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Developing Public Service Leadership: Understanding the Field Immersion/Comparative Cases Model for Mid-Career Professional Education in Environment and Natural Resources Leadership

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by

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Abstract

Public administrators in the United States face increasingly complex challenges and are called to leadership by position and in practice. In a hyper-pluralistic society, individuals must lead from where they sit, arbitrating value differences in day-to-day functions and taking on adversity and uncertainty in pursuit of the public good. These individuals are served by a variety of leadership training programs both internal and external to their organizations. This study characterizes the field immersion/comparative cases (FICC) model for public service leadership development and uses a grounded theory approach to build understanding about how individuals learn about leadership; what learning outcomes emerge from a single FICC program; and the individual, organizational, and societal impacts of those learning outcomes. The study uses program archives review, participant observation, and fifty-one interviews of alumni of the Executive Seminar Program in Natural Resources Leadership (ESP), a program of the Mark O. Hatfield School of Government at Portland State University, to elucidate six categories of ESP learning outcomes. In addition, the study offers three propositions for how and why the FICC model works, discusses where FICC-style programs are most useful, and identifies areas for further investigation and development of practice.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This study considers, fundamentally, how individuals learn to lead. It focuses on mid-career professionals who are rising in their organizations and networks from roles that are generally more technical and implementation-focused to supervisory, decision-making and executive leadership roles. It further focuses on the public sector and public service leadership, where individuals are situated in their organizations, which in turn are situated in the broader American democratic experiment. Finally, it situates itself in the field of environment and natural resources, using a grounded theory approach to characterize a field immersion/comparative cases (FICC) program model for leadership development, identify learning outcomes from an FICC program, offer propositions for how and why the model works in the ways that it does, and provide areas for further research and improvements to practice.

Public servants in the United States face increasingly complex challenges, from the development and implementation of an online patient tracking and billing system at the Department of Veterans Affairs to the preservation of endangered species whose ranges are shifting as a result of the changing climate. These challenges are both technical and adaptive. Many of them have long time scales, have contested values at their core, are not likely to have one right answer, and are polycentric, interrelated, and borderless. In the hyper-pluralistic governance context of the 21st century United States (Ferrara 2014), individuals working in the public sector have a legal and ethical obligation to lead from "where they sit" (Morgan, Ingle & Shinn, 2018), seeking to solve complex problems in pursuit of the public good. Public agencies offer employees an array

of training opportunities, including leadership training and opportunities for leadership development (e.g., details, mentorship). Depending on their professional pathway and other factors, an individual can participate in training programs internal to the organization or external, housed at universities, nonprofit and for-profit institutions, and other venues. Training and other professional development can address technical or adaptive challenges, or a combination of both. They vary in duration, location, and other design elements. They have a variety of inputs, outputs, and outcomes. No one program can offer all of the leadership material and support that an individual might need over her or his career.

Public service leaders require a core set of leadership skills and sensibilities to operate in the milieu of governance. Significant among these is prudential judgment, the ability to make subjective decisions at the intersection between social complexity and the ethical principles of the political system. Prudential judgment is developed and honed through practice (testing out, usually lower-stakes) and exercise (vision and action in a high-stakes setting) (Morgan, Ingle & Shinn, 2018). Public servants are responsible for taking on complex challenges, where any action will have both foreseen and unforeseen consequences. Often the information needed to make a good decision is thin or weak, and any decision is likely to result in loss for someone. Public service leaders need to understand that this context is theirs, that others step into challenges that can feel the same, and to practice stepping into complexity in lower-stakes settings in order to strengthen their professional muscles (ibid). Some leadership training programs are designed, to greater and lesser degrees, to address this need in the public sector.

The purpose of this research is to better understand the structure, function, and role of the FICC model for development of public service leadership in the United States. While leadership training programs employ a range of pedagogies to lift up individuals, leadership in groups, and leaders in organizations, the FICC model immerses participants in a series of real-world cases designed to serve as a vehicle for the practice of leadership. This research investigates how the FICC model develops participants' leadership skills and sensibilities through (1) immersion in a live case series, (2) participation in a mixed cohort; and (3) teaching and facilitation designed to promote discovery learning, an inquiry-based instructional model and strategies that focus on active learning opportunities for participants (Bruner, 1966; Dewey, 1916/1997; Piaget, 1973).

More generally, the research builds knowledge about how individuals working in public service develop their leadership skills and sensibilities. In pursuing a career in the public sector, individuals commit to arbitrating value differences and promoting the public good. This work is complex, difficult, and in some cases highly subjective. Outstanding public leaders draw on a toolbox of tangible and intangible, named and unnamed, learned and innate competencies to navigate challenging contexts. They guide not only themselves, but their teams, their organizations, and society at large when they weigh competing values, consider long time scales, work across boundaries, predict contingencies and secondary outcomes, and absorb uncertainty.

A range of literature, multimedia, mentorship programs, development opportunities and training programs are available to rising leaders. These resources originate in the private sector, in public organizations, in academia and in popular culture. They vary in how much time, expense, and expertise they require from both producer and

consumer. An individual or organization seeking to develop leadership might be constrained in a variety of ways and be seeking to build skills and sensibilities to address a particular problem or situation, or to increase their competencies or those of their teams more broadly. Understanding the kinds of resources required to facilitate leadership development in the public sector can help organizations make choices about the most effective avenues to pursue.

The core interest of this research is to better understand how professional training programs can promote the development of leadership skills and sensibilities in public service leaders in all sectors. To address this interest, the study investigates the FICC model for leadership development, and seeks to describe (1) the leadership pathways of alumnae of the program; (2) the effects of components of the program on individuals' learning outcomes; and (3) the ways that individual participants make meaning about leadership skills and sensibilities through participation in the program. The FICC model is chosen for its particular characteristics: the use of live cases, situated in community, facilitated by academic faculty. The model is intended to develop leadership skills and sensibilities through its design characteristics. First, the study asks, what does the FICC model look like when it is applied to public service leadership development? Or, does the implementation of the model look like what is expected in the literature?

Second, how do the components of the FICC model affect individuals' learning outcomes? The primary components examined here are (1) a live case series, as two or more real-world cases; (2) participation in a mixed cohort, as a group of individuals from a variety of federal and state agencies; and, (3) teaching and facilitation strategies

associated with the FICC model, including guest speakers, lectures, small-group work, final presentations, and reflective practice.

Third, do individuals who have participated in an FICC program report an improved ability to practice (strengthen, test out; lower stakes) and exercise (take action in context; higher stakes) public service leadership? The study elucidates participant learning outcomes with attention to their articulation of concepts and, importantly, their attachment of case examples, theory, and ideas to how they think about their work and how they do their work today.

The research approach is inductive, and the design is a qualitative analysis of a single program, the Executive Seminar in Natural Resources Leadership (ESP), a program of the Mark O. Hatfield School of Government at Portland State University. The study uses the environment and natural resources field to consider the complexity of public problems, and the skills and sensibilities that individuals require to be effective, efficient, equitable, and confident public service leaders. A forty-three-year-old program at the time of study, the ESP has just over 1,000 alumni in total, and these individuals make up the sample population. The study uses three data sources to inform analysis: a review of program archives, 1986-2019; participant observation; and a series of fifty-one semi-structured interviews of alumni from program years 2013-2019. The interviews provide the majority of the data used to inform findings.

This study describes a model for public service leadership training that has as a central learning outcome the development (through practice and exercise) of public service leadership. Across sectors, individuals, organizations, and society tend to rely on solution-centered approaches to most leadership challenges (Morgan, Ingle & Shinn,

2018, p. 216). While some–in the American executive branch, most–issues should be treated as problems with solutions, other challenges cannot be approached with this assumption. Rather, these emergent order (Kauffman, 1993; Kurtz & Snowden, 2003) challenges are characterized by a set of conditions with so many causes that they are uncertain and unstable.

Emergent order challenges call for individuals working in public service to lead from where they sit (Morgan, Ingle & Shinn, 2018), taking on conditions of ambiguity and uncertainty to promote the public good. For example, there is a high degree of uncertainty about the where, when, and how a wildfire will burn. A District Ranger with the US Forest Service is presented with a range of alternatives to mitigate fire risk, from aggressive prescribed burning and forest management to public education and prevention. They are responsible for reconciling a tremendous range of inputs, making a decision, and accepting the consequences of that decision, which might be good or bad but are almost always both, for a wide range of public interests and invested citizens. The District Ranger might have a technical background, some management experience, and professional mentorship and support within and outside of their organization. They are in charge of making a decision they, their partners, and their interested parties can live with, and guiding their team through conditions of uncertainty. This set of technical and relational tasks are difficult and demanding.

Wicked problems (Rittel & Webber, 1973) are becoming more common in political, economic, and social settings for two reasons. First, problems in American public administration have become more complex and interdependent (Keohane & Nye, 1987). Second, social and political institutions are less able to achieve agreements that

stand the test of time, producing administrative and relational conditions that are unstable (Morgan, Ingle & Shinn, 2018). As leaders face an increasing number of challenges for which there is no clear path, they require appropriate skills and sensibilities. These same leaders are also responsible for sustaining the parts of governance that work: stoplights, Firewise programs, riding irrigation ditches. In tackling challenges for which there is no clear path to solution, resolution, or equilibrium, there are several bundles of skills and sensibilities that individuals require: knowing leadership strengths of one's team and matching with contextual needs; sizing up challenges; the need for innovation; and heightened prudential judgment (ibid at pp. 225-228).

Recognizing that 21st century public service leaders are asked to take on challenging, complex circumstances with frequency, agencies, organizations and academic institutions design and implement education and training programs for the development of essential leadership skills and sensibilities. Leadership development for individuals working in public service helps those individuals to be thoughtful, informed and intentional in their decision space, to lead their teams, their colleagues, and their organizations to determine "what counts" for public goods and services, and to produce those goods and services to maximize outcomes.

In turn, building education and training programs for the development of public service leadership requires attention to the learning needs of individuals, organizations, networks, and governance regimes. These needs change over time in response to social, political, cultural, and biophysical conditions. Programs that attend to the kinds of leadership skills and sensibilities that are most relevant and in demand contribute to the

effective, efficient, and equitable production of public goods and services through their participants and alumni.

This paper begins with a review of the literature in leadership and its relevant sub-topic, leadership in public service agencies and organizations. The literature review also introduces the FICC model for a public service leadership development program, which is outlined but not substantiated. Finally, the literature review presents background on the FICC model's key components and their relationship to social and cognitive constructivism and case-based and problem-based instruction. Next, the paper describes the research methods used, presents results, and offers a discussion of the results and their implications for practice and continued knowledge-building.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Chapter 2 surfaces the literature that is useful in developing methods and research questions associated with public service leadership, leadership training, and especially training for the development, practice, and exercise of prudential judgment by individuals and organizations. The review covers literature in leadership and leadership development and the particular nature of public service and polity leadership. Next, the review outlines the FICC model for public service leadership development for mid-career professionals; the model is sketched in the literature to date, and this study substantiates and reifies it. Finally, the review covers social and cognitive constructivism in education generally, and case-based and problem-based instruction more specifically. The chapter is organized as a funnel to present the idea of leadership broadly, the particulars of public service leadership more narrowly, and then to present the FICC model for developing public service leadership and the theory associated with some of the model's key components.

The strategy for the literature search uses three discrete starting points. First, the leadership literature is anchored in *New Public Leadership* (Morgan, Ingle & Shinn, 2018), and includes works cited in that book and works cited in those works. Second, the FICC model is outlined in *New Public Governance* (Morgan & Cook, 2015). Third, the educational theory and program design reviews relied on searches of a variety of word combinations in Google Scholar, tracing through most relevant and most cited, and works cited in the most relevant among them.

Defining leadership

Public servants in the United States face an increasingly complex administrative and ethical landscape. Moreover, American democracy holds tension by design. This

tension is fundamentally between four core regime values: protecting rights, being responsive to citizens, managing public organizations and resources efficiently and effectively, and fostering civic engagement to create ownership by citizens in their governing institutions (Morgan, Ingle & Shinn 2018, p. 117). These core values operate within a republic of federal states, local governing bodies, and many interest groups. A multiplicity of values, linked with an increasing need to coordinate and communicate across boundaries, requires that public servants lead from position and in practice: lead from where they sit (ibid at pp. 10-12). In order to consider the contemporary face of public leadership, and examine the tools and techniques for its development, it is useful to begin with a discussion of the field more broadly.

Literature on leadership draws from a variety of professions, including public administration, business, education, social work, and healthcare. It also reaches into academic disciplines including political science, history, psychology, sociology and anthropology. This literature is organized in different ways, to serve different purposes. Here, it is organized around four levels of analysis: individual, group, organizational, and societal. This approach acknowledges the distinct set of skills, knowledge, and competencies needed by practitioners at each level of analysis (ibid).

First, a bundle of theory about leadership is centered on individuals. In trait-based and individual-centered theories, the individual leading has unique qualities and traits that set them apart from their followers (Yukl, 1981; Boyatzis, 1982; Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991). A vein of literature explores characteristics particular to "relational leadership," to date associated with women more than men (Gilligan, 1993; Regan & Brooks, 1995). Alongside this vein lies another that summarizes individual characteristics of female

leaders (Rosenthal, 1998; Fisher, 1999). However, individual trait theories fall short of explaining leadership success.

Contemporary literature has engaged a terminology of strengths to extend the discussion of trait-based leadership. This focus assumes that each person's mind is set up differently, and leadership success requires individuals to consider themselves in comparison and relationship to others. For example, *Strengthsfinder*, developed by Rath and Conchie (2017), is a validated, traits-based leadership assessment instrument. *Strengthsfinder* differs from classic traits theory by asserting that there is not a set of traits especially associated with leaders. Rather, by identifying individuals' strengths and areas to work on, the tool helps to build leadership practice. There is a combination of strengths held by both leaders and followers that can be triggered and organized, often in different ways to meet the needs of different situations. The instrument organizes individual leadership strengths into four domains: executing, influencing, relationship building, and strategic thinking. There are between six and nine sub themes for each domain, and subtheme components are weighted and combined to generate a score for each leadership domain. The instrument assumes that individuals are operating in a group setting, and that every member of a group has a particular combination of strengths. Once the instrument offers up individuals' strengths profiles, Rath and Conchie suggest, leaders can use this information to build a team to address the challenge at hand. In this way, they build a foundation for group- and contingency-based leadership theories with a strengths-based assessment tool.

Across the field, the weakness of trait-based theory has shifted analysis from individuals to groups. Weaknesses include (1) analysis of trait-based studies and their

supporting literature found no clear distinction between leaders and non-leaders in terms of traits explored (Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991; House & Aditya, 1997), (2) it is difficult to predict whether a given trait will contribute to successful leadership (Jennings, 1961); and, (3) while bundling personality characteristics suggests that some traits are related to leader emergence, they are not necessarily predictive of leader success (Judge et al., 2002). In shifting levels of analysis from individuals to groups, one vein of literature focuses on the dynamics that occur in small group settings, while a second vein considers the larger external factors that shape what counts as good leadership. Together, these group- and contingency-based bodies of theory broaden the leadership lens.

Thus, a second bundle of literature is associated with group-centered leadership and the dynamics of group settings. When people find themselves in groups, they engage in social processes. In all but the most structured contexts, these processes are interpretive and deliberative in nature, and leaders emerge through the group's search for substantive—not always technical—meaning and direction. Leaders are those who test ideas with and in relationship to group members, and group members associate themselves with people who are expressing ideas that resonate with them. This practice of meaning-making builds a sense of purpose, which serves as a foundation for the development and pursuit of specific, measurable goals (Swanson, 1970). Group formation literature describes the interaction required for groups to take ownership of expressed values, and how leaders and followers in a group define and take on work roles over time (Wilson, 2002; Yukl, 2012; Morgan, Ingle & Shinn, 2018). Leadership and meaning-making in groups is interactive and iterative: roles are redefined and reassigned

as group values evolve, and relationships and group solidarity ebb and flow (Morgan, Ingle & Shinn, 2018).

Thinking of leadership in groups shows that, rather than individuals building their personal style or brand, leadership has to do with ideas, meanings, and roles. Leaders emerge, grow, and wane in group settings and over time. Leaders' evolutions can be a product of the normative saliency of their ideas and their ability to build, sustain, and support resiliency in shared meaning; developing an understanding of ethics is a necessary component of individual and group leadership (Vogelsang-Coombs, 2016). In a group, as shared meaning coalesces, work roles develop. These roles help define expectations and appropriate relations among members, including leaders. Individuals grow and adapt under these constraints, and their growth shapes attitudes and norms about appropriate leadership both inside and outside of the group. Morgan, Ingle and Shinn (2018) emphasize that good leadership is defined in part by the content of, and relationships among, institutional roles. Additionally, leadership functions are present in many group roles and produce multiple leaders. Finally, dynamics between groups have as much formative influence on groups as dynamics within groups.

Understanding how groups make meaning, define roles, and form leaders has influenced organizational theory, where organizations set patterned relationships that calcify structures over time, within which there is order and role definition. The complexity that arises from the development of multiple patterns of relationships within organizations is known as contingency leadership theory.

As such, a third bundle of theory is associated with contingency, institutional, and organizational-centered leadership. In the 1950s and 1960s, literature began to focus on

leadership as a product of group functions and dynamics in corporate organizations (McGregor, 1960; Blake & Mouton, 1964; Hersey & Blanchard, 1981; Hersey, 1977; Hersey, Blanchard, & Johnson, 2001). This approach found that effective leadership depends on a match between organization or group conditions and leadership style (Fiedler, 1967; Vroom & Yetton, 1973; House & Mitchell, 1974; Fiedler & Garcia, 1987; House, 1996).

Blake and Mouton (1964) quantified contingency leadership with a grid, with "concern for people" along the y-axis, and "concern for task" along the x-axis. The range, from 1-9 along each axis, reflects how varying degrees of concern for task and concern for people produce different leadership styles. Reddin (1970) refined the grid into quadrants that sort people into four leadership styles: supporting, coaching, delegating, and autocratic. Reddin's styles suggest that potential and practicing leaders need to consider what kind of leadership is most appropriate for a given group at a given time. This "sizing up" of a group includes consideration of the group dynamics at work in a given team and the ways context defines the limits to and possibilities for action (Morgan, Ingle & Shinn 2018).

Contingency theories have some limitations. They presume a single, formal leader, or a clear hierarchy of leaders in a single organization. Most often, this is not the case. Rather, individuals in organizations often have multiple superiors, and many work groups have networked relationships across multiple organizations. In the public and nonprofit sectors, multiple legal obligations mean that subordinates bring more independence to their work than in a model corporate organization. Organizational- and

institutional-centered leadership theories build on the corporate focus of contingency theories to recognize the significance of the organization as a unit of analysis.

Selznick (1957, 1949) found that leadership at an organizational level is a process of weaving narrower group interests into a broader organizational vision. In a study of the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), he illustrates how federal agency staff coordinated a diverse array of community and business leaders into long-term collaboration with TVA to bring electricity to the valley, control flooding and promote economic development in the rural region. Selznick defines leadership in the TVA context as an institution-building process, where instrumental group and organizational agendas are transformed into a larger whole of shared meaning, capacity and purpose. He goes on to describe how institutionalization emerged over time through an intentional, explicit linking of the work of the TVA to the well-being of the region. The leadership exhibited by TVA staff showed their wide-lens vision of the whole of the public good, a sense of how their work fit, and an understanding of how an institution can serve as a venue for the transformation of the interests of disparate groups into a shared set of interests and values. While Selznick's TVA study is limited by the TVA's place in history and its large-scale, high-power approach, his work is an important precursor to a focus on institutions as the primary unit of analysis in leadership studies. Picking up in the 1980's, this focus develops understandings of the fluid nature of institutions and the leadership competencies required in these settings (Douglas, 1986; Powell & DiMaggio, 1991; Elkin & Soltan, 1993).

Distinguishing "public service" leadership

Public service in the United States, from a library bake-sale fundraiser, to a county commission, to National Monument designation, requires a particular set of skills, awareness, and judgment. Public servants are individuals who work in federal, state, and local general-purpose governments, and special districts, plus elected officials at these same levels. In some cases, contractors working for public entities can also function as public servants in their moral responsibility and constitutional obligation through their contract mechanism. Public legal missions, culture, history and values create a context for leadership that is different from what is found in the generic leadership literature, much of which emerges from the private sector. As discussed in the previous section, this body emphasizes personal qualities and transactional functions that bind leaders and followers to a shared purpose. Shared purpose alone is a useful and powerful motivator, but a shared purpose can be crafted–on purpose or by accident–to erode rather than build the trust and legitimacy required to steward public institutions and fulfill the requirements of governance. An additional basket of knowledge, intention, mechanisms and tools are required to actualize leadership in the public sector.

