 2001, 116). Conclusions from such studies could not be generalized.

As the trait studies were being questioned, empirical study sought to examine leadership from the behavioral perspective. What is it that leaders do? Leadership style study focused on the behaviors of the leader. Leadership style literature focused on the questions that could not be empirically answered by the trait scholarship of the time. “The University of Michigan leadership studies under the direction of Likert and the Ohio State studies during the 1940s under the direction of Stogdill and Shartle were antithetical to the trait or single –continuum approach” (Johns and Moser 2001, 116).

Style studies expanded research to examine ‘how leaders act and what they do’. (Northouse 2004, 65). The Ohio and Michigan studies in the 1940s are frequently cited as landmark studies that produced the understanding that both tasks and relationships are core dimensions of leadership (Johns and Moser 2001, 116). The Michigan and Ohio

studies in the 1950s and 1960s set the standards for research on leadership for the next 40 or so years. It is significant to note that questionnaire and factor analysis used in the landmark studies have been commonly used in leadership scholarship (Yukl 1998, 46). The major contribution of these studies was the continuum of behaviors and tasks.

“Organizational humanism” (Johns and Moser 2001, 117) had a significant impact on leadership style theory during the 1960s and 1970s. The situational approach to leadership indicated that the behaviors of the leader must be *appropriately* applied. The situation determines the type of behavior that the leader must use. The work of Hersey and Blanchard, Blake and Moulton, and Feidler are examples (Northouse 2004, 68-73). Vroom, Yetton, Likert, and others focused on approaches of leadership that included the impact of the followers and promoted less of a power disparity between the leaders and the subordinates. The participatory approach was favored at the time. These types of studies pointed out variables that impacted leader-follower relations including group atmosphere, maturity of followers, loyalty and attraction, and task complexity.

The goal of leadership studies at this time, as had been the goal of earlier scholarship, was to identify the variables that could be replicated to ensure leader effectiveness. The perception was that the participatory approach to leadership was most appropriate, and would yield greater good in organizations. “Yet empirical research could not confirm that the participative management style was the best” (Johns and Moser, 2001 118). “The critique of the leadership style approach is that there has yet to be empirical evidence that a universal set of behaviors will yield a unique set of outcomes” (Northouse 2004 75). Leadership style has thus been questioned as a ‘theory “and is

referred to in the literature as an approach or framework from which one might weigh in on behaviors of the leader.

“Trait” approaches have become popular again in response to societal and political changes. A host of contemporary studies that explain leadership in terms of demographics and in some instances affiliation with specific groups in society have become popular. One area of study has been on women’s leadership. The Great man theory so prominent in leadership study led to perspectives of leadership as a masculine phenomenon. Women in leadership positions faced significant stereotyping around their use of power, decision making and authority (Black and Magnuson 2005; Cross, Katz, Miller, and Seashore 1994). Northouse and others have indicated that the “question of whether women can lead is a moot point, but the stark under representation of women the highest levels of leadership remains an issue for research and action “(Northouse 2007 266). The child welfare supervisor position in Maryland has traditionally been dominated by females.

Women leadership studies and studies involving minorities, and nontraditional leadership of individuals on the fringes of society, such as the homeless or migrant worker are identifying new leadership approaches that consider the unique station of those that they represent in society (Coughlin, Wingard and Hollihan 2005; Cross Katz, Miller, and Seashore 1994, Daresh 2001). The point is that leadership of nontraditional groups in our society, including the homeless, those living on the fringes of society, those facing serious illnesses, and others require leadership that understands, and addresses oppression. The goal of leadership is to lead without “mimicking the dominant cultural

mode which has been largely exclusive hierarchical and oppressive” (Guajardo 2006 AAT3192304 213).

While considerable sets of scholarship focused on leadership style and situation, a large set of public administration and leadership literature focuses on transformational leadership. Transformational leadership has been widely studied across disciplines. Northouse indicates that although the term “transformational leadership” had been introduced by Downton, prior to James McGregor Burns’s classic study, *Leadership*, it is Burns’ work most cited a classic and pivotal in terms “*of a paradigm shift for study of leadership dimensions*” (Northouse 2004, 170). Northouse’s definition asserts that transformational leadership is “the process whereby an individual engages with others and creates a connection that raises the level of motivation and morality in both the leader and the follower” (Northouse 2004, 170).

Transformational leadership introduced by James MacGregor Burns in his classic book, *Leadership* (1978) links the literatures on leaders with that of followers. Burns was very interested in the role of the leader as a moral agent. “[He identified] two kinds of leaders, the transactional leader that is involved in an exchange relationship with the followers, and the transformational leader that recognizes higher needs and potential in individual followers. Transformational leaders, according to Burns, tend to “seek higher needs and potential motives of followers and leaders to build mutual relationships that enhance the followers and the leader”. (Burns 1978, 4). Burns argued that the “catalyst that converts the leader to transform is conflict”, and he recognized internal conflict as a significant force in the transformation of leaders (Burns 1978, 142). The issue of leader

morality is emphasized through his work. In the evolution of leadership thought, the defining characteristics between transactional and transformational leadership tended to set standards for how leadership behaviors were defined and measured.

In 1976 House developed the concept of the “charismatic leader” that was tied to the personal qualities of the leader including dominance, a strong sense of morality and drive. His work on charisma was a building block for the refinement of transformational leadership (Northouse 178-179). Writing in 1985, Bernard Bass built on the work that was begun by Burns in which he specified that “...charisma was necessary but not the sole condition for the transformational leader. He also expanded the work of House by adding additional emotional elements and teasing out the origins of charisma.” (Northouse 2004 171). Transformational leaders have more than charisma, and according to Bass are responsible for getting followers to do more, to aspire to greater productivity in the organization (Northouse 2004 173). “Transformational Leaders do more with colleagues and followers than set up simple exchanges or agreements .They behave in ways to achieve superior results by employing one or more of four components of transformational leadership”... (Bass and Riggio 2006 5). These will be described in detail later in this review.

Social work literature illuminated that the social work profession, around the same time, was defining the leadership role of clinical supervisors. Alfred Kadushin writing on supervision in 1985 indicated in addition to the administrative and educational processes, there was a dimension of Social Work supervision that was not being adequately addressed, the “expressive-supportive-leadership” function.... “The supervisor

has the responsibility of sustaining worker morale , helping with job related discontents , giving supervisees a sense of worth as professionals, a sense of belonging in the agency and a sense of security in their performance ” (Kadushin 1985 21). The tasks, functions and behaviors of the supervisor as a leader are thus argued in both general leadership and social work literatures.

Although the historical lens to this point has not focused on public organizations, the Meta analysis by Montgomery van Wart (2003) chronicled where public leadership study has traveled for over 20 years. His position is that despite the integration of transformation and transactional leadership in the private or mainstream literature, integration of transformational and transactional leadership did not find its way into the works of scholars that focused on the public organization. Van Wart presents the four broadest debates in the literature, the proper focus, whether leadership makes a difference, are leaders born or made, and the best style. The elements commonly found in debates in the leadership literature have included, the appropriate discretion of leadership with some suggesting that the public leader is little more than a puppet to the law makers, others argue that the role of the public leader is “steward for democracy” in public organizations. This is term used by Dr. Larry Terry who is mentioned in the van Wart article raises the issues of morality in leadership. (van Wart: 2003 4). There are other debates regarding whether leaders are born or developed, and finally the dichotomy between leadership and management remains a research topic. (van Wart 2003; Sashkin and Sashkin 2003; Daresh 2001; Caroselli 2000; Kotter, 1990).

Contemporary debates in leadership literature have emphasized the contextual nature of leadership. Literature that defines leadership within the context of which it is occurring adds depth and complexity to the definition of leadership. Contextual debates are especially intriguing. These are arguments that examine the maturity of the organization, the level of turbulence in the environment, the threats and opportunities that an organization faces, and the impact on leadership in the face of such challenges. Osborn, Hunt, and Jauch maintain that leadership and its effectiveness in large part is dependent upon the context within which it occurs. They argue that “leadership is embedded in the context” (Osborn Hunt, Jauch 2002, 797-798).

Four contextual areas critical to obtain an understanding of the significance of patterns of leadership behavior are identified by these writers. These are “organizational stability, crises, dynamic equilibrium, and edge of chaos” (Osborn, Hunt, and Jauch 2002, 798). The authors argue that these contexts vary as do the leaders in organizations, and that it becomes important to understand leadership at any given time in the context of the state of calm or volatility that the organization is experiencing. The organization moves along this continuum and the demands, expectations, and values of the leaders are shaped, and limitations or expansions regarding their leadership capacities are directly related to the contextual elements mentioned above (Osborn, Hunt, and Jauch 2002, 832).

Au, in a significant Meta review of the social work administration literature concludes similarly that, social work administration is seen as tied intricately to the practice goals of the profession and thus the leadership context is colored by the goals and ethical underpinnings of the profession. Au asserts that “devoid of ‘indigenous

theories of management the social welfare manager brings the nuances of the practice into the leadership” (Au 1994, 30). Au maintains that a more comprehensive knowledge and a much stronger administrative workforce could be created in social work if scholars and researchers devote more attention to the problems faced by middle managers and frontline supervisors (Au 2002, 53). The value added of the study herein is that through the voices of the child welfare supervisors, the role and relevance (or not) that context plays in their leadership experiences will be explored.

A current set of literature defines leadership in terms of complexity and chaos theory. E. Sam Overman’s article, *The New Sciences of Administration: Chaos and Quantum Theory in Public Administration Review* (Overman 1996 487) pointed to the fact science has traditionally had an impact on administrative study, management, and policy. Professor Overman cited that administration in the new science calls for a change in focus, a ...“shift from the structural and functional aspects of organization to spiritual characteristics and qualities of organizational life”... (Overman 1996 489). Uhl-Bien, Marion, and McKelvey examining the evolution of leadership theory from the industrial to the knowledge ages hold that leadership theory has shifted from a positivist industrial age driven approach to a knowledge age approach. The shift has not been subtle in that the prior approach was a top down approach that focused on production, and the new approach frames leadership from a “paradigm that focuses on learning, innovations, and adapting”(Uhl-Bein et al 2007 298). This is the cutting edge leadership theory that moves away from leaders and focuses instead on the processes of leadership. There is a

clear distinction in leadership complexity theory between leaders and leadership.

Leadership is considered an interactive adaptive process. (Overman, 1996 299)

The shift in the literature mentioned above creates a new phase in leadership study and is illustrative of the reciprocity process school in leadership research.

“Leadership is a dynamic that transcends the capabilities of individuals alone; it is the product of interactions, tension, and exchange rules governing changes in perceptions and understanding... [This approach is from emergent theory and complexity science that presents leadership as an emergent phenomenon the result of] ‘relational interactions’ among agents” (Lichtenstein, Uhl-Bein, Marion, Seers Orton and Schreiber 2003 2; Schreiber and Carley 2006). This current approach moves leadership from characteristics or processes invested in an individual to a complex set of conscious and unconscious processes among agents. It opens the door to a multitude of theories regarding conscious and unconscious processes in leadership, energy patterns, and a myriad of webbed relations. It reinforces the interdependence of leadership as a process (McSwain1993; Keene 2000).

Finally there is a growing body of literature that is assessing leadership through a collaborative lens. In the spirit of the collaborative context, Carlslip and Larson writing on collaborative leadership conclude from their research that generally the most effective leaders in addressing public issues are not those that have the most technical knowledge about the issues but rather those that can bring the right folk to the table to define, problem solve and present resolutions that can be implemented (Carlslip and Larson 1994, xx). Similarly Agranoff and McGuire note the importance of researching the

needed skills for the public manager who has to relate to private entities to get the job done (Agranoff and McGuire 2003 176).

This section of the literature review has illustrated normative definitions of leadership that have evolved over time. The scholarship cited was influenced by social, historical and political conditions that remain relevant today. The reviewed documents support the assertion that cultural and economic impacts as well as organizational life cycles influence leadership. New science and globalization as well as new technology have significantly influenced the definition of leadership. The bottom line is that leadership remains a multidimensional phenomenon worthy of continued study.

The selected scholarship is not meant to be all inclusive. The goal was not to review all that has been written regarding the definitions and functions, or scope of leadership, but rather to select a representative sample of the range of normative study that illustrate connecting threads which over time have defined leadership study. The literature selected supports the relevance of the research topic.

Emergent Leadership Epistemology

Emergent leadership epistemology, the second criterion, focuses on leadership theories that are logical, philosophical, and process based. Epistemology refers to not what we know, but our way of knowing. It involves our frame of reference. In terms of leadership in the project, the focus is on the process of leadership rather than the tasks of leadership. Emergent epistemological approaches to leadership describe the emotional, maturation and psychodynamic processes of leadership. Leadership is thus acquired and

evolutionary knowledge. This knowledge is integrated, retrospectively validated through reflection, and is transformative in nature. Collectively the cited literature in this section of the review illustrates fundamental issues and sense-making in leadership theory. These theories describe, integrate, and ultimately synthesize emergent leadership concepts.

Leadership is knowledge - socially constructed and transformational. Selected theories included suggest a contemporary world view of leadership as relational, interdependent, collaborative, interpersonal, multi- disciplinary, with complex meanings, languages, and energies across systems.

By presenting value for other than “rational instrumental” (Harmon and Mayer 1986 78-79) explanations for leadership behaviors, emergence leadership research recognizes and attempts to address a lacuna in the current body of theoretical leadership research. It challenges traditions of rational thought and action as the only pillars for explaining organizational behaviors. Emerging leadership studies reviewed herein cover all parts of leadership- learning, leading and adapting as a way of addressing the lacuna. The study fits within the current leadership research agenda through its focus on the complexity of supervisory leadership, focus on the self definition processes, and relational qualities of leadership. Each of the three areas, learning, leading, and adapting may hold strategies to address the leadership retention relationship in public agencies.

The research herein is supported, through selected sets of theoretical literature. Much of the scholarship included supports the spirit of theoretical discourse presented by Harmon and Mayer... “emergent epistemology” supports the position that all that we do, [and] the way that we act in our organizations emerges from social experiences”

...People act more or less spontaneously either in the response to the nature of the social situations, changes in their environments or ...the unfolding of unconscious energy and then seek after the fact through reflection to discover what they have done” (Harmon and Mayer 1986 339).

The Reflective Practitioner (1983), Daniel Schön’s classic work has been an essential reference in the theory of professional learning processes. His argument that there is a crisis of confidence in professional knowledge is as relevant today as it was when the piece was written. “We are bound to an epistemology of practice which leaves us at a loss to explain , or even to describe , the competencies to which we now give overriding importance” (Schön 1983 20) . He begins with the assertion that the practitioner has tacit knowledge that is used to help guide him/her through situations. His theory presents that ...“knowing is ordinarily tacit and implicit in our patterns of action and the feel for the stuff with which we are dealing” (Schön 1983 49).

He indicates that the professional is able to practice if she /he encounter’s small numbers or types of cases that allow her/him to develop a standard repertoire of responses and techniques. The tasks and responses can become expected and the individual knows what to look for and what to do (Schön 1983, 60). The individual can subsequently think back on these established experiences and pull from them. The reactions and responses according to Schön become ...“increasingly tacit, spontaneous, and automatic, thereby conferring ... the benefits of specialization” (Schön 1983, 60). It is the process of *reflection while doing* that creates the “art of the practitioner” (Schön 1983 50).

What happens when the presenting situation is new or in the case of the child welfare leader ‘messy’? Daniel Schön describes professional practice as “a world of conflicting issues and demands”. The problems of today he says present themselves to practitioners as “messy indeterminate situations”. Solutions to difficult issues tend to produce perverse consequences. This is because they are problems or situations that cannot be solved by pulling from technical knowledge or from theories alone. He identifies uncertainty, uniqueness, and value conflicts as critical issues for the professional.

Schön’s assertion is that in practice we begin with situations to which we can bring spontaneous, routine responses. This he calls “knowing in action” (Schön 1983, 49). We know how to solve the problems and what actions to use. This knowing he says is “tacit and is delivered without thought or deliberation, and brings us the results that we expect as long as the situation falls within an area that we have learned to treat as a regular /normal situation.” (Schön 1983, 49). What becomes difficult is when questions or expectations are unfamiliar or uncertain. When what we know does not work or fit the situation we are stumped and must engage in reflection. “[When a situation or a demand] seems incompatible or inconsistent [the individual may] reflect on appreciations he and others have brought to the situation in the past, redefine the problem or even his role. He may then find a way of integrating, or choosing among the values at stake in the situation” to solve presenting problems (Schön 1983, 62-63). The struggle for the child welfare supervisor/leader is that the daily many situations they are asked to manage and lead are not routine.

The convergence of his theory with retention is summarized in the analysis that Schön presents regarding the evolutionary phase of understanding as the professional moves from professional to a researcher into his own practice. As the professional moves to new competencies and skills and the possibility of new found gratification in the work, he/she is open to the self questioning of the meaning of the work, knowledge, and self. Schön asserts that the practitioner who has moved from unquestioned authority of his knowledge has in fact begun to question his knowing and the meaning of his work and has become a ‘researcher’ into his own practice. He engages in self education and grows in his work. *If his work does not “nurture this continuing self education, the practitioner may begin to look at leaving the job because research in practice is a source of renewal”* (Schön 1983 299). This is a critical point and exceptionally relevant to the study. The public child welfare supervisor has generally been promoted for displaying exceptional worker skills, but is required as a supervisor to have exceptional leadership skills for which the individual has received little if any training ,or exposure. How does he/she accomplish what Schon identifies as critical to self growth and retention if opportunities for self education, research, and differentiation are not nurtured by the organization?

An old adage, “Know Thyself” is an underpinning of the type of reflection the leader must do to be effective. Just as Schön’s theory calls for the practitioner to become a researcher in terms of the meaning of his work, the framework presented by Daniel Goleman in *Emotional Intelligence* calls for research of one’s emotions and asserts that [the] “...self-reflexive awareness mind observes and investigates experience itself, including the emotions” (Goleman 1997 46). Daniel Goleman maintains that “emotional

intelligence refers to the capacity for recognizing our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves and for managing emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships” (Goleman.1998, 317). It is illustrative of the retrospection required of effective leadership to address the affective and cognitive features of leadership. (Northouse 2007 22). Emotional intelligence contributes integration of the “affective and cognitive domains” and the effective integration of the two within the context of effective leadership. Self awareness and perceptions through reflective recall of public child welfare supervisors are at the core of this study.

Chris Argyis, Abraham Zalenik and Henry Mintzberg cited by Cooper challenged the field to “look to intuition to find the lost keys of management” (Cooper 1997, xiv.). Cooper indicates that contemporary scholars have suggested the lost keys to management may rest in our ability to learn to value and manage emotions in ourselves and in those with whom we work. He says, “One of the most harmful attitudes our modern work culture has perpetuated is, [that] we cannot, under any circumstances, trust our inner voice or perceptions” (Cooper, 1997, xiv). [Leadership is a] personal growth process that is designed to challenge and develop and improve “self awareness, and overcome internal barriers to greater maturity, and the development of leadership competencies” (Yukl 1998, 485). The activity of becoming aware of meaning, awareness of self, and emotions is reflective practice. These are processes of leadership consciousness.

Patricia Cranton is an educator that supports reflective practice. “It seems that [reflective thinking] must be a goal of professional development. If we do not consciously think about and reflect on our practice, we become nothing more than

automatons following a dubious set of rules or principles that are unlikely to be relevant in the ever changing, complex context of learning ”(Cranton and King , 2003, 32).

Cranton believes that reflective practice when done consistently and consciously in practice yields transformation. She sees reflection and transformational elements of individuation that sets one apart from the “herd”. This she says leads to additional questioning, individuation, and more personal growth. The work of Cranton theoretically supports this project’s assertion that differentiation, deciding who one is in leadership, sets the supervisor apart from the herd.

Several doctoral studies since 2000 have examined the issue of reflection as a critical component of leadership transformation and are relevant to the study. Three that are relevant to the project are summarized. Michael Wicker ‘s *The Critical Reflection Process in Transformational Learning and Leadership at the Africa Leadership and Management Academy* a doctoral dissertation published in 2001,AAT 3033979, examined the relationship between critical reflection and transformative learning and leadership. He was interested in” how leadership development is affected by transformative learning? His was a mixed model design that included experimental method and the collection of data through reflective recall of 32 students that participated in the Academy. [His] ...“findings indicated that reflection significantly impacts the leader’s self perception, and also results in a change of leadership practices (<http://proquest.umi.com.proxy.ub.researchport.umd.edu/pqdweb?index=1&did=72608332...2/20/2006>).

Hall's 'Deep Learning' case study explored how leaders in organizations used deep learning to develop their skills and enhance understanding of the context of their leadership. (Hall 2001 3 AAT3192304) "Deep learning is defined as learning that causes significant awareness and or shifts in assumptions, perspectives, and or frames of reference that one holds for him/herself , of others and of the world" (Hall 2001 14) Hall documents convergence of the fields of leadership development and transformative or "deep learning". Her study explored through the use of in depth interviews, experiences of leaders in many leadership development programs. (Hall 2001 18 AAT3192304) One finding suggested that culturally most organizations are not designed to support the ways people grow, most significantly, unique needs of adult learners, self directing concept, and motivation by increased self-esteem etc. (Hall 2001 26).

Jon Peter George mapped the leadership journey of four elite leaders in his 2004 dissertation .The study explored the transformative learning of these leaders responsible for organizations with an annual budget of over one million dollars annually. The study "provides a philosophical model of leadership that integrates personal development, with leadership development, psychology, organizational culture and the remnants of childhood development" (George 2004 1).

The doctoral scholarship cited above was supported theoretical constructs of "transformational learning" and "constructive-development" (Mezirow 2000 52-53) that are at the core of adult learning. According to Jack Mezirow, whose work on adult learning has been widely cited in the literature, the two are commingled processes central to *epistemology*. They are subsequently critical to the emergent leadership epistemology

as has been developed for this literature review. Constructive development theory “attends to the natural evolution of the forms of meaning constructing” (Mezirow 2000 53). This appears relevant to the self referenced leadership wherein the level of maturity or understanding and the identity of an individual are intertwined. What we give meaning to overtime evolves as we work through the nature and context of our experiences. This is typically referred to as maturational stages, and are related to the levels of leadership consciousness from which our professional identity, and commitment grows.

Robert Kegan asserts that “many institutions require high levels of social maturity for which the average adult is ill-equipped and frustrated because for whatever reason they have not successfully moved through the maturation stages or levels of consciousness that are required... Meaning is the integration of past experiences. The stages of identity and social understanding progresses from a place of unconsciousness to a state of consciousness ... we take things for granted and have no reason to question them. Values perceptions and actions are the truths integrated into the identity of the individual.” Transformational learning theory is useful to explain how we give meaning to our experiences, retool what we perceive to be correct, and develop new actions. It becomes the pathway to the next level of maturity”

(<http://www.mentalhelp.net/poe/view-doc> (Retrieved Feb 26, 2009).

Transformational learning theory challenges the notion that adults cannot learn new ways of doing things. Merizow defines transformation as “a process whereby an adult individual becomes critically aware of one’s tacit assumptions, and expectations and those of others and assesses their relevance for making an interpretation” (Mezirow

2000 4). According to Merizow, an individual undergoes a process through which environmental energies are assessed, reviewed, and challenged. Subsequently, the individual through a full range of mental processes, perceptions, reasoning, intuition and reflection, acquires and implements new behaviors. Culminating new behaviors, values, perceptions, and interactions provide evidence of transformation.

Transformational learning theory is relevant to the study. It suggests a template and process through which the individual professional, facing organizational constraints to self and profession, may make sense, question and challenge knowledge, and retools the frame of reference held about the role of the supervisor as a leader in public child welfare. Merizow indicates that transformative learning is an adult process that requires the individual to be self-aware. “Effective participation in discourse and in transformative learning requires emotional maturity-awareness, empathy, and control-what Goleman (1998) calls ‘emotional intelligence’ –knowing and managing one’s emotions, motivating oneself, recognizing emotions in others and handling relationships-as well as clear thinking”(Merizow 2000 11).

Transformation Leadership

An array of elements that may be significant to leadership consciousness has begun to emerge from the synthesis of selected literatures: a) an opportunity for leadership, b) self-definition or leadership consciousness, c) the capacity or understanding and ability to use tactic and reflective learning, d) a strategic approach to implement new skills values and perceptions, e) performance of leadership, an integration of leadership and doing, f) self evaluation, an understanding of how the leader sees what

he/she has accomplished, and finally (g) an awareness of the value added of the experiential leadership journey. As the leader works through these processes he or she becomes differentiated, self defined as a leader. This journey is one in which culminates in individuals able to set themselves apart from subordinates and superiors, yet remain connected to them, and define for themselves what leadership means and how they personally can manifest that meaning in their daily work (Friedman 2007 14). A way of being, a presence, or style emerges that reinforces for the leader new levels of self-definition. Transformational leadership style transforms and empowers followers.

Transformation leadership style theory has been widely studied over the past 30 years. The development and empirical testing of the style is largely attributed to Bernard Bass and Bruce Avolio, and is an enhancement of earlier work of James MacGregor Burns. Transformational leadership theory is based on four principles. The four behavioral constructs are referenced in the literature as the four Is. They include “*idealized influence, intellectual stimulation, individual consideration, and inspirational motivation*” (Bass and Avolio 1994 4). Much of leadership study has centered on the impact of this leadership style on the satisfaction, commitment, loyalty and productivity of subordinates. How these attributes impact the leaders themselves remains an area for continued research. This study will listen for evidence of the 4Is in recall of leadership experiences and perceptions shared through narratives of the supervisors.

Some current leadership theory focuses on “being rather than doing leadership” (Keene 2000 15). Emergence leadership theory facilitates a changed role for leadership. The experiential processes of being in leadership rather than performing leadership skills

are stressed. Through the work of complexity theorists the importance of leadership style has developed as a catalyst for building complexity and adaptation within complex organizations has been elevated. Leaders have at their core the responsibility to generate energy needed to bring actors together to adapt to demands from the organization and stressors placed on the organization. The data that provides evidence that this work is ongoing is in the behavioral and attitudinal expressions of the leaders.

Bass and Riggio in *Transformational Leadership* examined the etiology of the transformational leadership style. (Bass and Riggio 2006 167) Through an empirical examination of bio data, personal background and early experiences were identified as important in this approach to leadership. The authors stress however, that transformational leadership can be taught. The bottom line is that the individual must have an internalized commitment to developing his or her own leadership capacity (Bass and Riggio 2006 151, Pohland and Bova 2000 137). The relevance of individual experiences, social and environmental impacts, and organizational climate on leadership and subsequent personal and organizational outcomes are evident in popular and scholarly leadership literature. (Glisson 2002; Cashman 2003; Senge 2005; Wallach 2006; Friedman 2007; Northouse 2007).

Lawrence Shulman says that social workers are at their best in their work when they are able to “synthesize-integrate the personal self into the professional role” (Shulman 1992 25). Current researchers have documented the connection between social work and transformation leadership (Rank and Hutchinson 2000; Gillis 2001; Mary 2005; Fisher 2005). Public administration literature has called for an integration of theory and

practice. Zaccaro and Horn indicated that leadership theory has failed to help practitioners to solve the leadership problems because theory and practice are not symbiotic. (Zaccaro and Horn 2003 770). This project argues that theory and practice support one another as leaders attempt to make sense of their experiences. Pops in a review of current leadership theory indicates that there is a need to consider the non rational, affective aspects of leadership the “art of leadership” (Pops 2007 364).

Sense making or *meaning* often is reflected in the stories of leaders. Peter Senge calls this the “purpose story- the vision behind why leaders do what they do”. .. It is a “landscape to a larger vision that connects the personal dreams and goals of the leader as landmarks in a larger journey, and is central to his ability to lead” (Senge 1990 346). It gives meaning to behaviors. Members of groups experiencing similar realities create a collective reality of their group membership and their place within an organization. They are able to transcend organizational constraints. Sense making or *meaning* through the purpose story involves transformation. “The purpose story provides a single integrating set of ideas that give meaning to all aspects of the leader’s work” (Senge 1990 346).

Theoretically this is important to the study because it supports the importance of relationships and processes *of being* for the public line leader. It stretches the parameters of leadership research to include experiential learning as an important issue for leadership theory in the public organization. Leadership is seen as “a process that is co created in an environment of complexity, where control is less important than encouraging surprise and uncertainty” (Keen 2000). This fits well within the theoretical parameters of this study that the role of the leader is to cultivate complex energies, develop and nurture new

relationships and understandings [and] “create new realities and resultant new structures that support the new definition of organization” (Wheatley 1996, Keene 2000).

Mining the social work literature in leadership reveals that many of the social work studies were done in an effort to empirically evaluate the nature of the leader-follower interactions (Patti 1989, Gillis 2001). In an empirical study- entitled, *Social Work Perceptions of Transformational and Transactional leadership in Health Care*, Gillis used the work of Bernard Bass as a guide to examine social work leadership and suggested that “transformational leadership did have significant and substantial add on effects to transactional leadership in the prediction of perceived effectiveness and satisfaction with the leader in a social work sample” (Gillis 2001 6). [Retrieved 2/18/2008](#). Arches (1997) found that effective social work supervisors were using transformational leadership, although they were not identifying it as such.

Drs. Alberta Ellett and Leslie Leighninger in *Journal of Public Child Welfare* (2007) have explored in detail the de-professionalizing of public child welfare and indicates the negative impact this has had historically on child welfare. The empowerment and leadership of the public child welfare professional has been compromised. Disempowerment becomes a central issue for the line leader in the public agency attempting to navigate the journey to leadership. The use of narratives will help to illuminate the meaning of leadership especially if the child welfare professional supervisors perceive themselves, as some literature suggests, stripped of professional identity and credibility. Data in the study will support or eliminate disempowerment as an

important theme in self defined or differentiated leadership. The study may also lead to recommendations of supports to assist supervisors as they work the leadership consciousness continuum.

Emergent leadership literature argues that leadership is adaptive. “Complexity theory tells us that the desired order we seek through control is in fact the very outcome of change and uncertainty and will come to pass irrespective of our efforts to control and direct” (Keene 2000 16). The leadership transformation process, hopefully expressed in the narratives, of the participating supervisors may include descriptions of challenges that include changes in their values, frames of reference, and acceptance of the temporary nature of knowledge-that we believe is a given. The common threads running through emergence literature is that “relations are the building blocks in organizations, through chaos there is order, and that one’s self awareness is a pivotal strength upon which leaders grow, transcend and help others in the organization to grow to maximal potential” (Harmon and Mayer 1969 311).