The term "polity leadership" is a wide lens for the practice of leadership in the public sector. "Polity" comes from the Greek *polis*, the classical city-states of Ancient Greece and renaissance Italy. To characterize the *polis*, Daniel Kemmis (1990) begins by quoting Michael Ignatieff;

> No matter that Greek democracy was built upon the institution of slavery; no matter that the Italian city-states were feuding and unequal oligarchies. Utopias never have to make their excuses to history; like all dreams they have a timeless

> immunity to disappointment in real life. The *polis* would continue to beckon us forward out of the past even if no actual *polis* ever existed (p. 121).

Kemmis goes on to note that some of the enduring appeal of the idea of *polis* is because of the way it focuses attention on the shared enterprise of inhabitation, the place which a certain group of people recognize that they inhabit in common. Morgan, Ingle and Shinn (2018) extend this construct, explaining that "Polity draws attention to the organic wholeness of the community and emphasizes the synergistic influence of history, geo-political conditions, institutions and culture in creating a shared system of values, and shared agreement on governance processes and structures" (p. 98).

Polity leaders, then, are responsible for operating in the *polis*, the milieu of values and moral purposes of their communities (in contrast, leaders can be motivated by market incentives, or a combination of market and moral purpose). They can leverage private, public, nonprofit, and civic relationships and resources to advance a common good. Each generation of polity leaders is required to reevaluate and readdress its leadership role, opportunities, and possibilities, because the size and degree of overlap among sectors (1) changes through time; and, (2) is different among and across communities. While a degree of adaptation is required, there is a structure to the American democratic polity that endures through time.

Recognizing this enduring structure helps individuals to step into a space of opportunity and take action. Polity leadership is successful when it is informed by a strong understanding of the role and function of the sectors of the American political economy (Morgan, Ingle & Shinn 2018, pp. 66-69). The public, private, nonprofit, and special district sectors are best suited to distinctive tasks. It is important for public service

leaders–who can and in some cases must engage as polity leaders–to know what sector can do particularly well, and why (ibid).

Since the mid-1970s, a thread of leadership literature has focused on leadership in the public sector. Burns (2012, 1978) posited that leaders typically use one of two general methods of leading, an either/or dichotomy. Many leaders use a "transactional" approach, relying on a sense of reciprocity between leaders and followers. For example, elected politicians make commitments during their campaigns in exchange for constituents' votes. This approach falls short in many public settings, where market incentives alone cannot efficiently produce or allocate goods and services and a leader is responsible for cultivating and sustaining a shared sense of the public interest and a common vision and plan for action.

Burns' second method of leading is "transformational," which he defines as the ability to raise the consciousness of followers regarding common and higher values. This consciousness raising transforms an aggregation of individual or group interests to a larger common good. While Burns' work situates leadership in political settings, he also revives the individual level of analysis in the literature and links the two. This is useful, but it can be problematic as noted above: a strong leader and shared purpose are not necessarily set up to promote public interests or good governance. Morgan, Ingle and Shinn (2018) argue that Burns' emphasis on the social-psychological dynamic of leadership does not give sufficient attention to the institutions, norms and structures that are inherent to America's constitutional system of governance.

Luke (1998) offers the complementary concept of "catalytic" leadership, where successful leadership is the product of properly timed speech and action that catalyze

others. A catalytic leader inspires others to work together to determine goals and purposes, and to use information, resources, and their formal and informal power to work toward those goals and purposes. For a catalytic leader, formal authority and control of resources and information are less important than being able to see the complexities of a community or policy setting clearly and taking action at an appropriate time. Effective catalytic leaders identify critical points for action by thinking strategically, cultivating relationships in and among groups, and maintaining a clear and consistent purpose. Luke finds that because the setting in which most leaders operate is highly complex and highly interconnected, individuals and groups who spark collective action at the right moment tend to be more effective and efficient than individuals who take charge in a less strategic way. Catalytic leaders sense when a group, groups, or a network are more or less ready to hear a message, engage in meaningful discourse, reach consensus and act. This kind of leadership helps cultivate trust and conditions for productive work on things that matter to everyone involved. It also implicitly characterizes followers as political actors, each with their own judgment and contributions (Green & Zinke, 1993).

Carver (1990) contributes to the public service leadership thread by addressing head-on the challenge of leading in a world of rapidly shifting coalitions and changing organizations. Morgan, Ingle and Shinn (2018) suggest that public service requires a certain kind of leadership for three reasons. First, public service leaders act within defined legal structures of authority that both constrain and create leadership opportunities. To be efficient, effective, and equitable, these individuals need a clear understanding of the system of governance in which they operate, where a structure of authority creates a set of norms for how to engage and get work done. If leaders fail to

see, fail to understand, or fail to follow these norms they can erode the support of potential followers.

Second, public service leaders in the United States operate within a set of democratic values that are embodied and promoted by the legal structures and processes within which they operate. By learning and practicing an active awareness of these values, structures, and processes, leaders recognize what should get done (values) and how things should get done (the structures and processes). Embedded in the role of a public service leader is a moral responsibility to promote and preserve the democratic values that have acquired authority through law, history, and public institutions. This responsibility is a difficult one to fulfill, because public values are constantly contested and constantly changing.

Third, public service leaders need a large repertoire of leadership practices to recognize the elasticity of public values and accommodate them in a variety of settings and at every level of the organization in which they work. Public-facing and middle managers in public organizations shape the meaning of the public interest on a daily basis as much as individuals in positions of executive or legislative leadership. While the roles of public servants vary dramatically, their influence in shaping the public interest is equally significant.

Morgan, Ingle and Shinn (2018) argue that the particular circumstances of public service and public service leadership require the acquisition of a new leadership mindset, and an accompanying set of practices. For leaders with already extensive legal and management responsibilities, the addition of leadership frameworks and techniques can impair, rather than assist, their ability to act. Traditional expectations of efficiency and

effectiveness in the production of public goods and services are now accompanied by expectations of responsiveness, equity, protecting rights, and co-production through new governance designs.

Fulfilling the legal and moral responsibilities of public sector leadership requires an ever-evolving set of skills, knowledge, awareness, and sensibility. Morgan, Ingle and Shinn (2018) develop theory about "prudential judgment," a certain sensibility that is therapeutic–supportive of and helpful to–public service leaders and the outcomes of public service leadership. The authors draw on Aristotle's *phronesis*, or practical wisdom, to help define this sensibility. Three characteristics of phronesis have implications especially for public service leadership: experience, forethought and deliberation, and acquisition and development. First, the ability to make sense out of the busy world requires lived experience, and the feelings and memories that come along with lessons hard-learned or well-earned. Second, practical wisdom requires both forethought and deliberation. Individuals must have the capacity to think about a range of possible impacts of decision-making at every level of analysis, and recognize that the consequences of a certain action today may be different than the consequences of the same action tomorrow. Third, phronesis can be systematically acquired and honed through practice. This practice can be designed with intention, to accelerate the development of prudence and judicious decision-making (Morgan, Ingle & Shinn 2018, pp. 368-369).

In American democracy, prudential judgment is exercised at the intersection between social complexity and the ethical principles of the political system. Leaders are expected to spark collective action toward the public interest, and must do so on this

balance beam. On one hand, complex social interdependence holds value conflicts, and is unpredictable and unknowable in its whole. On the other hand, public service leaders are stewards of the public trust, responsible to legal structures and processes and institutions that hold and carry values through time (ibid at pp. 384-385). Prudential judgment is the theoretical space open to individuals who are willing to step into the challenge of creating the common good upon which so many depend.

Developing public service leadership

Three fundamental instruments for leadership development exist: self-study, structured experience, and formal training and education (Van Wart, 2005). Organizations play an important role in individuals' leadership development, ideally creating multiple avenues so that formal training, structured developmental opportunities, and incentives for self-study all exist. Van Wart (2005) describes seven fundamental principles for formal training design: setting goals, increasing the similarity of training to the work environment, teaching underlying principles, increasing the organization of the material, actively involving the learner, giving feedback, and using a variety of techniques and stimuli. He also categorizes methods for instruction, which undergird the implementation of the principles: lecture methods, discussion methods, printed and electronic materials, and practice and feedback techniques (role playing, survey and self-assessment, site visits).

While Van Wart's work surveys the instruments, principles, and methods for public service leadership development, others consider the inputs, outputs, and outcomes of individual programs and program models. There is an urgent need for new or revised leadership development programs for water resource professionals (Burbach, Floress &

Kaufmann, 2015), while a two-year development program in the food systems field was found to increase reported skill competency and skill application (Fernandez, Noble, Jensen, Martin & Stewart, 2016).

American democracy depends on leadership by career public servants at every level of their organizations. This is the space where leadership action is most visible to citizens, where it matters most in terms of services that add up and show up over time, and where democratic governance takes on real meaning as an active process of renewal between citizens and their leaders. Thus, education, development and training should situate public servants at the center of social complexity and political principals and help them to develop and cultivate their leadership skills and sensibilities, including prudential judgment.

Outlining the FICC model for public service leadership development

In *New Public Governance* (2015), Doug Morgan proposes a field immersion/comparative program model for leadership development. He describes components that may characterize the model. It engages "live" or "ripe" cases, relying on decisive players to tell the story of each case. Participants and faculty travel to the geography of the case topic, and spend time in the field to see, touch, taste, hear, and otherwise experience the challenge and opportunity at hand. Participants hear from decisive players in the conflict or challenge at hand, in confidential and individual or small-panel presentations and discussions. Cases are immersive, and duration makes a difference that matters: participants and faculty settle into the geography and become aware of the boundaries of communities and jurisdictions. Cases are facilitated to encourage students to seek leadership and structure intervention strategies, and multiple

cases are layered together to allow students to test these strategies in different contexts. A capstone session sets up students to test and present their learning outcomes.

The proposed model has significant theoretical overlap with a variety of leadership training programs for students at all stages, from early childhood education to post-secondary courses and professional programs. However, Morgan suggests that the particular combination of the model's components (live; situated in community; facilitated) creates conditions for a certain set of individual learning outcomes and especially surfaces the practice and exercise of prudential judgment by public service leaders. This study adds detail and description to Morgan's proposed model and investigates the relationships between key components of the model and individual learning outcomes.

Morgan's FICC model relies on theory from the fields of public administration, sociology, psychology and education. Particularly, it is situated in cognitive and social constructivist approaches to teaching and learning. Constructivist theory addresses the problems of knowledge and knowing (Piaget, 1973). Radical constructivism (von Glasersfeld, 2013) focuses on the individual, and begins with the assumption that knowledge, however defined, is in the heads of people, and that the thinking subject has no alternative but to construct what they know on the basis of their own experience. In other words, what an individual makes of experience constitutes the world in which they consciously live. This knowledge can be sorted into many kinds, such as things, self, others, and so on. This kind of categorizing aside, all kinds of experience are essentially subjective, and while two individuals might seek to find differences, they have no way of knowing that there two experiences are not the same.

Social constructivist theory is grounded in work by Piaget, Vygotsky, and Bruner, and contends that human development is socially situated and that knowledge is constructed through interaction with others. Based on work in psychology, philosophy, science, and biology, constructivist theory describes knowledge as emergent, developmental, nonobjective, viable constructed explanations by humans engaged in meaning-making. This meaning-making happens in social and cultural communities of discourse. While constructivism is not a theory of teaching per se, it suggests that teachers (facilitators, instructors, professors, and other kinds of teachers) take a non-traditional approach to instruction, one that offers individuals the opportunity for concrete, contextually meaningful experience through which they can search for patterns, raise questions, and model, interpret, and defend their strategies and ideas in a social context (Bruner, 1966; Piaget, 1973; Vygotsky, 1978; Dewey, 1997).

As an extension of the case study model, the FICC model draws heavily on the pedagogies associated with teaching via case studies. Case-based instruction asks students to draw on prior experience to solve actual or hypothetical problems, and to engage in discussion about their case (McDade, 1995; Mayo, 2004). As both problem-related and collaborative, case-based instruction blends cognitive and social constructivist models of teaching and learning: as students build knowledge through reflection and conceptual analysis, they concurrently share knowledge through discourse (Cobb, 1996). The approach casts students in the role of knowledge creator and faculty in the role of facilitator and guide, helping students to make sense of complexity and identify core areas for agency and change. Case-based instruction is employed in a range of

disciplines, among them nursing, science, teacher education, business, and psychology (Mayo, 2004).

Case discussion—in deference to case presentation—is a pedagogical tool faculty engage in order to create conditions for the social construction of knowledge (McDade, 1995). Notably, it differs from problem-based instruction (Savery, 2015), in that a case requires context and invites applied complexities. Case study serves as a launch point for discussion among students and, in a "live" case arrangement, between students and presenters in a question-and-answer format. In both case-based instruction and a fully developed FICC program, case discussion is an essential component in development of learning outcomes of both quality and quantity (Wassermann, 1994). Discussion is facilitated by one or more teachers, instructors, or faculty, who guide the group in review of the case content where it is particularly complex, and then toward inferences and conclusions. In the absence of planned answers, case analysis through discourse requires that students be active rather than passive learners (McDade, 1995).

Case-based instruction is engaged in single-discipline, cross-discipline, and interdisciplinary settings. Buchbinder et al. (2005) describe the added value of case-based instruction in interdisciplinary settings, finding that the use of an interdisciplinary case study, in conjunction with a mixed cohort model and experienced faculty, accelerates knowledge acquisition. By allowing for complexity and intersectionality in the setup and processing of the case, the authors more closely track the complexity of the system their students turn to when they construct and apply knowledge to similar situations in their lives and work.

While case-based instruction has been shown to produce a range of useful learning outcomes, it has drawbacks (Graham & Cune, 1980). First, because a case study is limited to the problem at hand, it may not generate the full complement of concepts needed to address curricular learning objectives. Where instructor-generated cases are used, this shortfall can be limited through case study design. During "live" cases, faculty chooses presenters and guides the content they offer. Faculty may also facilitate question and answer sessions to address particular learning objectives. However, live cases are more challenging to guide than pre-authored ones. Second, where instructor-generated cases are used, students may find it difficult to make connections between a fictional case study and their life and work.

While Morgan's FICC model relies on the theory and method of case-based instruction, it carries a few added distinctions. First, a FICC program is break-set, where students are immersed in a structured learning environment for a relatively short, set period of time, and then return to their everyday work or schooling. This process is repeated at least twice to allow for comparison, generally up to three or four times, and may be repeated for an extended time. Second, a FICC program situates students in both the physical geography and community where the case at hand is playing out. Third, a FICC program locates students as leaders and problem-solvers, both in the case at hand and in their own professions and lives. As in case-based instruction, the FICC model engages with the metaphor of learning as knowledge construction (Mayer, 1992). In addition, the model calls upon students to apply theoretical concepts observed to their own experiences, both professional and personal. Conceptual information becomes personalized, stimulating introspection and offering students opportunities to link course

content with complex challenges and potential solutions in their own work and life (Cabe, Walker & Williams, 1999). Literature in social constructivist theory, leadership, leadership development and leadership development programming frames this study by providing understanding about the product of public service leadership and some modes for its development.

Elucidating the FICC model and its impacts on public service leadership: need for this study

Morgan (2015) argues that the roots of public service as a professional practice are "firmly planted in the political soil of the various communities that public administrators serve" (ibid, p. 283). Administrators–public servants, professionals–need a firm grounding in rule-of-law structures, processes, and values that create accountability and the responsible exercise of discretion. Public service requires leaders who perform as agents, polity makers, and polity preservers. As such, it is necessary to understand how to best educate, train, and develop individual leadership for and in the public sector.

While Morgan outlines the FICC model, he does so as an observer and practitioner, designing, teaching, and re-designing FICC-style programs in the field. There is a need for research that examines in more detail and dynamism the interactions between the conditions created by an FICC program and the consequences of those interactions. That is, there is a need for knowledge about the characteristics, dimensions, and outer limits of the FICC model; about how it works, why, and for whom; and about the learning outputs and public service leadership outcomes it produces. This study begins to meet that need.

Chapter 3: Methods

Chapter 3 describes the methods used to better understand the development of public service leadership. The chapter describes the research design, setting, data sources, and methods for sampling, data collection and analysis. The chapter concludes with a discussion of validation and evaluation in grounded theory research.

Research design

This study uses a grounded theory approach to build knowledge about the form and function of public service leadership development. The study examines one program, the Executive Seminar Program in Natural Resources at Portland State University, to elucidate the relationships between how individuals learn to lead, how program structure impacts learning, and the learning outputs and real-world outcomes of the FICC program model. Program archives and participant observation informed the development of structured interviews of fifty-one alumni of the Executive Seminar Program who participated between academic years 2013-14 and 2018-19. Interview subjects are characterized throughout the study as alumni or participants (in the program and in this study), and more generally as public servants, public administrators, and administrators.

Research setting

The research setting is the Executive Seminar Program in Natural Resources Leadership, a program of the Mark O. Hatfield School of Government at Portland State University. ESP is a non-credit professional development program delivered by the Center for Public Service and previously housed in the Graduate School at Lewis and Clark College. The program was developed in the late 1970's at the request of regional leadership in the USDA Forest Service, who sought a development opportunity for mid-

career professionals. They were particularly focused on individuals who were transitioning from technical roles to supervisory and leadership roles and taking on boundary-spanning and more complex challenges in public natural resource management. Over time, the program grew to include participants from state and federal natural resource management agencies across the Pacific Northwest, as well as a handful of individuals working in the private sector (timber companies in Oregon) and a smaller number of individuals working in natural resource management for tribal governments, nonprofits and soil and water conservation districts. From 1999-2023, ESP cohorts have ranged in size from 16-29 participants. Today, ESP draws on case studies of complex natural resource issues to catalyze advanced leadership development and enhanced understanding of governance principles.

ESP is composed of three week-long case studies situated in communities of interest and communities of place. The cases are enriched by participants' opportunity to develop a sense of place (Kemmis, 1990, p. 5) and an embeddedness in their topic for the week. The program ends with a one- or two-day capstone in Portland, Oregon. ESP cases address real issues in real time, using guest speakers to tell the story of the environmental, regulatory, or policy problem(s) or solution(s) at hand. Guest speakers are polity leaders in the case topic, from elected officials to agency staff to nonprofit leaders to community members. Speakers are also asked to reflect on the leadership required to navigate the case at hand, and their leadership journeys more broadly. A typical five-day program week begins with a day of "scene setting," the history and institutional home of the case topic, a day of further information and detail, followed by a day in the field, a fourth day split between summative speakers or teaching topics and small group work,

and a final day of intra-class exercises to synthesize the week's learning. The cases are generally dispersed across the Pacific Northwest, with outliers in the Southwest, Intermountain West, and Alaska. They are topically diverse, considering issues from forestry and fisheries to land use and tribal rights. The cases' temporal, geographic, and material dispersion is central to the program design. In addition, each program year after 2010 is guided by and features a connecting theme (for example, "Restoring the Land, Sustaining Communities" and "Building Back Resilience"). These themes serve to connect cases and spark concept development associated with curriculum throughout the program year (Morgan, Ingle & Shinn 2018). Each year's theme is included in Appendix C.

The program is guided by an Advisory Board composed of natural resource agency leaders. These individuals represent the program's "sending agencies," the primary organizations sending participants to the program. It is led by a Program Director and Faculty in the Department of Public Administration at Portland State, and staffed by a Program Coordinator in the Center for Public Service. Cases and program year themes are co-produced by the Advisory Board and program staff and faculty. Advisory Board members also guide and adapt the program's learning outcomes, helping faculty and staff understand specific and timely training needs. Organizations represented on the Advisory Board in the 2022-2023 Program Year can be found in Appendix D.

As noted above, the program is staffed by a team of three: a Program Director, Faculty Lead, and Program Coordinator. Each of these roles is important to the function and flow of the program. The program director develops each program year (three cases and capstone, September through June) and each case study in collaboration with the

Advisory Board. The Director's work in case development is detailed, typically including extended research and story construction, engagement with guest speakers, and site visits. The Program Director also co-facilitates each day of each session and oversees the program as a whole. The Faculty Lead develops and delivers academic content in keeping with the program's learning goals and in alignment with each case and program year theme. The Faculty Lead also co-facilitates each day of each session with the Program Director, updates content in collaboration with the Advisory Board, and serves as a link between the program and the university. The Program Coordinator manages the extensive logistics required to support a cohort and staff on field programs across the West; supports cohort members during enrollment and throughout the year; and manages the program budget, marketing and records. This team of three works closely and in concert, and while the program has tried other staffing arrangements over its history, this current one has been shown to be most durable.