The leadership experience of an individual is a gestalt of the connections and relationships within and outside of the organization. Leadership is a personal, moral and social phenomenon. Margaret Wheatley who writes about the contribution of new science to our understanding of leadership indicates that “we cannot understand the roles and potential of an individual without understanding the network of relationships and the energy that is required to create the work transformations we ask of them” (Wheatley 1992 71). One might even construct a conceptual bridge from formative writers like Mary Parker Follett to the current emergence theorists like Uhl Bien. Mary Parker Follett was a

social worker and a “process” theorist. “She parted ways with the rationalist tradition and asserted that purposes emerge from social experiences” (Harmon and Mayer 1986 343).

In summary, this section of selected literature has examined theoretical literature and expanded leadership as a transformational learning process that is socially constructed. It presented various emergent leadership theories that examined learning, leading and adapting in leadership, and argued that the experiential lacuna in traditional leadership theory is addressed through new theories. Transformative learning as Dr. Lenneal Henderson describes it consists of “processes of personal and social stress, challenging dialogue and inter subjective exchanges” (Henderson 2003 387). Identification and validation of these stresses may emerge in the rich stories of daily work of public child welfare supervisors.

Complexity science has made a significant contribution to leadership study. Complexity theory challenges us to utilize multidimensional paradigms in understanding leadership rather than focus on a one-dimensional influence process paradigm. The role of leadership style in complexity theory is that it is an enabler of complex functioning that allows the energies of emergence and transformation to occur. “[Complexity leadership theory], conceptualizes the integration of formal leadership roles with complex functioning” (Schreiber and Carley 2006 61). The convergence of emergence and transformational theories is not subtle in the selected works. In fact, transformation is the vehicle through which relational energies are developed and transmitted and thus is essential to emergence of individual leaders and organizations. The study is attempting to integrate leadership theory and practice within emergence lenses. It supports the use of

stories to highlight transformational experiences, and illuminates the essence of leadership.

Contextual relevance

Contextual relevance is the third criterion against which literatures are weighed for inclusion in this review. As used in this project, contextual relevance is characteristic of a selected body of scholarship that focuses on mores, values and nuances of public leadership with an emphasis on social work and child welfare. The argument in the selected literature is that leadership changes if the context changes. It specifically addresses contextual parameters of supervisory leadership in the public sector in general, and in public child welfare specifically. Social work literature argues for indigenous administrative practices and approaches that consider the unique competencies of the social work professional and the overarching need to have leaders developed from inside the profession. Public administration literature cited in this review supports the notion that the contextual nuances of the public organization challenges leadership. Contexts include the type of organization, particularly the bureaucratic organization, and nuances of public organizations i.e., multiple publics and authorities to respond to as well as, the turbulences in the organization's environment.

One of the most important issues related to retention of professional supervisors is public child welfare as a bureaucracy. Public child welfare in the study represents child and family focused services that are provided by the local administrative agencies. The public child welfare services usually are not sole services but are a fractal of the bureaucratic service system. Generally child welfare programs are the largest of public

services programs offered second only to cash payments. Child welfare services are inclusive of child protective services, foster and kinship care, family preservation, infant and toddlers, foster and adoptive parent support serves and adoption programs. Investigations of child maltreatment and abuse, and continuing services to fragile families are included in this definition of the scope of child welfare services. These are services that require immediate decisions about safety and well-being of children and the solvency and support of families.

In the 2007 Maryland retention study, the issues of span of authority and control, large caseload sizes, recruitment and retention strategies, career ladders, and salaries were investigated as major issues. The poor image of public organizations and scarce resource availability were two additional features of public child welfare that also figured significantly in the discussion of retention. Bureaucracy defines much of the leadership understanding of the line supervisor. A considerable amount of research indicates that the relationships with the supervisor are a critical in retaining staff in all organizations. This is true of professional staff in social work, nursing and education. Formative research as long ago as the late 1970s was addressing the issue of fit, which is the presence of tension for professional staff. It remains an issue for organizational and administrative research and is a critical concern in this study. (Bartol 1979; Scurfield 1981; Ilaffaldano and Muchinsky 1985; Hellman 1997; Griffeth, Hom, and Gratner 2000; Landsman 2007; Fassauer and Schirmer 2008)

Ralph Hummel (1982) over 26 years ago provided an interesting theory of professionals and the public bureaucratic organization in the classic, *The Bureaucratic*

Experience. This work is of particular relevance to the study of leadership of line supervisors in public welfare agencies. Hummel's work pointed to the tremendous psychological challenges for the professional in the bureaucracy. It addresses the issue of sense making for the individual and points to conscious and unconscious aspects of the professional identity development and actualization in the public bureaucracy. [Given a lack of fit between norms of society and that of the bureaucratic organization, the leader / manager] must "adapt to both environments slipping between the two daily" (Hummel 1982 99). Hummel argues that professionals are especially challenged with the loss of their individuation and professional identity because they give up these for a new reality that is created by the organization. This concept is a critical one to consider as data is analyzed from the study.

Meta analyses on retention have indicated the importance of the professional commitment to the retention of professional staff. Hummel further asserts that " [for the professional] self concept [as] individuals , their personality , and uniqueness is never allowed to develop in terms of separateness and uniqueness, but only in terms of integration and similarity or functionality in relation to the rest of the organization" (Hummel 1989 103). The organization defines the individual professional. This study is in essence revisiting what Hummel called the "sub fallacy of the professional" (Hummel 1982 103).

Conceptually leadership is the way maker for the professional identity.

Hummel's perspective is that the public bureaucracy does little to nurture the professional leadership identity of the line supervisor. This goes to the heart of this project.

“Professional independence is a fallacy because the organization defines the value of the individual and his/her values as a professional.” He goes on to indicate that the “hope lies in professional associations where the superego can be nurtured and personal and professional identity buttressed through an affinity with colleagues” (Hummel 1982 105).

The degree to which the public child welfare supervisor is involved with the professional associations , maintains professional ties with colleagues that strengthen professional identity ,and maintains professional relationships outside of the organization may prove to be important to the strength of leadership self definition/differentiation , and subsequently to retention in the public agency. Data analyzed at several levels may help to identify how relevant professional associations and peers are to the child welfare supervisors. Are individual professionals impacted to remain employed as Hummel suggests, by the “norming and mastery exercised by their superiors”? (Hummel 1982 118). Two related issues come to mind- first, the perceived importance of relationships with superiors, and second the capacity, or personal mastery of an individual to develop a professional self despite organizational constraints. The strength of personal power, capacity, and importance attached to relationships with superiors along the experiential journey of the line supervisor to leader in the public sector may prove important to understanding retention.

Drs. Alberta Ellett and Leslie Leighinger and others have described the changes in the public welfare profession that have rendered the work of the child welfare professional from a position of respect to one where the professional status has been diminished (Ellett and Leslie Leighinger 2007 3, 21; Blome and Steib 2007 5). Since the

leadership role of the line manager has been ‘de-professionalized’ in public social work, it could be assumed that this level of staff contributes little as *leaders* in the complex operations of public child welfare. Narratives in the project will explore how practitioners see this issue.

The personal development and organizational dynamics relevant to understanding leadership for the line supervisor, *from the perspective of the line supervisor*, has not been widely researched in public administration or social work. Meta analyses in public administration have linked job satisfaction and intent to leave (Hellman 1997, Eisenberger 2002). Findings in the project may reveal that the relationship between senses of job attachment as a critical issue for self defined leadership and retention is illusory or not important to child welfare supervisors. Because we know so little in this area, the research must be open to all possibilities. Job satisfaction was thoroughly researched by Michelle Iaffaldano. The extensive study included 74 empirical studies with a sample size of 12,192 people. Of that number the Meta analytic study identified 217 satisfaction performance correlations. The findings of the study indicated that there is no statistical correlation between satisfaction and performance.

Another study from organizational psychology literature addresses kinds of stressors that may impact the decisions to leave. Nathan Podsakoff’s study was especially relevant in that it identified two main types of stressors, “differential and hindrance”. Differential stressors are those that are appraised as helpful and actually promote the goals of the individuals. Hindrance stressors are those that constrain the personal development of the individuals. (Podsakoff 2007 438). Narratives of child welfare supervisors include

stories of these stressors and the use of this typology in the study will prove helpful in the final data analyses.

Most social work retention research and a large amount of public administration research focuses on reasons subordinate staff leave public organization jobs with an emphasis on staff job satisfaction or performance and the role of the line supervisor in turnover. Child welfare supervisors walk the line between public policy and service delivery. Often promoted from worker level, these super workers are frequently thrust into the job of supervising a unit of six or more line workers without the benefit of leadership training (Landsman 2007 108). The preparedness, capacity and consistency of the supervisory workforce, is linked to the success of child welfare organizations to achieve their goals. The role of the line manager, supervisor, is “pivotal because services are delivered in uncertain circumstances and the techniques [to meet the needs of this most vulnerable population is often] indefinite” (Patti 2001.303).

We understand little about the leadership consciousness of the line supervisor, or what keeps him/her on the job, and whether and to what extent a differentiated leadership world view impacts success in public child welfare. Stories presented through the individual narrative interviews and the focus group would reveal if such tensions exist.

Although the above discussion inferred a tension for the professional child welfare supervisor, literature on this topic does not present a consensus regarding the tensions for professionals in bureaucracies. In fact, early explorations like that of Bartol present the position that there is no statistical evidence to support the presence of inherent tension for professionals (Bartol 1979 820). The lack of consensus in this area provides

additional support to the need for a dedicated study to drill down on the dynamics that impact the professional social work supervisors' stay in public child welfare. The assertions of Hummel that individuation is controlled in the public bureaucracy seems to be supported by complaints that professional child welfare supervisors articulate today.

Few studies have linked the issue of leadership with the intent of the individual supervisor to remain employed in the field of child welfare. Recent studies in social work have examined the tendency of public welfare supervisors to lean towards transformational styles of supervisors in public welfare. The implications of the value of transformational leadership to retaining staff have been documented (Gillis 2001; Mary 2005; and Fisher 2005). The nature and perceived importance of leadership consciousness to line leaders in public child welfare remains a 900 pound gorilla that is generally being ignored in the literature.

Organization Development literatures contend that a central question is whether organizations can develop work conditions that are beneficial to the individual and to the organization (Carnevale 2003 22). This is of particular relevance for the public organization. The job of the public administrator in the government agency is to address the 'wicked problems' of the society" (Harmon and Mayer 1989 11). They are the problems that are not routine nor can be easily addressed. These are difficult problems that require complex solutions, tactic knowledge and are typical problems of the public human services agency. Problems get addressed each day. The challenge is to understand how emergent leadership is used in the resolution of the wicked problems. What role does the organization play in the development of leadership opportunity and capacity that

allows the line supervisor to excel in tactic learning? Some of the public administration literature, both scholarly and popular, would lay claim that the needs of public and private sector leaders are different. Kouzes and Posner would say that when leaders are operating at their best there is no difference in the way that they lead.

Other literature indicates that an indigenous theory to public administration in general and social work particularly has been evolving since the early 1990s (Au 1994, Rank and Hutchinson 2000). Rank and Hutchison conducted a study of leaders within the social work educational council to raise the bar in terms of the importance of leadership as a course of study in the profession. In a survey to collect data pursuant to the perspectives social workers held towards leadership, 77% of the participants indicated that social work leadership was different from other professions and disciplines and that these differences could be divided into five basic themes , “the first being the strong connection of leadership to the professional Code of Ethics, the second is the tendency for social work leadership to practice along a systemic perspective , the third is that inclusion and participatory leadership is most frequently a characteristic of social work leadership. The fourth is altruism. [It is] at the core of leadership, and a concern for the public view of the profession” (Rank and Hutchison 2000, 493).

Another relevant theme, *professional congruence*, in the social work literature is expressed in the work of Nancy Mary (2005). She offers that the leadership style of those in the social work profession should, a) reflect the values and ethics of the profession and b) that the work of social service organization leadership should reflect empowerment of individuals and organizations. She integrates these concepts into transformational

leadership style (Mary 2005 106). Overall leaders in her study were seen to be more transformational. Her work and that of others indicates that leadership style is expressed in shades of behavior along a continuum between a hands- off style leadership to what one might call “conscious transformational leadership” (Anderson, Anderson ,and Marquardt 1996 5).

In summary, the child welfare professional appears to live an uncertain leadership experience for which there is little preparation. Inherent in the practice is the capacity to internally process situations, to reflect and subsequently select a direction as to what to do next in uncertain circumstances. This process creates a template from which the child welfare supervisors may subsequently draw in future situations. It is from the development of tactic knowledge that the professional child welfare supervisor/leader emerges. The study postulates that tactic learning is only part of the journey. Reflection on practice decisions, support for unique expertise and knowledge, and recognition of their contributions in to child welfare organizations appear to be essential to strong self leadership definition. Narratives from professional leaders will help to clarify and define what is relevant through their individual and collective leadership journeys.

Methodological Applicability

Methodological applicability is the fourth criterion against which literature is measured for inclusion in this review. It refers to writings and empirical studies that provide descriptions of qualitative interpretive research methods and the applicability of the qualitative approach for leadership study. Literatures cited in this section of the review provide support for the narrative methodology with public leaders. Basic

discourse and debates regarding phenomenology, and narrative inquiry are synthesized. Qualitative studies conducted the past 8 years that have used narrative research methods and/or focus groups as well as other means of triangulation are summarized. Far from comprehensive, this section of the review summarizes the contribution of relevant studies done with child welfare staffs, supervisors, and health professions that support the methodology of this project. Methods included in this review are those that are generally applicable to research in public agencies.

The integration of phenomenological research and interpretive research was discussed in the introduction to this review. “In public administration phenomenology is used to establish the meanings that social actors apply to work” (McNabb 2002 278). McNabb argues that phenomenology and interpretive research approaches are kindred. This is echoed by Camilla Stivers who indicates,” the point of our work [in public administration] in some sense is to understand (meaningfully interpret and critique) the life world of public agencies and the lived experiences of managers, and how these fit into their context”. This can only be understood by “talking with them” (Stivers, 2000 136). Building on the positions of McNabb and Stivers (2000) there is support in public administration literature for study that makes use of the interpretative method.

In its origin, phenomenology was developed by Edward Husserell as a science separate from psychology that examined the data of conscious experience. Two basic steps in the phenomenological process are, a careful description, and an understanding of the essence of the experience. It provides a way for analyzing an experience through a process of deliberate and systematic steps. Creswell indicates the approach involves

studying a small number of subjects through a prolonged contact to understand a particular experience (Creswell 2003 15). “From a phenomenological perspective, knowledge about any complex phenomenon is socially constructed, subjective, and strongly influenced by social cultural, and historical contexts” (Black and Magnuson 2005 338). The interpretation must reflect the story that has been consciously received and processed by the researcher.

The hybrid approach presented in this study is an integration of the narrative and phenomenological approaches that, allows the researcher to get an understanding of public leadership from a theoretical as well as a practice approach. This project is not a grounded theory approach. The formulation of theory from the data is not the goal. Narrative research is the primary tool in the study “Narrative research is a form of inquiry in which the researcher studies the lives of individuals and asks one or more individuals to provide stories about their lives” (Creswell 2003 15). “Narrative research is retroactive sense making: the shaping or ordering of past experiences” (Denzin and Lincoln 2005 641). It is one of many approaches to qualitative research. It is designed to capture the individual meaning of an action or experienced event, and is the story told by the narrator who defines the sequence and the importance of the events and actors in the story. To that end a narrative is a flexible approach to facts, through which the storyteller creates reality.

The narrative is not a static presentation; the researcher must interpret the meaning. “Although the voice of the narrator is emphasized and his/her credibility accepted, [the narrative] becomes a joint production between the narrator and the

listener” (Denzin and Lincoln 2005 657). Creswell notes, the product of narrative inquiry in the end, “combines views from the participants’ lives with those of the researcher’s life in a collaborative narrative” (Creswell 2003 15). “The meaning making through story construction and interpretation happens first between the narrator and the researcher and then on a different level when the researcher assumes the role of narrator and the reader becomes the listener” (Savin, Baden and Niekerk 2007 464). Thus the story is interpreted and in essence becomes a collective narration. It is the leadership stories of the child welfare supervisors that provide the ‘empirical material’ (Denzin and Lincoln 2005 660).

Current literature on narrative research points to its fluidity, emergence and openness as a field of study. “It is a field of inquiry characterized by tensions and connections” (Smith 2007 392). It is because of the fluidity that some literature challenges the value of narrative inquiry and renders it marginal in relationship to other approaches. Debates continue despite a long and valued history of narratives in the development of social sciences research. Current narrative research follows the work of Chicago School sociologists who collected life stories and other personal documents during the 1920s and 1930s, stories from the liberation and women’s movement and slave narratives. Labor and Waletzky’s Narrative Analysis, “Oral Visions of Personal Experience, conducted in 1967 is often cited as a ground breaking presentation of the idea that ordinary people’s everyday experiences are worthy of study (Denzin and Lincoln 2005 665).

Common themes in narrative literature indicate that narratives can be effective in individual and group transformations (Paulus, Woodside and Zeigler 2007 300). They

help to define and expand identities and create an actionable means from which individuals and groups gain meaning of themselves and their connections to others (Baden and Niekerk 2007, Riessman 1993). Brett Smith offers a dynamic quality of narratives indicating that narratives also have a social function. “People do things with narratives and they have important social functions, such as having moral force and accomplishing social status. Thus stories do things in relations to others” (Smith 2007 391).

Empirical studies over the past eight years have utilized narrative approaches to study leadership in public agencies, and to large extent health organizations. The common thread between most of the studies cited this section of the review is that they are conducted in helping professions, nursing education and social work. The studies cited below support the use of the qualitative approach with leadership study. A role model study conducted in the private sector is included because of the creative approach to leadership and focus on the interpersonal journey of leadership.

Dr Linda Hill (1992) of the Harvard Business School conducted a study of nineteen new managers in an odyssey towards leadership over a one-year period. Her work focused on the private sector in sales and marketing. The key contributions of her study in addition to validating qualitative study methodology with leadership inquiry were, the provision of critical insight into the transformation processes of new leaders; a creative design and longitudinal approach that made use of qualitative inquiry over a one year period; a forum in which new managers speak for themselves in mapping the responsibilities and their personal responses to the new craft; and finally, the

identification of leadership transformation themes . It became the role model study for this project because it reached beyond the ordinary scope of leadership study in public administration to examinations of critical experiential aspects of leadership through a longitudinal empirical study approach that relied on leadership narratives.

Dr Linda Hill- *Becoming a Manager: Mastery of a New Identity*, (1992) was an innovative study that integrated the experiential and administrative task dimensions of leadership. Unlike many leadership studies that focused only on the skills, tasks and relationships, Dr Hill focuses on the interpersonal development that happens to the new leaders and likens the transformation processes to “creating a new identity” (Hill 1992 7). Although the population for study was in the private sector, the study is mentioned here because of the value it added to understanding the experiential processes of leadership.

Angela Ausbrooks, PhD (2007) of the University of Texas recently did a study of child welfare supervisors and retention in which she looked at resilience characteristics and explored a host of personal and organizational behaviors. The study, “*Child Welfare Supervisor Retention: An exploration of personal and organizational resilience*”, utilized a qualitative design of focus groups and individual interviews to get the perceptions of fifty (50) line supervisors in Texas. She was interested in why they had employment longevity despite a host of risks inherent in the job. The focus was from a strengths perspective. Findings were that the “participants had a personal mission or calling for the work, support systems, and coping skills that allowed them to remain on the job.” This study demonstrated support for the use of qualitative methodology and the use of focus

groups and in depth interviewing as appropriate tools for the inquiry. It further validated professional commitment as a significant factor (Ausbrooks 2007 101 AAT3274738).

The remaining studies cited below are those that have been done within the last 8 years to address retention and social work or leadership and supervision. Research issues related to retention have also informed this study. The major issues identified by the Institute for the Advancement of Social Work Research (IASWR) are (a) the definition of retention and turnover is not standardized, (b.) populations are usually mixed including workers, supervisors, and administrators, (c.) conceptual differences between retention and turnover are fuzzy, limited time frames, lack of standardized measures, etc. (IASWR 2007 3-4).

A Meta-analysis by Barak, Nissly and Levin (2001) examined and synthesized twenty- five (25) articles on the antecedents to retention in child welfare, social work, and other human services. The value added of Meta analysis in the area of retention is that it integrates retention with sociological theories and provides empirical evidence that postulate *organizational factors are more predictive of turnover and retention than are personal factors* (Barak 2001 628). The authors caution that no single factor has been identified to fully explain turnover. They have indicated that the literature on this topic is scarce and that the “few authors that offer conceptual models to explain parts of retention and turnover among mental health and human service workers focus on the “social psychological models to suggest that turnover behavior is a multiphase process that involves behavioral, attitudinal, and decisional components” (Barak 2001, Griffeth 2000, Barak 2006).

One of the major themes in social work retention research literature is the complexity of the retention process (Barak 2001; Caselman and Brandt 2007; Rosenthal and Waters 2006; Reisch 2006; Hopkins 2006; Ellett 2006). The findings of the studies indicated that employees often leave not because of personal and family balance issues but because they are dissatisfied with their job, feel excessive stress and burnout and do not feel supported by their supervisors and the organization. A consensus finding in the Meta analyses is that professional commitment is statistically significant.

Retention study with social workers and social work supervisors over the past few years has yielded an interesting collection of conceptual and empirical studies. Based on the literature review process of the Maryland Retention Study (2007) Thirteen (13) studies were identified in the Maryland Retention study literature review that specifically addresses the retention of child welfare staff. Of that number, none have exclusively focused on the supervisor and none addressed experiential leadership processes as a variable (Hopkins 2007 119-125). This study is dedicated to the line supervisor and thus adds to the body of knowledge of public leadership study.

Retention studies over the past five (5) years with social workers have generally examined organizational and personal factors that impact turnover and retention of their subordinates. The data in these studies have been informative to the development and design of the study. The studies that have been included in the literature review are those that have used qualitative study methodology with results that explore retention behaviors of supervisors in social work or human services. These are summarized below:

(1) 2007- *State of Maryland Recruitment and Retention Study*, by Dr. Karen Hopkins et al.

The variables studied were demographic and organizational variables and a continuum of job withdrawal behaviors. The outcome of this study was that organizational factors beyond personal and demographic explained organizational withdrawal. The study included workers and supervisors in child welfare. Study contributed the continuum of organizational withdrawal behaviors that helped to define intent to stay. This study was done with a sample of child welfare supervisors in the State of Maryland public child welfare local agencies. Although data was collected to study retention and to get a better understanding of the workforce in the child welfare programs, the data provides rich information about the demographics of the population. The work is valuable to the study in that it examined and measured organizational withdrawal behaviors of supervisors. It raised the issue of why there was not a difference in the behaviors of line supervisors and their workers and became an underlying puzzle for the research project

(2) 2007- *School Social Workers Intent to Stay*- Tonia Caselman and Mary Brandt

The variables studied in this scholarship were the school social workers intent to stay and years of experience, collaboration with school personnel, and self-efficacy. The result of this study was acquisition of the MSW was a critical variable along with collaboration with school personnel in the decisions of the school social workers to stay. This study was of interest because in Baltimore City, the largest jurisdiction in the state with the largest child welfare programs, the job of choice for the supervisors that left child welfare supervisory practice was to go into direct school social work. Moreover it supported theory related to the professional commitment and retention that became the variables of study in the work.

(3) 2007- *Causes and Effects of Child Welfare Turnover Current State of Knowledge and Future Directions*, J.S.Strolin, M. McCarthy, and J. Caringi. This study examined individual, organizational and supervisory factors that impact child welfare staff turnover. The outcome of the study was that retention is improved when agencies support their supervisors. This was an interesting study because the retention literature is slanted

towards the supervisory behaviors that are negative and impact the workers decision leave. It supported the need to look closer at supervisors themselves.

(4) 2006 –*Predictors of child welfare worker Retention and Performance*, -James Rosenthal and Elaine Waters. This study focused on the impact of IV-E funding on turnover. In other studies IV-E had a significant impact on the recruitment of child welfare staff. The results of this study indicated that supervision did not significantly account for variances in retention. The value added to the work is the idea that supervisors and the style of interaction with the staff may not be a significant variable in the intent to stay.

Summary of Literature Review

In summary, this literature review has sought to present a synthesized review of literatures on leadership, transformative learning and retention. Historical, theoretical, empirical and practice scholarship has been presented. The review has examined debates and discourses from a historical perspective, and has presented points where social work, nursing and education literatures converge, create a vocabulary, and path to understanding the complex phenomenon of leadership. Meta analytic studies have been reviewed and provided guidance regarding variables most often studied, those that empirically have been found not to have strong relationships to retention, and the most promising variable that cut across disciplines, professional commitment.

It attempted to synthesize several theoretical approaches. Emergence leadership theory integrated many of the tenets common in these approaches. “Leadership occurs when interacting agents generate adaptive outcomes” (Lichtenstein UHL-Bien, Marion, Seers, Orton and Schreiber 2006 2). The review of formative leadership theory has been convincing that leadership is a complex phenomenon. It holds a special challenge for the

public agency professional. Leadership is a phenomenon sensitive to the changes in society. Moreover, the review followed the development of leadership thought and supported the idea that both leadership theory and practice have responded to political and socioeconomic nuances of the time. Leadership dimensions considered most important in leadership theory at any given time were clearly a product of what was considered important to society at the time.

Transformative learning was presented through the literature as one way supervisors navigate the pathway to leadership. Public administration literature appears to support transformation leadership style as a preferred style for personal and professional growth. One cannot move from “individual contributor to leader without profound learning” (Hill 1993 16). The review strongly supported the relevance and utility of process as appropriate for the study of how leadership is perceived and its importance.

Currently, relational, adaptability and flexibility dimensions of leadership are considered relevant to the emerging epistemology of complex leadership. Complexity leadership literature opens new options for questions regarding relationships used in the study. The literature also supported line supervisors as a population needing additional study. Although the solutions for retention of professional child welfare supervisors appear daunting, recommendations based on empirical study have been offered and adopted. Little data was available in either social work or leadership literatures to address leadership self reference and retention or the intent to stay *from the perspectives of the supervisors themselves*.

The narratives in the study provide rich data that will be helpful to an accurate understanding, from the insiders' perspectives, the importance of creating and nurturing leadership experiences for the line supervisor in child welfare. The study is a contribution to the fields of public administration and social work. The study holds promise to a better understanding of leadership as a dynamic interactive and adaptive learning process. It seeks to demonstrate through the research design that experiential data is rich data that informs practice at many levels. The results are of value to those interested in public leadership especially the role of the line supervisor in public agencies.

Chapter 3

The Research Methodology

Having critically examined the literature on leadership, this chapter addresses the method by which the data was collected, reviewed, and analyzed. It details the processes by which the respondents were selected and engaged. A number of key concepts were brought forth from the literature review to the methodology. These included professional commitment, differentiation, reflection, transformation, and ethics. Key ideas for the study were generated not only through the extensive literature review, but also through the assessment and critique of individuals that were not respondents but were critical contributors to the research project. Concepts like values, context, enactment, and adaptation were critical concepts. Two distinct groups provided feedback and critiques of the research processes. The first group consisted of two selected professional social workers that had previously worked as child supervisors, and the second, a group of peers that held expert knowledge of child welfare programs, child welfare program audits and

knowledge about the supervision at the practice level. Long before the corpus of data was acquired, these groups questioned myths and challenged that which we felt we knew about supervisory leadership.

The rationale for using narrative methodology herein described is supported by the literature, but more specifically by the definitive stories of the participants. The central research question for study is **how do child welfare supervisors in public child welfare perceive and describe their own leadership as leaders?** Other questions considered are ,(a) what is the nature and importance of leadership styles for public child welfare supervisors (b) whether, and to what extent, the child welfare supervisor's leadership experiences or some other dynamics helps the individual to manage shifts and changes in the role, turbulence in the administrative environment and changes in the norms and mores of the child welfare profession, and (c) whether these create a template that facilitates his/her intent to stay in the field of child welfare and in the host agency? The research question is an epistemological one that focuses on the meaning and importance that individual supervisors attach to leadership. The leadership experience is the unit of analysis, and is embedded in the stories of participants. The understanding of the leadership culture of public line supervision in child welfare may be interpreted through key themes across the texts.

“In public administration, phenomenology is used to establish the meanings that social actors apply to work” (McNabb 2002 278). Phenomenological research allows participants to put experiences in their own words, and select stories and issues they deem most relevant. It is research that seeks to get beneath the conventional way of

viewing a phenomenon and attempting to identify structures and patterns that underlie them. In the words of Bentz and Shapiro ...“it attempts to rid us of the ideas that we take for granted, and get to a deeper level of understanding” (Bentz and Shapiro 1989 97).

“Phenomenology focuses on what goes on within the person in an attempt to get to and describe lived experiences” (Bentz and Shapiro 1998, 96). As a research method it helps to make that which seems common place and ordinary have greater meaning. The methodology’s flexibility creates a way to dissect, and analyze the most essential elements of a phenomenon. The essence of phenomenological inquiry is to provide a detailed description of an individual’s experience as it is actually articulated by the individual. Although some of the literature suggests complex processes including bracketing and extensive enmeshing of the researcher within a phenomenological process (Clarkson 1995, Moerer-Urdahl and Creswell 2004, Wall, et al.2004). These complex processes are beyond the scope of this project. The characteristic that is most helpful to this research is to “obtain meaning and how group members cope with various phenomena” (McNabb 2002 277). The value added of this approach is that the primary tool is the consciousness of the participant. This is an important concept to mention at the onset of this chapter because the forthcoming descriptions of the methodological processes, and the analytical work in this project began with an acceptance of the reality for the participants as they present in their narratives .Bentz and Shapiro indicate that one may borrow “tools from the phenomenologist but that does not make the work of the researcher phenomenological nor the scholar a phenomenologist” (Bentz and

Shapiro 1998 97). Notwithstanding the caution above, phenomenology has utility for leadership scholarship. (Klenke 2008 22-24)

McNabb argues that phenomenology and interpretive research approaches are kindred. This is echoed by Camilla Stivers who indicates, “the point of our work [in public administration] in some sense is to understand (meaningfully interpret and critique) the life world of public agencies and the lived experiences of managers, and how these fit into their context. This can only be understood by talking with them” (Stivers, 2000 136).