ESP participants–selected by their sending agencies–are diverse in their organizational representation, professional backgrounds, and roles and responsibilities. Their educational backgrounds range from fisheries to finance to political science to art. Their professional fields include biometrics, budget analysis, forestry, fleet and facilities management, services administration, range management, watershed restoration, social science, planning, and program management. They come to ESP to develop supervisory skills, communication skills, collaborative skills, and the sensibilities required to lead in complexity. In some sending agencies, they request the program, self-nominate, or are nominated. In others, they are identified and encouraged by their supervisors. The

program can provide participants substantive learning outcomes as well as training hours, development opportunities, and performance metrics.

The ESP is a helpful research setting for generalizing descriptive findings about the relationship between the FICC model and leadership learning outcomes to other fields of public service beyond environmental and natural resource management. The defining characteristics of environmental problems are a long time scale to solution, complexity, a weak and scattered science base, integration across disciplines, an emotionally or values-charged atmosphere, and uncertainty and unintended consequences. In the twenty-first century, these characteristics are present in all kinds of settings where leadership is needed. Thus, leadership in the environmental field is a useful setting to study leadership in the public interest more broadly, from health and human services to financial regulation (Gordon & Berry, 2006).

Data sources, sampling and collection methods

This study relies on three data sources: a review of program archives from the mid-1980's-present; participant observation; and fifty-one interviews with program alumni. The combination of these three data sources builds descriptive validity for the model and its attendant outcomes.

The review of program archives included past case materials, giving a sense of the depth, breadth, and complexity of the program's field of study. Past case materials, and particularly case agendas, built knowledge about the process and product of case construction and the kinds of guest speakers participants experienced. Cohort lists gave information about the organizational representation, number of participants, and the mix of participants' roles and responsibilities, jurisdictions, and geographies. Archival review

also included some curricular materials, faculty notes, and capstone agendas and materials. Finally, archival review included exit surveys from 1999-2021. These surveys are focused on individual cases, and ask about participants' top takeaways, favorite and least favorite reading materials and guest speakers, and satisfaction with logistics and the program overall. While response rate to these surveys is, on average, about 30%, they provided some background information on key learning points, case topics, curricular approaches, and the arc of participants' learning and thinking about ESP over the course of the year.

The researcher conducted participant observation as ESP's Program Assistant (2013-2019), Instructor (2014-2019), and Academic Lead (2021-2023). These nine years of embeddedness in the program allowed the researcher to consider its purpose and function and asked them to work to improve the program as it operated. Recognizing that grounded theory analysis requires the researcher to serve as a vehicle for meaning-making (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), the researcher was well positioned to plumb the range of archive materials and interview responses to build a detailed and valid picture of ESP, the FICC model, and participants' learning outcomes. Moreover, it is likely that they received a higher response rate to their interview requests based on the relationship that they had with program alumni from 2013-2019.

Semi-structured interviews produce the majority of descriptive data for the study. Singleton and Straits (2010, p. 266) explain that in semi-structured interviews, the interviewer has specific objectives and is permitted some freedom in meeting them. While the scope of the interview is limited to certain subtopics and key questions are developed in advance, the discussion may also be wide-ranging, and additional questions

can be developed spontaneously during the interview. This interview method was selected over structured or unstructured to focus data collection on the relationships between components of the FICC model and learning outcomes, while leaving flexibility for the interviewer to investigate each individual's leadership development pathway, their experience in ESP, and how they link learning experiences, learning outcomes, and application to their everyday and lifetime work.

The sampling for interviews involved three steps. First, the study examines one leadership and governance training program; interviewees are individuals who work in environment and natural resources public service organizations and who are alumni of a well-known and resource-intensive external training program. Second, ESP participants are selected by their sending agencies. While each sending agency has a particular process for identifying, vetting and selecting candidates for ESP each year participants are generally chosen for their proven leadership potential. Thus, ESP participants have a propensity for inter- and intra-organizational leadership. They identify as promising leaders or potential leaders, and their supervisors and/or colleagues also identify them as such. Third, interviews were voluntary and in response to an email request. Where an email address on file with the ESP no longer worked, the researcher conducted only a brief search for the individual at another address or workplace. If alumni left the workforce or went into private sector employment, they tended not to turn up in these brief searches and fell out of the sample. These three stacking steps produced a sample of individuals who recognize themselves as leaders, who are recognized by others as leaders, who were impacted by the ESP, and who continue to work in the environment and natural resources field, largely in public service organizations. Participants'

familiarity with the researcher–via their program assistant and instructor roles during participants' program years–may have created some response bias tendency, which likely cuts both ways: participants were aware of the researcher's investment in the program and its successes, but were also comfortable with the researcher and wanted to give constructive feedback. The interview process, data analysis and storage were confidential, and participants were notified of confidentiality in the initial request for the interview and in each communication thereafter.

The interview script was informed by the study's purpose, the literature review, the review of program archives, participant observation and eight preliminary interviews of key informants identified by the researcher as invested in the program, thoughtful, reflective, and representative of a diversity of program years, sending agencies, professional roles and career stages. During the interview process, a research journal (also called memoing) tracked the refinement of questions to better access key information about categories, conditions, strategies, and consequences. Following the eight preliminary interviews, the script was refined in the following ways: (1) removed a question about 'why you do your work,' which sought to access the idea of public service as specially motivated or articulated. Interviewees did not express service as a reason for choosing or doing their jobs, with the exception of one individual who had moved to the nonprofit sector and one individual who was leaving federal service for mission work. While this lack of attention to the idea of service in public administration is intriguing, examining this is outside of the scope of this study; (2) added questions probing how participants apply the learning outputs they attributed to ESP to their work. Depending on the flow of the conversation, these questions were associated with single case studies,

examples of concepts, how participants characterize ESP when talking with colleagues or their staff, and comparison of ESP to other training and development programs and opportunities; (3) added question(s) about continued leadership learning, to explore what might be missing from the FICC model and other ways participants tend to or prefer to learn how to lead; (4) sharpened the question about accountability, to ask whether participants felt that ESP created it, their sending agencies created it, if it's needed, and what else it could look like or how else it could be facilitated; (5) dropped a question about organizational-level impacts except in cases where the participant was in an executive leadership role or program advisory role or situated in one of two organizations that are especially saturated with ESP alumni at the time of the study; and (6) used a range of probing questions to elucidate direct links between what participants learned or saw during their ESP case studies or program year and what their work is or how they do their work. Such questions included, for example, "Do you link that directly to something you saw at ESP or was it a broader learning point during that time?" or, "Did you learn that at ESP or somewhere else?" or, "How did visiting an oyster hatchery teach you about leadership?"

All of the interviews were requested by email, and transmittal text can be found in Appendix A. Interview requests were sent in waves, beginning with set of eight preliminary interviews with alumni from program years 2018-19 and 2017-18 to fine-tune the interview script and practice. These eight individuals were selected by the researcher for their knowledge of and engagement with the program, and diversity in terms of program year, organization and organizational role. Successive requests were sent to program years 2015-19, and then 2013-15, until the data showed saturation in

terms of categories and dimension. Participants scheduled using YouCanBookMe, and received confirmation from that software as well as a follow-up email from the researcher. The researcher's confirmation email included a .pdf interview script, which can be found in Appendix B. Interviews were recorded with and transcribed by Otter.ai. Fifty-one interviews were conducted from December 2022-March 2023.

The final sample represented a fairly even distribution of program years and sending agencies. Participants represented program years 2018-19 (16), 2017-18 (11), 2016-17 (9), 2015-16 (9), and 2014-15 (6). They represented 19 organizations: 6 federal, 9 state (in Oregon, Washington, and Montana), 1 special district, 1 nonprofit, and 2 private industry. 24 participants work in federal service, 23 in state service, and 4 in a special district, nonprofit, or private organizations. Participants serve in roles such as field manager, recreation, heritage, lands and partnerships staff officer, deputy division director, director, regional hatchery coordinator, program manager, senior staffer, energy lead, program manager, district manager, and others. They manage complex public issues including climate and species migration, recreation management, conservation finance, endangered species, high-voltage transmission line development, agricultural leases, mine permitting, information management, organizational change, budget planning and execution, and strategic planning.

The Office of Research Integrity Human Research Protection Program determined this study qualifies as exempt and satisfies the provisions for protecting the rights and welfare of all subjects participating in research (HRPP #196396-18). The study adheres to the following ongoing Human Research Protection Program requirements: (1) Changes to Study Activities: Any changes to the study must be submitted to the ORI for review

and determination prior to implementation; (2) Unanticipated Problems or Adverse Events: Notify the ORI within 5 days of any unanticipated problems or adverse events that occur as a result of the study; (3) Study Completion: Notify the ORI when the study is complete; the ORI will request annual updates on the study status. Study materials must be kept for at least three years following completion; and, (4) Compliance: The PSU IRB (FWA00000091; IRB00000903) and the ORI comply with 45 CFR Part 46, 21 CFR Parts 50 and 56, and other federal and Oregon laws and regulations, as applicable. The Office of Research Integrity can be reached at psuirb@pdx.edu or 503-725-5484. The study did not encounter IRB-related issues.

Grounded theory research: analysis, validation and evaluation

A grounded theory approach was selected for its attention to unified theoretical explanation for a process, here the process of learning how to lead. In grounded theory studies, participants have all experienced the process (ESP) and the development of theory can help explain practice (how the FICC model works) and provide a framework for further research. In other words, the researcher generates theory (here, three propositions) of a process, action, or interaction shaped by the views of participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Corbin and Strauss (1990) and Charmaz (2014) identify criteria by which one judges the quality of a grounded theory study, in terms of the general research process and empirical grounding. The researcher used these criteria as checkpoints during study design and throughout analysis.

Coding and writing followed guidance from Creswell and Poth (2018) and Corbin and Strauss (2015). Creswell and Poth explain that grounded theory uses detailed procedures for analysis. It consists of three phases of coding: open, axial, and selective.

Open coding develops categories of information; axial coding interconnects the categories; and selective coding builds a story that connects the categories. Finally, the analysis ends with a discursive set of theoretical propositions.

Open coding of interview data began by identifying kinds of categories: mechanisms, conditions, and two kinds of consequences: outputs and outcomes. As a way of operationalizing the core phenomenon, *how individuals learn to lead*, the analysis first captures mechanisms for learning to lead. Second, coding identified conditions or factors that created the environment in which the core phenomenon occurred. Here, causal conditions are *the structure of ESP*, a prototypical FICC program. In addition, a handful of contextual conditions add depth and breadth to the causal conditions identified. Third, the coding identified consequences of the core phenomenon. Consequences are split into two parts: *what ESP participants learned* and *how they use these lessons in their work*. Throughout this study, this two-step categorization of consequences is shorthanded in the language of policy analysis, as outputs (things learned) and outcomes (learning applied). Generally, open coding is the process of saturating salient categories, and then dimensionalizing the properties that make up each category. Overall, this first step in coding reduces the database to a set of categories that characterize the processes being explored, i.e. the mechanisms, conditions, and consequences described in this paragraph.

Categories of mechanisms, conditions, and consequences were identified, lumped, and split according to their strength, clarity, and explanatory function. For example, a vast majority of participants reported learning about leadership most through observation. Then, different individuals learned by observing different kinds of people in their

personal and professional lives, in different settings, and different time periods. This "observation" category could be further split into "observing supervisors," "observing peers," "observing complex cases or problems," etcetera. However, the larger "observation" category has explanatory function, in that it helps link up how individuals learn with the engagement of case studies in the FICC model and the outcomes that participants reported *from* observing guest speakers, case studies, and a case series. Categorizing learning outputs and outcomes, in particular, was challenging in that (as discussed in more detail below) participants did not consistently link outputs to outcomes. As such, a broad, shallow set of outputs categories were sorted together to better align with participants' reported outcomes, e.g., how they use or used what they learned.

Open coding was followed by axial coding, where categories become in relationship with one another. For example, participant reflections on different kinds of collaboration (guest speakers in a case study, on a project in their own work, among the cohort, collaboration that did not occur but would have been therapeutic) were collected into a learning outputs category titled 'collaboration.' Next, that category was combined with another: stories about how participants used collaborative skills and sensibilities they learned during their ESP year later, in their own work. Finally, selective coding develops propositions that interrelate the categories into a model, assembling a story of how learning to lead via the FICC-style program produces qualitatively recognizable and therapeutic outcomes in natural resources management practice. Continuing the 'collaboration' example above, learning outputs and outcomes about collaboration were placed in relationship with the program structure approach to explain how the FICC

program helped participants learn to define, practice, and apply collaborative processes across diverse natural resources governance and organizational management settings. Finally, a consequential matrix (Corbin and Strauss 2015) provides a framework for conceptualizing the impacts of learning leadership through a FICC program at different scales, from individual to global. The purpose and informational function of the consequential matrix is described in chapter 4.

Chapter 4: Results

In this chapter, the grounded theory approach builds a pathway from mechanisms (how individuals learn to lead); to conditions (the FICC program's key components); to consequences (what participants learn and the impacts of those skills and sensibilities); to a consequential matrix explicating the range of possible impacts of the FICC model program from individual to global. Finally, the chapter offers three propositions for how and why the FICC model is effective in producing public service leadership development.

How individuals learn to lead

As the core phenomenon under study, the concept of how individuals learn to lead in public service settings is explored in Chapter 2. For the purpose of this study, participants were asked how they learned to lead over the arc of their career and life. The data is useful in building knowledge associated with leadership and leadership development, and more specifically useful in building knowledge about how alums of ESP conceptualize their leadership learning. Asked early in the interview, this question did not focus on ESP per se, and while a minority of participants mentioned training in their answers, a very few cited ESP in particular. Rather, data linked to the general question builds understanding of how individuals making up the sample have learned to lead over the broad scope of their lives at work and in the world, and serves as a starting point for building theory about conditions that are therapeutic to leadership learning.

Overwhelmingly, the data shows that participants have learned to lead through observation of other leaders and, to a lesser extent, colleagues and peers. They do not distinguish between professional, civic, and personal settings, but their framing leans toward a reflection on professional leadership experiences, like noticing how supervisors

or executives handled a difficult situation. Some of the examples offered also cited civic leadership: watching how a fellow Little League coach handles conflict or how a nonprofit board member approaches strategic planning. Observations included noticing the approaches, styles, and characteristics of leaders who produced successful outcomes as well as those who produced unsuccessful outcomes. More intuitively, participants asked, what makes me want to follow this person? Most often, participants cited supervisors as the people they observed and learned most from. They also look laterally, noticing the strategies of people they admire who are not necessarily in positional leadership roles.

They notice tools and techniques for managing contentious settings, as well as more widely applicable considerations like relationship building, active listening, how leaders carry themselves, set direction, and speak up when no one else is willing to. One participant explained, “I’m not the smartest guy in the room, but I sure like to look around and follow somebody else who’s doing it better.” This participant sees themselves as a leader in their professional role, but tidily articulates the relationship between critical followership as a tool for leadership learning. Finally, participants identified the trial-and-error part of learning to lead through observation: individuals identify helpful leadership characteristics, try them on for size (usually in what they understand to be a low-stakes or low-risk setting or issue), “stretch a little bit,” see what works for them as individuals and in their interorganizational and intra-organizational contexts, and reject what might not be a good fit.

Second to observation, participants noted that they learned leadership through experience. This experience came during explicitly leadership-practice settings and

through professional settings where leadership or leadership activities were simply needed to do the job. In particular, participants cited wildfire and incident management experience, trail crew, job corps, management council leadership, and more generally (but equally foundationally) early experiences with sports and scouting. Participants also benefited from a variety of intentional placements in leadership or boundary-spanning professional roles. Often these placements felt like a push or a challenge; they were lateral (a scientist stepping into project management, or a planner stepping into public relations) and vertical, stepping into a supervisory or management role. Placements, details or appointments that participants cited as especially experience-producing were mostly inter-organizational. A few were intra-organizational (sitting on and then vice-chairing and chairing a committee of a fisheries management council) and in wholly new program areas, with new funding streams (designing and managing a food security and farmworker safety program during the Covid-19 pandemic). Most importantly, they involved "being given the opportunity to muddle through the waters."

After observation and experience, participants identified classes, training, and professional development as contributing to the arc of their leadership learning. While few participants received leadership or management training during their post-secondary education, a variety of professional training is available to them through their organizations (and organizations they may have worked for previously). These trainings range from early- to executive- career stage, technical to highly adaptive, and focused on a diversity of topics. Most are developed and offered solely through the participant's agency, while a few are contracted out to private organizations or universities (ESP is in this category). The trainings identified by participants vary in time commitment and

structure from one-hour online sessions to two-year, cohort-based models with travel and study. Participants noted that classes, training, and professional development opportunities helped them increase self-awareness; define their leadership style; reaffirm what they knew about leadership and leadership characteristics (particularly framing leadership outside of the concept of management and positional leadership); and learn more about working with and understanding people. Broadly, participants emphasized that training helps build a foundation for other kinds of leadership learning.

Finally, participants cited the experience and act of being recognized (and recognizing oneself) as a rising leader as a critical turn in the arc of their leadership learning. For an individual leading an essential technical program, being selected for ESP was an important signal about their work, their leadership practice and potential, and their value to their organization and their field. In other settings, being told directly that people listen when they speak or follow their lead catalyzed an awareness of the possibilities of leadership in their role and for their work. One participant explained,

> Sometimes we have to trust others that say we're ready for this. Maybe they see something that we don't yet see in terms of an ability to work through something. It's good to have faith in those that you trust around you to be able to help you see that you can do something. You don't have to work through all that internally. You can work through it with others.

Alternately, some participants realized their leadership function independently, "realizing everyone is looking at you for direction. That doesn't happen every day, but there can be a significant moment." Whether it was externally or internally generated, recognition was instrumental in coming into acceptance of a leadership role and recognizing their

capability. In turn, being recognized sometimes leads to being given (or pushed) into leadership or boundary-spanning professional roles, where participants gain experience and/or the opportunity to observe. However, recognition of rising or potential leadership alone has the power to motivate and inspire individuals to think of themselves as leaders, which in turn can produce leadership learning, practice, vision and action.

Taken together, these mechanisms for leadership learning (observation, experience, training, and recognition) lay the groundwork for understanding how participants experience and act on their leadership development. Next, these findings will articulate the specific context or conditions of the FICC program, which is a focused look at one avenue of participants' overall learning and development process.

Explicating key components of the FICC model program

The conditions for learning to lead are the structural components of the program, as identified in interview data, program archives review, and participant observation. While participants' leadership learning has happened over the arc of their career and their life, from scouting to line officer details to executive service, ESP provided them with a specific set of conditions in which to further develop their leadership skills, style, and sensibility. ESP is a prototypical field immersion/comparative cases program. While literature in the field briefly discusses and names the FICC model, this study explicates and validates essential components of the model.

For participants, ESP gave a way to see how theory–in public administration, sociology, governance, and leadership–relates to the field. They described the program as a seminar for natural resources professionals; an opportunity to learn together to and share experiences; a place to think creatively and critically; and to become more mindful

of the context in which natural resources issues occur. They highlighted the approach to case development, where they heard from all sides of the story in deference to solely one organizational or interested perspective. They characterized the program as "a perfectly balanced teeter-totter: what do we know about these questions through research? And what does it look like to actually imperfectly apply these things in real life?" and as "a 20/20 hindsight sort of thing: you learn about a controversial issue, the trials and tribulations, the players, the challenges, the lessons learned. Those stories don't just end; you explore how they continue to evolve over time."

Further, participants lifted up the structural components of the program that were most helpful for them: case studies, the cohort model, the mix of case topics, the mix of pedagogies, the timing or "break-set" of the program year, the academic component, and program leadership. While individual participants named between one and ten conditions, components, or approaches of ESP as especially useful to their experience, their learning, or their work during and after their program year, they noted that it is important to have the different "parts" of the program "if you're trying to learn and grow because everyone engages differently. There are leadership skills and all different aspects in the academic setting, engaging with local communities, and personal connections." That is, the conditions identified and explored in this section complement and enhance one another to produce a synergy in design and interaction, where the program is greater than the sum of its parts. This section will describe in more detail six essential conditions for the FICC model: cases, cohort, topics, pedagogies, timing, and curriculum.

1: Cases

Case studies are at the center of the design and functioning of ESP and the FICC model. They are generated by the program's Advisory Board, director, faculty lead, alumni, and colleagues, and constructed following a general model (Morgan & Cook, 2015, p. 282) with essential situational awareness and professional experience on the part of the program director. They are week-long explorations of a complex topic in environment and natural resources, situated as close to the community and landscape as is feasible. Each case week begins with background information, unspools a range of perspectives on the issue at hand, and includes an all-day field visit to sites that illustrate the issue or offer guest speakers the opportunity to show the cohort the impacts of decisions or possibilities on the biophysical, cultural, and social landscape. Over the course of each case, the cohort learns from 10-25 guest speakers who are positional and situational leaders responsible for tackling the issue at hand. Speakers typically represent organizations and constituencies across the political economy. The program director guides the cohort through the case and the director and faculty link practices and concepts in leadership and governance that are represented in the case to academic literature and broader experience through a range of pedagogical approaches.