Subsequently there is support in the literature for the use of qualitative methodology with public leaders, especially a model that includes direct conversation. As a method of inquiry, this approach allows for flexibility and spontaneous exploration of a phenomenon using the natural setting of the participants (Rudestram and Newton 2001 33).

Qualitative research in public administration includes at least “three broad strategic classes, explanatory, interpretive, and critical research” (Miles and Huberman 1994 7). The research design is an interpretive design. Interpretive research as defined by Stivers is “research that entails sense –making.”... It puts a frame around a set of situations or events based on conscious assumptions of that which is likely to be important, significant or meaningful... “Interpretive research is characterized by a strong sense of connection between the researcher and the subjects who are part of an interpretive study” (McNabb 2002 91). Direct contact with the participants at their work sites or at selected neutral locations is the primary means of data collection. What

appeared most appropriate for this study is a hybrid research approach that utilizes multiple data sources to reach a possible interpretation of the essence of public leadership.

In addition to the classes of qualitative study, a variety of approaches including phenomenology, case studies, action research, and ethnography are frequently used. (McNabb 2002 269-278). There is congruence between the selected research question and the method of inquiry. “The main task [of qualitative research] is to explicate the ways people in particular settings come to understand, account for, take actions, and otherwise manage their day to day situations” (Creswell 2003 182).

Some literature suggests a “natural hand and glove fit” for social work and qualitative research (Shaw and Gould 2001 23). Interviews and reflective recall or narratives are tools of practice in social work. The daily work of the social work supervisor is largely reflective and interpretative in nature. These are stories of the profession. Narratives are way of recall that helps the individual to make sense of situations. To make sense of the nature and importance of leadership for the line supervisor in public child welfare stories are elicited using guide questions to get them engaged and talking about supervision and their road to leadership, as well as their perceptions of peers and expectations of their organizations and the profession itself.

Narratives are also a standard tool in practice, directly with clients and with the workers and supervisors through recall. Public welfare supervision therefore provides opportunities for rich narrative study using tools that are methodologically familiar to the

population. The underlying assertion of the appropriateness of narrative research methodology is supported in the leadership literature and buttressed in social work practice literature and methods.

“Experiences in all of life, including organizational life, consist of stories... narratives [that] hold the life of the organizational experience and capture organizational life in a way that no compilation of facts ever can” (Czarniawska 1997 21). Individuals living the experience can best explain the experience through their stories. “Narrative research is treated as a distinct from of discourse, the shaping and ordering of a past experience. It is “verbal action, a process of storytelling and interpretation in which the voice of the narrator is emphasized” (Chase 2005 651-656).

Research using a narrative approach must be designed to have practice value to individual participants and to the organization that hosts it. There must be compelling reasons for using the approach. The theoretical literature on the value of narratives in organizations is intriguing. The stories of “man in organization” provide a “way of knowing” organizational life. “Meaning of an action or event is derived when the story provides an explanation of the action, and places it within a plot with characters and circumstances that include temporal relevance” (Czarniawska 1997 18-190).

Daily, line supervisors tell their stories in informal ways around the water cooler and in the lunch room. The study maximizes this naturally occurring behavior in organizational life to gain a better understanding of leadership. It involves gathering individual stories told in free flowing narratives within a research context. The narrators decide the depth, scope, chronology, actors, and relevant parts of the story. Research

participants explain in their own words their personal leadership experiences and the influence these may have on their decisions to remain employed as child welfare supervisors. A greater research question lies in the interpretation of what these stories tell about needs public child welfare supervisors have of their agencies to develop strong leadership identities and remain employed in their agencies. Through the use of qualitative analyses, the researcher will be able to interpret individual and collective meanings public line supervisors place on leadership.

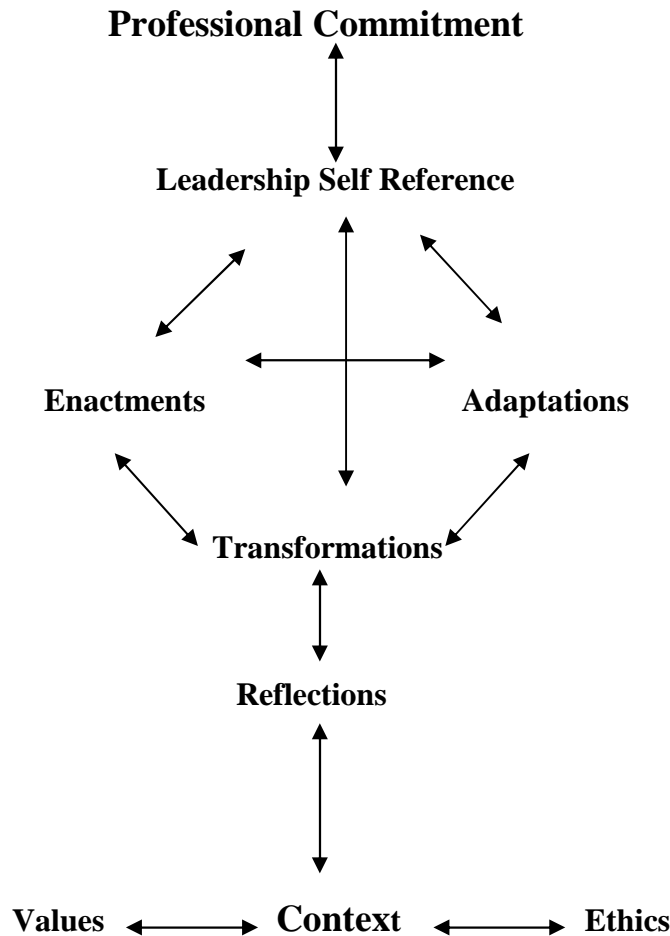
A major challenge of this study is to develop a qualitative research process, with well formed means of data collection and analyses. It must be vigorous enough to capture and understand the experience, context, and importance of supervisory leadership and retention behaviors in the public sector through rich descriptions and interpretations of patterns and themes. The goal is to gain understanding of the meaning and importance of leadership from the participants' perspectives, and the importance, if any, of leadership has regarding key decisions including responses to change and turbulences in the field or in child welfare programs, as well as the intent to stay employed as a professional supervisor in the public sector.

The key concepts taken into the methodology comprise a set of affective dimensions that support the conceptual bond between leadership and professional commitment. They supported the design of this project by adding depth to the questions, and creating a pathway for the analysis. A working conceptual model is presented that presents key concepts from the literature and suggest some relationships between them.

In this conceptual model, dimensions of leadership are embedded within the larger construct of professional commitment. They represent a range of knowledge, behaviors, and attitudes, and collectively represent a suggested culture of *public supervisorial leadership*. Leadership understanding begins with the concepts of values and ethics that have largely been shaped by the context or environments of the participants. Reflections in the spirit of emergence theory result in which the actions are clarified and values reworked. This is accomplished through recall. Transformations result in which the individual examines the frame of references and the beliefs and actions that embody. New approaches are enacted and adaptations are made that enable the individual to work through conflicts or stressors in the organizations. The model shows the most vigorous activities related to transformations, enactments, adaptations and self defined understanding or awareness of leadership. Once the individual has identified and reconciled the stressors and taken actions to implement new thinking he/she is exhibiting leadership. For the child welfare supervisors, professional commitment and all that it entails including the code of behaviors figures prominently in the self definition.

Coding and recoding generates themes and patterns in the texts. The analyses and interpretations will consider the corpus of leadership understanding expressed in the narratives from which inferences about the uniqueness of public supervisorial leadership in child welfare are drawn. As the data is analyzed, a return to the model will show how well it stood up to the data.

Figure 1: Conceptual Model of Leadership Self Reference



This model reflects relationships between critical dimensions of leadership self reference and professional commitment .Leadership is a way maker to professional commitment, and it is a product of an affectual relationship between child welfare supervisors and the field of social work generally, and child welfare specifically. Supervisors navigate the professional and organizational contexts within which they work. Their reflections and resulting transformations lead to opportunities for leadership

enactment, adaptation, and differentiation. Resolution of the contextual stressors within the profession and the organization creates the pathway to leadership self reference and professional commitment.

The research herein begins with an acceptance that the story of public line supervisory leadership has yet to be told. Thus knowledge, and understanding about leadership consciousness and its value to public line child welfare supervisors remains essentially unknown. Transformation and emergence literatures provide insights into dimensions of leadership that are introspective, strategic, reflective and retrospective.

Research Protocol

The sequence of research activities and decisions are presented in the description that follows. Narratives are always contextual, communal, relational, and claims and counter claims are made through and about the stories told” (Stanley 2008 278). The data is rich. A narrative study involves direct contact with the participants. This study includes data from individual interviews, a focus group, and a group of experts. The data collection period was roughly 120 days, from September 2009 through November 2009.

Questions for the study were developed from the literature and the researcher’s experiences to get at the perceived meaning of self referenced leadership and its importance to line supervisors in the public sector. In order to make certain the interview and focus group questions were appropriate and not leading, the questions were piloted using two social workers that had previously worked as supervisors in public child welfare. The questions were administered to the individuals and audio taped. Following

the interview, each question and answer was reviewed with the individuals in a candid discussion with the researcher. Their understanding of the intent of the questions especially as they related to the central research question was discussed. Other possible interpretations of the question and the range of possible responses were also discussed. The question was reframed with input from these two prior supervisors when the clarity of intent was not evident. Several other child welfare administrators reviewed the questions by e-mail and provided their reactions. All were satisfied that the questions were appropriate, and were non-threatening. The issue of eliminating anything that would lead to predetermined answers received aggressive review during the pilot and debriefing with the researcher.

Selection of the Response Group

There are roughly three hundred (300+) child welfare supervisors in the state of Maryland. The ideal response group in a qualitative study is six to ten people. Once the study was approved by the Maryland Department of Human Resources, and the DHR Research Review Committee decided that it has value for the Department, it was decided that the organization would take responsibility for contacting potential participants through a formal letter from the administration. The State wanted to stress in their letter to employees that the supervisors did not have to participate in the study. A letter of invitation had also been drafted by the researcher to encourage the supervisors to participate. Directors in the local agencies received letters from the Executive Director of Social Services Administration. They were the identified point of contact for their staff members. Interested supervisors would be able to directly contact the researcher. This

research competed with any number of other projects. Directors that had interest in the study shared the research opportunity with their staff members and supported the study via direct communication with the researcher. When contacted by agency directors or their designees, the researcher explained the response group size and requested supervisors with at least two years of child welfare supervision as preferred participants for the study.

The study used a response group of fourteen (14) volunteer respondents. Phone contacts with candidates ensured in the judgment of the researcher, that the participants were representative of the population of child welfare supervisors in the state. Specifically, each selected respondent had worked in child welfare as a professional social worker, had worked in the child welfare field, had been promoted or hired in at the supervisory level, and all had been a supervisor for at least two years. All expressed a willingness to discuss leadership. Participation in the study was voluntary. The goal was to have at least 10 respondents for the final analysis. The design called for 5 additional respondents to serve as backups in case several could not participate. Since the fourteen volunteer respondents' work assignments covered all of the major child welfare programs, a decision was made to include all of them in the study.

Engaging the Participants

Respondents met with the researcher at agreed upon times and locations to share their stories about their perceptions of their leadership experiences. Participants were assisted to feel comfortable through general talk and sharing of the researcher's

background in the field. The researcher shared that she had previously been a supervisor in public child welfare, she was no longer a state employee, and her research was confidential. The research purpose and confidentiality protocol including the written consent form were reviewed, and signatures obtained before each interview.

Confidentiality protocols such as the use of initials on data sheets, that no names or local jurisdictions would be mentioned in final reports, and the storage of tapes and notes would be held in sole custody of the researcher were reviewed and stressed at the onset of the interview and throughout the entire project.

The guide questions that had been piloted and reviewed were broad and open ended. The intent was to have the supervisors tell the story of their supervision as child welfare supervisors. The questions were well received. Narratives usually included case vignettes interwoven in the stories of what their days and experiences were like as child welfare supervisors. Personal information about their hire and selection of social work as career was also shared. Interviews were audio taped. Respondents were interviewed at selected site locations of their choice. Most chose to interview at their work site before or after work hours. The interviews were planned for 60 minutes. Most of the individual interviews lasted between 30- 45minutes. This was consistent with the time frames in the pilot interviews. Interviews were usually held in a vacant office at the work site. This protected confidentiality and allowed the supervisor to talk and not be interrupted.

In addition to questions about their role as supervisors and social work professionals, they were asked to identify the single leadership event in which they were *at their best* as leaders. They were encouraged to bring an artifact illustrative of their

leadership if they wished to share it. Although this element of the design was interesting to the researcher, it was not as interesting to the supervisors and they opted to share meaningful sayings or wording from plaques, or posters that they had up in their offices during their interviews rather than bring the artifacts into the interview. The meaning they attached to the artifact was most important and the lack of physical objects did not diminish the value added of the leadership best stories.

The respondents had been informed about a focus group on the Consent form and in the introductory comments of the researcher. The focus group was to be held after the completion of the individual interviews. Both the invitation letter and the consent form mentioned the focus group. It was also discussed prior to each of the interviews by the researcher to get a commitment of participation. The focus group was identified as the way the researcher would get a collective response to the themes discussed in the individual interviews. As with the individual interviews, participation in the focus group was presented as voluntary. There was a mixed response to the focus group, several respondents did mention they would not have a problem participating.

Following the completion of all of the individual narratives, and considering input from several of the respondents that had expressed preferences regarding date and time, a date for the focus group was scheduled. The intent was to have the same group of respondents that provided the individual interviews, corroborate the themes that were interpreted from the individual interviews. Anticipated conversations and non verbal communication between and among the participants held high promise of additional data that could be used in the final analysis.

Despite working through the logistics of planning the focus group, the respondents who had indicated that they wanted to participate were not able to do so. In an attempt however to meet the planned and approved methodology, and to corroborate the themes, the researcher worked to convince three of the original respondents to do this last piece of the project. The three respondents with some personal appeal by the researcher agreed to a dinner meeting to talk about the themes. The three respondents that agreed to do the focus group were from different jurisdictions, had very differing opinions regarding leadership, and proved to be exceptionally candid.

The lesson learned is that research participants can become saturated with competing obligations and are unwilling or unable to commit additional time. Designs may be most appealing to the researcher but not meet the needs, interests or comfortability of the participants. Throughout the project, the researcher had engaged in conversations with a selected group of individuals that provided reactions to the research and the provided the researcher with an opportunity to present and argue points. The researcher turned to this peer group to discuss the reactions of the focus group participants to the themes, and feedback regarding the direction and the overall “findings” of the study. The notes from the peer discussion group and the focus group were transcribed and included in the data base for additional coding. The work with this group added to the credibility of the project.

Data Collection

Interviews with the respondents were audio taped. Data consisted of rich narratives shared in response to the guide questions and probes in the individual

interviews. The researcher took limited notes as the interviewees answered the questions in an effort to have them relax and tell the story. It is worth noting that even though the research protocol for this qualitative study involved the careful development of semi-structured questions, some probes and questions were asked in direct response to stories or comments, and even non verbal reactions made within the interview. Prior work during the pilot session helped with the probes.

Having the two social workers that had previously supervised in child welfare pilot the questions helped the researcher to relax when the responses during the interviews led to new probes. What could not be anticipated nor planned for was how an individual respondent would react or exactly where an individual interview would go. The response group was a heterogeneous group with varied work experiences. In some instances where a question appeared to confuse or trouble a respondent, the question was rephrased as a probe. In some instances new questions were used because those developed in the protocol would not have gotten to the issue that was specifically raised by an individual respondent. The new probes were written into the transcribed interviews as they were developed. Field notes were also made to document the changes in the interview as appropriate. Each interview was as rich and unique as the participant and his/her story.

Some of the respondents were clear that their relationship with their administrator had largely figured into their decision participate in the study. This was a clue that the responses may not be complete or forthcoming. In an effort to acknowledge this and reinforce the value of their participation, the researcher sought to use humor and to

ensure the individuals that the questions were “easy” and the interview short. In one instance the respondent refused to meet in the designated office for the interview and thus the researcher met in his office. He was guarded and short in his responses. Once the interview began he became very forthcoming and spoke candidly about the lack of direct supervision for the supervisors in his agency.

An unanticipated revelation was how close I was to the subject matters being discussed by the respondents and my strong temptation to “join the troops”. It was as if I could have cosigned on some of the issues they presented. I became aware of this problem almost immediately and adjustments were made to bracket my experiences, limit my comments, and step back from the interview, and listen. My knowledge of the context of public child welfare worked in my favor, allowing people to answer questions without having to define their jargon. I was able to “parrot back” meanings as we talked. The responses were authentic and real based on my own knowledge of changes in operations and new social programs.

Since the interview could be administered within the 30-45 minute time frame or less the researcher was able to complete the contact sheets between scheduled interviews. The written Summary of Contact Sheet, a tool introduced in Miles and Huberman’s *Qualitative Data Analysis*, was adapted for this project. It is a summary of the contact and impressions of the interview and the respondents’ reactions and responses to the questions. The summary contact sheets were completed immediately following the individual interview whenever possible to capture researcher reactions to the interview, or questions that required follow-up. A sample Summary Contact Sheet is located in

Appendix C. Data from this form was entered into the casebook for this project.

Transcription of the audio taped interviews, and notes of the interview session was completed as quickly as possible following each interview. The data was expeditiously entered into the project database.

Coding of the text using QSR's Nvivo 8(<http://www.qsrinternational.com>) software facilitated coding across cases and within cases, tracked relationships, and allowed for the overall management of the data. Nvivo8 was selected because it supports a variety of methodological approaches. It is effective with small samples and has a variety of modeling options built into the program (Brazeley 2000 2-3). Despite the limited number of respondents, a large volume of data was collected from each participant. Computerized databases contribute a lot in terms of data management but little in terms of analyses. Coding and identification of relationships rests squarely on the researcher.

Chapter: 4

Coding

This chapter describes the coding scheme and coding processes. Although coding processes are large parts of the methodology, the magnitude of coding in the qualitative study demands a detailed and in depth discussion. Qualitative research literature presents coding as a fundamental process critical to analysis but not a synonymous one. "It may be a simple process aided by computers that involves identification of the frequency with which a word or phrase is used repeatedly in the texts, or a complex analysis of entire text

passages and phrases that describe the message or intent of the entire passage. “Codes may be descriptive, interpretative, or analytical” (Brazeley 2007 66). Coding processes in qualitative data involve linking data to other data and data back to ideas in the literature review or other documents. It also involves linking codes to other codes that may be similar or different. The literature is insistent that coding and analysis are related but not synonymous and that the input of the researcher is critical in exploring relationships.

In order to achieve a complex level of analysis of data obtained in the leadership project, codes are needed that move beyond descriptions to get to meanings in narratives. The descriptive codes were derived from the literature review and first readings of the texts. A coding scheme was developed that took the data through several levels of analysis. Some of the more recent literature on coding in qualitative research has indicated that coding in qualitative studies is a “retention process rather than a reduction process”. It is a process that allows one to file the data and to return to it frequently to get the essence of meaning of patterns and explanations” (Richards 2005 96). As new insights are realized the researcher recodes the text using different sources or in some instances the same sources with differently defined codes. Nvivo 8 allows one to do this without losing the original coding efforts.

Coding in qualitative research has been presented as having two main approaches, one that encourages the researcher to identify through deductive processes possible codes with which to begin, and the other found in grounded theory that calls for the themes and patterns to be “brought up from the data.” Both approaches have

strengths and are supported in the literature. Researchers tend to have a preference of approach.

Before either of these approaches was selected for this study, a critical task of the coding process required revisiting the central and sub research questions in an effort to have them guide the selection of the coding approach most appropriate for the study. The central research question for study is **how do public child welfare supervisors perceive and describe their own leadership experiences as leaders?** The sub questions for consideration are (a) what is the nature, context , and importance of leadership for public child welfare supervisors (b) whether, and to what extent, the child welfare supervisor's leadership experiences or some other dynamics helps the individual to manage shifts and changes in the role, turbulence in the administrative environment and changes in the norms and mores of the child welfare profession, and (c) whether these create a template that facilitates his/her remaining in the field of child welfare and in the host agency?

In an effort to move beyond jargon, I attempted to simply use lay language to define what I was attempting to do in the study. This task was not unfamiliar to me as it had been previously recommended by a member of my committee during my prospectus defense and proved exceptionally helpful as I often spoke to other researchers in the field and needed to precisely communicate the nature of the project. Lynn Richards, a co founder of NUDIST, is frequently cited as an expert in qualitative research methodology and data management. She recommends that one return to the research questions for direction with the coding. The model recommended by Richards (Richards 2008 30)

asked a series of questions regarding the research questions and goals and challenged me to take on the task of critically thinking through the intent of the study and using lay terms to succinctly explain my research. This preliminary work allowed me to keep the research questions in the forefront and to drill down to the essence my work by answering a series of questions, and working through beliefs, knowledge, and values from which the research project had evolved. Completion of the exercise was an initial step in the coding process. The results of this exercise, Getting to the Goals are shared in the Appendix F.

Leadership in the experiential sense is a complex phenomenon and has not been widely studied in terms of its relationship to public child welfare supervisors. Most often leadership examined in empirical studies addresses retention of subordinates, and focuses on the supervisorial behaviors that impact turnover. The focus from the experiential perspective in this study is not on skills or behaviors, but rather is focused on the processes and meaning of leadership. Leadership is not only what one does but rather is what one internalizes and feels. It represents a composite of inter and intra personal elements for the individual. The extensive literature review proved helpful in identifying a list of free nodes from which to begin. Some examples of the initial codes were leadership consciousness; self referenced leadership, and differentiation.

A large part of the coding work is done prior to the actual collection of data. Leading qualitative researchers have stressed the importance of developing detailed memos in qualitative research. (Miles and Huberman 1994; Brazeley 2007; Saldana 2009) As this project evolved, I wrote memos about my thoughts and feelings, definition

of the nodes, and reactions to coding results in a computerized research log. Detailed notes regarding the thinking and trial and error related to the development of the coding scheme, delays in the identification of respondents, negotiations with the host agency, the failed focus group, second effort to get respondents to participate, coding and recoding, and the overall progress of the project were kept in a running research journal. The memo work facilitated a thorough written review of my thinking, and changes based on new understandings and interpretations. Starting at the beginning of the project, the memos followed the project through its many stages of iteration and final presentation.

Detailed notes in the memos included definitions of the codes from the deductive review, and changes to codes based on actual reading and rereading of the interviews. New definitions of the codes evolved as the data revealed different meanings, and nuances of the responses in the interviews were also considered. This detailed work was tedious and developed over time as the project grew. It was exceptionally useful tracking definitions for the codes and building the coding scheme. Thinking through the possible codes, and linking them to reference sources was accomplished through the help of the software that allowed me to import sections from my proposal and literature review. This greatly assisted with development of the coding scheme, coding redefinitions, changes in interpretations, and definitions of the codes and the final codebook.

The process of developing the list of initial codes involved going through the individual and the focus group interview questions, and probes and linking those directly back to the research question and sub questions. The overall goal of the coding activity at

this point was to provide a check in the process that integrated key theoretical concepts from the literature to the central research and sub questions. Table 1 is an illustration of how the literature and the research questions are connected to preliminary codes.

In the “life world” (Stivers 2000 130) of the public child welfare agency, public child welfare supervisory leadership is characterized by complex processes of learning, reflecting, leading, adapting, and sense making . In Table 1 the individual interview questions developed to explore these areas are linked to concepts carried over from the literature. These concepts guided the depth of the probes needed to get to an understanding of the meaning of leadership. In narrative inquiry the stories do not just provide facts but help to provide the meaning and value of the experiences that are shared by the narrators.

Table 1. Preliminary Coding from Leadership Literature, Research Questions and Experiences of Researcher

Research question/sub questions	Literature reference /connection	Preliminary Codes	Interview Questions
How do child welfare supervisors perceive their own leadership? Reflecting	Schon , Hill, Senge, 4 Is Avilio and Bass Self awareness internal processing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership identity • Leadership self image • Leadership transformation • professional /managerial • leadership sense making • Leadership consciousness 	Question(s) 1, 2, 6,7a in the protocol
What is the nature of leadership from the perspective of the child welfare supervisors? Adapting	Avilio and Bass Professional identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership expectations • Leadership behaviors • Leadership enactment • Leadership opportunity 	Questions(s) # 9 11 3 in the protocol
Whether, and to what extent, the child welfare supervisor's leadership experiences or some other dynamics helps the individual to manage shifts and changes in the role, turbulence in the administrative environment and changes in the norms and mores of the child welfare profession, Sense making	Ellett and Ellett Professional commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership motivation Reflective leadership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing sense making • Social work expectations • Professional ism expressed • Ongoing professional development 	Questions 10, 11, 8. 4, 7,7a
(c) Whether these create a template that facilitates his/her remaining in the field of child welfare and in the host agency? Learning	Merizow Transformational learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retention decisions • Professional commitment • ongoing learning • transformation 	10 ,7, 6, 9

The first category in the table includes dimensions that involve self assessment. It is indicative of the individual adult work that is needed for self referenced leadership. It focuses on the internal processes of “being in leadership”. It is **reflective** work that in the framework of emergence theory would create new values, perceptions and a new world view. Leadership meaning is thus is reflective of the resolution of values, and power conflicts. The second category includes those dimensions that address the resolution of professional and organizational contextual tensions and the integration of opportunities for leadership. Here **adaptation** is critical and the probes would explore the changes that supervisors had experienced in their efforts to lead in the public agency. Key questions and probes asked respondents to assess their supervision in comparison to that of their peers, asked for relationships such as those with superiors and subordinates. These were interesting questions that for some respondents created tension in the interview. The third category pointed to dimensions that address leadership **sense making** and involves the critical work needed to identify their “station” in the agency and how that impacted their sense of self as leader in their agencies. Leadership opportunities and behaviors provided in the texts would be revealing of the struggle or lack of struggle this presents for the line supervisor. This becomes especially challenging for if the leadership opportunities are not opened to them by their supervisors superiors. Finally, the fourth category deals with **transformative learning** and includes action dimensions that facilitate autonomy and differentiation. Probes reached for experiences that would highlight significant learning and leading processes that forced supervisors to reassess values, political or social relations, and their frame of reference. It leads to differential

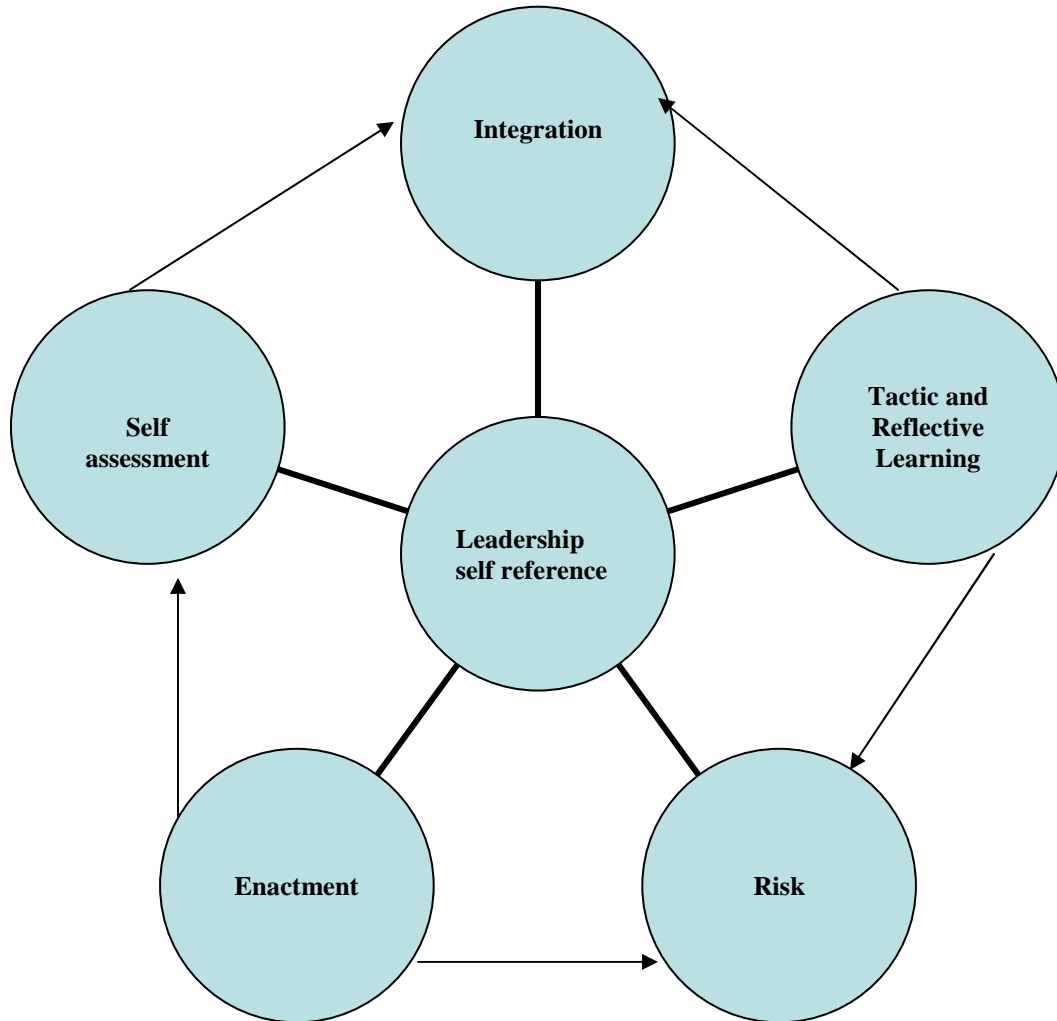
use of self in the organization, and to view supervision differently. The table is representative of the affective processes that are critical to leadership.

Working Model: Deconstruction of Leadership Self Reference

Coding deconstruction in qualitative research literature refers to a process wherein a passage of text is reviewed to identify its core meaning (Saldana 2009 4). Leadership self reference in this study is argued to be embedded within the larger construct of professional commitment. Professional commitment is the affective connection that one holds for his /her profession. In the helping professions this affection is often likened to a “calling or personal mission” to do the work. Considering it this way, the next logical step is to indicate how professional commitment is manifested. Leadership self reference for the public child welfare supervisor may be asserted as a manifestation of professional commitment. It is expressed through autonomy, enactment, tactic and reflective learning, integration, risk/resolution, and self efficacy. These dimensions are found throughout Meta analytical literature in studies regarding, professional identity, commitment, job satisfaction and intent to stay. The dimensions will be carried over to the analysis to determine if the data supports the assertion.

Figure 2. below presents the deconstruction of leadership self reference. Translating the interpersonal or affective dimensions into codes helps to “frame the boundaries of the research” (Miles and Huberman 1994 25). It is a working model of leadership self reference that returns to the synthesis of the literature review and the steps in the leadership self reference processes.

Figure 2: Working Model of Leadership Self Reference



Working up from the data

Coding data in qualitative study involves more than identifying codes and attaching text. It involves seeing logic in topics that work up from the data. Many of the

articles and books point to getting a broad view of the data through becoming close to the data. Brazeley for example, called this “broad –brush or bucket coding” (Brazeley 2007 67). Broad brush coding involves putting data once read into broad topics. Miles and Huberman recommended that the researcher read each transcript and attempt to give a broad code or name to the central message of the text on the Contact Summary Sheet. The summary sheet is used to indicate themes and patterns immediately following the interview. (Miles and Huberman 1994 54). It answers the question, what is this interview about? Other writers like Ryan and Bernard recommend that one read the data to see what may “pop out” as relevant to the study. This “eyeballing” method although not scientific has been widely used as a first step when working with the data (Ryan and Bernard 2000 http://www.analytic.com/mb870/Readings/ryan-bernard_techniques_to_identify_themes... Retrieved August 4,2009). This approach has proved useful in this project. As I read the texts and listened to the tapes, phrases and concepts mentioned would strike meaning for me in terms of the research questions or my own understanding of the complexity of leadership. These words and phrases became eyeballed codes.

Johnny Saldana) has written a coding manual for qualitative researchers. He recognizes coding processes involve “cycles of coding” (Saldana 2009 45). Although there are numerous others coding manuals this one was selected for its clarity and comprehensiveness. He identifies first and second cycle coding processes and how each moves the data analysis from descriptive to deeper interpretive levels. In each of the cycles there are numerous approaches to coding that the researcher may select .The

challenge is not to include more approaches than needed.” First cycle coding are the processes that happen during the initial coding of data and consists of seven subcategories , Grammatical, Elemental, Affective, Literary and Language , Exploratory, Procedural and Themeing the Data” (Saldana 2009 45). “The second cycle coding methods include, Pattern Coding, Focused Coding, Axial Coding, Theoretical Coding, Elaborative Coding and Longitudinal Coding. All of these methods require skills including categorizing, keen observation, integrating and synthesizing” (Saldana 2009 44-45)

The selection of the specific coding approach is determined by the intent of the research, and the research methodology. The coding scheme for this project included a first and second cycle in the coding. Four approaches were selected in the first cycle of coding and one in the second cycle. The first cycle codes selected for use are attribute, eyeballing, structured and in vivo coding. The second cycle makes use of pattern coding. The description of the selected coding approaches will be provided along with an explanation of the value each adds to the project. Each of these approaches selected was congruent with the narrative methodology used in this study and my skill level with qualitative coding.

The Coding Scheme

First Cycle Coding (Saldana 2009, Richards 2007, Miles and Huberman 1994)

The following coding methods were utilized in this project:

1. *Attribute coding* – Attribute coding according to Saldana is a “method of managing essential information about the demographics of the respondents and the data used in the study ... It is intended as a coding grammar, a way of documenting descriptive “cover” information about participants, the site, and other components of the study” (Saldana 55-57) Demographic information was collected on a Demographic Data Sheet and on the Summary Contact Sheet. The demographic information was developed into tables and imported into the database. Tables 2-6. Represents the demographic profile of the participants in this study. A casebook for the participants may be found in Appendix C along with the Summary Contact Sheet.

Table 2. Gender

Male	Female
4	10

Table 3. Race/Ethnicity

African American	6
Caucasian	8

Table 4. Age Range of Participants

Age Range	Number of Participants	Percentage
30-45	6	43%
46-55	6	43%
56-65 and older	2	14%

Table 5. Field Placements Experiences

Field Placements	Number of Participants	% of the Response Group
Psychology or mental health	5	36%

Child welfare	7	50%
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Table 6. Program Assignments

Area	CPS	Fam. Pres.	FC	IT	Adopt	FPS	Total
Number	1	1	8	1	1	2	14
Percent	.07	.07	57	.07	.07	14	100%

2. *Eyeballing the data* – This method involves reading notes or transcripts to see what catches the eye of the researcher. This process allowed me to focus on phrases or key words or ideas that tended to jump out during in my initial read of individual texts. These were highlighted. This was a manual process. Many times the phrases or words became most apparent during the transcription process because each interview was listened to several times and typed by the researcher. Table 7 presents some “eyeballed” key terms and phrases and the context within which these were mentioned in the text.

Table 7. Eyeballed Codes

Key Phases or terms that popped out during first read	Definition /Context
“Dealing with culture is a learning curve”	In response to Q 3- is the job different from what you thought it would be?
“Like I had died and gone to heaven”	Q4 what is it like to be a supervisor here?
Leadership role is providing coaching and supporting	Q6-what is the leadership role for child welfare supervisors
Professionalism	Probe what words describe what it is like being a supervisor
Position does not automatically lead to leadership. It can depend on the individual	Q Are supervisors leaders?
Clinical	Code word for social work practice ,values, practice interventions
Bringing balance	Helping workers to normalize the work
Role model	Q what do you expect of yourself as a child welfare supervisor?
Organization culture impacts leadership	Support for social work profession
“Open and available”	Assessable to staff advocate for them
‘Never thought of myself as a leader’	Q -Are supervisors leaders?
“Touchy feely social worker”	Concerned with feelings and needs of workers elicits these from workers
Accountability and support	Data driven
“Growing the team”	Code –being able to select own team hire train and coach them
We do not get the supervision that we need	Supervisors often left to deal with issues alone
“Finding my niche... my fit”	Feeling of fit- values aligned with social work profession

3. *Structured coding* – Structured coding in the work of Saldana is” an elemental coding method.” This method is a foundational approach and a grand tour of the data.”...Structured coding is appropriate for virtually all types of qualitative studies, but particularly for those employing multiple participants, standardized or semi-structured data gathering protocols... It is a means of coding and categorizing the data corpus”. (Saldana 2009 66-67). Structural coding makes use of large chunks of text rather than a line by line coding process. It is from these large chunks of categorized data that the themes are identified. It has been recommended for interview transcripts. The value added for the use of this method is that it sets the stage for thematic analysis later in the project. In structural coding, words are used to address particular research questions. Identification of free and tree nodes in Nvivo 8 helps to organize the structured codes. The qualitative reports in Appendix G. show the progressive development and use of structured codes in the project.
4. *In vivo coding* –“**In-vivo codes**” are placed in quotations, and are bolded type to indicate that the words of the participants rather than those of the researcher most aptly described the intent and meaning. Saldana recommends this approach for the novice qualitative researcher whose studies are designed to” prioritize and honor the participants voice” (Saldana 2009 74) as is the case in this study. Based on text and field notes this method uses the actual words of the participants to identify the most relevant codes expressed in the data that

addressed the research question and or sub questions. Unique or indigenous phrases and words that recur frequently in the individual texts and the focus group text are given meaning. A list of such phrases is provided in Table 8

Table 8. IN-Vivo Codes

In vivo Code	Reflections , meaning metaphor	Context
“I have a vision that I am working through this work”	Reflecting on the work that the individual has yet to do in terms of social work	In response to why do you stay?
“Just give me a tent on the parking lot and my people I will be fine “	Passion regarding the lack of support and acknowledgement for the profession	Responding to what is different for you as a supervisor?
“ I have to do good “	Connection to social work profession and the desire to practice ,with personal values	Passion for the work
“Felt like I had died and gone to heaven “	Fit with agency culture and application of skills and knowledge	Embeddness to the organization
“Growing the team “	Capacity to hire my own folk	In response to leadership best
“Open and available”	Behavior code for willingness to be available and open to hear the issues of their staffs	What do you expect of yourself as a supervisor?
“Clinical “	Code for practice attitudes , knowledge and skills of the social work profession	Described repeatedly as the job of the child welfare supervisor
“Walk the walk “	Code for holding the profession up , doing what is expected as a professional -truth to the norms , mores and values of the profession	Where will supervisors be in the next 3-5 years?
“Accountability”	Code for shared responsibility for outcomes of cases , also data tracking	Describes the job of child welfare supervisor

Second Cycle Coding (Saldana 2009, Rubin and Rubin 2005)

The Second Cycle Coding method is a process that further refines the codes that have established in the first cycle work. “The primary goal during the second cycle coding is to develop a sense of categorical thematic, conceptual /and or theoretical organization from the array of the first cycle codes. It attempts to derive some interpretive and striking perspectives about the data” (Saldana 2009 149-150). The process is one of applying the codes and reapplying the codes when new interpretations influence. It also involves merging existing codes into thematic patterns.

Saldana has identified several methods in the second cycle of coding. “Pattern coding , Focused coding , Axial coding and Theoretical coding are mentioned as possible approaches to determine meta codes for research projects”(Saldana 2009 150-151) .Any one of these may be used as appropriate in qualitative study.

Pattern coding is used in this study to categorize practice conditions and elements that indicate various levels of leadership consciousness. These categories are subsequently integrated into two main codes *self referenced leadership and practice conditions* reflected in the chart below. It is through the resolution of the processes associated with leadership consciousness that one expresses true self referenced leadership

Pattern coding during this cycle of coding identifies a “meta –code” that tends to pull a lot of the information from all of the participants together under one explanation. This type of coding is inferential and in some ways thematic. In the spirit and intent of the epistemological framework that informs this study and its design , coding in the

Second Cycle does not seek to identify causal inferences but rather to suggest how leadership has meaning for the child welfare supervisors and why it holds importance for their retention decisions. The clue mentioned by Saldana to help identify pattern codes is “consequential words”. As appropriate, “the first cycle codes are assessed for commonality and assigned patterned codes which are then used to help develop a statement of the meaning of leadership” (Saldana: 154). The pattern codes that get to the essence of meaning of leadership are identified in Table 9.

Table 9. Pattern Codes

First cycle codes	Second cycle code Categorical Themes in the data
Professional social work identity Support of clinical practice Opportunities for leadership Relationship with peers Relationship with staff Validation of professional worth	Practice conditions
Identification and alignment of core values Individual transcendence Retrospective and reflective sense making Identifications of blockages Self facilitated leadership awareness Differentiation	Leadership Consciousness

Although they tend to overlap, coding and analysis are not the same processes. Lyn Richards notes that analysis is a critical part of descriptive, and topic coding, and that analytical coding is even more so because analytic codes create new ideas about the categories and the data, Coding, she says, is the “first step in opening up meaning... It is a way of **taking off from the data**” (Richards 2005 94). Once the final coding structure

has been applied, leadership perceptions can be identified as common themes in corpus of the data. As Opler indicates, “themes are only visible and thus discoverable through the manifestation of expressions in the data and conversely, expressions in the data are meaningless without some reference to themes” (Ryan and Bernard 2003 86).

Descriptions of the final codes are found in the code book found in Appendix H.

The next chapter moves from the description of the codes and coding scheme to an in- depth application of the coding scheme described above in analyses of the data.

Chapter 5

Analysis

Following some introductory comments about analysis in qualitative research, this chapter will provide an analysis of the data. Analysis in qualitative studies is an ongoing iterative process that begins at the onset of the investigation, and takes many forms (Bradley, Curry and Devers 2007 1760). It is through the analyses that the researcher brings his /her voice to the narrative. As Rubin and Rubin explain, “the goals of the analysis are to reflect the complexity of human interactions by portraying it in the words of the interviewees and through actual events and to make that complexity understandable to others” (Rubin and Rubin 205 202). In the analysis, a block of comments on a specific topic is determined to be a “data unit”. These data units are comments from an individual respondent or include comments from several respondents. (Rubin and Rubin 202-203) Interpretations of the data using the two branches of the central research question follows the coding scheme, attribute analysis, structured analysis, in-vivo analysis and patterned analysis.

The “*identify and retrieve method*” of analysis where line by line text is analyzed discounts the richness of relationships between codes and within codes. Thematic analysis on the other hand is the process through which “...general propositions that emerge from diverse and detail-rich experiences of participants ...provide recurrent and underlying ideas regarding the subject of inquiry” (Bradley, Curry and Devers 2007 1766). Chunks of data units are used across the cases in the study to identify themes. In this research project the development of themes is a process that evolved from the use of priori coding and melding fuzzy relationships between nodes are presented as latent meanings and interpretations of the data from the researcher’s perspective. The actual or **in vivo** responses of the respondents that explain a dimension of their leadership is highlighted and bolded for effect. The NVIVO 8 (www.qsrinternational.com) software was helpful in linking codes and making models and charts of the data as the researcher refined and developed codes from several approaches.

Data analysis is the process of moving from raw interviews to evidence-based interpretations. “Analysis entails classifying, comparing, weighing, and combining materials from the interview s to extract the meaning and implications, to reveal patterns or to stitch together descriptions of events into a coherent narrative” (Rubin and Rubin 2005 201). Gough and Scott identified two areas that are distinctive to coding that is also relevant to analysis. “The first is “emic” in that coding is the means to the emergence and the interrogation of theory from the data. The other is “etic” which is concerned with the interpretation and presentation of data in ways likely to be found meaningful by many audiences” (Gough and Scott 2000 342). The latter of these is appropriate for this study

because the audiences that may find this work informative are specifically social work supervisors, social work, nursing, and education administrators, public administrators, clinicians, professionals, and others interested in leadership and the retention of professionals in public organizations. Data is comprised of the transcribed texts, notes from discussion groups, literature review, and research journal, and the coding processes that facilitated cross coding and merging of codes.

In order to analyze participants' responses at deeper levels, the two distinct branches of the central research question are revisited. The first branch, the practice branch of the question asks for descriptions of the leadership. Sub questions reach for an understanding of the described and identified contextual elements within child welfare practice, and specific organizational conditions that appeared relevant to understanding where respondents are in understanding their leadership. The second arm of the research question is epistemological and focuses on meaning. It asks for perceptions of the reality of supervisory leadership for the public child welfare supervisor. Nodes developed from each of these branches of the research question have been identified in the previous chapter. The depth and levels of analyses are driven by the evolutionary patterns in coding processes. The data from this study are analyzed using the four selected approaches; attribute analysis, structured analysis, in-vivo analysis and patterned analysis. These are consistent with the coding methodology. In addition the dimensions that were developed from the deconstruction of leadership self reference will be held up to the text in a final section of this chapter.

Attribute Analysis

Using the attribute codes from the data scheme, the following general profile of the respondent group is offered. The fourteen (14) child welfare supervisors that participated in this study were assigned to an array of seven (7) programs within Maryland's child welfare services. Collectively the respondents worked in all of the major child welfare programs offered in the state ; Foster Care, Regular and Teen , Independent Living, Child Protective Services, Family Preservation, Foster Parent Services, Adoptions, and Infant and Toddlers. They were supervisors from two jurisdictions in the state. One large urban and one large country jurisdiction participated. Collectively, the respondents had over 137 years of child welfare experience. The respondents ranged in age from 30-65 years of age, were a mixture of Caucasian and African American in racial composition, and consisted of 4 men and 10 women. Twelve (12) of the respondents had graduated with Master of Social Work Degrees from local schools of social work in the Maryland Metropolitan area. Two (2) however had graduated from schools as far away as California. The group was heterogeneous and a good representation of the larger population of child welfare supervisors.

All of the respondents had prior child welfare experience, most in the public sector, and several had been promoted as direct services workers from within the agencies for which they worked. Supervisors indicated that being promoted from within had given them the chance to know pretty much what the job involved. Those hired from outside of the agency felt that they had had sufficient contact with the public agency supervisors through their prior work in child welfare that they had some sense of the

work. Several respondents reflected back to their own supervisors as role models to guide them regarding either how they would conduct business or how they were certain they would not supervise.

Twenty-nine percent (4) of the respondent group indicated that they had less three years or less of child welfare supervisory experience. Some studies have indicated that it takes roughly two years for the new hire at the worker level to understand the scope of the job. If this holds true for the supervisors, it could be expected that these are supervisors whose level of leadership understanding is just forming. A return to the coding of interviews from the respondents with less than three years supervisory experience indicated that they were most frequently coded at **conditions that support leadership**, namely professional and organizational nodes; professional identity, social work identity , agency identity , peer support , acknowledgement that social work is valued by superiors , and the use of their clinical skills. External validation and recognition of professional worth by peers, superiors and their staff were important. There is strong identity with the profession and with the agency of hire. They were the respondents that mentioned accountability as a major task of their supervision.

Forty-three percent (6) of the group indicated 7-11 years of supervisor experience. A review of the coding revealed that this group was coded most frequently at nodes that indicated communication and management of their work group was important .They were interested in “**growing the team**” and recognized strengths and weaknesses of the team. They were interested in the relationship with their peers. There were less frequently coded at nodes defined to reflect emphases on the need to use their clinical skills. They

were teachers of the professional way. These were individuals that told stories of going out with their workers and modeling the skills for them. Coding was most frequently tied to nodes that stressed the **values of relationships with peers and support for their work groups**.

The respondents with the longest tenure in child welfare, 12 years and over were also frequently coded at nodes representing relationships. They were interested in the strength of their collegial relationships and were comfortable discussing the power of the impromptu clinical consultation session that they often held. This spoke to the connection with peers that became important for validating professional standards and defining identity as professionals for some. Moreover, these individuals shared stories of things that had learned, how their world views had changed and their effort to share this knowledge with their staff members'. They mentioned professional recognition outside of their organizations. The respondent that had 22 years of supervisory experience had an exceptionally interesting story that included her journey to locate her birth parent. She had childhood history with the organization as an adopted child. She has included her family's personal story and participation in adoption programs and activities of the organization. Her narrative was most frequently coded at support of staff, values alignment, and personal transcendence. It was interesting to note that she integrated her personal story into the leadership narrative.

The majority, (8) eight of the respondents had previous psychology or behavioral health field experiences prior to supervising in public child welfare, and these experiences tended to impact their expectations regarding the use of clinical approaches

in case management services. Six of the group (6) had come to their supervisory positions following tenure as line workers in public child welfare in the agencies in which they now work as supervisors. Only a few (3) of the respondents had worked as social workers in private group homes or residential centers. The respondents were very strong in their conviction that social work is a helping profession and that upholding its norms, values and mores was the “calling” of the supervisor in the public agency. One individual expressed that it was “a tremendous and welcome change to be providing services in an organization that was not profit driven”. Thirteen of the respondents self identified as leaders.

Intent to Stay

An objective of this research in addition to understanding the importance of leadership the child welfare supervisors was to garner from the data some sense of whether leadership self reference impacted the decisions of the supervisors to remain employed as supervisors in public child welfare. The analysis of the text indicated that the respondents when asked where they saw themselves within the next three years provided a range of responses that included remaining in child welfare and/or in the host agency to retiring to accept direct social work positions with special populations or teaching social work. Five of the respondents indicated that they would probably retire but continue to work in the field of social work. (They are not included in the analysis of the intent to stay) Six indicated that they enjoyed the role of direct supervisor and that they would continue at their host agency as child welfare supervisors. Two of the

respondents had plans within the next 5 years to be working in different capacities in leadership in child welfare. The first wanted to open her own family reservation services and the other had not decided, but knew that she wanted a higher leadership position in child welfare. One respondent indicated that she had not thought about it at all. She indicated that she probably would be at the host agency doing the same job, but in all honesty she had not given it any thought at all.

The common threads running through the demographics for 5 of the 6 respondents that expressed an intent to stay was that they all had less than 5 years tenure in child welfare supervision. These five supervisors worked in foster care programs. **“Growing the team”** was the most mentioned motivating feature presented for why they continue to stay in their positions in child welfare. The outlier was a supervisor that had 10 years tenure as a supervisor and had been promoted from within the ranks at that agency. This respondent was recognized by her peers as a leader in the group and often filled in for the administrator. Supervisors that expressed intent to stay mentioned their **peers, relationships with their superior, and the teams that they have built over time as reasons that they opt to stay. Autonomy to provide clinical direction, to be at the decision making table as an equal, and the ability to hire members of their team, were also important considerations.**

Leadership: Setting the context for deeper Analysis

Leadership was not predefined by the researcher. By design it was left to the respondents to define and articulate the meaning of leadership as they deemed relevant and important. The definition of leadership for each individual would emerge from the

stories, sequences, important circumstances, and people they opted to include in their stories. In traditional quantitative research, leadership would have been defined and options provided to have the respondent identify within given parameters where the respondent saw himself /herself. The challenge in utilizing the narrative approach in this project is that there are as many definitions of leadership, implied or directly identified, as there were respondents, and no scale of measurement. The value of the qualitative approach was that unique and specific leadership perceptions, and meanings attached to leadership emerge “up from the data”. The notion of beginning with a “right answer” or measure for where supervisors should be in terms of their understanding of leadership would compromise the emergence meanings embedded in their stories. .

During this research it was critical to listen carefully for indications of levels of leadership awareness in the stories. The goal was to interpret through the text where the corpus of respondents are in their understanding of leadership measured against elements in the framework of emergence leadership theory, namely leading, learning, and adapting. Specifically, my intent was to listen to their stories for tasks, behaviors or values that marked different levels of leadership awareness and understanding. Case scenarios, anecdotes and rich illustrative case examples included in the stories provided the data to support my interpretation of an individual’s understanding of leadership.

Meaning in this study is defined as melding of beliefs and actions. It is expressed through the culture of language and other cultural phenomena such as professional rituals, behaviors or values and norms. Narrative according to Polkinghorn helps the individual to make sense of actions and behaviors that otherwise do not make sense

(Czarniawska 1997 19). One's understanding of leadership is inherent in the nature, depth and peculiarities of the story that one tells about it. It is not enough to simply call one's self a leader or to hook leadership onto the role or position in the agency. The peer group had cautioned that this was a critical issue in the early analysis of the data. For that group there was a body of self work, adult self awareness that needed to be integrated into the understanding of leadership. For leadership to have meaning the child welfare supervisor would need to identify and clarify personal core values , identify congruence of values , mediate and bring to resolution lack of values fit ,and work through personal reflection experiences in his/her personal and professional life that support and give meaning to leadership. These are the types of behavioral themes that I listened for as they told their stories. In *The Leadership Challenge* Kouzes and Posner indicate that "leadership an arta performing art [and a journey of self development] in which the instrument is the self" (Kouzes and Posner 1995 336).

Stories illustrated supervisors in the study expressed a basic understanding of leadership that appeared to tie it to the profession. They provided case examples and thick descriptions of interactions with their staffs that demonstrated agency identification. David Sims identifies a duality of organizational and occupational commitment unique to middle managers (Sims 2003 1202). This was expressed early in the narratives. Later in the narratives, actions and feelings representative of ongoing learning, adaptive behaviors, and in some instances transformative processes attached to leadership experiences were evident. Reading the texts for the first few times I was drawn to commonalities and patterns and outliers in the stories of the supervisors. Job rituals,

energy with which the story was told, tensions and defining circumstances were a few of commonalities for which I listened.

One pattern was quickly evident in the texts. Supervisors wrestled with the demands of the profession, the organization, themselves as professionals, and their staffs. Their description of the job as a child welfare supervisor was routinized. The job was one in which they came in the morning responded to e-mails and reviewed data in the computerized system, and helped with any problems with which they were asked to assist. These activities as described and presented in the interview appeared to be more managerial than leadership driven activities. The presentation of these tasks was presented in a matter of fact way generally without emotion or energy. Texts were coded using a myriad of words and phrase that were linked to the profession. Some of the codes were professional identity, professional commitment, acknowledgement of the profession, professional worth etc. The in vivo codes often reflect indigenous meaning and included words like, professional identity, **“open and assessable”**, **“advocacy and accountability”**. These are code words that have special meaning for the professional social worker. They provide visions of the work that the supervisor has to perform. When the dyads of words are considered a set of behaviors, they are indicative of the tensions that exist in the job. Stories from the supervisors with three years or less experiences in child welfare supervision were coded with nodes tree nodes that were indicative of strong agency commitment. These respondents indicated that the job has a long learning curve and that most probably they would be in their jobs in their host agencies for the next five years or longer. **“The agency Way is my way”**.

The descriptions of jobs became more animated when supervisors described the unexpected TDM or Family meetings related to prevention of out of home placement of children, or if a crisis for a child was presented. These meetings or crises could happen at any time. If crises arose they were ready to respond. The descriptions of these activities were filled with codes like **“clinical, professional identity, found my niche, open and assessable, and advocacy”**. They represent metaphors of supervisory leadership. There was a lot of energy associated with descriptions of these tasks. In addition the array of words reflected relationships with staff and deeper meaning attached in terms of leading their work groups of social workers. On at least two occasions the respondents stopped and asked me, how are you defining leadership? The question was returned to them for an answer. As the interviews progressed the supervisors shared snippets of their values and roles they played in their units and in the organizations. Their own theories of leadership, although not explicitly spelled out, were embedded in their stories and vignettes.

This data presented thick descriptions of their tasks that were more relationship driven and provided a deeper meaning of their work as leaders. The supervisors explained that their primary job was to help the workers –**“to be there for them”**. The common theme was support and advocacy. The supervisors felt that they needed to sit with their workers in meetings and to help explain particular decisions or actions taken in cases. They were **“providing balance”, “advocacy and accountability”**.

A perplexing issue was that although some stories were besieged with instances where the supervisor did not feel respected professionally, and clear difference in organizational cultures were presented; the leadership themes were not so different across

the respondents. Myth suggested that jurisdictional differences explained difference in quality of supervision across the state. The data however was showing common patterns and themes. The jurisdictional differences did not appear to be the most significant factor in leadership self reference. Even though supervisors may have shared stories in which they received little support to enact leadership in their organizations, were not typically recognized as adding much to their organizations as professional social workers, and were denied the opportunity to provide clinical services; they self identified as leaders. What were they telling me in these stories about leadership and why had they opted to share their stories and experiences in the way that each did? This new piece in the research puzzle created more questions, including how to interpret common themes.

The task for me as researcher was to drill down beneath the surface to get to the meanings of leadership. Different definitions and perceptions of leadership were embedded deep in the brief stories of these respondents. Unlike traditional quantitative research there was no hypothesis or scale from which to work. My literature review and role model study helped to provide the way.

The deconstruction of leadership self reference had identified the following six dimensions: autonomy, enactment, tactic and reflective learning, integration, risk/resolution and self efficacy. These were some themes in the vast leadership and retention literature. Each of these was found to have importance in the meaning of leadership for the supervisors. Supervisors expressed the need to hire their own people. They wanted to make clinical decisions regarding the children, and not be second

guessed. It was important that their tactic knowledge be recognized and acknowledged.

All of the respondents mentioned autonomy as an important dimension in their work.

“I do not like to be micromanaged. And when I do make a decision-now you want to supervise me?”

“I have been able to develop my own full team. It is great.”

“I bring balance. The workers may not have developed this in their career yet.”

Supervisors in the large county jurisdiction and one in the large urban jurisdiction mentioned leadership enactment in their narratives. They were able to identify opportunities in their work that allowed them to become more involved in the administration of the programs. They spoke of the special projects that had lead, and the efforts they make to represent the work of their units in the community. Supervisors also insisted that they wanted their superiors and administrators to invite them to be at the table. The texts were thick with the case examples of children and their families interwoven in the stories of leadership and the challenge to provide unbiased services when abuse and neglect was so prevalent. The supervisors struggle with integrating new approaches to work with the families, accountability, new data systems, and the changing practice regarding what is evidenced to work for vulnerable children and their families. Changes in policy and law become confounded with the societal changes and expectations to balance children’s needs and parent rights. Several respondents mentioned there was need to reassess their values as policy changes impacted their decisions and tactic knowledge was called into question.

Finally self efficacy and the capacity supervisors held that they could make a difference, could do the job, and lead the way for their staffs was present in the stories from the field. They told stories of taking risks in terms of having their staff do the work to help them build skills and develop a sense of empowerment in decision making. They were actively working through the pull to be a worker.

In sharing the stories, the child welfare supervisors had essentially told stories that presented their leadership as complicated but deeply impacted by their professional commitment to social work and child welfare .The plots were indicative of efforts to reconcile professional and organizations identities. The actors were a mix of peers, superiors, subordinates and client families. Time frames in their stories tended to flow from the present to their initial tenure as child welfare supervisors years ago as they presented lessons that were well learned and passed on their subordinates.

The role model study helped to frame deeper analysis of the meaning of leadership for the child welfare supervisors. Dr. Linda Hill had followed respondents in her study for over a year. During that time they mastered several key skills attached to leadership and developed their own theories of leadership. The evolution of managers to leaders developed in what amounted to phases of leadership “mastery and understanding”. They worked on skills, but the understanding and meaning attached to skill mastery resulted in new leadership identity.

Daniel Schon identified a phase of development wherein the professional moves from total acceptance of tacit knowledge to a place in which the professional becomes a researcher of his own practice. He indicated if the organization did not nurture this effort the professional begins the turnover processes. This represented a convergence in the literature of leadership self reference as used in this project and intent to stay. A framework using these ideas and those of Dr. Hill was constructed through which leadership understanding as interpreted from the text was analyzed.

The conceptual models of leadership self reference and the processes that that impact leadership self reference provided code words to help with the analysis of the levels. Parts of the text from all of the respondents fit into one or more levels of leadership self reference. Narratives were coded as the processes and themes emerged from the data units. The levels were developed by using the preliminary codes in the models and the tree nodes from NIVIO 8 database that were from the interpretation of the themes in the narratives, the literature reviews, as well as recommended codes from the peer and pilot supervisors groups. A brief description of the levels as they emerged from the data used in this study is presented below.