ESP case studies are presented as close to the case geography as possible, with steering and engagement from key players (ibid, p. 281). One participant described the functional distinction:

> The cases were simulations, and by that I mean they had these two factors: time and consequence. When something comes across your desk, you're required to have an answer. What ESP does is freeze time, and puts you in this simulation where you have a problem that is stretched over time, so you're not pressed to

> make a decision. You have space to rehearse different positions, visit the past, present, and future. And it doesn't bring the risk of maybe messing up. Then once you go into a live situation that they're grappling with, they know to ask, what can I do now, I can consult, buy myself a little time, consider multiple perspectives and then come to a solution. It's a reminder to open up that space to really compute the variables.

Storytelling is essential to the function of cases; in terms of case development and the case study itself. The program director experiences the construction of each case as the writing of a journalistic story; participants lift up the storytelling of the cases, where the program "uses them to tell a story. The pieces you were sharing, they all fit together as a whole: the lessons, the skills, the strategies and the perspectives we were exposed to fit together nicely." The criteria for selecting cases, which is owned and held by the program director and faculty lead together, includes: "many hands" involved; a policy issue or topic that has played out publicly; "ripeness" for study; a diversity of natural resource issues covered over time; regional distribution; relevance for future decision making; illustrations of different leadership styles or conflict resolution processes; offers challenges to participants' beliefs and worldviews; and fits in geographic and budget capacities.

While some cases are well-known examples of innovation or success in the field (for example, the Teanaway Community Forest, groundfish recovery on the Oregon Coast, the Yakima Basin Integrated Plan, or the Mountains to Sound Greenway National Heritage Area), there is an originality and authenticity to the case construction, where some guest speakers are being asked to reflect on their experience with a process or

project for the first time, or in a particularly open, expansive, evaluative way. This action orientation, in turn, contributes to participants' sense that a case is built to teach them, and enhances conditions for teaching, learning, and practice.

Cases rely on a process of discovery learning (Bruner, 1966; Dewey, 1916/1997; Piaget, 1973), where participants hear from a variety of sources, perspectives, and experiences, and make sense for themselves, as individuals, in small groups, and as a class, of the "story" of the case, its past, present, and future, and the implications of their "takeaways" for their own leadership development and work in governance. This process creates doubt for some participants at first: the program year does not begin with a set of specific objectives, skills to develop, or homework to complete. Rather, participants are expected to "discover" or identify through their own professional judgment what is interesting, expected, unexpected, useful, and transferable to other natural resource problem settings, including their own work. One participant explained,

> Visiting a sturgeon hatchery became leadership training: we might have been at a hatchery, but it was incumbent on us to ask the right questions, find out the necessary information, discuss it with a team and then present it. There is a scene size up and communication touchstone in leadership, and the onus was on us to practice that. Procedurally, we had to walk through those steps, and understand the substance along the way well enough to digest it and present it. It all rolls up to honing the individual leadership skills that you need to be the one who's speaking up rather than shrinking into the background.

Another participant noted,

> ESP gives you a chance to dive into an interesting topic, and while that itself is interesting, it's really not so much the specifics of what occurred, but what did the different individuals involved do? What was the outcome? What were the traits or takeaways? It's almost like it starts with the topics and then you get tricked into what are the leadership moments that you saw.

In contrast to many of the other leadership and professional development courses participants have taken or know about, the case study approach removes participants entirely from their organization, and usually from their subject area expertise, geography, and/or jurisdiction. By taking participants out of a theoretical classroom and out of familiar territory, cases create an environment for learning that is both protected and as complete as possible. Rather than a case written up in a book chapter, or even a privileged re-telling written or spoken by one or a few individuals, live case studies allow participants to both hear and experience through non-verbal signals like body language, individual characteristics, and perhaps most importantly a shared experience of the resource itself.

Of the many concepts that participants in this study offered, most frequent was the note that cases that were as complete as possible (in the confines of the program week) allowed them to consider the many different perspectives attendant to complex natural resources issues. The word "perspective" captures ideas including ways of knowing, knowledge, experience, values, aspirations, assumptions: the range of the human condition. As human creatures, we are intimately connected to our natural environment, and depend on its well-being in a variety of ways. Natural resources governance surfaces value conflicts that span geographies and jurisdictions. Importantly, good governance of

natural resources requires that administrators be skilled in examining the range of perspectives that are associated with an issue.

In ESP, the case study model embraces the necessity of building understanding of perspectives. One participant was surprised to notice, at the end of their program year, that they had taken forty pages of notes at each of the case studies outside of their geography and expertise, and only a couple at the case they were more familiar with. Upon reflection, they took as a learning point that when a person feels familiar with an issue, they tend to shut off the possibilities of creativity and innovation. Other participants explain, “it is helpful to look at somebody else’s problem because you can look at it without bias, without trying to achieve an outcome that’s important to you. It enables you to look at things from other perspectives.”; “Complex cases forced us to, rather than solving the problem, think about who needs to be there to solve the problem? What voices do we need to hear? What perspectives would help find a solution, or can we compromise?”; “You get to see the same scenario from a dozen different perspectives all at once, and you get the privilege of not having to figure out how to solve it.” The freshness and ongoing-ness of cases offer participants a range of opportunities to gather, consider, compare and contrast different perspectives.

Importantly, case studies both unsettle (by removing participants from their subject(s), organizational culture and role of expertise) and settle, by constructing a setting that privileges learning over action and protect participants from professional or personal consequences because the issues are not under their jurisdiction. Rather, they are observers, and learners. The program is private, without recording, media attention, or reporting. This protected setting offers participants the opportunity to shed some

expectations, to think critically and creatively, to listen without thinking about what to say next, and to consider alone and in a collaborative setting of colleagues in learning the range of possible solutions to the issue at hand as well as key lessons in leadership, administration and governance. One participant explained the function of the protected setting,

> I prefer the case approach because I can take away lessons or strategies from a case study rather than operating on the patient, so to speak, with everything on the line. That feels higher stakes. With ESP, it was possible to draw parallels and extrapolate. It's a more academic and a safer space.

Another participant offered more detail:

> People say you learn best by making mistakes, and that's true. But nobody wants to make mistakes, so when you borrow someone else's problem, you don't have the pressure. You can think freely, you don't think of how you might fail, and what the consequences of that failure could be. You can come at it from an ignorant perspective, and I think sometimes I can make a better decision about, for example, an irrigation program because I'm thinking, how do we deliver the mission? It lets you come up with ideas that are a little more risk free. It's hard to make decisions when you're worried about failure, and it's easy to worry about failure. I use this in my job all the time, even now.

Building and executing case studies on site and in person is an essential program design component of ESP and produces learning processes and outcomes that are more complete. While the majority of each case week is spent in a classroom or lecture-style setting, the venues are community-focused and diverse: meeting rooms, event centers,

arts venues, granges and churches. During the field day or days of each case week, cohorts visit logging operations, fish processing plants, post-fire forests, farms, scenic areas, recreation sites, restoration projects, hatcheries, dams, city water plants and other kinds of infrastructure and landscape impacted by natural resource management jurisdictions. Participants highlighted the role that this part of the program design played in their learning process:

> Going to the locations and seeing the locations was also very, very important. When you talk about something in the abstract, a location or event, you kind of develop a mental picture of what happened and how people interacted and what the scenario was. It can be very different if you actually go out and see the locations and talk to people while being on the ground. They're saying, in this location we have this situation we have to deal with, here are the various issues that came up, and here's how we solved it. That had a very direct impact.

Their memories of the narrative of a place and of people's experiences are vivid and "complete data," linked in a complex way to the leadership skills and styles they observed associated with places and people. Moreover, seeing the landscape provided a reminder of the timescale of environment and natural resource challenges, and the social challenges and opportunities that unspool from long time scales; "it's one thing to see plans on the board, or dates in written documents. It's another thing entirely to go out and talk with people who live with it all the time, have lived with it for decades."

Similarly, participants in policy, budget and planning roles emphasized the educative value in "following" an issue from political and policy work to field work to see how the pieces fit together: "You might see on the ground how policies might make things better

or worse. You see the different parties that are needed to bring policy change about or give input on what the impact on the ground would be."

In addition to witnessing the biophysical processes, limitations, and opportunities often associated with complex natural resource issues, participants reported appreciation for and benefit from learning in person in deference to learning online, either synchronous or asynchronous. Interviews were conducted in 2022-23, after most work and school had returned to in-person after the Covid-19 pandemic. Participants are alumni from program years 2013-2019, so experienced their ESP year before remote and hybrid learning became common practice. However, many professional trainings had moved to online systems previous to the Covid pandemic, and continue to be offered in that mode for convenience and accessibility. It is likely that participants especially reflected on the in-person, on-site mode of ESP after the isolation and remote and hybrid practices of 2020-2022. That said, there are a variety of kinds of information and ways of learning that are difficult or impossible to replicate in a remote or hybrid setting. One participant explained,

> For me, the human dimension is important. Words on the page aren't going to get animated without the people that are working with the issues on the ground. They have the greatest stake. The complexity of human interaction involved with policy: so much of it depends on the way people interact and communicate and that's just something you can't fully capture within the four corners of a written page. These are wicked problems that have a lot of human interaction and communication and miscommunication mixed up in them … you needed the case

> studies application to get the comprehensive and holistic perspective on the problem.

Finally, the sequestered environment of case studies allowed participants to experience a sense of exploration or adventure, "a state of mind to receive information and not just retain it but think in a way that you need to be thinking to learn."

Case studies provide participants with the opportunity to see how their peers across environment and natural resources management in the Western United States practice leadership and governance. Over the course of each case week, they are exposed to 10-25 individuals in different kinds of leadership roles and with different kinds of orientations to the idea and practice of leadership. Being on site and in person helped participants to understand technical information associated with the case, and to see leadership lessons buried in the milieu. Perhaps equally important, the shared experience of unpacking, sorting, and highlighting the case that they had with their guest speakers built an empathy, awareness, and compassion for their leadership characteristics. Participants noted, "really [ESP] is about how leaders perform in the circumstances, and not theoretically or anonymously; you're going to meet them."; "we were going in with an openness to observe what's going on and understand what the various leaders we're interacting with are experiencing … not trying to solve their problem, but to understand how they're trying to solve their problem"; and,

> In the case study approach, you're seeing real leaders in action. You see some pretty high caliber leaders in action and get a chance to interact with them and understand how good leaders think. They're all different, and you're going to be a

different leader; you get to pull all of these pieces from this variety of different leaders to figure out what's going to work for you.

More specifically, the case study approach puts key players from across the political economy, representing a range of roles, responsibilities, and leadership styles, in a teaching and engaging posture with the cohort. These individuals, as teachers, are credible and diverse. Thus, participants learned from people they could recognize, remember, and value, and that depth of empathy produced a stickiness of memory that was different from other leadership training they had experienced. They gained confidence as well as competence from observing leaders in a live case setting: "Conversations with on the ground experts gave me some of the confidence I needed to speak up, have an opinion, to feel like I'm capable of learning more."

In articulating the purpose and function of the case study approach, participants talked about "translation" of ESP to their work world, "takeaways," "applying" what they learned, "using" approaches and skills, and "trying out" tools in their day-to-day work. In this research, this bridge from classroom to practice is characterized as "transference." A participant explained,

> We went and sat down and got to hear from the people that experienced that complicated issue. We got to draw from it and think about how we might apply the ways they were dealing with it and how we might apply that to our problems back home. So that's the best way to learn.

Another participant likened the experience of learning and then transferring knowledge and experience with ESP to working a detail outside of their regular duties, but more complete:

> It adds to the confidence of being able to try something new, because you're seeing that someone else did it. It's easy to get ingrained, something has worked before for you. For example, I recently took on a role working on some regulation changes. Because it was outside my workflow, I tried lots of different techniques and strategies to try and get at the end goal of facilitating change, a lot of different communication strategies. I was able to find some opportunities there.

For some participants, transference happened during cases and between cases during their program year: "While we were talking about fish in Puget Sound, I spent a lot of time going back and reflecting on the problems I'm working on … the self-reflection happens in parallel with studying an external problem." For some, it happened months or years later, triggered by a setting, a memory, or the need for a particular skill or tool. For most, the time scale was not part of how they characterized the consequences of participation in ESP; they used knowledge, skills, and awareness gained from the program intermittently and across settings, in their organizations and with external partners, in community, on projects, in program areas, and quite broadly, in how they think about themselves and the purpose and value of their work. One participant explained,

> Sometimes we were told to [think, write or talk about transference] but it happens when you're listening to a speaker and you see, oh, this little facet is just like our little facet here, and you think about it. I don't think that's restricted to one or a handful of times. It's throughout the whole process … looking at another problem and using what you learn to turn the lens around back to yourself.

Some participants wanted more clarity in the role of transference in the program, particularly early in the arc of the program year; they noted that they learned through the case series to "connect the dots from observing to what I'm going to do."

Prudential judgment is made up of two kinds of action orientations: scene size up, or sizing up, and taking action (Morgan, Ingle & Shinn, 2018). In ESP, participants experience case studies as practice "sizing up" the leadership challenge. However, they are not positioned by the program alone to practice taking action. One participant explains,

> When you're learning concepts, learning to apply concepts, taking away that very personal lens or skin in the game can be helpful. The flip side of that is when you get back to your service area, project, office, you can't apply those objective lessons in the same way, because you're not objective. They have to go through that relationship filter, that personal filter.

They are encouraged to think about what taking action has, could, and will look like, what resources it will require, and how it might feel. They are also provided with opportunities to practice in concept. Essentially, the program exchanges the ability to put participants in an action orientation–at risk, in their own organizational settings–for the ability to put them in a protected case setting, reaping the benefits of that protection identified above. It follows that the kinds of experiences, knowledge, skills, tools, and awareness that participants transfer are close to real-world, but not applicable to their work in exactly the same way as learning to lead through making mistakes. They are more diverse, more grounded in theory, and built out and reinforced in a structured way, but they are not necessarily as deep, sharp, or memorable.

Each of the six core design components of the FICC model provide opportunity for transference. Participants cited guest speaker sessions, case topics, academic content blocks, case study structure, the case study series, small group work, full group presentations and the cohort experience as locales for testing and translating their learning. Importantly, in the FICC model for leadership and governance training, transference is the nexus between conditions and consequences, where participants use their professional commitment, passion, and ambition to turn their protected practice, experience, and knowledge into work that is qualitatively better than it would have been had they not taken ESP. This nexus is discussed further under Proposition 2 (transference).

2: Cohort

Above any other characteristic or component of ESP, participants cited their appreciation of their program year cohort. They were specifically asked about the value of a cohort that is "mixed," with participants from federal and state agencies from across Oregon and Washington (and a few participants from nonprofits, private organizations, local governments and special districts and a few from the greater Northwest) in deference to a cohort made up of their colleagues in their own organization. Every response was in the affirmative, and the value of the mixed cohort was often raised by participants before the question was asked.

On its face, this unanimous response might suggest that a mixed group of mid-career natural resource professionals could be introduced during a meet-and-greet, or go on a retreat without the case construction, and reap the benefits of one another's perspectives, skills, knowledge, and experience during and after their time together. This

is not the case; participants formed deep and thoughtful relationships through the crucible of the case series. Their relationships were built on the process of "figuring out" the cases together, "conversations that people were having in the process of trying to figure out how to deal with the situation."

A mixed cohort allowed participants to experience others' personal and professional perspectives as they worked together to understand and consider approaches to each case in their series. This included a measure of diversity among leadership styles, professional and personal experiences and approaches to problem-solving: "to be in a room with a lot of people who don't think like me challenged me to think about the situation differently." More specifically to public service, cohorts include a diversity of organizational cultures. Participants benefit from understanding better the kinds of organizations they might encounter in solving complex natural resource problems and, crucially, hearing unvarnished perspectives of how organizations got the cultures they have, what challenges and opportunities those cultures present, pitfalls and strengths. Further, understanding organizations' cultures helps participants know how to look for good collaborators in those agencies for their work in the future.

By enriching participants' understanding of peers and peer organizations–opening a window to how different agencies might approach an issue–the cohort approach strengthens groundwork for intra-organizational work across the region. Alumni serve as trusted partners for one another across organizational and geographic boundaries, beginning difficult projects or identifying the right steps in different organizations. Two participants exchanged information about their organizations' diversity, equity and inclusion work in "a rich exchange of initiatives and things that actually happened

because of that [ESP cohort] relation." One participant explained, "the diversity of the group had us learn to look at other processes and figure out how other prospective entities and agencies fit into the challenge at hand." Another noted,

> Most of the problems we're trying to solve now are complex or wicked or are really entrenched and being able to figure out, at least acknowledge that other people and other entities do things differently and you have to figure out how to turn that to your advantage as opposed to becoming more entrenched in one way of doing things. That is a huge part of the value of this kind of program.

A third emphasized that when hiring in their own organization, they are looking for leaders who have developed a set of external relationships: "The expectation of our higher-level leaders is they should have a network. And if a class can help build a network, then that's an added benefit." They also noted a sense of increased pace and volume of workflow, and the difficulty of finding time to build a network in the day-to-day of their work, even when a larger and stronger network in their field would help them do better work in the long run. Thus, building networking into a professional training has the potential to add value in multiple, stacked ways.

In addition to the depth and diversity of the cohort, career stage has an important role for both individuals and the composition of the group during each program year. ESP is advertised as being for "mid-career professionals." What this means to sending agencies varies, but generally refers to participants who are about to or have recently transitioned into supervisory or boundary-spanning roles. One participant offered a story that illustrates well the transition from early- to mid-career and executive level public natural resources management:

> At the beginning of my career as a wildlife biologist, my manager took me out into the forest, next to a creek, and said, 'Look at this landscape. What would you do different to it?' I didn't know! I saw trees, and a stream. It takes a while to get your feet under you, to understand that landscape management is about management objectives, not just trees and a stream. It's about extraction or use of a species or landscape, conservation issues, and options for improvement. Over time, you build a platform, a grounding to know what questions to ask and what information to privilege, how to probe, how to solve problems creatively.

Another participant reflected,

> With ESP, it's those case studies that really challenge you to think of things from other perspectives. I'm always challenging myself and our staff to do this as we approach those problems and our work. ESP was one of my first big deep dives into seeing some of those bigger, much more complex issues and processes, and that's kind of all I do now.

ESP participants are typically identified by their sending agencies, supervisors or peers as rising leaders and usually have ambition to take on additional leadership responsibilities as their careers progress. A supervisor in a sending agency noted that they send staff who want to move up in their organization; they emphasized the value of ESP as,

> Being able to see what it takes to truly be successful as you work through the tough natural resources policy issues that exist. You need to think bigger and broader to make sure that we're doing the right thing for all the people that are out there. [ESP] is a good entry point for them to see what it truly takes to work

through bigger issues. It was important for me to try to have them see what it looks like and not necessarily have to experience it firsthand.

This supervisor is identifying the inflection point between career and training that can help propel an individual into more effective public service leadership, and situating an FICC-style program in that trajectory. They are also naming the importance of the protected nature of learning in an FICC-style program, which is discussed in more detail below. Another supervisor articulated this inflection point: ESP is "good for certain individuals, people who are on the cusp of being a higher level of leader. It can help coalesce that for them."

In addition to hitting the timing for individuals in their professional trajectories, a cohort composed of mid-career professionals, or participants generally in the same stage in upward movement through their organizations, encourages networking for professional and personal development, achievement, and support. ESP alumni help each other get promotions, details, board seats and new jobs; they help each other solve complex problems, find new ways of approaching difficult issues in their jurisdictions, and give and receive counsel many years after their program wraps up. The academic and professional benefits of a mixed cohort are significant, but for participants what is perhaps equally important are the personal connections; they are inspired and encouraged by one another. Thus the cohort exposes participants to one another's professional and personal perspectives and approaches to problem-solving; places them with career-stage peers; and encourages relationship-building for a range of functions.

3: Topics

ESP engages a diversity of case topics over each program year with an intention to remove participants from their discipline area, program, role, geography, jurisdiction, and other familiarities at least once. Given the professional diversity of program participants, this requires the Advisory Board, program director, and faculty to be thoughtful about the composition of each year's slate of cases. Since the mid-1970's, ESP case topics have ranged from forest planning, to water quality issues, to Indigenous subsistence rights, to fisheries recovery. A list of cases from 1999-2023 can be found in Appendix C. Generally, a program year has a mix of resource types (fisheries, forestry, agriculture), organizational leads (federal, state, local), and geographies (Oregon, Washington, and the greater Northwest).