Levels of Leadership Self Reference: A Tool for Analyses

The initial level of leadership self reference (Level 1) identified from the data has leadership firmly attached to the culture of the social work profession and organizational conditions including culture of host organization that support or hinder leadership understanding. Leadership is encased in the comfort the supervisory position brings and meaning of leadership is dependent upon the extent to which the leader comes to terms

with authority and learns to personally reconcile issues in his/her leadership such as power, authority, expertise, and resist the pull to remain a clinician. The clinical framework, a significant part of the supervision, supports the tactic knowledge base that is an essential element of the position. It is significantly intertwined with the context of the organization and profession. Supervisors may practice the tasks of their job, attend meeting with and or for the boss , get the reports out, meet with their workers on the cases , and a host of other activities for years without moving from this initial stage of leadership self reference. The core task is to accept the new role as leader and resist the return to direct practice by doing rather than leading. This process culminates in initial self reference as a leader.

The unique feature of this level of leadership self reference for the public child welfare leader is that leadership is institutionalized. Nuances of public child welfare including volatility of cases, frequent policy shifts, recurring challenges to personal and professional values, empowerment, advocacy and justice are tied to the supervisors' competency. The supervisor makes sure the job is done and is directed by the organization as to the scope and meaning of the supervisory leadership. The struggle at this level is to professionalize the job. One way to do this is to hook leadership squarely into the values of the profession. Messages about supervisory leadership at this level are generally received from sources external to the supervisor. A huge influence are the ethics , values and mores of the profession that dictates how the profession should respond to ethical dilemmas including policies that fly in the face of the core values of the profession. Mores received in the socialization of graduate education are guiding

forces for the supervisor. Professional and organizational commitments were dominant themes from the data. The in vivo code that best describes this level of understanding is, the **“Agency Way is my Way”**.

An intermediate level (Level 2) occurs after resolution of the challenges of the first level. It is a level where the work involves an awareness of leadership that has moved beyond what Dr Linda Hill suggests as the “resolution of expectations from competing factors” to one in which the leader “manages the context”(Hill 1986 117). This level of work for the public child welfare supervisor forces **“breaking away from the box”** that is created when leadership is hooked on the coattail of the profession. The safety and predictability that the box has provided gives way to new challenges, especially personal values work. During the development of this level identification is with, the complexity of the work. It also consists of a keen awareness of expert knowledge. The supervisor by this level had paid some dues and developed some tactic knowledge that has been tried and true.

The child welfare supervisor with enhanced understanding of the work now sees the importance of taking learning to another level- to the “next step”. The supervisor must become as Schon says a “researcher” of own work to examine why certain tactic knowledge is so. He/She must look inside to determine where the values conflicts are and to reassess the work processes and practices that may limit growth of individual and or group development. It is self facilitated awareness that ultimately leads to individual transcendence. Not only are these leaders identifying the barriers, but they are finding

adaptive ways to move them as barriers to their leadership. These are action oriented leaders in public child welfare. They educate themselves to become more proficient.

There is a continuum of understanding as the public leader works this level that may be facilitated and enhanced by actions that grow out of retrospective “sense making”. It is a conscious revisit to the resolution processes of first level meaning and expression of leadership. It involves a revisit to personal values and assumptions about leadership. “They are beginning to see when routines are smothering creative planning and blocking necessary advancement” (Kouzes and Posner 1995 45). Leaders at this level of their understanding in public welfare are beginning to identify for themselves the stressors that are impacting them as leaders. They can identify those that are helpful stressors identified in the literature by Podaskoff as “differential stressors “that propel them to reach higher levels of understanding and those that are “hindrance stressors” that retard their growth (Podaskoff 2007) . Public child welfare leaders at this stage of understanding are aware of the complexity of public child welfare at a deeper organizational and personal level. Some of the literature point to this deep learning an identifiably adult work. Deep Learning in the scholarly literature is attached to experiences that create significant changes ,awareness , assumptions, and connections that help to link one to a frame of reference” (Hall 2001).

The nature of working in the public organization with a multitude of publics to report to and conflicting values and policies create a rich environment for reflection and research of one’s personal values and practice. There is an awareness of the ethical conflicts inherent in the public organization and the child welfare program. The child

welfare supervisor is working to resolve these in a way that is true to his/her own values and those of the profession and the society at large. The fundamental tensions between the child welfare system and solvency of minority and poor families and integrity of kinship relations in the community were examples highlighted in one of the respondent's narratives. The lack of vision in the public organization for nurturing young social workers in their quest to provide child welfare services , and the preoccupation with statistical outputs that relegated staff to widgets was seen by another as **“abhorrent and a detriment to children in the system”**.

The **Code of Ethics** of the profession has been with the supervisor since his/her days as a clinician, and provided the most important hook for the supervisory job as he/she began the leadership journey, now becomes an important philosophical guide. The true driving forces are those personal values held by the leader. Supervisors at this level of their awareness come face to face with the conflict of their understanding of leadership as supervisor and that of the organization .They are working through the issue of fit of their leadership, in the concept of Margaret Wheatley, the “chaos “of work. (Wheatley 1992 133) They are ready to work through the conflict and find ways of creative adaptation in order to grow in their understanding. Values alignment is critical and thought to be the pivotal factor impacting intent to stay by respondents in this study.

The work turns from the individual to the group. The leader has understanding that the job is not a solo effort. The in vivo reference from the narratives, **“we cannot do this work alone”** becomes the mantra. The shift moves the supervisor from seeing oneself as a therapist that happens to work in a public organization, to a change agent,

leading others dedicated to serving the most vulnerable. This work is neither subtle nor quiet. Texts analyzed from the narratives reveal that the supervisors at this level of leadership awareness are able to look at the diversity of their staff and the complexity of their work and identify the strengths and talents of their work groups. They begin to do team building and capacity building that is needed to get the work done well. They understand successes are not just individual successes but are tied to the total of the group's productivity and growth. These leaders are comfortable taking risks to confront issues that infringe upon their core values. They do not hesitate to confront race, diversity, fairness, justice and equality in public child welfare. Risk taking is a strong element in the work of this level.

The richness and joy child welfare supervisors expressed about **“growing the team”** in their stories is indicative of this level of understanding. It is when the supervisor recognizes the power of the group and the potential of the collective. The supervisor has a well oiled machine that is competent and skilled. He/she is able to let go of some of the control and share the rewards of the work with the group. Moreover these code words illustrate that the leader has begun to see his /her role in connection to the success of the group. Supervisors want to participate in the hiring of their team members. The frame of reference has shifted from the individual contribution of the supervisor to the group. The leadership is redefined in terms of group membership and identification with the group success rather than individual successes. Horizontal relationships are also paramount at this level.

Text of the respondents indicate that peer relationships with other supervisors are important not only for support but for identity. Peer relationships are critical at this level to **provide knowledge and support**. One respondent even indicated that they help with the socialization roles and the provide group identity. These groups according to the respondent were formed most often around age groups. Other horizontal relationships, especially those outside of the organization become significant and are nurtured and developed. It is through these relationships the supervisor gains acceptance as a leader and his/her contribution as a leader is both recognized and rewarded.

Supervisors seek their learning from a variety of sources including their staff members and clients that they serve. This level of leadership understanding is particularly powerful in the texts where supervisors indicated that their organizations were engaged in significant transitions or for those for whom the work environment was turbulent and lacked support or recognition. Their stories are tales of disrespect or total disregard for their contributions as professionals, and how they adapt. Similarly, this level of consciousness appears in the stories of the supervisor who is experiencing a transition such as the loss of direct supervisor, the result of retirement or other change. Supervisors are regrouping. For some, the thought of leaving becomes a real consideration and they have to do the work to resolve their concerns or leave the organization. The failure to resolve the myriad of tasks and conditions in this phase of leadership self reference may account for another reason that some supervisors opt to leave for direct service jobs in other agencies.

Finally the third level of leadership consciousness (Level 3) is an advanced level within which the individual is differentiated as a leader. They experience **differentiation and transcendence**. The theoretical works of Edward Friedman and Ralph Hummel were most helpful in the setting the context for leadership understanding at this level of public leadership consciousness. Hummel spoke of the problems the professional has with his identify as a professional in the bureaucratic organization. An individualized professional identity for Hummel does not exist. Leaders have addressed this issue in the public sector and have found ways to adapt. They are able to remain in the organization because they have transcended the organizational stressors. They have professional identities that are nurtured by outside contacts. Professional identity is not tied to the organization but to the profession, and is flexible and adaptive. Friedman (Friedman 2007 13-17) talks about the need to become well differentiated for survival as a leader. He mentions the importance of doing the emotional work necessary to transcend, enabling one to be both apart of and separate from the institution or organization while operating with clarity of values and purpose within it. The third level of leadership consciousness is the level through which the individual increases growth as a person and a leader. It is a state of transformation for the public supervisor.

In the terminology of one respondent these supervisors “**Walk the Walk**”. The supervisor /leader is concerned with personal growth as a leader and is aware of the impact of leadership on not just the work context but on the conditions of the world. Leadership at this level is not a role but is a dynamic inter action process that facilitates

individual transcendence, an alignment of core values, and capacity to facilitate self awareness through questioning of self and others.

Leading at this level of awareness is the culmination of learning, adapting and transformation. It is the congruence of identity and action, and ethics. The leader happens to practice in public child welfare but understands the connection to larger world of social justice. Specific language in the texts points to a world view that is broader than the profession or organization. The texts of individual interviews and the notes from the focus group indicate that some leaders understand what their leadership means to them and to the field. There are evidences of transformative learning in their stories.

Levels are not linear .They are fluid manifestations of understanding that impact the behaviors and attitudes of the supervisors. Having provided background regarding how the tool for the levels of leadership consciousness were developed from reviewing, and synthesizing commonalities in the codes, support from the literature, and critical thinking, the following structured analysis is provided that integrates the tool. Until now the focus of this analysis has utilized individual interview responses as the units of analysis. The structured analytical approach will gather specific sets of responses from several respondents to collectively examine how when coded, they address the research questions.

Structured Analysis

In structured analyses chunks of text are identified that address the research questions. It is recommended that the number of sources that were coded rather than the

number of references be identified in the analysis. What follows is a structured analysis using the central and sub research questions.

How do child welfare supervisors in public child welfare perceive and describe their own leadership experiences?

Structured codes: Practice Conditions that Support Self Referenced Leadership and Leadership Consciousness

Structured coding according to Johnny Saldana applies content –based or conceptual phrases representing a topic of inquiry to a segment of data that reflects a specific research question used to frame the interview. In analysis it generally results in identification of large segments of texts on broad topics. These segments can then form the basis for an in depth analysis within or across topics. It is suggested that frequencies on the basis of the number of individuals who mention a particular theme rather than the total times the theme is mentioned be considered in the analysis. This method of analysis was most important to this study because it helped to strengthen the arguments that I am attempting to make regarding the nuances and uniqueness of public child welfare supervisory leadership. As a researcher it is important to also share my own sequence of learning. I have therefore included explanations regarding decisions made in the selection and presentation of the operationalized concept of leadership consciousness through the structured node development, and analyses.

Conditions that Support Self Referenced Leadership

A structured tree node identified was *conditions that support self referenced leadership*. It merged most of the free nodes that had originally been identified at the onset of the project. It was also comprised of tree and child nodes that were social work

practice specific. These included recognition of the value of the profession, leadership opportunities, validated professional worth, required use of clinical skills, and strong identification with social work profession, strong peer relationships, strong relationships with superiors and accountability. The three most coded nodes under conditions that support self-referenced leadership were; *validation of worth, opportunities to enact leadership, and social work identity*. The respondents had described their daily work as a combination of management and leadership and they shifted between the two each day. An important note to share in terms of transparency is that most of the respondents came from one jurisdiction where there was strong MSW administrator with many years of social work experience in child welfare that pushed social work values, mores and opportunities. Her interest in the research had prompted her staff to participate.

Eleven (11) sources were coded in which the respondents indicated that they defined their leadership in terms of their professional and or organizational context. It was important to their leadership self definition to have the agency acknowledge/ validate that they are important and have value to the organization as social workers.

Acknowledgement of professional worth by the immediate administrator appeared important along with the verbal expectation that that the supervisor would step up to the plate and lead as needed. Secondly, opportunities for leadership also included in this node were mentioned as a supporting condition to self referenced leadership. These were opportunities in which supervisors filled in for the leadership in the organization, or were selected to participate on special committees or work teams. I have selected several of

the unifying comments and several of the outliers to illustrate the intensity of understanding around this topic.

“I am important .I am a professional. My leadership role is one of coaching and supporting’.

Partly because we have administrators ...We have a lot of opportunity to be at the table to deal with policy and procedure, to talk about how we are changing policies and how this will impact our workersI absolutely see child welfare supervisors as leaders.

“I do see supervisors as leaders, clearly at least all of the people that I know that have been doing this for a while .They have an amazing commitment to children. People are committed .It is in their blood’.

“My agency hired an attorney to supervise ...who is not clinical and does not support many clinical decisions.[The] role as an attorney has been as an advocate and [the attorney] does not see all parts ...Previously my supervisors were more supportive and understood the role of the agency better .”

“It is sometimes demeaning when you have upper management that does not respect your role or your ability to make appropriate clinical decisions”

“As a whole, we are the backbone of what goes on ...we do not get the respect! I know that we are important. Leaders???...here NO.”

Thirteen (13) of the fourteen child welfare supervisors indicated in direct response to questions regarding whether supervisors are leaders indicated, that supervisors are leaders and said that they see themselves as leaders within the profession or/and within their agencies. Their responses were initially coded to free nodes; leadership identity, professional identity, agency commitment, definition, accountability, power and impotence. These codes grew from answers to questions and probes that asked what the day was like for the child welfare supervisors, how it was with their units,

and probes that asked for information regarding their own expectations as supervisors and those of their organizations.

The full implementation of Chessie, the computer system, has changed the work culture and the daily operations of the line supervisor whose work now involves careful review of the data system daily to ensure that all data is entered. This cultural shift as expressed in the stories means the supervisor is less available to provide the teaching and clinical support that was a large part of the job in the past.

The third most coded node under the conditions supporting self referenced leadership was *opportunities to enact leadership*. Narratives coded here included stories that administrators have provided opportunities for supervisors to attend leadership training or to work on special committees or work groups. In addition this code reflected narrative in which the leaders saw and created leadership opportunities in their daily tasks.

“In this agency, the supervisor is the conduit for all programs, policies, processes, clinical decisions, planning for staff and case management. Supervisors set the tone for management and are the go between from top to bottom and bottom to top of the organizational culture.”

Every day is different. I am not married to a desk. I do get what I come to work for everyday ...I find my work clinically challenging. To teach and find out what is really going on with our teen clients...

I feel that now because our administrator is not hands on, I can get in the limelight and talk about the wonderful work that we do. I am the lippy one and will get out in the community. I feel that I am leading us as a program on the map...30-40% of my job is marketing”

“We are told this is new policy just do it ...Unless you are involved in Annapolis you just do it...”

“I never thought of myself as Leader...Just do what I do ...I guess that I am a leader of this small flock even when some of us get out of line or gets lost .I am there to pull them back in with the rest of the flock...”

The fourth most coded node under the conditions that support self referenced leadership is social work identity. This node included the major areas discussed in the texts about the importance of social work to the leadership identity for the public child welfare supervisors. This project has illustrated that when a strong professional identity was accompanied by the dynamics of acknowledged value of the social work profession by the superiors in the organization and the expectation that clinical social work is practiced daily , the respondent was able to self define as a leader in child welfare.

“I think that we need to make sure that the values of the profession are upheld .We have a good field”.

“As a social work professional, I expect that I will maintain excellent social work principles, teach integrity, and be accountable for ethical decisions and good clinical practice”

“Once I had to role model for a worker that was really having a difficult time. It has been an ongoing process before I involved myself. Things were pretty bad with the family. It is a whole lot better now since we have been reflecting on and sharing the things that I did ...I think my worker has learned from the good and the bad of it. She says that she has learned a lot....I teach.”

“I love the work .I love the people. Just leave me alone with my little corner of the world and I will do fineWhen I look at myself as social worker I will lead proficiently. I will put the clinical pieces inTeach the workers what they need to know. The clinical aspects of our work are crucial.”

There was a lot of text devoted to expressions of the importance of external validation of professional worth. Ten (10) sources were coded at this node. The respondents perceived a fit between their supervisory roles and tasks, and the mores,

values and norms of the profession. The literature links this to retention if the individual is able to make a psychological connection between the work of the organization and organization can present value of the job to the overall improvement of conditions in society. Moreover stories indicated validation by the superior of their contribution to the organization and the agency was important.

“Equality... we are equals at the table, you need a score card to know who is who” I absolutely see supervisors as leadersManagement puts us in the leadership position... we are expected to take on the role of leaders...”

“Yes supervisors are leaders. I think that supervisors are in the forefront. There is a sense of equality here.”

This job is rewarding. We are well respected and have a lot of autonomy, that’s nice in some ways ...we are trusted and I feel honored to lead my group”

“No, I have never thought of myself as leader.... I just do what I do. I never thought about that”

“It is sometimes demeaning when you have upper management that does not respect your role .or your ability to make appropriate clinical decisions”

The first broad based observation from the respondents’ narratives is that at the **first level of leadership consciousness**, leadership is intricately tied to the profession and the culture of the host organization. The child welfare supervisor is committed to the work of the agency and the work of the profession. They are task oriented. They defined their leadership as one of helping their staffs to do the job. They disagreed on how that should be done, with some being more actively involved in doing the casework than others. Accountability was a concern but a differential one because there was some disagreement about the level of accountability the supervisor is responsible for in the

progress and success of the case. This was especially true if the worker decided to do other than that which was found acceptable or approved by the supervisor. A recurring theme was the importance attached to recognition of the professional social worker as important to the organization.

What are the nature, context, and importance of leadership for public child welfare supervisors?

Seven (7) tree nodes developed addressed responses to this sub question. They included clinical orientation, professional identification, social work identification, leadership identity, and the fit between child welfare supervision and professional social work. Child welfare supervisors in this study felt that they have an important role as leaders in their organizations and that they play an important role in the profession by helping to prepare newer workers to the field with the clinical skills necessary to uphold the mores, values and norms of the profession.

“One of the things that I have attempted to do is to engage the workers like we engage clients to find out what they bring to the tableI allow workers to implement some of their own decisions if I feel that no harm will be done ...

“I have very high expectations. I feel that I have an important role ...I need to establish a foundation for the workers to stay in foster care .I know that they might not be here always “

Specifically the sub questions asked, *whether, and to what extent, the child welfare supervisor’s leadership experiences or some other dynamics helps the individual to manage shifts and changes in the role, turbulence in the administrative environment*

and changes in the norms and mores of the child welfare profession, and whether these create a template that facilitates his/her remaining in the field of child welfare and in the host agency. Leadership self reference did not alone make the difference in how the individuals handled changes in the organization and in the profession. Their understanding of leadership either as a dynamic process or as a role / position crafted by the organization figured prominently in the actions the individual was willing to take. The stories shared included thick descriptions of efforts to resolve competing conflict between the needs of the organization and the needs of the staff and clients it serves.

This analysis suggests that the child welfare supervisors early in the second level of leadership consciousness are focused on getting the staff within their respective work groups to individually do the job right, to be accountable and to keep the work groups in line. They are largely working within expectations of the organization and demonstrating fundamental clinical values and methods of the profession.

“The leadership role is being able to have your unit work together and Work productively to accomplish the goals the agency is looking for.”

“I have high expectations. I expect people to do things my way because my way is the agency way ...”

“I try to be data driven. I like to collect a lot of data. I tend to create things to help my workers track .That has grown out of my experience ...With so much going on it is easy to forget what is due ...I want to make sure that we are doing all that we need to do on time.”

“We are told this is new policy, just do itUnless you are involved in Annapolis you just do it ...”

“I never thought of myself as a leader... just do what I do ...I guess that I am a leader of this small flock even when some of us get out of line or gets lost. I am there to pull them back in with the rest of the flock...”

This job is rewarding. We are well respected and have a lot of autonomy, that's nice in some ways ...we are trusted and I feel honored to lead my group"

"No, I have never thought of myself as leader.... I just do what I do. I never thought about that"

"It is sometimes demeaning when you have upper management that does not respect your role or your ability to make appropriate clinical decisions"

"Understanding Leadership"

The analyses above are focused on the meanings that were actually articulated by the participants. It was critical to move from the manifested meanings to more latent or analytical level of leadership that involved interpretation of the narratives. It was simply not enough to indicate that child welfare supervisors self referenced as a leaders. The task of the research was to interpret what was meant when the child welfare supervisor declared himself or herself as a leader. What behavioral, language or rituals were presented in the texts? Leadership was an identity construction for the participants and implied a personal calling. The latent meanings of leadership interpreted from the texts of the child welfare supervisors would move the analysis to the later parts of the second level and the third level in the tool.

In response to the initial question (*tell me a little about yourself*), Two of the respondents began their identity question by sharing they are mothers. Twelve (12) of the (14) fourteen respondents began their stories, with their graduation from graduate school. They talked about their early work in the field many highlighting the clinical proficiency that they had developed over the years. Some mentioned that they have been promoted

from the worker staff within the organization for which they now work. Graduate education was an important chapter in their lives and when provided an opportunity to tell their story, graduate education was the initial identity factor. Identity for these respondents thus is intricately tied being a social work professional.

Their accomplishments as professional clinicians, worthy to be recognized and applauded, was a huge second element in their identity story. This is an important point because the respondents in the early stage of leadership self reference are tied to the definition that the organization ascribed. The texts of their interviews revealed that the child welfare supervisors in the study identified at this level of leadership self reference were dealing with their individual leadership identities, and becoming more comfortable with authority and responsibility. They are confident their tactic knowledge, and have a frame of reference from which they can respond to thorny problems of child welfare. They are working on the resolution of power and authority, especially as the individual with ultimate accountability of the work of their workers, as well as the awesome responsibility for the safety and well being of children in the care of the State. They struggle with themes like power, control, risk and accountability.

During the research process, a neat and simple answer to the research question emerged, that *leadership self reference occurred when the conditions in the organizations included validation of social worker and his/her worth as a professional, and that these are the supervisors that are likely to remain in the organization as supervisors*. This observation proved too simplistic and did not account for different organizational culture

experiences mentioned in the texts of several respondents. The complicating issue was some of the respondents had indicated their organizations did not support social work and yet they had very strong identification as leaders with social work values, mores, and clinical practice. It was intriguing to return to the texts and coding for these individuals and read again what they had shared. Revisiting the actual tapings of the interviews also helped. These respondents recognized themselves as leaders, but leaders that relied on strong peer support and went outside of the organization for recognition and validation.

It had been recommended in the Saldana literature that at some point in the analyses the researcher may want to test for saturation of the data by utilizing if /then analogy. There was no way to answer the research question by utilizing , the “if /then” approach , **if** certain social work and organizational conditions are present **then** supervisors will self reference as leaders and stay employed in the field and host agencies. Texts from all of the respondents would not fit neatly into such an interpretation.

Following a brief but candid discussion of the project and the preliminary answer to the research question with the peer group members, my work was challenged because it was not looking deep enough at the **essence of leadership**. One person pushing back indicated that the answers seemed to be too simplistic and practice driven. “One is not a leader because one self identifies as leader. What about social workers in host organizations, like hospitals that have no allegiance to the profession”? **...Leadership is not in terms of being in a position; leadership must be seen in terms of being in a**

process.... A place that you feel ethically right for the people that you are working with.” This discussion proved to be a significant contribution to the study.

After considerable thought, I returned to the research question which had two branches- the practice and the epistemological. I had only used the practice arm of the question for the initial coding efforts. The epistemological approach to the question and the emergence theoretical lens from which the study has been developed helped to move the project to another level of analysis. I identified a tree code that represented elements of perceived leadership. The new node “Understanding Leadership” was a tree node that included several child codes designed to drill down into leadership consciousness. Re-coding of all the narratives for introspective and reflective recall in the texts revealed evolution and change of leadership perceptions. Text that presented transformative behavior stories and experiences and evidences of individual transcendence and identity redefinitions were coded at this node. This tree node included the following child nodes; *differentiation, individual transcendence, identification and removal of blockages, facilitated self awareness, and alignment with core values, transformations, risk and opportunity.*

Dr. Hill indicated that by the ninth month of leadership, the managers’ in her study talked about using themselves in differential ways to build relationships with their subordinates and peers. In her study, this occurred when individuals were more than three quarters the way of the first year of leadership. All of the respondents in this study had two years or more of supervisory experience. Using her research as a gauge, the respondents in this study were expected to have resolved primary identity tasks. The text

of responses from the supervisors was recorded to include nodes that addressed differential use of self with peers and staffers, and focused on the internal processes that support leadership self reference. .

Fourteen (14) sources were coded at this new node providing 47 references to Understanding Leadership. The 14 respondents clearly were functioning at different levels of understanding and despite the fact that many had numerous years of experience, most of the shared stories were indicative of initial or intermediate levels of leadership consciousness as defined by the framework operationalized for this study . Several mentioned that they were happy to have very experienced staffs that required little “supervision”. They were able to share responsibility with their workers. They set about to find ways to support the decisions of their staff and to reconcile any differences regarding the clinical directions in the cases. They also talked about developing relationships with other supervisors and the fact that peer relations were important .These horizontal relationships are important in the sense that they help the child welfare supervisor to acquire vast amounts of information across programs that support and strengthen their tacit capabilities and to create networks of support. The selected texts below illustrate the differential role that child welfare supervisors are taking with their staffs.

“I allow the workers to implement some of their ideas... understand how and what you brought to the table ...I have tried to translate what I have learned to my workers.”

” The leadership role is being able to have your unit work together and work productively to accomplish the goals the agency is looking for .”

“The biggest thing is to support the workers and make them feel like...The work is hard enough they should feel like if they have a real problem there is someone that will sit in a meeting and advocate for them and support them also challenge them to question them and help them with their decisions...”

Social work supervisors in recent research embrace transformative approaches to leadership. Their leadership understanding is dependent upon how well they are able to initiate and sustain supportive supervision, All (14) of the respondents in this study indicated that being “**available and assessable**” to their workers was critical. The “Four Is” developed by Avolio and Bass (Avolio and Bass 1994 3) was a helpful conceptual approach in the analysis of this feature of leadership. “Transformational leaders that self-define have strong internalized values and ideals they reflect a strong sense of inner purpose and create environments where people are urged to solve problems with creativity and energy”(Bass and Avolio 1994 18). The cited text below is used to illustrate the presence of the transformational constructs in the supervisors’ stories. The supervisors’ stories provide instances in which the line supervisor had established relationships with their workers that facilitated closeness and trust , they had recognized the skill of their workers and sought to encourage them to take the lead in cases, they asked for their ideas and sought new ideas from their staff , and finally they paid attention to the needs of individual staff members. Beneath their words there appears to be leadership growth and the capacity to help the workers to exceed expectations in the work. This is illustrative of late second level work. In this analysis the respondents’ behaviors and attitudes are illustrative of a more advanced level of leadership consciousness. They are demonstrating transformational leadership.

Idealized Influence –considering the needs of others over his/her own needs, sharing the risk with followers, demonstrating high standards or ethical and moral conduct (Avolio and Bass 1994 3)

“I have had workers feel comfortable enough to cry in my office. Not only about personal issues but how they feel about families that are going through some things. I am a touchy feely supervisor.”

“I allow workers to implement some of their own decisions if I feel no harm will be done, I say tell me tomorrow how that worked out .I want to know how and what you brought to the table.”

Inspirational motivation – providing meaning and challenge to their follower’s enthusiasm and optimism are displayed (Avolio and Bass 1994 3)

“I have a fabulous unit all are seasoned workers they need minimal supervision and that is an asset. Either could be supervisor”

“I expect to support my workers and the clients as best I can ...to be available....to stay calm when things get crazy and just keep things in perspective because sometimes the workers can’t or don’t have...They have not gotten there in their career path... I have to bring balance.”

Intellectual stimulation –stimulates followers’ efforts to be innovative and creative by questioning assumptions, reframing problems and approaching old situations in new ways (Avolio and Bass 3)

If I don’t know, I will ask contacts for ideas in the way to go. As a supervisor I can get more response when we go outside of the agency or the state for information

“I was older when I entered the profession .I had a lot of world experience I was not out to save the world. I think very differently today than I did yesterday....I had to see that I was wrong in some decisions. I had to see that I was wrong .I had to feel it ...I have tried to translate what I have learned to my workers.”

“I allow workers to implement some of their own decisions if I feel no harm will be done, I say tell me tomorrow how that worked out .I want to know how and what you brought to the table.”

Individualized consideration- pays special attention to each individual’s needs for achievement and growth by acting as a coach or mentor (Avolio and Bass 1994 3)

“My newest worker...I usually conference with her each morning about her cases we interact throughout the day .when the workers get in I go out to each one to see what they might need from me.”

“I am a strong encourager of, Go after what it is you need...”

Some of the texts revealed lessons these supervisors had learned from the field had transformed their lives. These were lessons that they wanted to share. The processes through which they worked to get at this level of understanding connected the supervisors as leaders to the larger context of social justice. Social Justice is an important but relatively new emphasis of the social work professional code of ethics and standards. It is a calling for those concerned about the well being and care of mankind. The cited texts revealed a deeper understanding of leadership .Supervisors that participated in this study, irrespective of organizational conditions, were demonstrating what Mezriow has described as *transformative learning*. The work that they are doing with their staffs is indicative of creating of adaptive approaches and they have created opportunities and structures that have allowed them to transcend as leaders. They are clearly differentiated. They are leaders that happen to be employed in public child welfare.

“I have to say this is a learning experience. I think very differently today than I did as a worker...**you cannot do this job alone.**

We go up and down with morale. I had to look at how it is impacting me...look am I going to leave what I love to do? It’s exciting, demanding, exhilarating. I have tried to transfer what I have learned to my workers...to make all that we do relevant... to understand connections and laws ...open their thought processes. I don’t see a lot of supervisors doing that...”