This diversity of case topics is functionally important in the same way that the case study approach itself is important: it allows participants to understand, analyze, problem-solve, and then transfer back to their own work approaches to leading through complex natural resource issues. Having not only case studies but a diversity of case studies is additive to the production of the consequences of ESP: in most program years, every member of the cohort is taken outside of their comfort zone in one or more ways during one or more of the three case studies. As participants note, cases were "framed in locations, activities, and a bigger picture that were relevant to my job but different enough to give good perspective." For example,

> A speaker talked about the visual impacts of geoduck farming. Well, with timber harvest, we hear some of the same things. The question is, is this place for use or for looking? It's the same type of topic, but another way of looking at it was more

> accessible. Once you get that type of understanding, it's hard not to think that maybe the same thing is true in these other instances.

Another participant compared the challenges they identified in a case study on solar siting in the Mojave Desert with challenges in a new Habitat Conservation Plan, and explained, "For me, having something that is real, that somebody's lived, and you can hear from the players that were involved in it, then it's easier to get a connection to our curve, the challenges that we're facing." That is, if there is a fresh way of thinking about viewsheds, or conservation zoning, there may be a fresh way of thinking about other kinds of difficult topics that allow for the construction of a dialogic understanding or a shift in an intractable values conflict.

Moreover, working together to understand and problem-solve a case that was "out-of-water" for a majority of the cohort encouraged participants to learn from one another. Particularly, they learned from watching each other ask questions, build context, identify sticking points and impact points, develop a theoretical framework and plan for going forward, and visioning or predicting how the case might evolve over time. That is, being equally unfamiliar with the technical aspects of a case encouraged the cohort to work together to surface different approaches to identifying and practicing responses to the case's adaptive aspects: the diversity of case topics enhanced the effectiveness of the cohort condition.

4: Timing

ESP's three case study/one capstone design is premised on the idea that adult learners benefit from a "break-set," or opportunity to examine and perhaps test out what they learn during a case study in the context of their own professional environment and

practice. Without a counterfactual, this difficult to probe, but participants validated the break-set approach in terms of timing, space to reflect, ability to talk with colleagues, cohort bonding, and practice understanding the case method or "stretching a different professional muscle";

> If you have one session, then a break, then you're going to reinforce what you've already discussed and learn, break, reinforce again. It's almost like getting study sessions in between. That was more beneficial than getting it thrown at you all at once. Also allowed us to build relationships between sessions. And allowing information to sink in, then reaffirm it, then sink in and then hit you with it one more time. That repetition was good.

And,

> Doing three cases was really key because it helps reinforce for you that [ESP] is about looking for patterns. It's not looking for the specific details of each of the case studies; it's looking for patterns and what are the ingredients of successful outcomes that are good for the community as well as for the resource.

Notably, since the program's inception participants have had the option to participate in one, two, or all three case studies out of a single program year (the capstone "comes with" one or more cases). Program faculty have encouraged participants and sending agencies to commit to the "set" of three cases for the learning function described in this section, and a vast majority of participants do complete three cases. Participants who completed two or less cases during their program year were removed from the interview pool, so their experience is not present in this study.

5: Pedagogies

The ESP program design incorporates a range of pedagogical approaches that reflect adult learning theory (e.g., Vella & Ashworth, 2008) and particularly a focus on iterative learning and a flow between settings of education and exploration and settings of practice. These approaches include first-thing daily opportunities for recollection and reflection during each case week, where the group is all together, paired, or sorted into small groups (two to five people per group); a "team questions" exercise, where small groups address questions that require them to access and synthesize case information and theory in leadership and governance; accountability via presentations that are synchronous or asynchronous; informal after-hours sessions to share a meal, unpack the ESP experience, and build out the cohort component of the model; and the development of a Leadership Learning Plan, a kind of professional development portfolio.

An important sub-set of the team questions exercise is a challenge to "get out your crystal ball," that is, for the teams to use the information they have about the case study, as well as their broader organizational and contextual knowledge to gently predict the trajectory of the case problem and possible solutions or solution space. This challenge encourages participants to consider who, and what, will help a case toward resolution, who, or what, might be missing, and what contextual factors (cultural, social, biophysical, epistemological) might support or inhibit resolution.

Opportunities for recollection and reflection help participants to resurface substantive case knowledge as well as to look at contexts, problems, solutions, individuals and groups from different perspectives, even limited to the perspectives of cohort members alone:

> You'll often find out that the perceptions are vastly different … and that's helpful to know if you're in a leadership position. Sometimes [during ESP] I would find myself with a totally different perception than others in the room. So, hearing what other people would say would help me fill in those gaps.

Similarly, facilitated small group work to surface key case information and themes and synthesize lessons learned has an important role. Small groups enable participants to engage more directly with their peers via the case information and program learning materials, to learn with and from one another, and to be exposed to their peers' learning, problem-solving, and leadership styles and approaches in a different format than the full class setting. Typically, each case study includes a team exercise that begins on Thursday and lasts all afternoon; this time working in small groups allows for extended conversation on case topics and transferable learning. Participants noted that the mix of modalities, from all-group to small group to pairs to individual work was helpful, where "some portion of it was probably perfect for everybody." Achieving the full range of these modalities in sufficient depth to be worthwhile takes time, and is reflected in the full work week required for each case study session.

In addition to pedagogies that focus on the case studies, participants are asked to craft an individual Leadership Learning Plan over the arc of the program year. This "assignment" has evolved somewhat over the life of ESP, but has held its current form since 2015. The learning plan is a loosely guided document, outline, or set of notes held by each participant and developed in sections, one at each case and the capstone session. Participants respond to written and spoken prompts, and engage in one-on-one cohort conversations to test and develop their ideas, goals, and ambitions. The learning plan is

an integrative strategy, akin to the professional leadership portfolios described by Morgan and Cook (2015, p. 282). They represent a substantive element more typical of other kinds of leadership development and training programs; at ESP, the learning plan is a nod to self-reflection and goal setting, but it is not the focus of the program's design or its highest performing component. Participants use their learning plans to check in on their values and goals, how they use their leadership style and where they want to go in their profession; they appreciate the opportunity to "document and affirm." They use them in performance reviews, applications, and to guide mentees. One explained,

> I realized I know more than I know, and saying it out loud to somebody else helps me remember some of those principles. Part of leadership is being able to talk to other people about leadership and reinforce and remind yourself how it all works.

That is, while they are not central to the FICC model, the Leadership Learning Plan and associated or similar individual leadership articulation and development activities have a role in comprehensive teaching and learning practices.

6: Curriculum

Each ESP case study week includes one to three and typically two teaching topics, blocks of teaching content developed and delivered by the faculty lead on topics related to environment and natural resource policy, governance and leadership. These presentations link the broader academic literature and theory to the case under study, and are designed to deepen understanding about the leadership theory and practice developed during each program year. Faculty and staff consider this curriculum to be essential to the program design. While some teaching topics vary each year in relationship to the case studies, many topics are presented every year. Faculty also offer summaries of relevant

substantive policy, such as the Endangered Species Act, water law, energy policy, and land use law as appropriate. Teaching topics include the American political economy, public service leadership, polity and community leadership, network governance, policy processes, policy issue emergence, organizational design, change, and development, collaborative governance, civic capacity and community resilience, working with tribes (law, policy history and governance), and the role of science in policy and administration.

The teaching topics selected or developed for each program year is responsive not only to the case studies themselves but also to the Advisory Board's training needs and goals; the program year cohort's feedback; and emergent topics. Participants experience and engage these teaching topics to varying degrees depending on their interest, their educational backgrounds, their particular professional roles, and other factors. That is, for some participants, the academic curriculum component of ESP is central and highly valued, while for others the case experience, cohort, and other key components have a much more essential role in manufacturing their learning outcomes. However, there is no counterfactual: the program has never been delivered without the teaching topics. Faculty past and present suspect that the teaching topics have an essential role in shaping the process by which participants understand and experience the case studies themselves and the exportable or transferable knowledge, skills, and capacities that the program is driving toward. Examining more rigorously the impact of the teaching topics and approaches to facilitation is an area that would benefit from further research, but is beyond the scope of this study.

Comparing across leadership development programs and turning to program outcomes

While this study did not seek to identify other FICC programs, or to compare FICC programs to one another or to professional leadership development programs more generally, it did ask participants to make comparisons or identify differences in their singular experiences. This individual, comparative reflection is one way that participants were encouraged to think about the impacts of ESP's program design.

The variety of leadership development programs known to participants is described above. When asked to compare, participants emphasized the live case study approach, focus on "getting on the balcony," and pedagogies of ESP as especially different from other programs they experienced or were aware of. Depending on their orientation and preferences, some participants preferred or privileged the individual leadership development tools and techniques of other programs, noted that ESP and individual-focused programs were complementary, or privileged the "sizing up" emphasis of ESP's program design. One participant, in this third camp, explained,

> Personality assessments and style assessments are great, but I don't find myself leaning back on that stuff. It's the real-world experiences that resonate for me, that I can more easily access in my mind and pull lessons learned. That is the overarching theme of my reflection on ESP, that makes it unlike other experiences I've had.

As a prototypical FICC program, ESP engages six essential design components: cases, cohort, topics, timing, pedagogies and curriculum. These components work together to produce a set of consequences, which take form in participants' learning outputs (what they learn) and outcomes (how they use what they learn in their work). The following section of this analysis describes these consequences.

What ESP participants learn and how they use those lessons in their work

During the interviews for this research, the consequences of the FICC model program are split into two steps: what ESP participants learn and how they use those lessons in their work. This split mirrors the two action orientations associated with the development, practice, and exercise of prudential judgment: sizing up and taking action (Morgan, Ingle and Shinn 2018).

The outputs ("I learned") and outcomes ("I use that when …") of FICC leadership training are largely but not consistently linked in the data. For example, a participant reported key takeaways from their program as theory about civic capacity and topic-specific information about crafting policy for communities' recovery after wildfire. Then, they reported using what they learned in the program in contexts of collaboration and network governance and supporting inter-organizational response to rapidly changing circumstances. A possible explanation for this dissonance is that participants learn more than they report, and apply concepts that are represented for them as examples rather than theory or ideas. That is, they are following a pattern they observed in a case study, supported by attendant analysis during the week, without attaching it to theory as such.

What participants report as key takeaways (the data on learning outputs) is shallow and wide: there is a diversity of answers, and there is much less repetition than in other categories. Notably, many participants emphasized that while they had learned a lot in ESP, thought about what they learned a lot, and felt it was useful and important, they could not name exactly what it was. A majority of these participants came back later in the interview with some learning points, while a subset repeated their emphasis that the program was useful, important, and relevant, but it was difficult to "put their finger on"

or name what they had learned. There are not other similarities among this subset that were captured in the study (e.g., different among cohort years, sending agencies, or role types in their organizations).

Perhaps more importantly for the further contextualization and embeddedness of the results of this research, participants were not asked to attribute "what they learned" and "what they used" solely to ESP. Recognizing that the program's stated learning objectives are the kinds of things that citizens, professionals, and public administrators would be experienced in and trained in–explicitly and implicitly–long before and after their program year, the interview questions asked participants to connect knowledge to ESP by asking if they had a few "top takeaways" from the program, "things that you learned for the first time, or probably things that you sort of knew that were named, reinforced, or got more or less important to how you think about the world or your work." Then, participants were asked if they use those "takeaways" in their work, or other ways they use their ESP experience in their professional or personal lives. In this approach, the validity of the correlation between the program and its consequences rests solely on the experience, awareness, and recollection of the participants themselves.

The quality of the impacts of the program on participants and how they do their work varied among them, depending on a variety of factors including their nature, way of learning, past professional, educational and personal experiences, their roles and responsibilities, the organizational culture and context in which they operated or currently operate, and more. For some participants, the program was seismic: it shifted in fundamental ways how they understand the context of their work and orient themselves in it. For others, it was a learning highlight, "the best training I've been to," and produced

a handful of ideas, practices, tools and skills that they could name. For still others, the consequences were highly incremental, a little more perspective here, a slightly different approach there.

Further, how participants experience, notice, and reflect on their program experience changed over time. For some, the impacts of their learning and awareness showed up right away. For others, it was triggered by the echo of an idea, a circumstance similar to one of their case studies, a move within their organization or a new job. “How much” of a difference the program makes is highly individual, highly variable, and moderately predictable given the participant’s career stage, role in their organization, reason(s) for participating, and personal and professional goals. Broadly speaking, the consequences of ESP–and FICC programs for public service professionals more generally–are incremental. Significantly, they accrue over time: a line officer who does public engagement more effectively adds to the residual civic benefits of good governance and capacity building over the arc of their career. This consequential matrix is expanded in the final section of this chapter.

The findings of this study come into focus with data on how participants use what they learned in ESP in their work. These outcomes emerge from two sources: the conditions of participants' learning (the components and the whole of the FICC program) and the substantive information learned in the program. For example, a participant described the theory associated with measuring civic capacity, and then identified a few ways they had mapped that model onto their work in Eugene and used indicators of civic capacity to help prioritize different parts of projects and processes; they are thinking

about how to both draw on existing capacity and to bolster capacity through the residuals of their land management work.

Six categories of consequences were selected from the data. The coding process is described in chapter 2. For consequences in particular, the researcher selected categories that emerged with strength and precision: participants discussed them most extensively and with the most collective dimension, or participants characterized them very clearly (even if without as much abundance or dimension across the category). Categories that program faculty and staff thought might be present or of particular conceptual interest—for example, policy process—were excluded if they did not also have strength or precision in the interview data. These six categories offer insights into how the conditions created by the FICC program enhance participants' public service leadership competencies.

1: Empathy

This category of data uses a heading that only a few participants used themselves. It is uncommon to say that to manage hydroelectric accounts, plan timber rotations, or guide watershed restoration a public administrator needs to have empathy; rather, scholars, citizens and administrators themselves highlight behaviors and actions like "help people collaborate," "understand different perspectives," and sometimes "lead with compassion." It is up to administrators to practice the social and emotional sensibilities and capacities required to carry out the approaches necessary for effective, efficient, and justice-promoting public service leadership. Empathy–being aware of it, building it, and adapting it to different contexts–is an ability that is at the heart of the practice of public service leadership. It is, for participants, ever evolving and ever more important as they

rise as leaders through their organizations and in their fields. They naturally translate the core ability of having empathy to a range of settings, practices, and relationships at individual, inter-organizational, intra-organizational, and community scales.

Broadly, ESP gives participants practice examining a complex natural resource issue from a variety of leadership perspectives. The program aims to offer a three-hundred-and-sixty-degree view of each case, and privileges the lived experience of guest speakers who are close to the problem at hand. For participants, this deepens their sensitivity to the importance of seeking out and seeking to understand the range of perspectives and public values that are a defining characteristic of natural resource governance. In turn, their framing, planning, implementation, and evaluation of their work is informed in a more complex way by their empathy for the range of values brought to bear on a given topic. One participant explained the relationship between ESP's empathy practice and their work since their program year:

> With ESP, I was thinking about putting myself in those places. For some people, that's their world. For us [as administrators] it's about coming to a resolution, or about fulfilling our mandate. But for a community, it's a really big deal. Did we consider all of the impacts, did we do our best to see the unintended consequences?

A second participant described changing where the post required notices of public processes. Previously, they had posted at three bulletin boards that only some members of the community typically see. Recognizing that broader awareness of the meetings would produce a more complete and "honest" project in the end, they now post on more boards

and on social media. It's more work, they noted, but "that's our job." A third participant offered a physical approach to seeing things differently:

> I tell my park staff, sometimes you've got to walk out of the gate and walk back in like you're a visitor. You lose things in your day to day; you've got to shake off the cobwebs and really look at things to see what's effective. I took that away from my year with ESP.

Participants report learning about and thinking about empathy in different settings and at different scales. First, practicing empathy serves them as individual leaders; one participant quoted a note to themselves from a session that reads, "Followership needs trust, stability, compassion and hope." Second, practicing empathy serves them as supervisors, team leads, and team members in their organizations. For example, a supervisor in a largely exurban and rural, older, and politically conservative region noted, "I'm using this idea of different perspectives interorganizationally, to build diversity in the workgroup and input other opinions that wouldn't be heard otherwise, because we're going to be left behind as we move forward if we don't do that." Third, practicing empathy serves them in "sizing up" or building knowledge and a living understanding of the complex challenges in their work portfolios: "I more consciously try to understand others perspectives, to understand more deeply. I don't think I was that proficient at that before ESP. It helped me reflect on ensuring that I'm trying to understand where folks are coming from when we're talking about a project or an issue, not jumping right to a solution." Fourth, practicing empathy serves them in the formal and informal relationships required to perform leadership in their highly networked settings.

ESP's case study approach allowed participants to situate the personal experience of empathy–common, and powerful–in their professional world. Leaning into understanding guest speakers' perspectives in a protected setting encourages vulnerability in thinking, sensing, and building awareness that participants had not previously or since felt in such a complete manner. One participant highlighted the depth of understanding of guest speakers' perspectives on their issue that they were able to achieve:

> [ESP] is the most human, unique leadership engagement I've had to date in that you're using real world challenges and talking to people from all different sides of issues, who would have a position on those issues that makes total sense. You have time to listen, ask questions, and get to, oh, that makes total sense. I totally get why you did that.

In a more objective sense, ESP participants learn or remember to look at problems, questions, challenges or conflicts from all angles. That is, it is the responsibility of public administrators to understand and hold the range of public values associated with their service area, whether that is wildlife, forestry, fisheries, water quality, public engagement, or operations serving some of those program areas. Public values are diverse, and they have their roots in the history, culture, and lived experience of communities of interest and communities of place. By making time to better understand the contours of the values associated with a particular public problem, administrators are better positioned to tackle that problem in an effective and equitable way. As a training approach, live cases offer participants the opportunity to practice examining a public problem from many angles in a protected setting; one participant

describes the relationship between the cases and the practice of looking from all angles as follows:

> What ESP excels at is going someplace, lining up the decision makers and people in the background, the ones that have had to make the decisions and the ones who have had to live with the decisions or tried to influence them. It's interesting to talk to people on all sides of an issue. You take a walk around, so to speak, and see [the case] from a lot of different angles. That's what place-based training does: allows you to go out and see from different angles.

One participant offered a clear-cut example of a situation in which looking at others' perspectives produced a public good. On a jurisdiction that is co-managed by two state agencies, a collaborative recreation planning group identified a site for a campground along a river. The site had historic use, but the co-management arrangement was new, and one of the two agencies was committed to buffering the river from the campground, while the other was interested in placing sites alongside in a reflection of the collaborative group's vision. The participant explained,

> Both sides were so augured in on what was important to them, we weren't getting anywhere at all. I was able to keep talking and ultimately our solution was to be able to have campsites in the buffer but you can't drive to them, because what [the first agency] was really talking about when they said no was cars in the floodplain, while what [the second agency] was talking about when they said yes was camping in the floodplain, so there really was a place to go, but when you have all the emotions of your own views not being heard, sometimes you have to force yourself to hear the other side.

Understanding and integrating diverse perspectives are essential skills and orientations for public service leaders and natural resource managers; the practice of doing so can not only improve the effectiveness of governance but also promote justice for a range of historically marginalized groups. One participant explained how they have been able to apply what they learned about Indigenous ways of knowing–epistemologies–during ESP to their work:

> I was sitting in on a large-scale, complex planning and implementation process where agencies were presenting alternatives. Tribes were there, too. I saw clearly, with my ESP practice on, that when an agency presented the economic consequences of an alternative, we are completely embedded in a frame where we quantify value through economic analysis while the tribes were talking about, what is the value of the river? They were talking about a different value system that wasn't in the federal analysis. Nor could they translate it. There was a complete incongruence between the two systems. We can issue an [Environmental Impact Statement], go through litigation, on and on, but they're never going to match because they are speaking different things. They're speaking and we're answering with models to reply to things like beauty and sense of being and sense of place. It helped to understand that, in some ways, in the complexity of our governance structure, perhaps that will never be resolved. It might be more productive to come from that point of view, that it won't be resolved, than pretending to do a dance and make things okay. ESP gave me a more real and broader perspective on what the true root issues were, as opposed to staying more on the surface or one side of the current.

2: Working collaboratively

The operationalization of empathy is the consequence that occurs with the most frequency in the data. Second to empathy is the importance of relationships among collaborators in doing good governance, and the ability to "tell their story with as much enthusiasm as they can." More broadly, participants describe a set of learning outputs and outcomes associated with working collaboratively. They emphasize the role they learned that relationships play in their work: "ESP helped me refocus that relationships that are more important than deliverables. They're what makes the deliverable possible. In the past, I haven't given the relationships the time that they needed, or really didn't understand or fully appreciate their importance." They explain the role that relationships have in navigating complex public problems,

> Allyships are the key to bridge some of these inconsistencies [of policy and needs on the ground being poorly aligned]. By considering different perspectives through relationships and meeting people, you can build something that's personal and relational, that goes beyond the transactional level of the institution. That can help you move things at the organizational level that you weren't able to before.

Participants learned about building collaborative processes to leverage their relationships, and create opportunities for new ones. They frequently cited the idea of taking time and making time to bring people together, to hear from a wider range of perspectives than they might have before, and to substantively take other perspectives into account and give them power. One participant highlighted, "It seemed like, in all cases, it was the conversation of 'we' that brought it home. Our guest speakers would

say, ‘I had a good idea; to get it done, I needed this person, that person, that group.’” Seeing collaboration play out in live, contentious, imperfect settings is, for participants, illustrative and informative. Further, as leaders rising through their organizations, participants are moving through roles that have an increasing likelihood of needing, or being improved by, collaborative approaches. One explained,

> Early in my career, being a collaborator went against the grain of what I’m about, which is to get things done. Collaboration takes so much more time. But, as I’ve grown in my career, I see that the way that we get things done is by having these relationships. In ESP, you see how some of those relationships are formed over time between partners. It can feel like all just noise, but as you move further along, you see that you can get so much more done by taking time to foster those relationships and collaborate. Just this morning, I had a standing meeting with a supervisor in one of our partner agencies; it’s all about keeping those relationships and sharing your resources to get things done. That was a big part of ESP for me.

Collaborative relationships make a bigger difference in some settings than in others. Building relationships, employing empathy, and investing time in shared collaborative practice is a leadership decision in itself. A participant explained,

> In some projects, the relationship piece is very small, but sometimes there is a project where we can effect changes upfront. A large-scale metals mining project we’re permitting is an example of this. We’ve been having conversations for ten years, and I view those meetings as opportunities for building relationships and trust. As the mine representatives are explaining their plans and assumptions, we have to have the relationship piece, because they have to trust what we’re saying

> about species protections is valid and true, and what we're recommending is important for them to give due consideration and to try and make their project successful. The time spent building relationships is really key, because it makes it easier to get over difficult spots. These big, complicated projects don't come across my desk a ton, but they last a long time.

Because ESP cases typically focus on long-term, high-stakes challenges, learning outcomes are perhaps disproportionately freighted with a focus on empathy, relationship-building, dialogue and collaboration. This focus equips rising leaders with the capacity to take on complexity and build a pathway of vision and action.

In addition to learning about working collaboratively via ESP's case study approach, participants observed and practiced collaboration within their cohort. This source was more important to participants who are more reserved in group settings and for whom the constructive design of the case study approach felt uncomfortable or unclear at first. One participant explained,

> With the cohort, there were sixteen other perspectives and experiences brought to the table, to our shared problem and group exercises, to the way we think about things and the discussions we have. It's easy to have conversations with people that see things the same way as us. The tools that we practiced in ESP are tools that I continue to practice in conversations that I have now working with partners.

Learning about and through the practice of collaboration in the FICC setting is a layered, integrated experience for participants. They observe it, engage in it, practice and iterate collaborative theory and practice across their program year, thus developing competencies essential to leadership in the American political economy.

3: The context of public service leadership

Participants learned and use a bundle of theory and practice associated with the context of public service leadership. First, they more readily embed their work in environment and natural resources in society and the biophysical landscape at large. They sorted out the observation that resource issues are really social issues. As one participant who had a case study on shellfish farming and the balance between native and non-native oysters in Puget Sound said, "The oysters would have been fine without us!" That is, anthropogenic impacts on the environment are ubiquitous, and the paradigm under which public lands and natural resource management agencies work is one of shaping, structuring, using, fixing, and other kinds of control.

Second, they have a conceptual and operational understanding of civic capacity, supporting their work in public engagement, co-management, and other kinds of partnership arrangements as well as an awareness and attention to the civic, social, cultural and economic residuals of land and resource management work in communities. Third, they have a broader foundation in public administration, particularly in understanding the outlay of the American political economy and the authorities, limitations, and attributes of each sector along with how they do and could work together to produce public outcomes.

While it is well established that "natural resources" issues are issues of humans acting on the environment, and governance is in part about structuring and facilitating human action, leading across disciplines, from fish biology to public engagement, requires a certain set of skills, tools, and sensibilities. For many ESP participants, the program comes as they are moving from a discipline-focused role to a supervisory and

leadership role; or, they find themselves in a leadership role seeking a broader understanding of governance, community, and problem-solving. The case study approach allows them to experience natural resources management and leadership knit together with the interests, values, and knowledge of communities of interest and communities of place: “ESP is unique in the kind of look at all the people that natural resources touches when you're dealing with any action. That’s a reality people wouldn’t realize necessarily, just doing their job day to day without coursework like this.” Another participant was more specific:

> So many things turn into social issues, versus any of the ‘natural resources’ stuff we’re so close to in our training and experience. We’re focused on the resource, certain that if we show this one piece of data it’s going to break this dam. It won’t. There’s something else going on. This was one of the most critical pieces for me to see.” Similarly, “The mediation thing of how to deal with difficult situations is still of use to me. Even though I’m in a technical field, it’s not the technology that causes us issues, it’s the people. That’s one of the lessons you learn out of the program. It’s not how many cubic feet of water flow through this river or how many trees you can cut down or how high the wave is going to be. It’s how do you manage the people that have to deal with that stuff?

Among the academic content and embedded in the program design of ESP is a focus on civic capacity, the idea that communities are self-authoring in the face of change and moreover that the quality and quantity of their ability to self-author is variable, measurable, and in the sphere of influence of public natural resource managers. Participants cite the theory of civic capacity and, more frequently, the awareness and

ability to look for it and account for it in communities and on projects in their work. One participant emphasized,

> There's so much that civic capacity explains. It's easy to just have it kind of be this feeling when you don't have a term to express and understand and articulate what you're experiencing. It was a lesson when we were in Wallowa County, and it's applicable to different places. You can go from one community to another and go, wow, how can this be the same valley? It's really important.

Another explained,

> I found so useful the idea of civic capacity, being something that's not project based or even process based, but this broader undergirding that is a different way to conceptualize public involvement. It's not about volume, or length of time, but the broader health of a community, or a community of interest or a community of place.

A third participant noted the value of learning about and beginning to operationalize civic capacity while embedded in the community experiencing the case at hand: being on the ground was

> Particularly useful for understanding where the community in a general sense is at on a natural resource issue or topic. What is the stickiness there? What's their capacity to engage? Is it a place you don't even want to go as a government agency? Where are they starting from? That is one of the things that translates from [ESP]. What is our ability to help or hinder that process of growth? What is their history? For example, are they a mill town that has a lot of change in how they socially connect with forestry issues, where they've seen declines over 20

> years and if we say there is less timber to harvest, that is another addition in that history? There's not an answer here, but awareness helps craft our actions.

In ESP, academic content provides an overview of the American political economy. Participants cite learning or remembering to consider who is in change in an issue area, and who they need to talk to or bring to the table to affect change. This consideration is related to learning or remembering to "get on the balcony," and discussed in more detail in that context below, but authority begins in the legal and normative framework of political economy. In addition to a technical, theory-based explication of the American political economy, participants linked an increased awareness of its contours with the importance of understanding others' perspectives. That is, they could see better the range of motivations, constraints, and conditions that shaped others' decision-making context:

> You realize there are so many layers to all of these decisions and issues that you don't really look at challenges the same way after [ESP], after you talk to those people and realize they're not making bad decisions. They're making the best decisions for their organization, and how that interplays with everything else is so complex.

This consideration extends to each stage of a project, process, or issue, from framing to evaluation.

Participants cited the importance of recognizing the different ways interested parties–citizens, yes, but much more often other federal, state, and local agencies and local and tribal governments–might define a problem and surfacing and bridging those

differences before proceeding. For example, a participant leading response to nitrates in groundwater in the high desert reflected,

> Over time, people are more or less engaged depending on what's going on, among other things. It's so important to lean on all the different partnerships and understand that there may be a role for folks. State government is just one piece there's federal interests, other state agency interests, city and county, a port, industrial users, tribes, community members. There are [environmental justice] communities, [English as a second language] communities. That's a particular example where I have thought about all the different roles that the parties can play. If you try and go at some of these solutions alone, you're not going to get there, because you won't have credibility doing it alone.

Participants also noted learning to focus on creative solutions, drawing on different resources for implementation, and the importance of keeping different groups at the table to be sure a project or program is doing what it was meant to do or to identify what is needed as conditions change. That is, a more robust knowledge of political economy facilitated the collaborative orientations and skills of participants.

ESP elevates participants' awareness of resources across the political economy. By crafting collaborative settings and solutions that draw on these resources (e.g., legitimacy, knowledge, funding, ability to do different kinds of work on different timelines), they build frameworks and practices that are more resilient. For one participant, who worked in a state agency during their program and later moved to lead a nonprofit, learning about participatory governance and co-creation empowered them to

bring their organization to the leading edge of collaborative and networked solutions in their geography and their field. They explained,

> Working for the state, the attitude about [nonprofits like mine] was that they are low credibility compared to government. Now, I don't let anyone treat us or our organizations like we don't belong at the table because we do and we can navigate that really constructively and with a lot of care. But we are a vital part of that conversation [in our mission area].

Finally, a few of the theory and practice pieces described above knit together to give participants a sense of solace when they are working to arbitrate value differences in the public sphere and a better understanding of their role in the broader American democratic experiment. One participant's top note was,

> Within natural resources, these are value conversations and therefore, yes, science is playing a role but the more that we can recognize values (and people value things they care about, so that's good), the quicker we can get traction. ESP for me has helped me with my sanity. If we don't solve something, or this constituent thinks we didn't do enough for them, it might be because of these complex, associated values. Ultimately those aren't stagnant things, there's not a right answer, and it's probably going to change over time. Just because we're working through a policy shift and folks are upset, that alone doesn't mean that we didn't do good work. I saw that in the cases, and I can relate to that and realize we all have our roles.

That is, leading in the public sector is qualitatively improved by an awareness both professional and personal that an individual is in service to a range of values. This

knowledge, for participants, is comforting, and helps them to understand the context of their work and the larger set of institutions and aspirations to which they are committed. This understanding, in turn, shapes the way they build vision, take action, conceptualize leadership, take risks, and exercise prudential judgment.

4: Vision and action

ESP teaches participants strategies and sensibilities for building a vision for change and leading and supporting action toward that vision. Since 2015, the program's curriculum has included *Leadership on the Line* (Linsky & Heifetz, 2002), which includes a section expanding on the purpose and practice of "getting on the balcony" as a metaphor for the leadership competencies required to take a more comprehensive look at a challenge or issue at hand. Participants cited the case study approach and curricular content separately and in tandem as teaching them what "getting on the balcony" looks like and when it is useful. One explained, "Having a broader perspective made me sit back and think a little before I acted." Another characterized this way of thinking as "watching the dance floor; trying to watch people and figure out where they're coming from, who they're working with, what they're doing. Trying to understand people and what we can get done together by watching." Alternately, a participant looks

> At the bigger picture and how a [conflict or challenge] fits in. Some of these big deals aren't really big deals and you can let them play out because when you take that step up, look at the bigger picture, you can see it's not going to derail where you're headed.

It is actionable:

> Now I try to step back, not be so resource focused. I never would have done this prior to ESP. I want to find that problem and grab it. How I've used it is this helpful idea, to step a little further back, understand that the timeline might be a little too tight, give us an extra day. I try to provide some of the space that the program did [for our case studies] to see if that space will help me come to solutions. It's good to do that proactively, but I've also done it reactively, when we're in conflict.

Notably, "getting on the balcony" is useful across time: ahead of a complex decision or process, during, or in reflection, review, or evaluation; it can improve future outcomes as well as present ones, and promote informed risk-taking and the exercise of prudential judgment, as in, "Thinking about the "balcony" taught me the importance of evaluating or reflecting on our work and the important lessons we can learn from successes and failures. It's about being thoughtful and critical and not being afraid to change course." Finally, the idea of the balcony can help individuals understand their roles, their boundaries, and their expertise; "The "balcony" thing for me is about knowing your role, knowing when you bring expertise, when do you help the group refocus. And, it's ok to take your role, or step outside of your role consciously for some purpose."

When participants shift from "getting on the balcony" to taking action in the mix of public natural resource management and leadership, they draw on their ESP experience to remember and articulate the value of taking "small steps" or incremental progress toward a larger goal. A participant explained,

> ESP helped me know how to deal with wicked problems. When one comes up, I try to take a step back and say, ok, what are the pieces I can deal with now? Are

there pieces and parts I can take care of to make it slightly less wicked? What works for me is to try to find the manageable pieces and start working on those.

In another example of learning to focus on "small steps," a participant recalled seeing a new school under construction above the tsunami zone on the Oregon coast. While moving the school did not "solve" the problem of communities' tsunami risk, it was difficult in itself, and, they noted, it's important to account for the small steps and small wins, and to keep them in context. As an individual, it is therapeutic to know that small steps move your work in the direction of the public good. As a leader in an organization, it is strategic to identify small steps, to prioritize them, and to guide a team through their achievement while holding and frequently communicating a larger vision.

ESP cases provide participants the opportunity to practice moving from the "balcony" to the "dance floor" and back again; when to make these moves, why, and what to do with the information and understanding they gain. One participant explained,

> We are stuck in cubes … interpreting statute. We are writing rules but we're not on the ground. It has value to literally put your boots on the ground. It helps you see these problems and helps you hear from people that are living with the direct impacts of these problems or the benefits.

Cases increase participants' facility in identifying and taking on perspectives of all different kinds, and provide anchor experiences for the practice of building vision and leading action.

5: Leadership is …

Leadership–and especially public service leadership–is woven throughout the ESP curriculum and case experience. Participants are encouraged to look for leadership

lessons in the cases, from guest speakers, from one another, and from comparative cases and their own experience. They are facilitated in identifying and naming leadership lessons, and program faculty and staff frequently highlight leadership theory, practice, and "nuggets," tidily phrased anchor points for participants' work going forward. Participants reported drawing on a range of these ideas, examples, and "nuggets."

Precisely adjacent to and essential in framing public service leadership is articulating administrators' work as, in some contexts, politics and political work. Participants cited the idea of politics (lowercase or "small p") as "the arbitration of value differences," a phrase included in the program curriculum. That is, the work that public servants do–perhaps not every day, but with regularity–requires them to balance the range of public values and even the range of epistemologies associated with their resource or their jurisdiction. A participant highlighted the value of this articulation:

> A lot of what I do is political work. This way of conceptualizing it [as arbitrating value differences] helps a little bit. That was a real lesson because as people, we're passionate, we have a personal value system, so you get into what's 'right' and 'wrong,' plus very science-based people like myself are very likely to say something is 'wrong.' But politics is what we're working with, and that's ok. That was a big one for me.

Another participant described an example from one of their case studies, in which a cinder cone was flagged into four quadrants in the wintertime, to divide up higher-quality (north-facing) snow and lower-quality snow among motorized and non-motorized users. The flagging was time-consuming and very precise. They recalled,

> In that situation, that was the only thing that was going to work. Sometimes you have to realize you're not going to get an elegant outcome, but you can get an outcome. What is valuable there is the ability to keep communicating. Most people would throw up their hands and say, I'm in charge and this is how we're going to do it. [The deciding officer] never seemed to do that, even though he had the power to.

Leading through change and how to lead through change is a theme dominant in Advisory Board discussions and an area of focus in the program curriculum. A sense of accelerated change in governance work, in organizations and society at large, drives the Board and participants to seek guidance on tools and techniques for leading through change as well as a broader ethic of public service leadership, camaraderie, and confidence. ESP cases are selected for their complexity, scope, and scale; they are significant resource management challenges. As such, they always provide examples of individuals and organizations leading through change. One participant noted that ESP gave relief to how they think about the "'crucible of change,' these periods of intense change that require a certain kind of leadership, a certain kind of approach." There is, they went on, "a tremendous opportunity for growth and for something unexpected to arise. Making space for that and getting comfortable with that discomfort is what ESP taught me to do. This concept has really guided me over the last few years."

Significantly, the ESP experience gave participants a sense of company, confidence, and comfort in leading through change and weathering leadership challenges more generally. This camaraderie bolsters them as individuals and energizes their work and their leadership. One explained,

> I really lean on the case studies and people sharing their experiences. We're dealing with significant change, policy change, operating programs, administration. Part of my job as a leader is to connect with my folks and make sure they're doing ok. I can feel the tension in the system right now. I've been able to let them know, we're not the first ones to deal with these wickedly complex situations. Maybe it feels like we're carrying all of this for the first time, but this was happening when we were all entry level specialists and staff as well. It's just, we were sheltered from it. This is happening all the time around us, these complex challenges, and now we're in leadership roles to deal with it. I share examples from ESP, this is happening with tribes around Puget Sound or in southeast Alaska. We're just in positions now that we're exposed to it more, but we're not alone. It's been going on for a long time. It's not going to stop. It's just our role to help solve them. So I've used the ESP experience sometimes to make myself feel better, and hopefully my staff feel like we're not alone. This has been dealt with before and it's going to be dealt with in the future, and we'll get through it.

The cohort condition of ESP reinforced participants' sense of company and comfort; in some cases, they use one another to test ideas, assess risk, consider collaborations and partnerships, and build knowledge.

Participants reified the distinction or stacking of leadership and public service leadership in the literature (Denhardt & Denhardt, 2015; Morgan, Ingle & Shinn, 2018), explaining that the conditions created by ESP–immersion in a place, learning as a cohort, and practice looking at an issue from all angles–encourage the exercise of creating those

conditions for oneself and practicing the skills required therein. Those skills, they note, are important not just in leadership but in government, where administrators are expected to perform in their program area and their organization, and to sustain an awareness of the work of governance writ large and the feeding and care of democracy, where they hold and uphold the range of public values present in society. One participant unpacked this thinking in terms of effectiveness and legitimacy:

> A lot of the case studies are about the efficacy of government. There have to be rules, so government agencies are the artists, the interpreters of those rules. To me, the whole point of the program is that we are evaluating and able to look and say, is the government effective in this realm? Or does it need to change? Is it working? Do the people involved know whether it is working or not? That's an important part of leadership, too, not just the product but do people see it and see why? That makes it easier for them to stay within the rules.

By conceptualizing leadership in this way—as responsible for getting the work done, but also getting the work done in a way that builds legitimacy in their field and across governance and government generally—participants build their capacity to exercise leadership in a more holistic and dynamic way.

6: Risk, safety, and prudential judgment

Participants expressed learning and professional outcomes associated with risk, safety, and prudential judgment. The ESP curriculum cites Linsky and Heifetz (2002) to remind participants that "Leadership often happens at the edge of authority." One part of this bundle of outcomes is learning and practicing the art of questioning and challenging, both

to build knowledge (individual, organizational, and group) and to promote dialogue that can be transformational. One participant explained,

> I learned … substantive things, about wildfires, instream flows, the challenges of restoration, how river systems function, what a fish tower is. But learning to question all of those things, to understand them and be sure we had all the information, I think the learning to question is part of the thesis of ESP.

That is, participants further developed skills, techniques, and confidence in critical thinking associated not just with leadership and governance, but also with the boundary-spanning technical capacities required for executive-level leadership in natural resources management.

Empathy and working collaboratively remind participants that there's no one right answer:

> For example, when we learned about salvage logging in Roseburg after the wildfires, agency and industry both had their own scientists, and their scientists were in complete disagreement. Seeing that was useful in exposing the different elements of those policy questions and pushing us to think about how we answer them or how we hear all the voices, how there isn't one right answer, and how the different values are pulling at one another.

Similarly, "In all the years I was in school, there's a yes answer, a no answer, a right answer, a wrong answer. In ESP, I had to change my thinking on some of that. I had to trust the process." Also in this vein:

> Through all those case studies, there was never a perfect solution at the end, they never were complete, there was never a bow to put on it. That was illuminating

> because being a data person at first and trying to be more black and white … [I realized] that when you're in a leadership role, everything happens in the gray area. You're constantly taking risks. Incremental successes are good enough, and I can't let the perfect get in the way of the good. Keeping constant pressure on success and making incremental progress along the way is just fine. That's what they did when they moved the [Seaside] school out of the tsunami zone in our first case: it was a little piece of what they needed to accomplish, but it was a huge success and you can hang your hat on that. It was a good story that came out of that case because it seemed like there was total gridlock and then there was that bright spot.