“I see that families are dying ...the concept of family is dying. One thing that I am able to do in this job is to bring family back. We have some successes. It happens...**I have a vision that I am working on through this work and that is why I stay.**”

“I will continue in the social work profession .**I have never fit anywhere in my life the way that I fit in as a social worker** .As far as my leadership best ...**the best is today and the best is tomorrow**”

“When we do a lot of good social work practice and we do a good job , it is not what people say about me... it is all of us ...**We walk the walk**”

In- Vivo Analysis

The in-vivo analysis provided additional insight into the passions and commitments of the respondents. This was an exciting feature of the research that allowed me to connect emotions to leadership perceptions through the metaphors and brief case histories infused in the narratives of the respondents. The in vivo coding helps to” frame the interpretation of the respondents” understanding of their leadership in words that they use in their everyday lives”. (Saldana 2009 74)

Although many of the terms have already been included in the analysis, the following terms were indigenous to the leadership perceptions and professional commitment of the child welfare supervisors that participated in this project. “In vivo codes capture the behaviors, processes and meanings in the words of the participants. Metaphors, symbols and imagery are also reflected through the in vivo codes” (Saldana 2009 76). Responses from the participants were rich and thus selected phrases are used to illustrate many of the perceptions that they shared .The following table, Table 10, reflects the **in vivo codes** and the meanings or metaphors that come from them as reflected in the interpretations of the texts.

The code word “**clinical**” is not just representative of the method of practice but rather is and embodiment of the total corpus of the profession. It captures the values, mores, and expectations of social work. The respondent who

indicates that **clinical is important and she *always* keeps the clinical in her work** is acknowledging her affective connection to the profession over and above the expectations or limitations of the organization. This strong expression of connection to the profession and declaration of her behaviors to adhere to the professional codes of standards is reflective of leadership self reference .This text hangs well with the working model of leadership self reference wherein leadership self reference is embodied in the construct of professional commitment, and the tasks of working through the work context by aligning values and ethics allows one to reflect and adapt.

Table 10 IN-VIVO Codes up from the data

In vivo Code	Reflections , meaning , metaphors
“I have a vision that I am working through this work”	Reflecting on the work that the individual has yet to do in terms of social work - personal and professional mission intermingled
“Just give me a tent on the parking lot and my people I will be fine “	Passion and acknowledgement of the value of the profession Separation from the organization
“ I have to do good “	Connection to social work r profession and the desire to practice
“Felt like I have died and gone to heaven “	Fit with agency culture merging of personal and professional self
“We walk the Walk”	Success of one social worker is tied to the success of many. It is our calling to lead in the profession
“ growing the team”	Sharing the clinical knowledge and skills with beginning social workers Taking responsibility for growth of the team
“Open door policy “	Use of 4 Is in the daily work of the supervisor
“I detest micromanagement”	Importance of autonomy and trust that professional will do the right thing
“Clinical .I always keep the clinical “	Importance attached to the profession and critical element in professional identity and commitment

Focus and Peer Groups on Leadership

Another interesting issue from the literature was the importance of professional associations. Twelve (12) of the fourteen leaders in this study were **not** members of any professional organization. Validation of their professionalism was not coming through membership in NASW (National Association of Social Workers) On the surface this could move away from Hummel’s assertion that professional associations are the

restorative element for professional identity in bureaucratic organizations. The other way to look at this is that the professional association sets the tone and standards for professional social work and being a member is not the issue but rather accepting and adhering to the practices, mores, and norms is what is vital. The child welfare supervisor in public organizations adapts to the host organization and aligns values with the profession.

Formal professional leadership socialization in child welfare begins in the graduate school. The focus group expressed gratitude of having their organizations assist with the continuing education classes and added agency supported membership in a professional organization of the supervisor's choice was another way the agency could support them as leaders. A professional social worker in the state of Maryland is one that is licensed by Maryland Board of Social Work Examiners. A social work supervisor according to the Board must be both licensed and approved by the Board to provide clinical supervision. The Code of Ethics espoused by the National Association of Social Workers is the driving force for the work that is done in the field. Social workers not members of NASW or NABSW must follow the Code of Ethics. The Maryland Board of Social Work Examiners, the licensing agency uses the Code of Ethics in its testing and credentialing.

Respondents indicated leadership is an expectation of the professional and the Board of Social Work Examiners. For many of the respondents leadership was embedded in the job as supervisor in child welfare, for others it was linked to licensure and approval of the Board. One respondent felt that the profession was not well respected

in the agency and that the skills, particularly the clinical skills were not used nor expected to be used in the agency. In fact, this respondent risked to indicate, “If the Board of Social Work Examiners did an assessment of what the child welfare supervisor did in this organization, they would probably be appalled”. She further indicated that she would be passing her licensure exam this month and then she could say that she was a leader her profession. Licensure was identified as an important topic at the focus group. It was tied to professional identity and commitment, and was mentioned as one of the areas that needed more study as a factor of retention. The meaning of leadership as a social work professional and supervisor was tied for focus group participants to licensure and being approved by the Board. It is an area for more study.

“I expect to have my license within the next couple of months. I have my MSW and I know clinical practice ...but now they call me a Human Services Supervisor I don’t have the name or recognition... I cannot do anything or say anything clinical.”

A radical recommendation from the peer group was to “upgrade the staff hiring only the MSW for work in child welfare.

“Child welfare supervision cannot afford to be without a strong clinical base in the next 5-7 years”.

The top four things needed for continued development of supervisors as leaders and to have them stay employed as supervisors were identified by the focus and the peer groups were:

- Commitment to supervisorial staff, social work principles, and practices.
- Line staff needs to be upgraded professionally. Hire only MSWs.
- Supervisors and administrators **“work from the same book”**

- Create and grow leadership from within the organizations.

Pattern Analysis

Pattern coding is a process that identifies a “meta-code” (Saldana 2009 150). These are the codes that identify the emergent themes in the data. They represent a synthesis of coding processes that link a number of the nodes together. In analysis this is called a theme or pattern. The focus group was held to have participants in the study corroborate the themes and patterns that were identified from the individual interviews. The main question for the focus group was their reactions to each of the themes, to **corroborate that these are realistic and true for the child welfare supervisor**, and to identify any additional things that we have mentioned in the study. The participants concurred with the themes presented and indicated that alignment of values was a critical issue impacting intent to stay.

In pattern analysis the goal is to narrow the structured and other codes down until one code represents the essence of the phenomenon under study. In this case there were two structured codes, Conditions that Support Self Referenced Leadership and Understanding Leadership. The focus group agreed that all of the themes were relevant to **Leadership Consciousness**, a code that encompassed all of the issues that had been discussed. Under that core theme the alignment of core values was considered critical for these participants. Core values were essential to leadership identity. Throughout the interviews the respondents had indicated a number of core values that are attached to the profession and to their individual practices. Values at best are a complex subject in the

leadership literature. Within the context of supervisorial leadership in the public sector, it is a challenge to find studies that explore values in any detailed way. Munson has indicated that values and knowledge are “interconnected through the choices that people make, and he indicates that it is important for the supervisor to understand the distinction and interconnections (Munson 2002 99).

If the acceptance of social work values is facilitating the beginning level of leadership consciousness, then alignment of basic social work values with personal values was seen as essential for a more advanced understanding and consciousness of leadership.

Alignment means congruence with personal values of the individual, the profession, and the organization. It was the opinion of the focus group participants if core values were not aligned, the individuals would not be retained by the organization. Evidences of this were found in the individual texts and the focus group discussions. Alignment is a process that walks the individual back to the self and formative frames of reference. The issue of alignment of values gained significance from the input of the participants of the focus group. The pattern code selected and agreed to by the focus group participants was “Leadership Consciousness”. In analysis this theme would be called self reference.

The following citations from notes of the focus group point to the agreement that personal values aligned with values of the organization are the essential conditions for leadership in public child welfare.

“Internal issues are at the core. They must be there before you can have a strong professional identity; I knew my values long before I knew the values of social work. Going to school just helped me to name them differently.”

“If you don’t know who you are then you can’t lead somebody else.”

“I left a job because I did not fit in with their values ...I did not like where they were going. I had to leave; if the values are not right then you have to leave ...”

“It is different when you are running an agency for profit...so for me it is more comfortable because it fits better for what I thought child welfare should be...”

Self referenced leadership is a complex phenomenon. Clearly the themes that came up from the data were important and tended to characterize favorable conditions in organizations, work groups and teams that supported leadership. These were some of the same conditions that the respondents reported influenced them to remain employed as child welfare supervisors in the public sector. Some of the initial coding indicated strong peer relationships, and good relationships with superiors as well as the acknowledgement that social work was important to the organization were factors that helped to define the supervisors’ leadership understanding. There also were themes that focused on the lack of support for the professional social worker in the public agency as relevant to retention. Professional social workers in both settings self referenced as leaders.

The focus group respondents and peer group challenged the importance of manifest interpretations that suggested external messages were most critical to leadership self reference and intent to stay. They indicated the strongest reason for individuals leaving public child welfare supervision was non alignment of personal and professional values with those of the host organizations. The well differentiated leader may be able to remain in a hostile work environment as long as she/he is able to confront and resolve lack of values fit. Focus group participants responding to slides that reflected professional acceptance and approval by the supervisor and the organization as key factors in leadership understanding and enactment, said,

“In these slides the outside is telling the supervisor what to do ...the profession, the supervisor, the administrator and that is not where it’s at... **you need to lead from the inside out.**”

“People can stay at the first level for years.... I know some ...you don’t have to do the work ...but **you are not a social work professional nor a leader if you don’t.**” “**They are putting practice on a non- foundation**”

“There is a tension... ..I know what is clinically and morally wrong ...is abhorrent and unnecessary There are others ways to get work done that does not destroy children These are the times that **I pick my battles** ... Do I give u p what I love?... If I upset some body then ...I am not concerned. I am right ...”

These were professionals that knew clinical practice and self defined as leaders in their organizations and their profession .They were in some instances appalled that the organizations failed to recognize values of the profession, or to support clinical foundations in the work with families and children. Their values were not in sync with those of the organization. The organizations’ non adherence to the social work values base expressed in the Code of Ethics figures prominently in their dissatisfaction. This emerged as a stressor for some of the leaders as they struggled with their own leadership, and growth in these organizations.

Interestingly, the lack of values fit was not a hindrance to the extent that supervisors could not continue the work with vulnerable children and their families. The range of adaptive behaviors utilized by leaders experiencing this type of work environment is a recommended area for future study with this population. Observation and review of the composite qualitative reports, along with the narratives helped to guide the analyses. Selected reports, graphs and coding summaries are included in Appendix G.

The lack of input from all (14) of the respondents to corroborate themes remained an issue for this researcher. In fact, not having maximal participation reduced the range of responses regarding corroboration of themes. The latent content interpretations appeared relevant and credible based on themes shared with the respondents, the literature and my experiences in the field. Credibility of the study was also achieved through though the efforts to maintain a high level of transparency, through operationally defining leadership consciousness, and my efforts to firmly link the interpretation of data to theoretical and empirical studies. The use of peer checkers also helped providing credibility.

In narratives, and case anecdotes, respondents emphasized that they were strongly committed to the profession of social work and that they believed in its worth. Their professional worth was however intricately tied to the professional code of ethics and social work culture that had been passed to them from graduate school. This was made apparent when the responses to the identity question in the protocol, tell me a little about yourself, began with descriptions of graduate education for most of the respondents.

Throughout narratives the importance of the NASW Code of Ethics as the guiding principles for the profession was mentioned. Leadership as a supervisor for most social workers is attached to the spirit and intent of Code of Ethics. A Content Analysis of the Code of Ethics using two versions that span over 20 years was completed. This analysis was limited to phrases such as *supervisor and leadership in* the documents. I was driven to understand how the National Association of Social Workers had weighed in on supervisory leadership over the past twenty years. The intent was three fold, to see how leadership was referenced in the document, and to what extent supervisory leadership

was mentioned in the documents, and finally if NASW changed its practice or /and philosophical view of supervision over the years. The intent was to use this approach to support interpretations of the narratives in the aforementioned sections of this project and for additional credibility to the interpretations.

Content Analyses: NASW Code of Ethics

The purpose of content analysis in qualitative research includes describing trends over a period of time. Content analysis may be manual or computerized through the coding of the documents. Two copies of the NASW Code of Ethics were used for a manual review. They represented revisions by the Delegate Assemblies in 1996 and 2008. Copies of the NASW Code of Ethics was secured and read using the coding scheme. The first task was to read for any words and phrases that tended to jump out regarding leadership. I was particularly interested in coding for words in the Code of Ethics that related to *supervisory* leadership.

NASW attaches the role of the supervisor firmly into the practice model of social work. Supportive supervision has a goal of ultimately providing better services. The intent is to help the worker to adjust to the job setting and to provide the highest quality clinical services. There was no mention of leadership in either text of the Codes. Rather the focus was on educational, clinically driven supervision and more recently the consultation that the supervisor provides to staff and others in the field. Supervisors were urged to prepare themselves for the areas of supervision that they were to provide.

Leadership is thus silent in the codes. This supported Au's position that devoid of an indigenous theory of social work leadership, the field tends to return to its methods.

Nvivo 8 was used to analyze the content of the Social Work Code of Ethics 2008 using the structured nodes in the data base. As with the interviews, the language of the Code of Ethics was most frequently coded at practice oriented nodes. Section 3.01, Supervision and Consultation, of the Code did not mention leadership but indicated that the supervisor should have the necessary knowledge and skills to supervise.

In summary, supervisory leadership for the public child welfare supervisor gains meaning from the institutional norms and mores of the profession that are embodied in the Code of Ethics. Meaning of their leadership is a complex process of reconciliation of personal and professional goals that are sometimes in conflict with policies and procedures within which they practice.

The goal of this project was not to find or argue causal relationships but in the constructivist paradigm to identify some of the meaning attached to leadership as shared by this group of critical players in public child welfare. It has accomplished this. Supervision is an integral part of the professional commitment of child welfare supervisors. It is influenced by acknowledgements of the value of the professional social worker and the field of practice, and validation that these individuals are making a contribution to vulnerable children and their families. Moreover, leadership enactment opportunities must be in place to foster professional growth of the supervisor.

Leadership consciousness as developed in this project is the culmination of internal growth and development of adult learning that maximizes the supervisor's

experiences into differentiated actions. The study has argued the notion that leadership is worth examining in the context of self reference. Some of the issues that were raised in this project are echoed in current international social work literature. “The social work literature has focused on the need for ongoing dialogical debate about the profession and what it needs to do to remain competitive to meet challenges of social work’s changing environments. Work has been done on how to address the moral and practice standards for the profession. Little study has been devoted to the impact of the experiential journey to leadership for supervisors in the field.”

<http://www.socialwork.net/2009/I/articles/mcdonaldchenoweth> Retrieved November 202009)

This analysis has sought to have the reader understand the meaning of the data by using a variety of techniques. These have included a review and analysis of coding, and identification of themes and patterns that developed from the using the coding scheme recommended by Saldana. Models were developed to expand the definitions of the codes and to decode the patterns which the text supported. Finally the social work Code of Ethics that guides the professional and ethical behaviors of professional social workers was analyzed for mention of “supervisory leadership”.

Chapter 6

Discussion: The Story, Implications, and Recommendations for Future Research

This chapter focuses on the big picture that emerged from the interpretation of the data and the key lessons learned from this research. Leadership is a complex personal

journey that creates a pathway for mastering the context within which one works and integrates the values, mores and ethics of one's profession of choice.

The narrative approach was undertaken to gain an understanding of how supervisors perceive themselves as leaders in the public sector, and to learn from the perspectives of the supervisors if their leadership perceptions played a role in their decisions including intent to stay. This goal was accomplished.

Public child welfare supervisors in this study indicated six major themes in their stories of leadership.

1. Child welfare supervisors in public child welfare self define as leaders. They are solidly connected to their profession and children and families.
2. Workplace conditions play a role in their navigation of the leadership journey.
3. Leadership self reference is integrated in the individual's professional commitment and capacity to resolve personal and organizational tensions.
4. Adult values work, especially values fit, alignment and transformation, is critical to leadership understanding.
5. Differentiation and transcendence appear to reduce organizational stressors impacting leadership self reference and led to exhibited adaptation in leadership behaviors.
6. Supervisors that expressed intent to stay for the next three to five years, had autonomy .They hired and trained their own staffs, had good relations with their administrators, and saw themselves as making significant contributions to the organization. Length of tenure may be the influencing variable.

This study presented, explored, and interpreted the nature and importance of leadership for the public child welfare supervisor from an experiential context. It sought to understand if public child welfare supervisors self identified as leaders, and if that means anything to them. Child welfare supervisors do see themselves as leaders. Their shared stories are rich with descriptions of behaviors that indicate they are both comfortable with and are practicing differential leadership in their work groups and in public organizations. Although the respondents in this study did not always articulate their stories in leadership consciousness language, they have developed world views of supervision, public child welfare and leadership. They exhibit differentiated behaviors based on where they are in their leadership journey.

Interpretations of data in this study indicated that supervision in child welfare practice is institutionalized. Based on interpretations from the data, leadership self reference or differentiation happens over time and involves the successful resolution of numerous tasks and levels of understanding. It does not appear as a linear process but tends to change as the individual's understanding is crystallized through recall, introspection, and exposure to new circumstances. In this sense leadership self reference is an interpersonal developmental process. This is not new information, and has in fact been studied under the rubric of many titles including self efficacy, professionalism, differentiation, leadership consciousness etc. What is new is the illustration of this learning process directly through words of the child welfare supervisors in the public sector, and the effort to link leadership understanding to key decisions like risk, relationships with the team, and intent to stay.

National Associations, local licensing boards, and public agencies within which the supervisors worked, as well as key administrators helped to define the work of the supervisor within clinical parameters. This is a blessing and a curse for supervisory leadership. McDonald and Chenoweth argue, “Once the logic has become dominant, the subsequent attitudes, attention and behaviors of the influential actors become isomorphic with it” (McDonald and Chenoweth 2009).

(<http://www.socialwork.net/2009/1/articles/mcdonaldchenoweth>). Retrieved 11/20/2009.

This quote rings true in that the Code of Ethics, the logic for practice in the social work profession, was silent on leadership. Social work supervision has been a large influence in the direction and growth of the profession. The relationship has not been reciprocal. The profession has limited the leadership role of supervision. Supervision has been strongly linked to clinical practice, and is seen first as an extension of clinical practice. The administrative or leadership functions are in many ways defined by the host organization.

Traditionally leadership is not taught in the curriculum of social work. Yet it has become one of the important identified areas other professions are embracing. As was cited in the literature review, education and nursing have long identified leadership as critical to the growth of their professions and the retention of their professionals. Social work has found its administrative supervision nestled uncomfortably (or not so) in the inner working of the host organization.

There is a window of opportunity to challenge the field to move forward with leadership. Leadership for a Changing World (LCW) a collaborative research team that

involves researchers and practitioners has been bringing groups together to find a shared vision of change. “The contextualized study of leadership –understood as meaning – making in a community of practice –demands a method of co-production of knowledge, a participatory approach ...

(<http://leadershipforchange.org/insightd/conversation/files/knowledge.php3>. Retrieved December 12, 2005).

The public administration literature is ripe with studies that examine new approaches to leadership and new theories and perspectives of organizations. Public welfare programs are often criticized as chaotic. Margaret Wheatley, Uhl-Bein and others cited in this project support the assertion that chaos will yield improved outcomes. This, I offer, is the way reform and sustainable changes will happen for child welfare. Social work supervisors as public administrators closest to the chaos, and “wicked” problems with service delivery, and policy ambiguities must be exposed to new models of leadership that will better equip them to be the stewards of volatile public programs. Rather than focus on the fact that indigenous theories for administrative practice are not developed in public welfare , we need to jettison to identifying leadership theories that help us to understand the process for “being in leadership” in the public organization.

Leadership is evolutionary and can be taught and nurtured. (Kouzes and Posner 1995 15). Educational programs could support both social work and public administration by including contemporary perspectives of public leadership in graduate classes.

Leadership needs to be taught using the creativity of emergence and complexity theory - where leadership rather than leaders -are paramount to the survival of organizations. This

requires a shift in traditional public administration theory classes. This project argues the importance of other than basic leadership theory for all public leaders. It challenges scholars to examine the “soft psychology” of experiential leadership as a legitimate area for future research.

Strategic approaches that support child welfare leadership and retention may be developed through building upon the existing value set of public supervisors. A small number of supervisors are invited yearly to participate in state run leadership programs that generally use private business models of leadership in the curriculum. The literature supports transformational leadership as congruent with the professional value base of the public line supervisors. Coaching programs and leadership development courses should build upon this congruence of professional and personal core values. Supervisors should be encouraged and challenged to identify and respond to transformational leadership opportunities in their own practice. Through existing coaching and mentoring programs new opportunities for self growth, and leadership consciousness could easily be included. Mentoring opportunities for all new child welfare supervisors should include exposure to the meaning of leadership as they take on the new position. A dramatic approach suggested by participants in this study would be to hire only MSW staff in the public agency as workers in child welfare. This controversial approach as explained by participants ensures that staff and supervisors are on the page of the play book.

NASW reports indicate there have been increased calls for help from members to the National office regarding how to provide supervision. New supervisors hired in public services should be required to demonstrate that they have addressed their core

values as well as skills. As one respondent said in her interview, “It is hard; you have to separate the supervision from the job.”

The national and local associations in social work and public administration sponsor training and continuing education attached to conditions of advanced licensure. These organizations have an obligation to enter into the discourse on leadership. Patti has argued that this is the time in the history of public welfare management that sharing knowledge is critical. Few continuing education classes are devoted to leadership consciousness. Fresh theories about public organizations would help to challenge the existing leaders to go further in their leadership understanding. National and local associations weighing in on leadership would add legitimacy to leadership as a critical element in child welfare practice and research.

Finally, data and interpretations in this study were offered to promote discussion in the fields of public administration and social work. It is hoped that administrators may gain greater insight into the complexity of supporting and retaining professional supervisory staff in the public sector. The retention literature supports professional commitment as a strong indicator of retention (Ellett, Ellett and Rugutt 2003 177). Professional commitment is a place from which the public organization may start to reinforce values alignment that the data in this study supports as critical for leadership self definition. Public child welfare can only be strengthened by this approach. Public organizations that exhibit indifference or hostility to the role of professional social workers are missing the boat to implement creative strategies for improved service delivery, policy implementation and retention of their professional staff. Some

professional staff in this study adapted and found support for their leadership as social workers outside of the organization. They continue to struggle to address their fit as social work professionals and leaders. To the extent that this study has generated discussion about the impact of self referenced leadership in the public organization, it has contributed to the field.

Leadership self reference and its importance in critical decisions remains an area for more study and discourse. This study, although a small slice of the total picture of supervision in public service, raises the complex experiential nature of leadership for a critical population in public service. In order to retain effective professional credentialed child welfare supervisors, public organizations must grow leaders from within the organizations.

A longitudinal mixed methods study that follows newly promoted supervisors for a number of years and includes several states, or regions would provide valuable information about the development of leadership consciousness over time and the impact on outcomes in public child welfare. Current research has provided quantitative measurement tools that may be adapted for such a study. The utility of existing tools however, would need to be tested. The richness of narratives is without question an asset to this topic.

Understanding leadership differentiation overtime and the value it adds to the stability and efficacy of the workforce in the public agency is a most compelling reason

for recommending a longitudinal study. The stories of the line level supervisor in public child welfare must be taken seriously.

Public organizations must understand the connections between the personal values of those drawn to public service, the strong connection of the line supervisor to the profession of social work, and the adult values work that must be mastered for the individuals to grow as strong differentiated leaders in the field.

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Appendix A: Guide Questions for Individual and Focus Group Interviews

Guide Questions for the Individual Interviews

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. And for granting your permission to audio tape the interview. Remember this is confidential. I am curious if child welfare supervisors see themselves as leaders of child welfare in their agencies and whether leadership perceptions or the lack of them has impacted their decisions to remain employed in child welfare? The questions that I have developed are guide questions to help us in the interview. Feel free to answer these in any way that you want, or to share stories that explain your answer. Before we end I would like to have you tell me about a time when you were at your leadership best and share an artifact if you brought one today.

1. Tell me a little about you.
2. How were you promoted to supervisor? ***Probe: Was that typical for your agency?***
3. Walk me through a typical day for you as a child welfare supervisor.
Probe: So is this different than what you thought it would be like?
4. ***Probe: give me some examples of what it is like to be a child welfare supervisor?***
Tell me about your relationship with your supervisor over the time that you have been in your position?
5. What is it like with your peers? ***Probe: What would you say the greatest differences are between you?***
6. **What do you expect of yourself as a child welfare supervisor? Probe: What do you perceive as the leadership role of the child welfare supervisor in your agency?**
7. What do you expect of yourself as a social work professional?
8. Public child welfare undergoes frequent policy and procedural changes. What strategies do you use to cope with all the changes?
9. What motivates you to stay on as supervisor?
10. Where do you see yourself in the future, say the next 3-5 years?
11. Would you like to talk about a time when you were at your leadership best?

Focus group guide and probe questions

The focus group will begin with a brief statement of purpose to have a collective response to recurring themes and patterns from the individual interviews. It will emphasize that these are summaries of the statements and no one participant is credited with making these remarks. The focus group guide questions are much more explicit in regards to leadership that were in the individual interview questions. The intention is to try to guide the discussion to a more experiential reflection on leadership with the participants. The following questions represent the possible range of items and questions. It should be noted that the respondents will drive the questions and probes.

1. Some of the common themes and patterns that came out of the interviews are on the flip charts around the room. These represent summarized responses. How do you respond to these? ***Are we on point? Is there something missing?***
2. Tell me what your views are regarding the role the agency expects of child welfare supervisors?
3. Can we talk a bit about the rewards and challenges of the job for the professional social worker in child welfare supervisory practice?
4. What things have changed for you since you became a child welfare supervisor?
5. What do you think most supervisors think about their own leadership experiences?
6. What are the top three things agencies need to do to retain child welfare supervisors?
7. Where do you see child welfare supervisors in the next 5 years/ forecast
8. Why do you think child welfare supervisors stay in public child welfare?
9. Is there anything else that we should have talked about?

Ending with this group will include thanks for their participation and review of the next steps in the research protocol that includes reconnecting with individual participants by phone to share the focus group analysis, and to obtain any corrections or edits to ensure confidentiality and drafting the final report if necessary.

Appendix B: Informed Consent Form

Child Welfare Leadership Study Informed Consent

I _____ agree to participate in a face to face audio taped interview and a audio taped focus group interview as part of a student research study on the perspectives of leadership experiences of public child welfare supervisors, entitled , *The Leadership Experiences of Child Welfare Supervisors in the State of Maryland Department of Human Resources: Impacts on the Dynamics of Retaining Supervisory Leadership*. The study is being conducted by Claudietta Johnson, Public Administration Doctoral Student, at the University of Baltimore (410-945-7449)

I do not have to take part in this study. Participation is voluntary. My participation or decision not to participate **does not** impact my employment as a state employee in any way. I can opt to leave the interview or focus group at any time without any penalty. I decide what is important to share and how much information to provide to the researcher on any subject. I understand that no information will be presented that can be used to identify me as an individual participant.

The purpose of this study is to learn how child welfare supervisors in the public agency perceive their leadership and whether, and to what extent leadership experiences have impacted their decisions to remain employed in public child welfare. I will not benefit directly from this research. However, my participation may lead to information that can help with the retention of child welfare supervisors.

I volunteered for this study having been contacted by the researcher along with nine (9) other of my colleagues across the state of Maryland. I was contacted because I indicated that I was willing to share my perceptions about leadership. I have been asked to meet with the researcher for an audio taped narrative interview that will last for approximately one hour. I will also participate in a video-taped 60- 90 minute focus group with other supervisors that are participating in the research. I understand that the researcher will travel to my job location or an off-site location of my choice for the narrative interview. The video tape will be produced by an outside resource not affiliated with the Department of Human Resources (DHR). The focus group will be held centrally to allow for maximal participation. No discomforts, risks or stresses are expected. The questions are broad and I can select how, and if I wish to answer them.

Data from the study will be analyzed using a computer software program, and the researcher will contact me so that I can verify accuracy of my responses before they are included in the final report. The final written report will include composites of the narratives without identifying information. It is expected that I identify any data for exclusion that I feel puts me at risk in the narrative interviews All notes are maintained in a locked facility by the researcher for safety and confidentiality. One year after the study has been completed; consent forms, interview notes, demographic sheets, audio tapes, and the video tape will be destroyed. It is the expectation that the summary results will be

shared with the Department of Human Resources and may be submitted for publication in professional journals.

M's Johnson will be available to answer questions about the research throughout the study period and can be reached by phone listed above or e-mail Claudietta@verizon.net
I understand the processes and procedures described above.

My questions about the research have been answered and I agree to participate. I have been provided a written description of the research and have also been given a copy of this consent form.

Signature of Researcher Date

Signature of Participant Date

Appendix C: Contact Summary Data Collection Sheet

Contact Summary Sheet

Contact Type: Individual _____ Focus Group _____

Site _____

Date _____

Researcher _____ Observer _____

1. Main themes/issues in the contact
2. Summary of responses to each guide question asked
3. Summary responses to key probes that are not in guides
4. Salient, illuminating points
5. Remaining target questions/issues for future contacts
6. Issues for follow-up/clarity

Appendix D: Demographic Data Collection Sheets

Demographic Data Collection Sheet

Please complete the following demographic information. The data will be aggregated and analyzed so that no individual will be identified. It is information that will create a profile of the participant group. I would like to have your contact information so that I may get to you if I have questions about any of your responses to the questions. No one else will have access to your contact information.

Name _____

Email or telephone _____

1. Enter the jurisdiction in which you work _____ (This data will not be shared nor will the jurisdiction be mentioned by name in the final report).

2. Gender ☐ male ☐ female

3. Age

☐ 20-29 ☐ 30-45 ☐ 46-55 ☐ 56-over

4. Race /Ethnicity _____

5. Education _____

6. Masters Degree in social work / other _____

7. Doctorate Degree social work /other _____

8. Field placement site _____

9. Current program assignment _____

10. Years tenure with the DHR child welfare _____

11. How many people do you supervise ____

13. Do you aspire to other administrative positions in child welfare? _____

14. Are you a member of a professional association? _____

Appendix E: Letter of Request - Invitation Letter

Invitation Letter to Prospective Research Participant

Dear Child Welfare Supervisor

I am a student at the University of Baltimore. As a part of my final requirements for a Doctorate in Public Administration, I am working on a research study that will examine **how child welfare supervisors perceive and describe their own leadership experiences as leaders**. I am very interested in understanding why supervisors stay in public child welfare, what supervisors think about their leadership experiences in public organizations, and if leadership or something else impacts the decision to remain in a job that is both challenging and rewarding. I have been granted permission to conduct the study with child welfare supervisory staff in Maryland.

This letter is a personal invitation for you to participate in the study. You have been selected as a possible participant because of your knowledge of child welfare and work as a child welfare supervisor. Participation is totally voluntary and your responses will be kept confidential. This is a qualitative study. It makes use of audio taped individual interviews in which the participants tell stories about their experience as leaders. Supervisors will be encouraged to share stories about their *leadership best*, and to bring artifacts such as notes, letters, pictures, tokens etc that represent that experience. Artifacts are although interesting are not mandatory and you may opt not bring anything.

Several weeks later the interviews are completed all the respondents will meet together in a focus group that will be audio taped. Collectively they will discuss some of the themes and patterns that emerged in the individual interviews. The opportunities to have you, in the field doing the job, discuss supervisory leadership in child welfare is both intriguing and exciting.

The study will require about a total of two hours of your time. I anticipate the audio taped narrative interviews to take 60 minutes. Focus group may take 60- 90 minutes. Time will be carefully managed but the goal is to have the supervisors respond as fully as they wish to the issues and questions. The focus group will be scheduled centrally to allow for transportation and access. I will travel to your work site or to a location that is of your choice for the interview. Your responses will be confidential and safely maintained in the sole custody of the researcher. Data that identifies an individual will not be used in the final report. Specific information shared regarding a local department will also not be identified.

My data collection will not begin until late Spring 2009. Your responses when analyzed with those of the other participants will provide the field with much needed voice of child welfare supervisors that have opted to remain in a program and profession that is challenging and rewarding. Results of the study will be shared with DHR and the local agencies to help identify possible retention and support strategies. There will be no names or other identifying factors used in the write up. Supervisors are the experts on this subject and your perspectives are the core of my research. I sincerely hope that you will consider sharing your knowledge and expertise in what I know will be creative and informative research.

Sincerely,

Claudietta Johnson, MSW, LCSW
Doctoral Candidate in Public Administration
University of Baltimore
ClaudiettaJ@verizon.net 410-9457449

Draft Letter to Obtain Approval to Conduct the Research Study

Dear Director White and Research Review Committee,

I am currently a Doctoral Student in Public Administration at the University of Baltimore. I am beginning my final research project and have opted to conduct a study that will focus on the retention and leadership of supervisors. My study has been approved by my doctoral committee, and the University of Baltimore IRB. The study builds on the Maryland Retention Study that was conducted in 2007 by drilling down on the experiential leadership of child welfare supervisors and why they stay in child welfare. It is different from the 2007 study in that it focuses solely on the supervisors in child welfare. It focuses on leadership issues, and it introduces self defined or differentiated leadership as a new variable for consideration in retention study with professional line supervisors.

I am keenly interested in identifying and understanding what it takes to retain credential child welfare supervisors in public child welfare. Knowing why supervisors stay will help us to prevent losing them. My research question for study is **how do child welfare supervisors most likely to remain in public child welfare perceive and describe their own leadership experiences as leaders?**

I am writing to seek permission to conduct this study with selected child welfare supervisors at the Maryland Department of Human Services across Maryland. The study is a qualitative study that involves narratives, and an audio taped focus group. Participation in the study is voluntary and responses would be kept confidential. I am seeking input from *supervisors in the five (5) jurisdictions that have had the greatest supervisory turnover over the past three years*. I would like to ultimately select two supervisors from each of the identified jurisdictions. I would need from DHR the identified five jurisdictions and names of assigned child welfare supervisors.

I will travel to the participants and meet on-site, in an off-site location, or after hours to conduct in-depth interviews. I anticipate the interviews to take 60 minutes for completion. A focus group of these same participants would be scheduled for several weeks after the individual interviews. The site will be centrally located so that travel would not be an issue for the participants. The focus group is scheduled to last from 60-90 minutes. Every effort will be made to complete the work within the 60 minute timeframe. In order to protect anonymity the raw data including the audio tapes and the video tape will not be shared with other than my research committee Drs, Henderson, Julnes, and DePanfilis.

My data collection will not begin until late spring 2009. Aggregate results of the study will be shared with DHR and the local agencies in a final report to help identify additional retention and support strategies. I am attaching the protocol statement regarding my research for review. I am available to meet to discuss my research project further. I am certain that the results will be of value to the Maryland Department of Human Resources, and to the individual supervisors.

Thank you.

Sincerely,
Claudietta B. Johnson, MSW, LCSW
Claudietta@verizon.net
410-9457449

Appendix F: Getting to the Goals

Getting to the Goals

1. What is my broad research area?
*My research area is public social work **leadership retention and turnover.***
2. Within that broad topic the question in the literature is ***how can public agencies stem the exodus of child welfare supervisors?***
3. Within that focus my topic is ***the impact of self defined leadership on retention decisions of public child welfare supervisors.***
4. What question is being asked...*Does the supervisor who defines himself /herself as a leader tend to stay in public child welfare? Is self reference as a leader important?*
5. The research question being asked is *how do child welfare supervisors perceive and describe own leadership experiences and whether and to what extent does leadership impact their key decisions especially to remain employed in child welfare?*
6. My relationship to the question is rooted in my experience as a supervisor and administrator in a large public child welfare agency. *Practically, I believe that those people that have differentiated themselves as leaders are able to remain employed in public child welfare even though there are significant risks in the job. They have a frame of reference from which they withstand the turbulences in the organization and in the field. This is simply my gut feeling and is supported by stories from friends in the business. I really do not know the stories of leadership from the supervisors in child welfare. I was a child welfare supervisor but saw myself as a leader and moved up in the organization. This is my story but may not be that of the participants. My task is put my inclinations behind me and go for the answers.*

Down to the Researchable Question

1. I am interested in public child welfare administration.
2. One of the major problems for public administrators is the retention of credentialed staff especially line supervisors. Agencies are attempting the hold onto supervisors but they tend to leave. Across the country the child welfare supervisors are exiting at a high rate and despite the efforts to retain them. They continue to exit sometimes for direct service jobs with school systems or private direct service providers.

3. I want to know why the supervisors that opt to stay do so beyond issues like money or personal issues. If we know what they think keeps them employed in the field and their hosts agencies, and understand the dynamics of their leadership experiences, then programs and supports for the supervisors may be developed that will help to improve the retention rate. This could improve the quality of services for vulnerable children and their families.
4. How do child welfare supervisors perceive and describe their own leadership experiences; what meaning they attach to their understanding and experiences and do this leadership self reference impact their decisions to remain employed in public child welfare? I would need to develop a research plan that allows the participants to directly communicate their experiences and perceptions of leadership.
5. I am on my home ground with this research in public welfare administration. The supervisors may well open up to and insider/outsider. They could however, not want to share details of their experiences since I previously worked in the organization as an administrator. I do not think that the richness of data from the supervisors would be the same if the researcher was not intimately familiar with the field, and was not knowledgeable about the current state of public child welfare in this state and in the country.
6. What data will I need to demonstrate that the research question is being answered? Narratives also called stories in this research that are the actual words of participants will be needed, as well as an analysis of relationships between data. The issue for analysis is to get deep enough in the data to touch the “essence” of their responses. The research questions and sub questions, literature review and my work experience with this field of work have provided a place for beginning. Much work is to be done prior to the collection of the data.

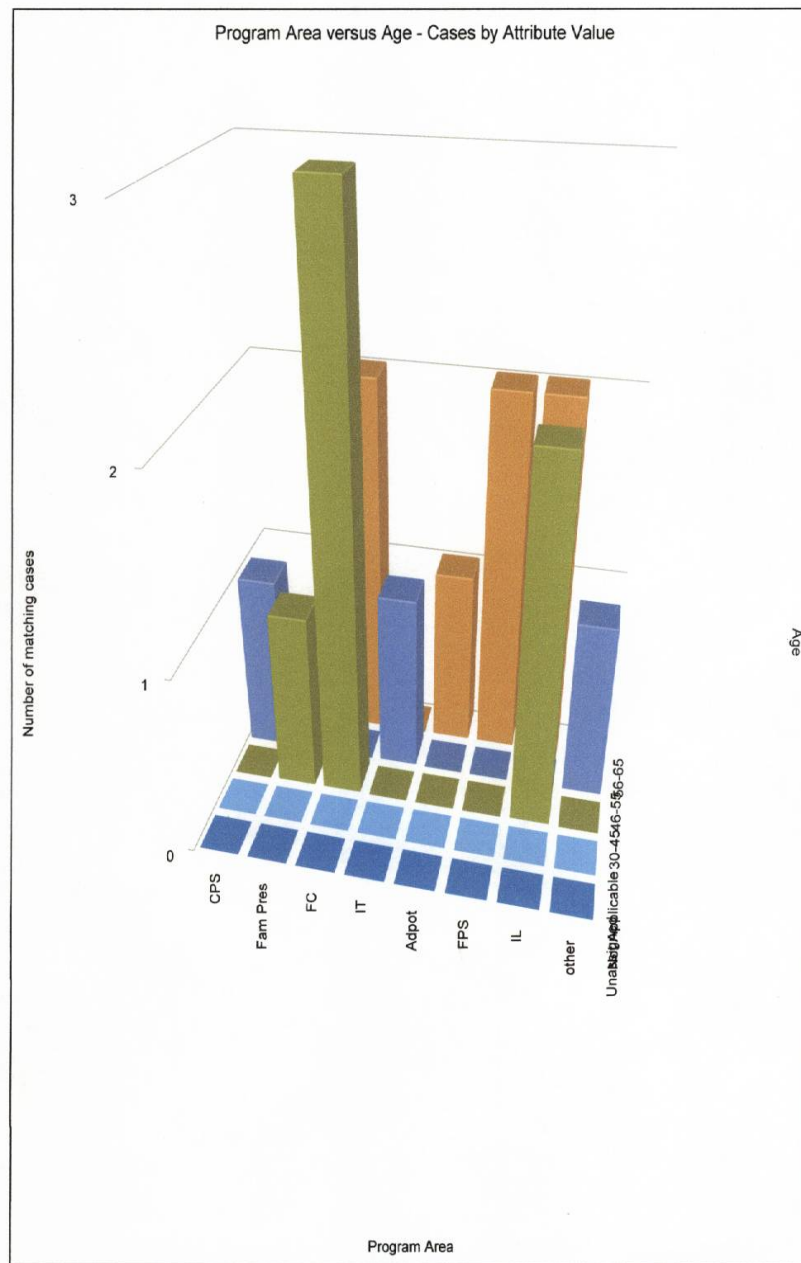
Setting up Categories for thinking about the data

“When the relationship between data and the research question is established, data become relevant, and evidence for arguments” (Richards 2008 33). Considerable thinking was done in preparation to handle the data.

- ❖ Miles and Huberman (1994) Joseph Saldana (2009), Weston, Gandell and et.al. (2001), Creswell (1998) and Charmaz (1990) have indicated that it may be helpful to begin the coding processes in qualitative study by identifying deductive codes from the literature and the experiences of the researcher. This means a return to the research question(s) and the memos that track the evolution and iterations of the questions, as well as meanings and intent. This task culminates in a preliminary code list that will change as the project evolves. Having worked through this initial list, does not give permission to force data into these codes. The working list of codes is imported into the Free Nodes (NIVIVO8) database and will be revisited as the coding scheme is developed.

Appendix G: Qualitative Data Reports Casebook
Coding Summary Reports
Structured Coding by Source
Pattern Coding

	A : Age ▼	B : Field Place... ▼	C : Gender ▼	D : Program Ar... ▼	E : Race Ethni... ▼
1 : Cases\TJ	56-65	Child Welfare	Female	FC	Caucasian
2 : Cases\SS	56-65	psychology /ment	Female	FPS	African American
3 : Cases\SA	30-45	Not Applicable	Male	FC	Caucasian
4 : Cases\RP	30-45	psychology /ment	Male	IL	African American
5 : Cases\PS	30-45	psychology /ment	Female	Fam Pres	African American
6 : Cases\MD	30-45	Child Welfare	Female	FC	Caucasian
7 : Cases\KG	30-45	psychology /ment	Female	IL	Caucasian
8 : Cases\JT	56-65	Other	Female	FPS	African American
9 : Cases\JS	56-65	Child Welfare	Female	FC	African American
10 : Cases\JN	46-55	psychology /ment	Female	other	African American
11 : Cases\JG	46-55	Child Welfare	Female	CPS	African American
12 : Cases\DS	56-65	psychology /ment	Male	IL	Caucasian
13 : Cases\DL	30-45	Child Welfare	Female	FC	Caucasian
14 : Cases\BS	56-65	Child Welfare	Female	IL	African American
15 : Cases\BL	46-55	psychology /ment	Male	IT	Caucasian
16 : Cases\AB	56-65	Other	Female	Adpot	Caucasian



Coding Summary Report

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Generated: 11/25/2009 9:39 AM

Coding By

<u>Name</u>	<u>Initials</u>
Claudietta Johnson	CJ
Claudietta	CJ
Total Users	2

Internals\Content Analysis

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<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
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<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Understanding of leadership\self facilitated awareness	2	2.83%

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Internals\Interviews\AB

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Coding Summary Report

Page 2 of 29

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Tree Nodes\Understanding of leadership\enactment of leadership\Hindrane stressors	1	0.77%

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Coding Summary Report

Page 4 of 29

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Coding Summary Report		
Page 5 of 29		

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Coding Summary Report

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<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Free Nodes\agency commitment	2	4.81%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Free Nodes\commitment to staff	1	10.07%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Free Nodes\identity	1	5.61%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Results\openand available	2	0.61%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Results\openand available (2)	2	0.61%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Results\values run	5	1.16%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Conditions supporting leadership	3	13.96%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Conditions supporting leadership\opportunities	2	8.88%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Conditions supporting leadership\Profession is valued	1	4.12%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Conditions supporting leadership\sw identity	2	4.48%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Conditions supporting leadership\validation of worth\strong peer support	2	6.53%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Recognition as a leader	1	3.67%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Understanding of leadership	1	5.92%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Understanding of leadership\alignment with core values	3	10.77%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Understanding of leadership\Differentiation	1	4.40%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Understanding of leadership\enactment of leadership	1	1.24%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Understanding of leadership\enactment of leadership\Hindrances stressors	2	5.06%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Understanding of leadership\identification of blockages	2	4.81%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Understanding of leadership\individual transcendence	2	9.21%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Understanding of leadership\retrospective sensemaking	1	4.48%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Understanding of leadership\self facilitated awareness	3	9.56%

Total References	40
Coverage	5.71%
Total Users	1

Internals\Interviews\DS

Document

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Free Nodes\identiy	1	1.85%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Results\openand available	5	1.03%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Results\openand available (2)	5	1.03%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Results\values run	2	0.43%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Conditions supporting leadership	4	17.99%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Conditions supporting leadership\opportunities	1	5.62%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Conditions supporting leadership\Profession is valued	2	5.97%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Conditions supporting leadership\Profession is valued\professional identity	1	3.32%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Conditions supporting leadership\sw identity	2	8.70%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Conditions supporting leadership\use of clinical skills	2	8.53%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Conditions supporting leadership\use of clinical skills\clinical	2	10.19%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Conditions supporting leadership\validation of worth	1	2.11%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Conditions supporting leadership\validation of worth\strong peer support	2	3.04%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Conditions supporting leadership\validation of worth\supportive relationship with leadership	1	7.26%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Understanding of leadership	2	5.19%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Understanding of leadership\alignment with core values	2	8.70%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Understanding of leadership\enactment of leadership\Hindrances stressors	1	7.26%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Understanding of leadership\identification of blockages	1	7.71%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Understanding of leadership\leadership definitions	1	2.07%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Understanding of leadership\self facilitated awareness	4	21.95%

Total References	42
Coverage	6.50%
Total Users	1

Internals\Interviews\Interview with R101509 **Document**

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Free Nodes\agency commitment	3	11.48%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Free Nodes\commitment to staff	1	5.32%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Results\openand available	2	0.56%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Results\openand available (2)	2	0.56%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Results\values run	2	0.46%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Conditions supporting leadership	1	4.53%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Conditions supporting leadership\Profession is valued	1	0.77%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Conditions supporting leadership\sw identity	3	9.74%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Conditions supporting leadership\use of clinical skills	3	15.73%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Conditions supporting leadership\validation of worth	2	10.97%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Conditions supporting leadership\validation of worth\strong peer support	2	6.32%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Conditions supporting leadership\validation of worth\supportive realtionship with leadership	2	8.62%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Recognition as a leader	1	1.53%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Understanding of leadership	2	8.25%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Understanding of leadership\Differentiation	2	5.07%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Understanding of leadership\enactment of leadership\HIndrance stressors	1	5.32%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Understanding of leadership\enactment of leadership\HIndrance stressors\availability and openness	1	5.30%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Understanding of leadership\self facilitated awareness	2	7.85%
Total References	33	
Coverage	6.02%	
Total Users	1	
Internals\Interviews\Interview with sa		Document
<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Results\openand available	4	0.66%
<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Results\openand available (2)	4	0.66%
<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Results\values run	2	0.33%
<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Conditions supporting leadership\Profession is valued	3	13.37%
<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Conditions supporting leadership\Profession is valued\professional identity	1	2.08%
<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Conditions supporting leadership\sw identity	2	12.36%
<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Conditions supporting leadership\use of clinical skills	3	21.52%
<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Conditions supporting leadership\validation of worth	3	13.95%
Coding Summary Report		Page 13 of 29

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Conditions supporting leadership\validation of worth\strong peer support	4	19.53%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Conditions supporting leadership\validation of worth\supportive relationship with leadership	1	4.33%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Understanding of leadership	4	29.37%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Understanding of leadership\alignment with core values	1	8.36%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Understanding of leadership\Differentiation	2	7.46%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Understanding of leadership\identification of blockages	1	8.36%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Understanding of leadership\retrospective sensemaking	4	15.85%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Understanding of leadership\self facilitated awareness	1	4.34%

Total References	40
Coverage	10.16%
Total Users	1

Internals\Interviews\Interview with SS101509 **Document**

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Free Nodes\agency commitment	2	6.25%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Free Nodes\commitment to staff	1	2.10%

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Results\openand available	2	0.36%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Results\openand available (2)	2	0.36%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Results\values run	2	0.30%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Conditions supporting leadership	2	7.26%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Conditions supporting leadership\opportunities	1	5.18%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Conditions supporting leadership\Profession is valued	5	15.71%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Conditions supporting leadership\sw identity	4	16.04%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Conditions supporting leadership\validation of worth	4	11.61%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Conditions supporting leadership\validation of worth\strong peer support	1	7.40%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Conditions supporting leadership\validation of worth\supportive relationship with leadership	2	6.84%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Recognition as a leader	1	6.67%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Understanding of leadership	3	15.59%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Understanding of leadership\alignment with core values	3	16.30%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Understanding of leadership\Differentiation	1	2.72%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Understanding of leadership\individual transcendence	2	5.37%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Understanding of leadership\retrospective sensemaking	3	16.09%

Total References	41
Coverage	7.90%
Total Users	1

Internals\Interviews\Interview with T 100809	Document
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<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Results\values run	6	0.35%

Total References	6
Coverage	0.35%
Total Users	1

Internals\Interviews\Interview withj100409

Document

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Results\openand available	9	1.10%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Results\openand available (2)	9	1.10%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Results\values run	3	0.32%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Understanding of leadership	3	13.37%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Understanding of leadership\alignment with core values	3	5.50%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Understanding of leadership\Differentiation	2	5.84%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Understanding of leadership\identification of blockages	3	10.29%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Understanding of leadership\individual transcendence	4	12.02%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Understanding of leadership\self facilitated awareness	3	9.20%

Total References	39
Coverage	6.53%
Total Users	1

Internals\Interviews\JG

Document

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Free Nodes\agency commitment	1	8.64%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Free Nodes\commitment to staff	1	2.25%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Free Nodes\identiy	1	3.35%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Results\openand available	2	0.36%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Results\openand available (2)	2	0.36%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Results\values run	2	0.30%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Conditions supporting leadership	2	12.41%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Conditions supporting leadership\opportunities	1	3.80%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Conditions supporting leadership\Profession is valued	2	17.15%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Conditions supporting leadership\Profession is valued\professional identity	1	3.41%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Conditions supporting leadership\sw identity	2	3.62%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Conditions supporting leadership\validation of worth	4	8.90%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Conditions supporting leadership\validation of worth\strong peer support	1	2.11%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Conditions supporting leadership\validation of worth\supportive relationship with leadership	1	3.91%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Understanding of leadership	3	14.60%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Understanding of leadership\alignment with core values	3	15.15%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Understanding of leadership\Differentiation	1	3.42%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Understanding of leadership\enactment of leadership\Hindrances stressors	2	6.08%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Understanding of leadership\identification of blockages	2	7.43%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Understanding of leadership\retrospective sensemaking	2	9.47%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Understanding of leadership\self facilitated awareness	3	13.55%

Total References	39
Coverage	6.68%
Total Users	1

Internals\Interviews\JS **Document**

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Free Nodes\agency commitment	1	0.78%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Free Nodes\impotence	1	1.77%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Results\openand available	11	1.35%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Results\openand available (2)	11	1.35%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Results\values run	3	0.37%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Conditions supporting leadership\Profession is valued	2	6.40%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Conditions supporting leadership\Profession is valued\professional identity	3	5.66%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Conditions supporting leadership\sw identity	2	4.55%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Conditions supporting leadership\use of clinical skills	3	14.28%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Conditions supporting leadership\validation of worth	2	4.77%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Conditions supporting leadership\validation of worth\strong peer support	3	2.37%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Conditions supporting leadership\validation of worth\supportive relationship with leadership	2	5.85%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Recognition as a leader	2	9.79%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Understanding of leadership	3	14.28%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Understanding of leadership\alignment with core values	1	4.24%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Understanding of leadership\enactment of leadership\Hindrances stressors	4	7.19%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Understanding of leadership\individual transcendence	1	1.77%

Total References	55
Coverage	5.10%
Total Users	1

Internals\Interviews\KG

Document

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Free Nodes\agency commitment	3	20.14%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Free Nodes\commitment to staff	2	9.44%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Results\openand available	4	0.94%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Results\openand available (2)	4	0.94%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Results\values run	2	0.43%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Conditions supporting leadership	1	4.85%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Conditions supporting leadership\opportunities	2	10.87%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Conditions supporting leadership\use of clinical skills	1	10.08%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Conditions supporting leadership\validation of worth	1	5.40%

Node Coding	References	Coverage
Tree Nodes\Conditions supporting leadership\validation of worth\supportive relationship with leadership	1	5.55%

Node Coding	References	Coverage
Tree Nodes\Recognition as a leader	2	11.65%

Node Coding	References	Coverage
Tree Nodes\Understanding of leadership	3	23.33%

Node Coding	References	Coverage
Tree Nodes\Understanding of leadership\enactment of leadership	1	4.30%

Node Coding	References	Coverage
Tree Nodes\Understanding of leadership\enactment of leadership\Hindrances stressors	1	4.30%

Node Coding	References	Coverage
Tree Nodes\Understanding of leadership\enactment of leadership\Hindrances stressors\availability and openness	1	10.08%

Node Coding	References	Coverage
Tree Nodes\Understanding of leadership\individual transcendence	1	6.51%

Node Coding	References	Coverage
Tree Nodes\Understanding of leadership\retrospective sensemaking	1	2.93%

Node Coding	References	Coverage
Tree Nodes\Understanding of leadership\self facilitated awareness	1	5.42%

Total References	32
Coverage	7.62%
Total Users	1

Internals\Interviews\PS **Document**

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Free Nodes\agency commitment	1	3.05%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Free Nodes\commitment to staff	1	3.15%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Free Nodes\impotence	1	0.93%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Results\openand available	5	0.50%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Results\openand available (2)	5	0.50%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Results\values run	2	0.19%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Conditions supporting leadership	1	2.91%

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Tree Nodes\Conditions supporting leadership\opportunities	2	4.31%

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Tree Nodes\Conditions supporting leadership\Profession is valued	4	10.83%

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Tree Nodes\Conditions supporting leadership\Profession is valued\professional identity	2	2.19%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Conditions supporting leadership\sw identity	1	1.61%

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Tree Nodes\Conditions supporting leadership\use of clinical skills	1	1.77%

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Tree Nodes\Conditions supporting leadership\validation of worth	1	3.53%

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Tree Nodes\Conditions supporting leadership\validation of worth\strong peer support	2	6.73%

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Tree Nodes\Conditions supporting leadership\validation of worth\supportive relationship with leadership	1	4.71%

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Tree Nodes\Understanding of leadership\alignment with core values	4	15.27%

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Tree Nodes\Understanding of leadership\Differentiation	4	7.27%

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Tree Nodes\Understanding of leadership\enactment of leadership	1	3.66%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
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<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Understanding of leadership\individual transcendence	7	20.58%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Understanding of leadership\retrospective sensemaking	1	0.96%

<u>Node Coding</u>	<u>References</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
Tree Nodes\Understanding of leadership\self facilitated awareness	2	6.15%

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Total Users	1

Internals\LIT Rev	Document
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Free Nodes\commitment to staff	1	0.41%