Given that public service leadership "happens in the gray area," participants leaned on the concept of prudential judgment introduced and iterated in the ESP curriculum. Prudential judgment suggests that in some cases and some contexts, public servants can produce the most efficient, effective, and equitable public outcomes by exercising well-informed, timely professional judgment in decision-making, implementation and evaluation. Morgan, Ingle and Shinn (2018) use neuroscience, psychology, and social science literature to characterize prudential judgment as a purely different cognitive pathway, which requires a different kind of practice; it is the practice of doing something an individual has not practiced for. It requires significant information gathering and an ability to know when action is more important than more information. It is dialogic, or transformative in terms of process and substantive outcomes. It requires role balancing and, in some cases, identity balancing, where individuals inhabit different roles and carry their identity or identities in their organizations, their professional

networks, and their communities. The exercise of prudential judgment makes ESP participants and public servants like them "community statesmen" (ibid); the American democratic experiment depends on governance that people can see, understand, engage in, and see themselves in. For ESP, this is parks management, wildfire mitigation, endangered species conservation, environmental protection, and more.

Prudential judgment, as a concept, touches on a range of the consequences that emerge from the ESP data: the framework of the American political economy, using empathy to see deeply from perspectives other than one's own, "getting on the balcony" to craft a vision and help make an action plan, working collaboratively, and managing risk at different scales. One participant explained its function for them;

> The concept of prudential judgment really stuck with me. It's inherently true: rarely is there just a perfect, clean-cut answer to these decisions that we need to make or what it means to follow our mission on the land. The truth is what we do is we exercise prudential judgment. Maybe that's messy, but your judgment informs those decisions. I really found that powerful to acknowledge, to say it out loud. And on some occasions, it can be really constructive when there's lots of disagreement to say, listen, our role here is to exercise our professional judgment. That's going to be imperfect, guided by our experience, but there's no formula, there's no perfect answer. If there was, we wouldn't still be talking about this. So that was a big concept to have a two-word phrase for that's been super helpful.

In some contexts, exercising prudential judgment requires taking on risk. A participant held up a sticky note they keep on their desk: "Risk should be educated and informed." They explained,

> While you have relationships with your cooperators, and you're respecting your mission and theirs, sometimes you've got to take risks. I documented this in my [Leadership Learning Plan], and it's something I struggle with, so I think about that, and go back and reflect. Are there opportunities I'm avoiding where I could be thinking about taking educated and informed risks? For me right now this looks like asking hard questions of our leadership, or speaking openly and honestly to our executive team.

Another participant recounted a subtext of one of their case studies, in which a guest speaker in a leadership position made what the participant considered to be the "easy" decision rather than the "right" decision. They noted,

> That stuck with me, not in a judgmental way but as a reminder to myself because I have prejudices and biases as well. And so, I need to think about what's right, what is the right thing to do, and how to do the right thing when it's a big risk.

Three propositions associated with the FICC model for leadership learning in public natural resource agencies

At the heart of this study are three propositions about how the FICC model produces leadership outcomes in public administration. First, a FICC program sets participants up to practice applying multi-disciplinary concepts in leadership and governance. Second, a FICC program centers transference, the idea that the skills, sensibilities, and capacity to lead in complex settings can move with an individual from one case to another. Third, the FICC model depends upon a synergy among its components; that is, it is greater than the sum of its parts. Particularly for adult learners, who are deeply embedded in their professional, personal, cultural and social contexts,

situating learning in the real world makes a difference that counts. Each of these propositions is expanded on in this section.

Proposition 1: practice

> When asked if and how ESP was useful for them, a participant said,
>
> ESP, for me, would be like the equivalent of small gasoline engine repair in high school shop. If I had taken that class, and had a little bit of a foundation, I'd be like, ok: let me apply the knowledge I do have here, let me look critically at this and see if I can at least form an opinion, have some ideas about how this might move forward, or what I don't know. It gives you a toehold on that knowledge.

This metaphor takes charge of the proposition that the conditions created by ESP– particularly the case study approach, mixed cohort and pedagogies focused on iteration– set up interactions that give participants knowledge, skills, and confidence to take on complex public service leadership challenges. ESP alumni have roles and responsibilities that require extraordinary leadership, like managing wildfire, returning tribal lands, facilitating restorative justice practices, protecting water quality, conserving endangered species, and more. After their programs, they have stepped into ambitious programs and projects, among them crafting omnibus wildfire legislation, running for county commissioner, reorganizing their teams and their agency, leading an enterprise team, leading their agency, and allocating tribal fisheries.

The originality and authenticity of each case study and the arc of each program year facilitates participants' engagement and sense of relevance. The anchoring of cases in communities of interest and communities of place, field trips and after-hours time that build a sense of place, and exposure to real people tackling the case topic help build

meaning and contribute to the thickness and stickiness of participants' substantive case learning and, more importantly, their capacity for leadership in their own professional settings.

Overwhelmingly, participants learn to lead by observing others exercising leadership. One participant explained,

> [In ESP] I got to hear from folks from different perspectives explain how they worked through a scenario. I mentioned how I learn leadership is through mentors, people I've connected with in my career and my life; this was a way of doing that. I got to make it real, hear the speakers' perspectives.

FICC programs allow participants to learn by observing in two ways: through exposure to guest speakers, leaders in the case setting, and through exposure to their colleagues in the program cohort. In any cohort, there is some variation in how individuals listen, discuss, and understand case information and the lessons about leadership and governance embedded therein. FICC programs perform an additional sense-making function for rising leaders who are learning through observation. When individuals learn by observing, they choose parts of what they are observing that are most useful for them. No context is exactly the same, so there is individual and group reflection about what to hold onto, transfer, or take away for future use. One participant explained that, generally, to learn to lead they "Get most of it by watching other people, picking up what I thought made sense." In an FICC-style program, the "I" for that individual became "we," the cohort, where they gained the benefit of a range of other reflections, a sort of double-reflection of the most valid, reliable, and transferable concepts and practices.

FICC programs also set participants up to build their capacity for leadership through practice in a protected, low-risk space for solution seeking, thought experiments, and intellectual trial and error. Recognizing that leadership learning happens through observation first and experience second, the reflection and discussion component of case studies calls on participants to embark on thought experiments and intellectual trial and error in low-risk or no-risk settings. That is, the case study problem is not their professional problem. Rather, it becomes a laboratory for solution seeking. Further, their cohort members are in the laboratory with them. Each cohort member offers a somewhat or very different background, approach to problem solving, set of ideas and knowledge and way of experiencing and digesting case material. Brought to bear through reflection and discussion, this diversity of thought creates a broader and deeper solution set than one learner can alone. It reflects the networked and collaborative nature of complex public problems in environment and natural resources and public administration generally, giving participants an experience of creative abundance without a threat of failure.

While the risk of failure in real-world challenges reflects an awareness of public accountability–which is an essential driver in the construction of democratic governance structures and the provision of public service–it can cloak some of the solution space, information, knowledge, and range of possible outcomes. By practicing problem-solving freely while situated in a case context, participants experience the nuanced limitations and challenges of a live case that will be closer to their own testing grounds than a fabricated case or story. Ultimately, participants can use a live case study that is complete

and protected to practice unpacking, sorting, highlighting, and transferring competencies to their professional practice. One ESP participant explained,

> Borrowing a problem was always the winning ticket for us all: guest speakers always had tons of responsibility. It was helpful to see that you're not the only one, but you had the freedom to ask the questions that you'd like to ask day to day. It had a safety zone about it … that was it, pulling your own fears, worries, self-doubt out of the way and being just a very interested party. Then, you could draw your own similarities to what you're doing back home to help.

Then, during and after their program year, participants are explicitly and implicitly positioned to use concepts and examples (but not, significantly, a blueprint, plan, or step-by-step guide) to carry out their own professional responsibilities. For example, a participant reflected on how they lean on the idea of prudential judgment:

> It's not so applicable to state trust lands, because we have a trust mandate. But on the habitat side, we're managing spotted owl habitat. There's no right way. We started doing it in 1997. Nesting pairs are disappearing when we leave the habitat alone. It might not be a habitat issue primarily anymore, and I give more credence to people that came in and said, hey, you're not doing this the way we'd like you to. And I was definitely more open to that [after ESP]. There are many sides to everything and when you don't have defined or you have evolving science, you have to be cognizant of the fact that you don't know it all, even surrounded by specialists.

Proposition 2: transference

There is a practical flow between practice (proposition 1) and transference: during and after their FICC program, participants practice … transferring. That is, they are encouraged through the range of pedagogies and their own curiosity, intuition, and ambition, to test out the ideas they accumulate during their program. However, practice–like small engine repair–is the exercise of doing a similar thing over and over to build familiarity and competence. Transference is the exercise of molding something useful to fit a new situation while retaining its particular usefulness.

The same idea in different settings looks, in this proposition, like different artists' sketches of the same thing layered atop one another and held up to the light: muddled, but capturing the essence of the thing. For example, a participant can take the idea of bringing the right people to the table from a forty-person forest management collaborative to a six-person invasive plant management project. Guided by the same awareness–that everyone with an interest should be included–they craft very different-looking venues, relationships, timelines, documents, communications, implementation, reporting, monitoring and evaluation. By building participants' facility to move ideas from case to case, and from their cases to their work, a FICC program teaches them the skills and sensibilities required to see, name, and communicate the essence of concepts and practices in public service leadership. At its core, a FICC program surfaces the practice of individual, group, and community meaning-making that is associated with solving public problems and requires that participants lift that practice from one case and plunk it down in another, and then another, and then in their own professional world.

This study finds that FICC programs promote transference in two particular ways. First, a FICC program can help leaders raise their sight lines. Each of the model's

conditions contributes in their own way to encouraging rising leaders to situate themselves in public service and the greater good, and to draw energy and inspiration from their colleagues across the American West. Second, because many sticky natural resource challenges are "people" challenges (alternately, governance challenges or requiring the arbitration of value differences), the FICC model likely has broad application beyond the environment and natural resources field and indeed for public service leadership development in most and perhaps all fields.

Transference is increasingly important as environment and natural resources issues intersect with public health, justice, food security, housing, the impacts of climate change, and other fundamental threats to individual and community well-being. ESP participants link public service leadership, leading at the edge of authority, relationship building, and individual, organizational, and societal resilience. One participant articulated the importance of feeling competent exercising transference in their accelerating and intersecting professional world:

> ESP catalyzed my interagency engagement in a way I don't think anything else could have and was super critical for me when things were very challenging. Because, within [my agency] is a warm cozy blanket of bureaucratic process. And you can bask in it and never have to call anybody outside of the organization. And there's lots of managers that are like that, content to hang on their ranch. What I really appreciated about ESP was that by looking at other problems, I draw connections to what I'm doing, or could do. And I definitively understand that the individuals in other organizations facing the same problems, we could work together. When Covid-19 hit, and the 2020 [Oregon] wildfires … I think this is

> just so true for a landscape that's going to be defined by climate driven crises. The luxury of our blanket, it's just gone. If our job is to [manage land], we're managing three Type-1 incidents at once. Relationships really matter on those long duration incidents. And if you don't have a base of competency to talk to people who aren't in your camp, it's going to go sideways. I pride myself in working across organizational and jurisdictional boundaries, with county commissioners and others on those incidents. I tie that to being kickstarted by ESP.

Proposition 3: synergy

Leadership learning through a FICC program is qualitatively different from traits-based or individualized leadership learning in the ways that the program conditions interact to produce individual learning outputs, individual, programmatic, and organizational outcomes, and a matrix of impacts. That is, there is synergy among the model conditions that make a FICC program greater than the sum of its parts. While a variety of leadership training approaches are helpful for mid-career professionals and executives, the FICC model excels at embedding participants in packages of meaning (Berger & Luckmann, 1967) that increase the thickness and stickiness of their public service leadership learning.

ESP is structured in a way that is highly iterative. Case studies, facilitation, curriculum, and the arc of the program over the academic year create a kind of weaving, where theory and practice are warp and weft and for participants who are open, attentive, and appropriately positioned in their professional and personal lives, learning outcomes are difficult to dissect from their regular approach to the complex public problems and

leadership challenges they face. Rather, they reflect a sense of their program outcomes as integrated and indistinguishable from their other knowledge, awareness, and practice: "After we wrapped up, I felt like I learned so much that I could apply to my work. And then I think I've just been applying it and now it seems kind of normal."

> Another participant explained the synergy of their program experience as follows; I need to see things, the different ways and types of leadership that I would not have seen. I would be less for it. I try to be very observant. Without that artificial [case context] I would not have had the opportunity to see those examples of what leadership looks like. What I know is that in my day to day there are artifacts from that experience that manifest in my decision making. And maybe I'm a little kinder, or maybe I pause a little more before I open my mouth. Or maybe I stop to ask a question before I make a decision. All of those things that you pick up along the way, and one of those big stepping stores was that program for me, being able to see so much all at once and focus all at once. In our hybrid and remote type of world, it was a luxury to be removed from everything and just focus [on the case].

The synergy among program conditions is an important marker in a resource-constrained environment, where trainers and managers are likely to consider whether it is possible to deliver single or a few of the components of an FICC-style program in an effort to fit the schedules of professionals, limited resources, and other constraints while achieving some of the outcomes described above. Experimental research is needed to identify exactly whether and how the FICC model could be parsed in this way. However, in discussions of how they have shared their learning outputs with their colleagues and

teams, participants reflected on the interactions among the program conditions. One considered,

> If I just tell the story of the case study, they're not going to get the complexity. Without the classmate interaction, you're not going to get: there's all kinds of ways to look at this problem, don't get tunnel vision … there is all kinds of overlap like that in the structure of [ESP].

Another participant offered a thoughtful expression of the democratic utility of ESP and the FICC model broadly:

> It's easy for me to want to shut my door and not talk to anybody all day. Because the most important thing for me, for my job, is to support our staff to deliver conservation. But we have to embrace one another. We have to acknowledge the value of one another and we have to give those soft skills and those artifacts of conversations and interactions that we carry with us. Whether it's in the ESP program, or whatever the equivalent of the water cooler is nowadays. Because ultimately, we're just doing this for one another. And it's easy to forget that when we're not with one another. All these problems we're talking about, they're all people problems. Oysters in Puget Sound? Fine without us. Salmon? Same thing. They're all people problems. So, there's just tremendous value in forcing people like me to go sit down with a bunch of people I don't want to sit with and stop moving widgets for a little bit. So, I can talk and listen. There's value and you can't put a number on it.

The three propositions offered here—practice, transference, and synergy—work together to produce conditions for learning that are emergent, iterative, and especially suited to

rising leaders in the public sector. The logistical construction of ESP and other programs following the FICC model creates synergistic conditions for participants to practice leadership in context and to transfer what they build from one context to another. For mid- and executive level public administrators, the ability to transfer capacities including but not limited to: empathy; collaboration; vision and action; understanding and articulating the context of public service work; defining and practicing leadership; and calibrating risk and safety and exercising prudential judgment produces improved individual, organizational, network and society-level impacts.

Conceptualizing the impacts of FICC leadership learning at scale

Importantly, this study engaged a grounded theory approach to consider the impacts of one FICC program. Grounded theory is a good fit here, because it is impossible to separate whether the rising leaders who come to ESP rise because of the program, are lifted by it, or perhaps rise or stay in spite of it. Rather, this research uses participants' own reflections to identify correlation between their experiences in the program, what they think they know, and how they use their knowledge in their work. It builds out knowledge about the structure and function of the FICC model and particularly how a FICC-style leadership training program produces leadership outcomes in the context where it operates. Significantly, the theory associated with this model calls for further development of the thinking associated with its impacts. While individual leadership growth is valuable, and individual acts of leadership in the natural resources topic area are meritorious, the impacts of individual learning outcomes from ESP are more significant at scale.

Organizational impacts are highly variable among sending agencies. As a result of agency size, structure, leadership development and promotion processes, employee mobility, and other organizational factors; and participant selection, number of slots, and duration with the program, the way that ESP learning outcomes affect individual organizations internally and externally is difficult to measure or describe. In some sending agencies, everyone on the leadership team (state or regional) is an ESP alumnus. In others, there are networks of alumni, but they are dispersed throughout the organization. In still others, alumni are not connected and not aware of one another. Some sending agencies are small (for example, a soil and water conservation district with three staff) while others are large (for example, the USDA Forest Service). This variation produces concomitant variation in the synergistic interactions among alumni as well as variation in the impacts on organizations and their contribution to the public good.

Without measuring per se, participants and Advisory Board members speculated on the kinds of organization-level impacts that ESP has: "[Peers in my cohort] are probably people I'm going to encounter professionally. That gives you that sort of longer-term vision that if we're running a group of 25 through the program every year, we're talking hundreds of people that are going to be lifting their own organizations' capabilities through improved leadership. There's a lot of collective value there. All of these other agencies are going to be so much better if people have this kind of leadership training."; "Everyone on our leadership team right now has been through the program. Even though it wasn't synchronous, it's a shared experience of having done that training, looking at things from a big picture perspective. It helps us all look at things through a shared lens, and know that each of us has the deep familiarity with the case studies we are

referencing or taking a lesson from." And, "Folks here that have gone through ESP, I think they are more willing to step up and be leaders, more willing to lead projects or tackle some challenging problem, to raise their hand first and volunteer for that challenging work. I would imagine that some of the learning and experiences in problem solving that are had throughout the program give folks the confidence and skill set and desire to take what you've learned and bring it into implementation."

On top of individual outcomes and some evident organizational impact, Corbin and Strauss (2015) offer the "consequential matrix" as an analytical tool for elucidating the expanding circles of impact for individual learning outcomes. A matrix can examine a range of conditions and range of possible outcomes; the complexity of relationships between conditions, interactions, and consequences; different actors, roles, and perspectives; and different scales (individual, organizational, societal). The authors sketch a diagram of a consequential matrix that is a series of concentric and interconnected circles, growing from individual to organizational to community to national to global. They draw arrows going both toward and away from the center, representing the intersection of conditions and consequences and the resulting chain of events. In the diagram, conditions move toward and surround the interactions under study, and create a complex background in which those interactions–and many more–take place. The outward-headed arrows represent how the consequences (here, all of the ESP participants' learning outcomes) move outward. A major limitation of the diagram, Corbin and Strauss note, is that the flow appears linear. Really, instead, it should move like a game of billiards, where balls strike one another at different angles, setting off a chain reaction that ends with knocking the appropriate ball(s) into the pockets.

Here, ESP trains rising leaders. Those individuals move through and across their own organizations and across sectors. They are ambitious, committed public servants, and they rise from entry-level to mid-level management and supervision to executive roles as their careers progress. ESP alumni lead state and federal agencies, write communications for the Secretary of the Interior, manage first-of-their-kind transfers of federal lands back to tribes, manage the budget for the Bureau of Land Management, among a variety of essential and laudable roles and responsibilities. Individual acts of leadership can produce culture change at pivotal points in the evolution of an organization, a network, or a governance regime. Moreover, public service leaders and practitioners draw on model case studies like those that ESP builds and delivers.

Finally, the ESP alumni network extends across Oregon, the Pacific Northwest, and the country. Each cohort draws on one another to greater or lesser degrees, sharing information and testing ideas as needed. They are a network of case study thinkers, innovators, collaborators, initiators and facilitators of dialogue; in turn, they lead their teams with their ESP outcomes embedded in their strategies, approaches, styles and skills. Early in an interview, when asked to characterize ESP, one participant considered,

> I think about all the different people who have gone through this program. We all move around; knowing that these kinds of conversations are happening year after year, here in Oregon, and then that information and knowledge is being taken to all these other places in the country. People in my cohort moved to Alaska, to Montana. They're probably having the same kinds of conversations, about these complex human interactions that are affecting how they manage the land. That was a thing that jumped out at me as an important message to share: that impact

locally, and within the cohort, or even the agencies. I think it gets disseminated out pretty wide.

The data provided in this section suggests that, like Corbin and Strauss' metaphorical billiard balls, the impacts of individuals' participation in ESP can have impacts that range from individual (confidence, camaraderie) to global (large-scale wildfire mitigation contributing to climate resiliency).

Chapter 5: Discussion

The results of this research offer promising developments in the theory and practice of mid-career professional development of public service leadership. They elucidate the field-immersion comparative-cases model for leadership development and characterize six key conditions for the model. More broadly, they provide insights into how the structure and function of the FICC model helps people experience, practice, and transfer knowledge about leading in complexity and in service of the public good. They suggest that mid-career professionals learn primarily through observation, and secondarily through experience and facilitated learning experiences. They identify six consequences of a FICC-style development and training program in environment and natural resources, and offer three propositions about how the FICC model works. Finally, they employ a consequential matrix to characterize the dynamic, scaled interactions implicit in understanding how individuals learn about leadership. This discussion section offers reflections on the findings, notes about contextualizing and strategically engaging FICC-style programming, areas for further research and improved practice and a conclusion.