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Free Nodes\identiy	2	3.46%

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Externals\literature review

External

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Memos\Coding research memo

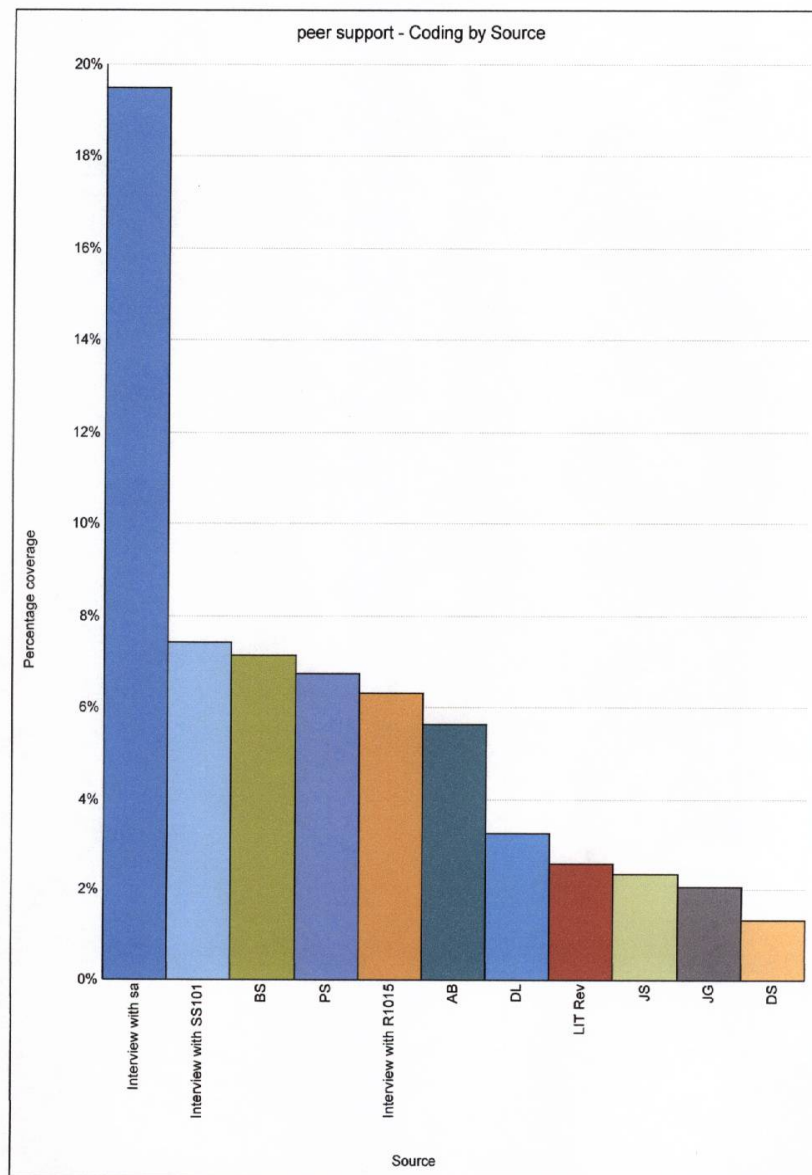
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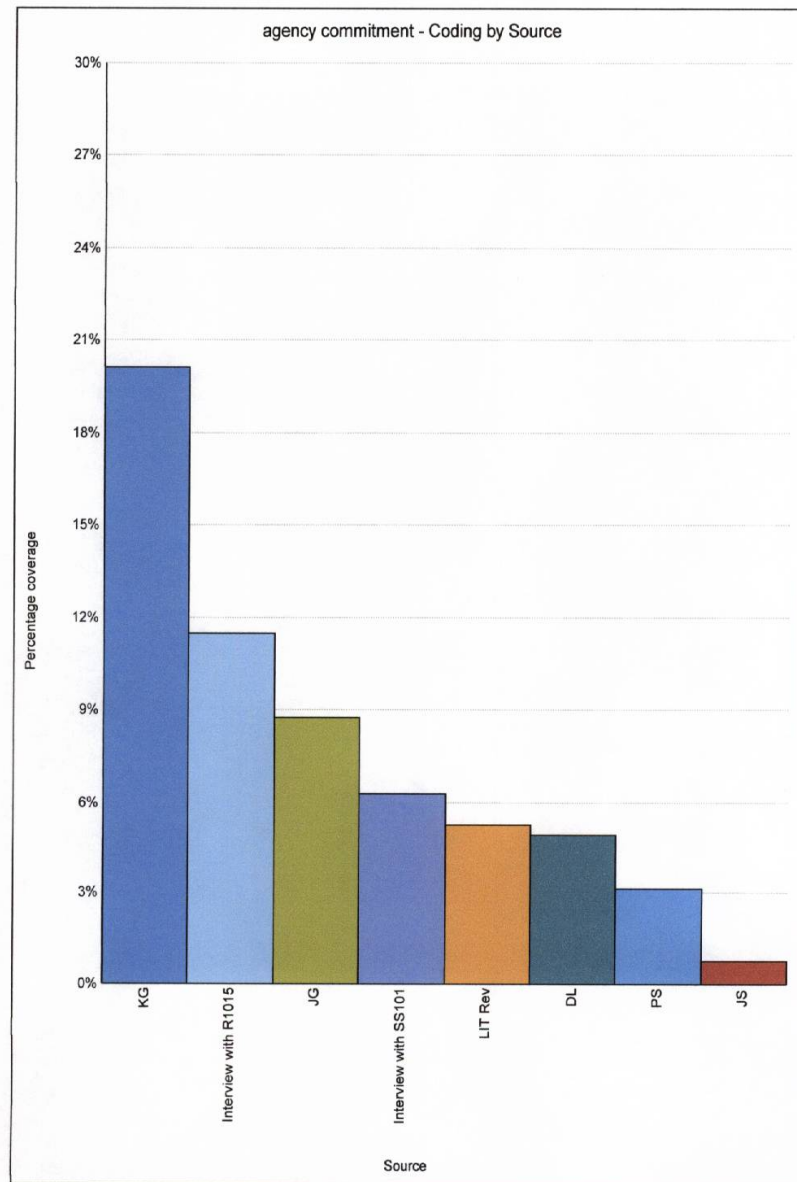
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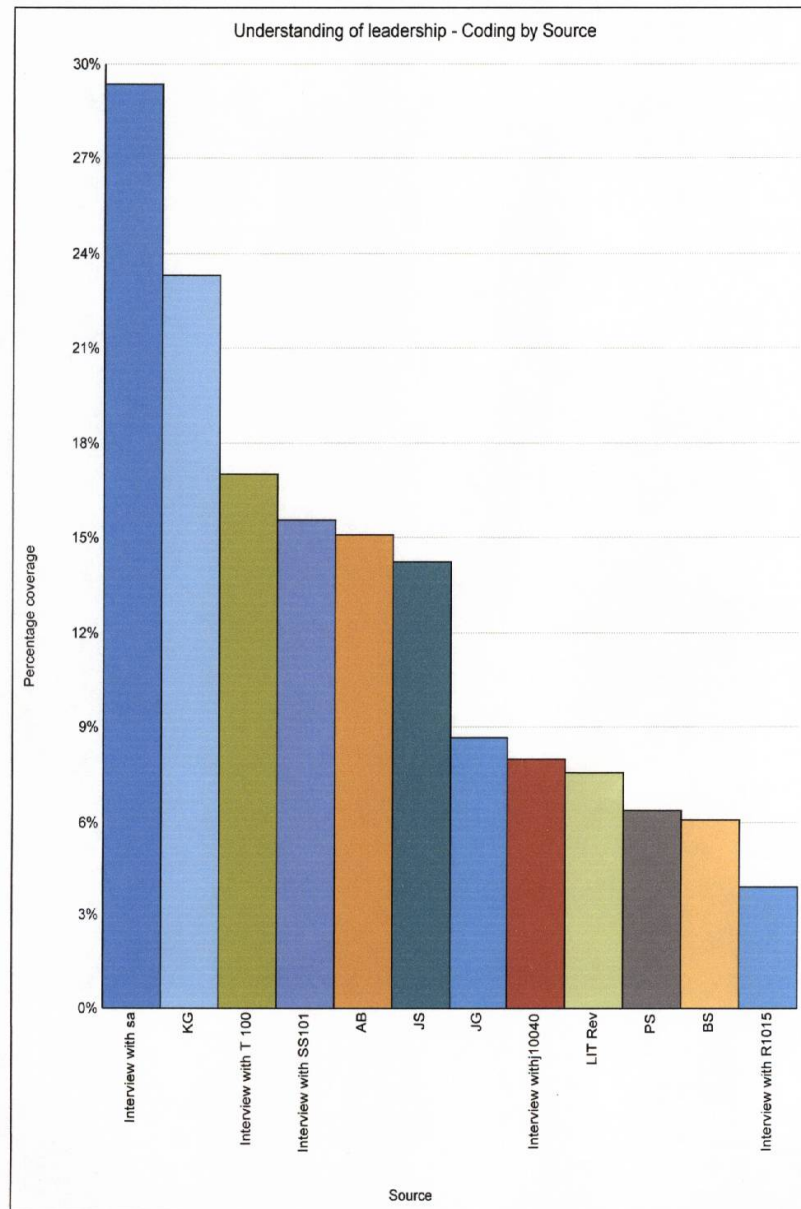
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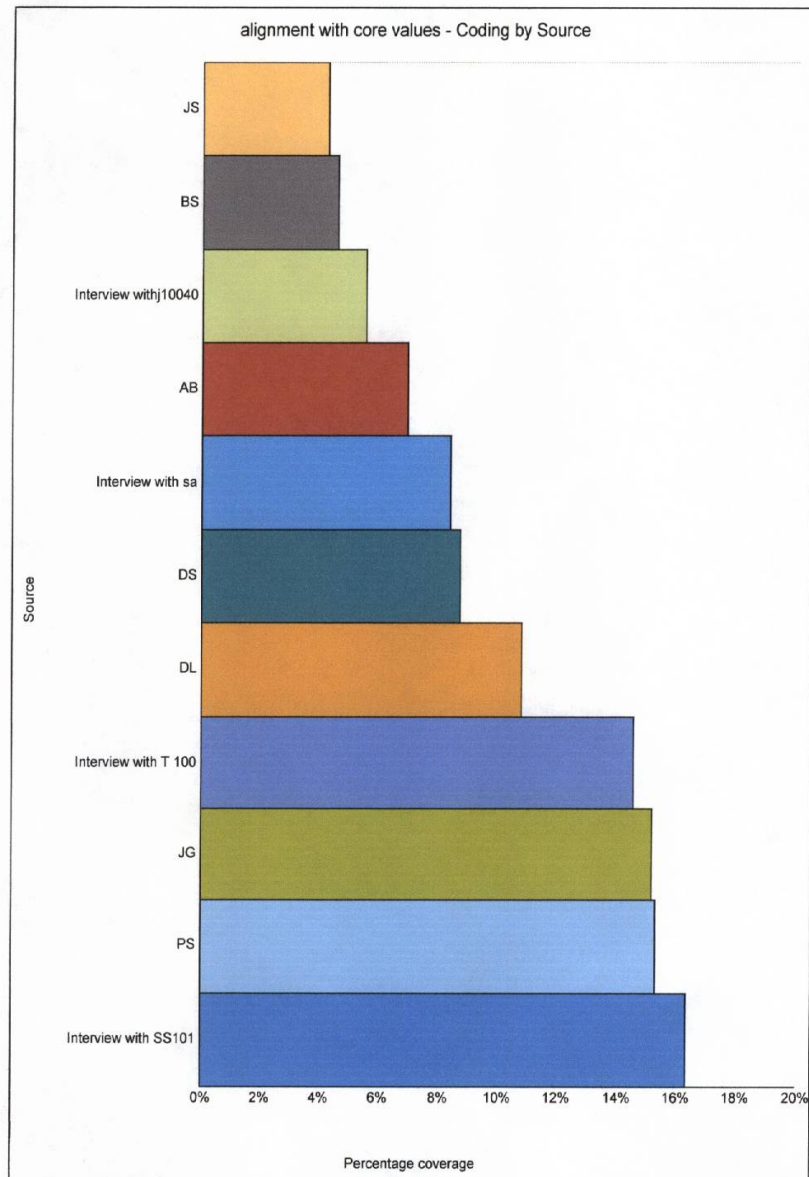
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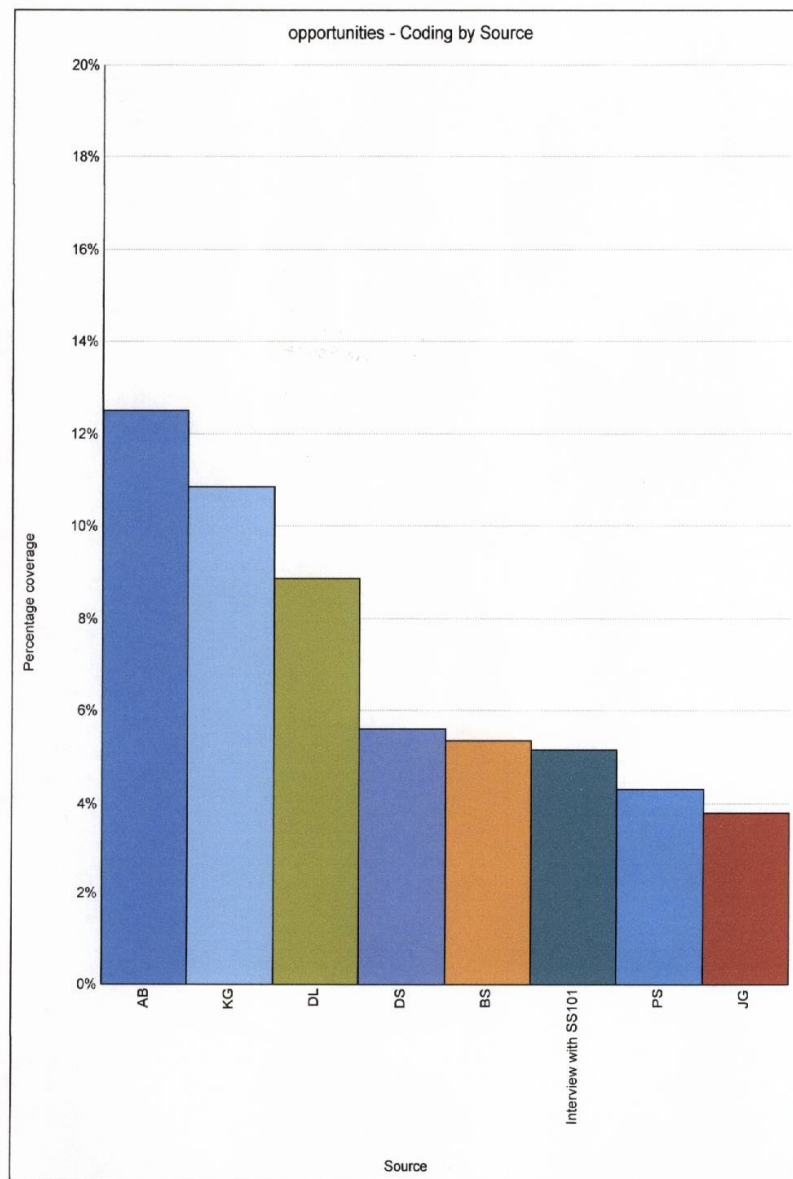
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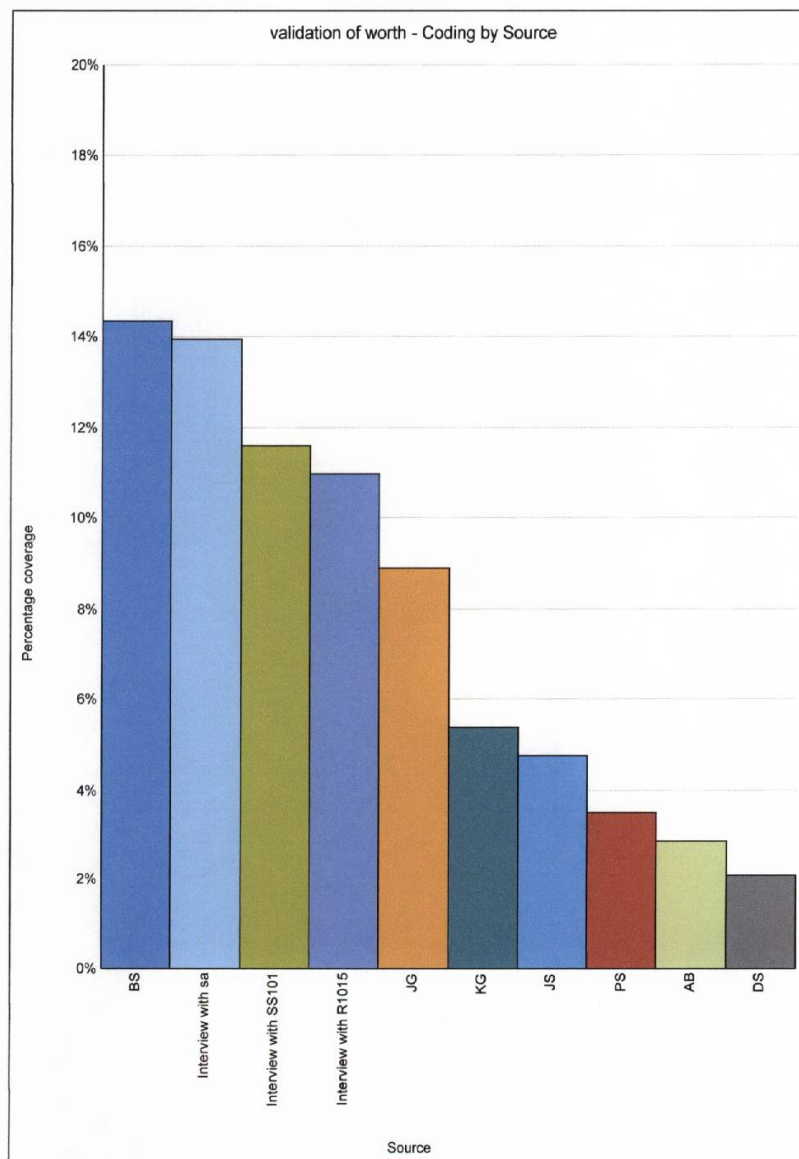


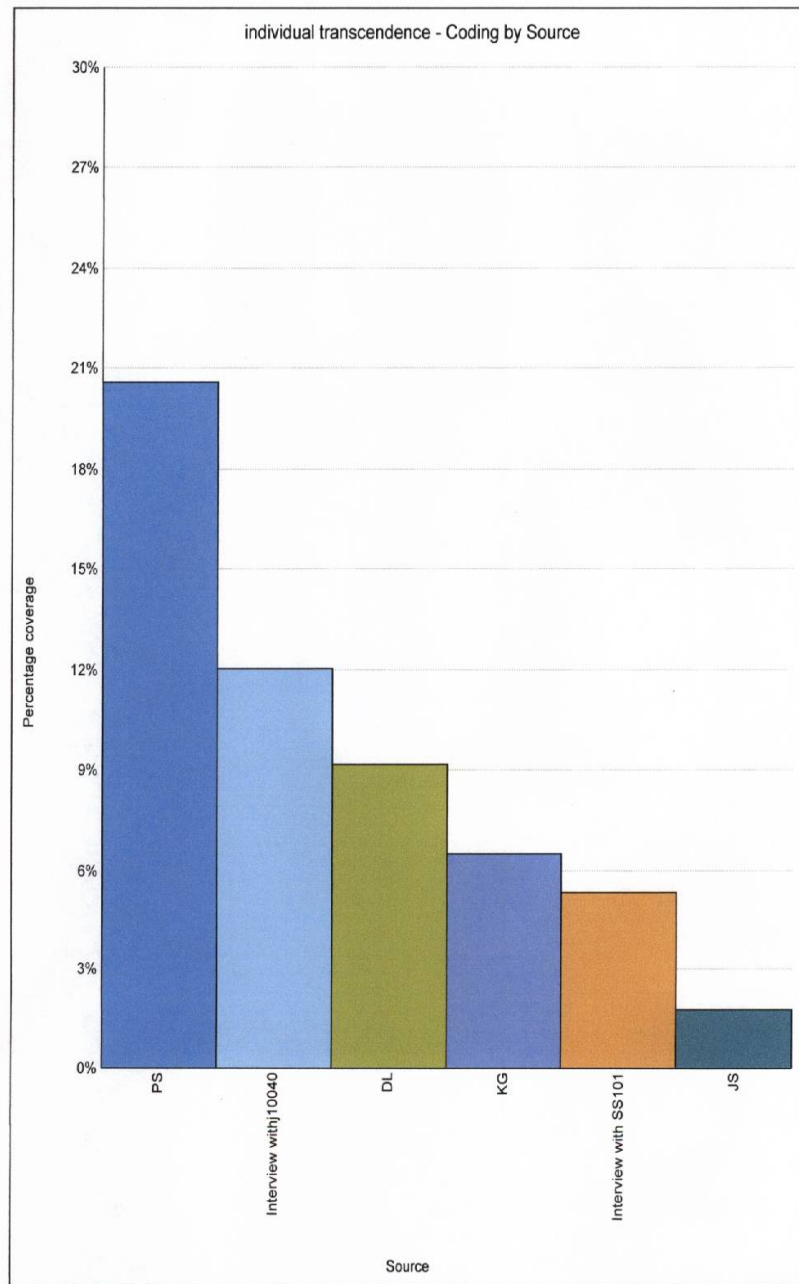


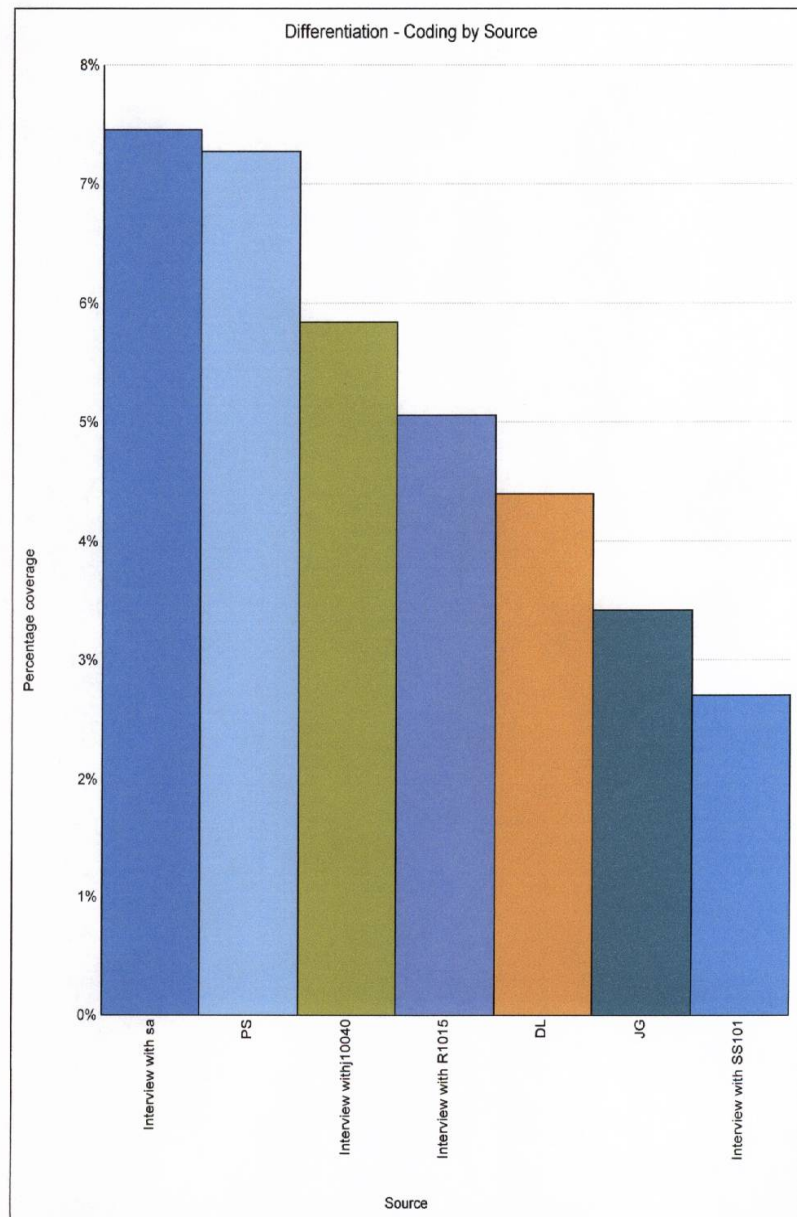


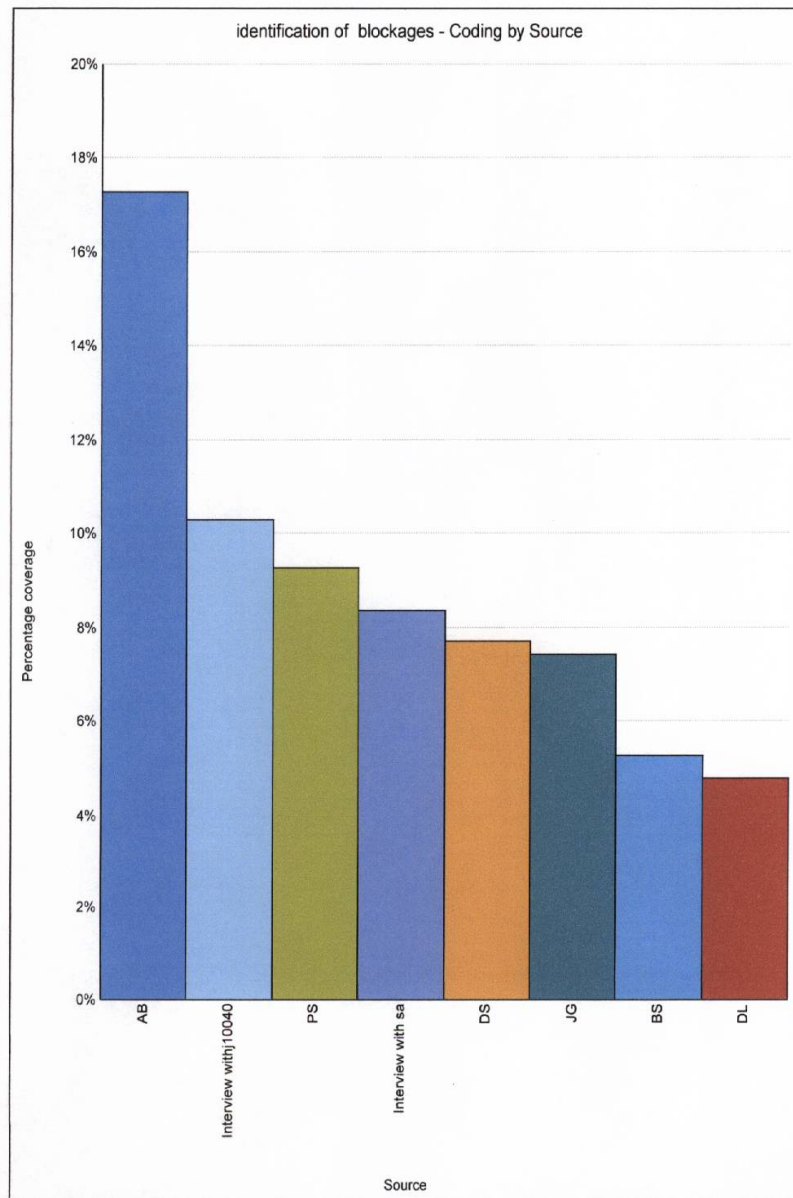


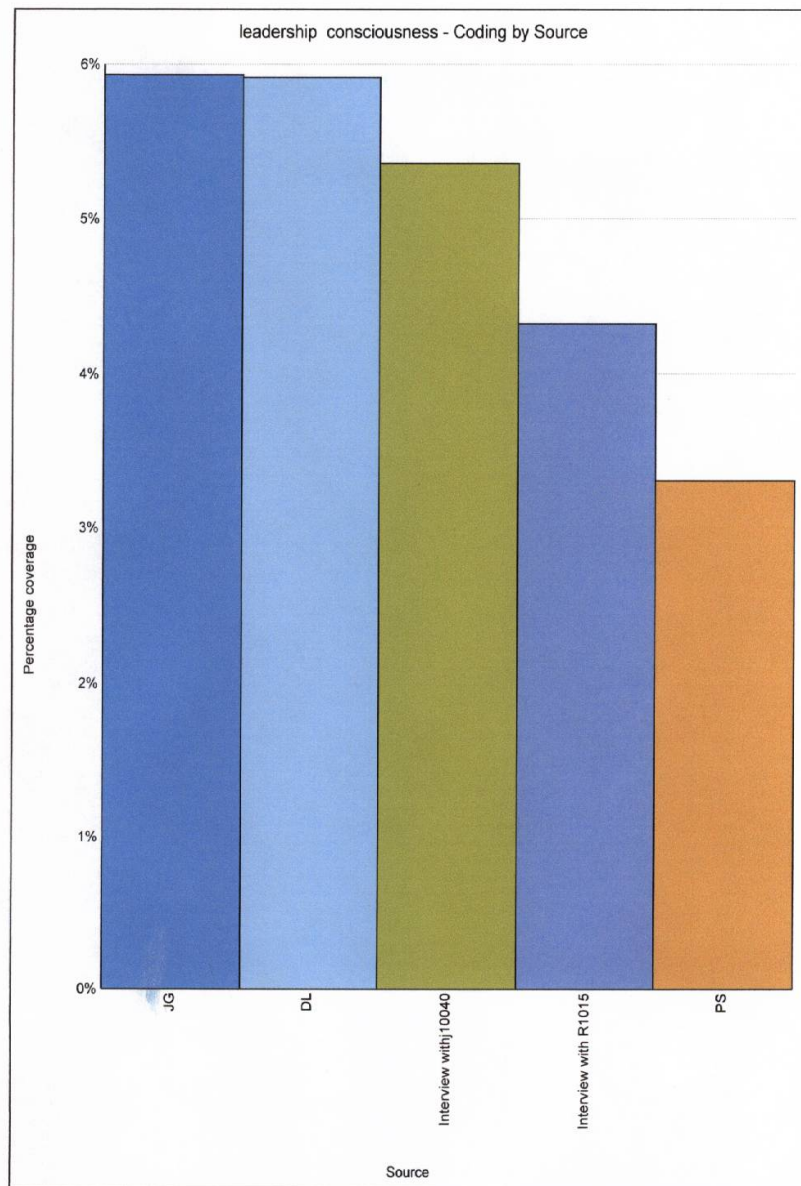


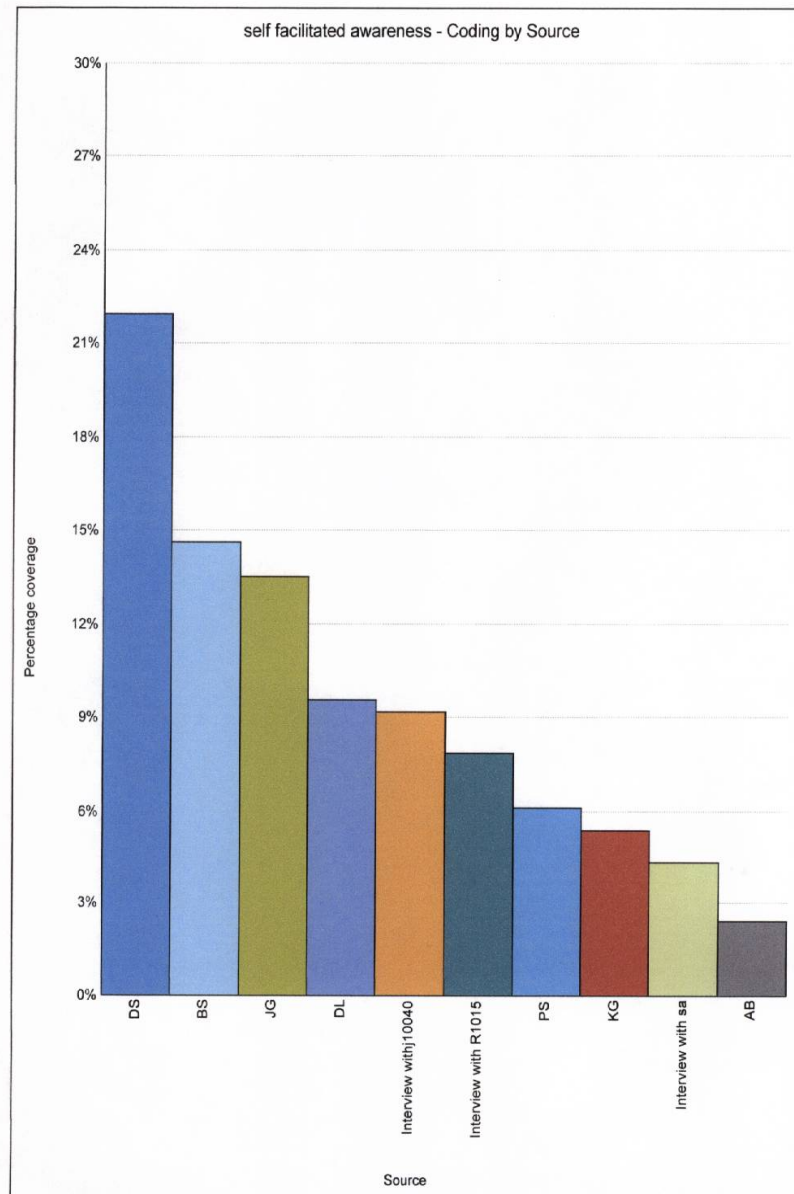












Appendix H: Code Book

Leadership Perceptions of Child Welfare Supervisors Codebook

Name of Node	Definition of the Node
Tree Nodes: Conditions Supporting Leadership Self Reference	This is a structured node that includes coding regarding organizational or professional conditions that affect leadership self definition.
Leadership Opportunities	Supervisor is asked to lead work groups, participate in decisions, etc.
Profession is Valued	Social Work is acknowledged as having value for the organization
Strong Social Work Identity	Individual identified with the social work profession value, and ethics
Use of Clinical Skills	Social work clinical techniques are used in casework daily
Validation of Worth	Supervisor is valued by the organization
Recognition as a Leader	Organization leadership accepts supervisor in leadership role in the agency
Enactment of Leadership	Supervisor accepts the role defined by the organization and puts in into action
Strong Peer Support	Supervisors depend on peers for validation, knowledge and support
Tree Nodes: Understanding Leadership	This is a structured node that includes coding regarding understanding leadership beyond the directives of the organization or the profession.
Alignment of Core Values	Supervisors identify their core values and do work necessary to align with the organization or find ways to adapt
Retrospective Sense Making	Supervisors use recall to understand their actions and the actions of others
Self Referenced Leadership	An identify statement from supervisors, I am a leader
Individual Transcendence	Supervisor moves beyond the controls of the organization and profession to define self as leader
Self facilitated Awareness	Individual values and self work, transformative learning
Identification of Blockages	Identification of procedures, policies or actions that limit leadership growth.
Enactment of Leadership	Risk taking behaviors, challenging old and incorporating new paradigms.
Differentiation	Identify, awareness of supervisor setting them apart from staff. Supervisors see themselves as separate but also part of the organization, identify with strengths and weaknesses of the team and work to achieve goals of team.