ESP participant interviews reified the knowledge that leadership can be taught and leadership learning is iterative. From the first stages of a public service career, ambitious rising leaders build their capacities to size up and take action in conditions of complexity and uncertainty. As they take on more responsibility in their organizations and their networks, they also take on more risk and are called upon to absorb more uncertainty in support of their team, their mission, and the public good. These rising leaders can be supported in a variety of ways, including through leadership development

and training. This study extends what is known about what public administrators need from their trainings: individual assessments and skill building are helpful, *and* context-focused, immersive, comparative approaches including but not limited to the FICC model are significant. This latter type of training, with its primary focus on the world *around* the individual rather than the individual themselves, is about naming the world where rising leaders find themselves and setting them up to construct, practice, and transfer the capacities they need to be effective, efficient, and justice promoting.

Exemplary leaders conceptualize and practice leadership in a variety of ways. In interviews, this study asked participants to explain how they learned to be a leader; in order to set up that question, the study first asked participants if they *think of themselves as leaders*. A majority of participants are supervisors with three to about a dozen direct reports and in some cases nearly three hundred employees. A minority are in partnership, liaison, or coordinator roles without supervisory responsibility. Nearly all participants replied that they do think of themselves as leaders, but it was a passing yes; they followed with explanations of what kind of leadership they practice and what leadership means. It is, they said, collaborative, from behind, about the team, about supporting others, about guiding others, about knowing everyone's strengths and how to help apply them to a problem. For participants, leadership is relational, reciprocal, and constitutive. It is likely that the relationship between thinking of leadership in these ways and participation in ESP is to some degree tautological; that is, individuals identified by their sending agencies as a good fit for ESP likely already held this orientation, only to have it named, confirmed, or lauded. This could be studied, but here the takeaway is that the FICC

model is particularly well built to plumb the kinds of capacities that participants are leaning into, and to situate them in the theory and practice of public service leadership.

Broadly, adult learning theory requires attention to program structure, content, and culture. Mid-career professionals are deeply immersed in their work and thoroughly embedded in social, cultural, and epistemological parcels of meaning that require extra sorting and situating. Particularly in the periods of transition from entry- to mid-level management, and then again from mid-career to executive, individuals are taking on increased complexity. Traits-based and other individual leadership development opportunities help build understanding associated with their own skills, abilities, and awarenesses, but they generally do not focus on the complexity itself: *what* rising leaders are dealing with. One participant explained,

> I credit ESP with the transition into a more formal embodiment of leadership in my career, because it provided me with a vocabulary and a framework for thinking about some of the things I was observing, some of the things that I was doing, some of the things that I recognized as valuable but maybe didn't have the language to talk about or the kind of framework for understanding and exploring it more deeply.

Contributing to a sense of complexity is the sociological finding that in all kinds of groups (diverse or not diverse by various measure), different people have different experiences associated with the same observed thing. For administrators who are charged with arbitrating value differences in their everyday work, facility with this awareness increases their effectiveness. Making the exercise of empathy a first step; standing in

others' shoes; remembering to do so in high-stakes and high-conflict settings; and leading others in doing so all improve outcomes in governance.

The FICC model is particularly therapeutic for public service leadership development at the mid-career and executive levels. It is durable: participants cited particular challenges (positive and negative) to which they applied their ESP learning, including the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on organizations and resources; rapid generational change in public agencies, rapidly elevating cadres of leaders; a focus on producing environmental justice; and the accelerating impacts of climate change. In sum, the six key components of a FICC program (cases, cohort, topics, timing, pedagogies, curriculum) create a synergy that builds participants' understanding of theory and practice associated with empathy, collaboration, the public service context, vision and action, leadership, and risk, safety, and prudential judgment. The model does so by encouraging practice and transference. Then, participants with well-developed skills and sensibilities in public service leadership elevate their organizations and their networks as they tackle compound threats to social, cultural and economic well-being across the American West.

This study opens doors to a variety of areas for further research. First, how deep versus wide should the curriculum be in the FICC model? Or, what kind of learning outcomes should programs expect with consistency, and what kind or which are intermittent or episodic? Here, the data on participants' learning outputs is shallow and wide: there is a diversity of answers, but much less repetition in other categories. It is likely that because mid-career professionals are embedded in their work worlds, and their educations, interests, roles, and responsibilities are fairly diverse within their cohort and

population, they take what they need and leave the rest. In this case, the breadth of teaching topics, information, ideas and experiences presented to participants is an attribute: there is something for everyone. It is also possible that a more focused curriculum would more effectively and consistently develop knowledge and competencies that are of a higher priority to sending agencies, program faculty and staff and participants. Future investigation could conduct pre- and post-tests of specific learning outputs, and could be linked up with ESP program development to identify real-time priorities, build them into curricular delivery, and then evaluate outputs and outcomes.

Second, what number of cases produces the most effective FICC program? ESP uses three cases plus a one- or two-day capstone session. The capstone is designed to further promote transference by asking participants to apply their case learning to challenges they and their cohort members face in their own work. Here, most participants interviewed attended all three cases in their program year (a few attended two). Most attended the capstone, but many did not recall any information about it. There is some evidence that learning plateaus after three cases, but it is weak. Future investigation could sort out single-case participants, two-case participants, and three-case participants and survey or interview to identify learning outcomes; alternately, a time-series approach could survey or interview participants after their first, second, and third cases, and then again some time after their program year (this study used 4-10 years after program year, partly due to variables associated with program interruptions during the Covid-19 pandemic).

Third, how important is accountability in the FICC model? Or, does the FICC model's iterative teaching and learning approach sufficiently transform learning into capacity such that accountability measures are not necessary? Adult learning theory suggests that structures and systems for accountability to one's learning are an essential part of teaching (Vella, 2008). This study found that accountability measures per se may be less important than the literature suggests, or that the FICC model ameliorates some of the need for them. This may be particularly true vis a vis intra-organizational and community leadership topics, while some kinds of accountability (check-ins, reviews, scheduled or structured time with or by peers or a supervisor) remain helpful for developing and practicing individual learning notes, styles, and skills. The theory and practice of accountability in the context of the FICC model could be explored and examined in a variety of ways.

Well before but particularly after the height of the Covid-19 pandemic, a robust dialogue has emerged about what kinds of teaching and learning can be done online, in a hybrid format, synchronous or asynchronous. A fourth area for further research asks, how hybrid can a FICC program go? Many of the components of the model depend upon or are significantly enhanced by face-to-face interaction, field experience, and time spent in cohort and community. There are a range of experimental designs–and practical experiments–that can access this question, and certainly there are advantages to hybridizing a professional training program. However, much of the magic of ESP is in the essential human interactions that produce learning outcomes and enhance the public good. Testing the limits of a hybrid FICC program should be done with caution.

Fifth and finally, there is a set of research questions associated with the impacts of a FICC program on the cases and case communities themselves. How do FICC programs affect the communities of place, communities of interest, networks and regimes in which their cases are situated? Do they help, or hinder? Under what conditions? Are there ways the FICC model could be adjusted to promote good governance in its case settings? That is, is the model reciprocal? Could it become more so? Here, there is some evidence that in some case settings, ESP has residual effects on capacity. The case studies allow guest speakers to tell their stories in a reflective way; they give guest speakers something (speaking to the program) in common in cases where relationships are strained; they frame the case as a story to be learned from, something that is complex and challenging but curious and hopeful. In some cases, partners form or renew relationships in the ESP room; guest speakers find professional connections with members of the cohort to achieve something new or different in their shared work. ESP staff and faculty seek to increase these residuals through introductions, communications, and follow-up, as well as through honorariums to guest speakers from small organizations as the program budget allows.

Because ESP visits each case setting only once, or at the least only returns after ten years or more (for example, re-visiting sage grouse conservation or water rights in the Klamath Basin), it is limited in what kinds and how much residual value it can facilitate for its cases and case communities. A FICC model program that is situated in place, using the same or many of the same guest speakers, field sites, and an evolving social and political case and community context would be better positioned to produce residuals that are substantive and durable. A variety of methodological approaches could access this

expansive area of investigation. Significantly, a focus on reciprocity could enhance capacity and promote justice in the communities that FICC programs depend upon, important public values and paramount goals of the endeavor of public service leadership development.

Areas for further development of practice in FICC programs and ESP in particular mirror opportunities for research. They include attention to curriculum lumping and splitting, currency and development; continued development of a balanced approach to hybrid instruction in FICC programming for mid-career professionals; and structuring and facilitating opportunities for protected practice. In ESP, there is opportunity to continue to refine the team exercise to emphasize transference over accountability per se and to examine and test different approaches to the capstone session. Curriculum could explore more deeply the concepts and practice of decolonizing natural resource management and promoting justice, and continue to give theory and examples of practice to administrators sorting out how to give power to underrepresented communities in the constraints of the American political economy.

This study describes and validates the field immersion/comparative cases model for public service leadership development, identifies six bundles of outcomes from one model program, and offers three propositions for how the model works in the ways that it does. It emphasizes the importance of training public administrators about not just their own leadership abilities but also about the world in which they lead in its full complexity and uncertainty, its humanness, cruelties and kindnesses. It lifts up the role of public administrators in producing and preserving democracy and celebrates their commitments

to managing risk, taking care of their teams, and doing good work. One rising public service leader offered this observation:

> Sometimes processes are really good and work really well. But sometimes they don't. And sometimes they may have started out working really well but because of changes in technology, social conditions, whatever it might be, those processes may not be working as well anymore. If we're so narrowly focused and trained to follow the process and not deviate, then we may just live with those issues. We may even end up implementing things that really, truly don't make sense and maybe more detrimental than they are helpful. So, at that stage, there needs to be enough opportunity and ability to take that step back and look at the process and evaluate, is this working well or not? Does this still make sense? And to be able to say, here's the process, here's where I'm seeing the issue, can we talk about that and have an opportunity to improve it? I want leaders who look at big pictures, who are open to bigger or different ideas, who are willing to think, to ask questions. If you have spent your whole career following processes and not being allowed to ask those questions, then it's not very likely you're going to become a leader who will ask those questions and think broadly. So really, we should be training people, if we want them to come up through the agency into leadership positions. We need to be training them as leaders from the very beginning to end up with good leaders in the end.

This quote captures the essence of leadership and leadership training in public service: leadership can be taught, and it can be learned. Complex administrative systems produce public goods and services every day, and these systems are made up of individuals in

service to the greater good. Public service leaders are innovative, curious, generous, and committed. A dynamic approach to training and development lifts up their work, which in turn lifts the well-being of landscapes and communities.

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Appendix A: Email Transmittals for Interviews

Email 1

Hi (name);

Hoping this finds you well. I'm delighted to be sending you this note: I wonder if you have some time in the coming weeks (or after the holidays if that's better) for a visit and an interview in support of a study of how we learn about leadership. Especially, I'm examining how ESP works, whether it works, and what we and programs like us can do better. I know your time is valuable and I appreciate your consideration.

This is my ask: click through to (url) to schedule. I've blocked hour-long slots, but expect that we'll want **30-45 minutes**. If you don't see a day/time that is good for you, email me with your preferred day/time and I'll make it available. Once you've scheduled, I'll send you an email with a Zoom link. If you prefer a phone call, there is a box in the scheduler for a number, or let me know day-of.

We'll start with some guiding questions, which I'll send to you along with the Zoom link, and then have time to explore themes that might need more discussion. The study is for my dissertation, which I'll fold into an evaluation of ESP and one or more journal articles in public administration and leadership.

Note that this research is approved by Portland State University's Institutional Review Board, part of PSU's Office of Research Integrity. Before scheduling, please scroll down to the bottom of this email and read the scripted Consent to Participate in Research.

If you have any questions or the scheduler doesn't work for you, you can always reach me by phone or text: (phone).

Thank you, and looking forward,

(signature)

Consent to Participate in Research

You are being asked to take part in a research study. The text below shows the main facts you need to know about this research for you to think about when making a decision about if you want to join in. Carefully look over the information in this scripted section and ask questions about anything you do not understand before you make your decision to schedule and/or participate in an interview.

Project Title: Developing Public Service Leadership: understanding the field immersion/ comparative cases model for midcareer professional education in environment and natural resources governance and leadership.
Population: All alumnae of the Executive Seminar Program.
Researcher: Dr. Jennifer Allen and Erin Steinkruger, Department of Public Administration, Portland State University.
Researcher Contact: Erin Steinkruger, (email), (phone)

Key Information for You to Consider

Voluntary Consent. You are being asked to volunteer for a research study. It is up to you whether you choose to involve yourself or not. There is no penalty if you choose not to join in or decide to stop.
Purpose. The reasons for doing this research are to better understand the outcomes of the Executive Seminar Program, to build theory about professional training programs, to contribute to an evaluation of the Executive Seminar Program and to contribute to the development of training programs in the Center for Public Service.
Duration. It is expected that your Zoom or phone call will last 30-45 minutes.
Procedures and Activities. You will be asked to participate in a one-on-one Zoom or phone interview with the researcher. You will be sent a set of guiding questions by email ahead of the interview, and can expect the interviewer to add questions that are relevant to the themes discussed in keeping with the semi-structured interview format.
Risks. Some of the possible risks or discomforts of taking part in this study include describing difficult experience or situations in your professional pathway and/or providing critical feedback about the Executive Seminar Program.
Benefits. No direct benefit but the researchers hope to gain a better understanding of the outcomes of the Executive Seminar Program and implications for professional training program design and implementation.
Options. Participation is voluntary and the only alternative is to not participate.

What happens to the information collected?

Information collected from you for this research will be used to better understand the outcomes of the Executive Seminar Program, to build theory about professional training programs, to contribute to an evaluation of the Executive Seminar Program and to contribute to the development of training programs in the Center for Public Service. The research will be published as a doctoral dissertation and submitted as article(s) to peer-reviewed academic journal(s). No identifiable information will be included in any publication, public forum or report.

How will I and my information be protected?
We will take measures to protect your privacy including anonymizing your survey responses and storing all data in password protected files and survey software on a password protected computer. Despite taking steps to protect your privacy, we can never fully guarantee that your privacy will be protected.

What if I want to stop being in this research?
You do not have to take part in this study, but if you do, you may stop at any time. You have the right to choose not to join in any study activity or completely stop your participation at any point without penalty or loss of benefits you would otherwise get. Your decision whether or not to take part in research will not affect your relationship with the researchers or Portland State University.

Will it cost me money to take part in this research?
There is no cost to taking part in this research, beyond your time.

Will I be paid for taking part in this research?
There is no compensation for taking part in this research.

Who can answer my questions about this research?
If you have questions or concerns, contact the research team at:

Erin Steinkruger, PhD Candidate in Public Affairs and Policy
(phone) (email)

Who can I speak to about my rights as a research participant?
The Portland State University Institutional Review Board ("IRB") is overseeing this research. The IRB is a group of people who review research studies to make sure the rights and welfare of the people who take part in research are protected. The Office of Research Integrity is the office at Portland State University that supports the IRB. If you have questions about your rights, or wish to speak with someone other than the research team, you may contact:

Office of Research Integrity
PO Box 751
Portland, OR 97207-0751
Phone: (503) 725-5484
Toll Free: 1 (877) 480-4400
Email: psuirb@pdx.edu

Email 2
Hi (name),

Thanks so much! Really looking forward to the conversation. I expect we'll want 30-45 minutes. We're scheduled for **(date)**. Here's a Zoom link: (link). If you prefer a phone call, let me know any time. My cell phone is (phone). If you need to reschedule or cancel, you should have received an email from You Can Book Me with an easy process. If that doesn't work for you, don't hesitate to let me know.

The guiding questions I'll ask you are attached here [Appendix C]. We can expand on them, skip, or jump around as you'd like.

Best wishes,

(signature)

Appendix B: ESP Interview Script

Executive Seminar Program Study

Thank you for making the time to visit with me about ESP and your leadership learning. I expect our conversation will take 30-45 minutes. Here are our guiding questions:

BACKGROUND

1. Tell me about your current role. What is on your "desk"?
2. Why do you choose to do the work that you do?
3. What do you think it means to be a leader in your professional role?
4. How do you think you've learned to be a leader?
5. Have you taken leadership trainings besides ESP? Could you please describe them briefly?

ESP

1. Why did you participate in ESP?
2. Was your overall experience with ESP positive or not positive?
3. What were your expectations about ESP going in?
4. Did the program meet those expectations? How, how not?
5. How would you describe the ESP learning "setting"? Or, when you go to tell someone about ESP, how do you describe it?
6. You were in a cohort of participants from different organizations and different geographies. What do you think were the pros and cons of this?
7. ESP is made up of 3 weeks plus the capstone, spread out over the academic year. How did this structure work for you?
8. We also divided into pairs and small groups for reflection often, and in teams at the end of every case. How did that work for you?
9. Do you feel like you were accountable for learning during your ESP year?
    a. In what ways?
    b. To whom?
    c. What about after the program was over?
10. What were your top takeaways from ESP? Maybe 3 or 4.

AFTER ESP

1. How do you apply these (or other takeaways) in your work?
2. More generally, what kinds of impacts do you think ESP has on individuals, organizations, and society at large?

IN CLOSING

1. Anything else you think I should know about ESP or leadership learning or your work?

Appendix C: ESP Past Cases List

Executive Seminar Program in Natural Resources Leadership
Case Study History
2000-2023
Map View of Cases

2000-2001 Case Studies

Fall: *Irrigation Districts within the Methow Valley;* Winthrop and Walla Walla, Washington
Winter: *Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) Reviews Re-Licensing;* Hood River, Oregon
Spring: *Hanford Reach National Monument;* Richland, Washington

2001-2002 Case Studies

Fall: *Northwest Oregon State Forest Management Plan*; Forest Grove, Oregon
Winter: *Re-introduction of Wolves at Yellowstone National Park*; Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming
Spring: *Steens Mountain Special Protection Legislation;* Frenchglen, Oregon

2002-2003 Case Studies

Fall*: Dam Removal on Fish-Bearing Streams in the Pacific Northwest;* Elk Creek Dam Medford, Oregon
Spring: *Energy Production and the Preservation of Natural Resources;* Hood River, Oregon
Winter: *Search for Tribal Economic Independence: The Makah Tribe Whale Hunt;* Neah Bay, Washington

2003-2004 Case Studies

Fall: *The Salton Sea*; Palm Desert, California
Winter: *Off-Shore Ground Fish Issue;* Newport, Oregon
Spring: *Forest Wildfires, Summer 2002;* Medford, Oregon

2004-2005 Case Studies

Fall: *The Klamath Basin Water Conflict*; Klamath Falls, Oregon
Winter: *Kangley-Echo Lake 500 Kilovolt Transmission Line;* North Bend, Washington
Spring: *Natural Resource Policies of the Nez Perce Tribe;* Lapwai, Idaho

2005-2006 Case Studies

Fall: *Forest Ecosystem Management: The Northwest Forest Plan*; Corvallis, Oregon
Winter: *Columbia River Channel Improvement Project;* Longview, Washington
Spring: *Conserving the Greater Sage Grouse;* Reno, Nevada

2006-2007 Case Studies

Fall: *Managing Water Flows on The Missouri River;* Bismarck, North Dakota & Kansas City, Missouri
Winter: *Mount Hood National Forest Recreation Plan;* Welches, Oregon
Spring: *Grizzly Bear Management Plan;* Bozeman, Montana

2007-2008 Case Studies

Fall: *Managing Complexity: Superfund Asbestos-Contaminated Vermiculite Clean-up;* Libby, Montana
Winter: *Conflicting Priorities: ESA and the Marine Mammal Protection Act;* Astoria, Oregon
Spring: *Deep Connections: Groundwater Mitigation Rule for the Deschutes River Basin;* Bend, Oregon

2008-2009 Case Studies

Fall: *Healthy Forest Restoration;* Klamath Falls and Lakeview, Oregon
Winter: *The Rush to Renewables: Wind Energy Development;* The Dalles, Oregon
Spring: *Exxon-Valdez Oil Spill: Twenty Years Later*; Anchorage and Valdez, Alaska

2009-2010 Case Studies

Fall*: Salmon Hatchery Reform in the Columbia River Basin*; The Dalles and Pendleton, Oregon
Winter: *Tillamook Estuary Flood Control and Restoration;* Tillamook, Oregon
Spring: *Wild Horse Management on Public Lands;* Burns and Frenchglen, Oregon

2010-2011 Case Studies

Program Year Theme: Implementing Landscape Level Policies and Plans

Fall: *Klamath Basin Restoration Agreements*; Klamath Falls, Oregon
Winter: *Bison Management in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem;* Yellowstone National Park
Spring: *Killer Whale Recovery in Puget Sound;* Friday Harbor, Washington

2011-2012 Case Studies

Program Year Theme: Getting Ahead of the Curve

Fall: *Wolf Recovery Management In Oregon*; Enterprise Oregon
Winter: *Beneath the Surface: Allocating Oregon's Territorial Sea*; Newport Oregon
Spring*: Controlling Aquatic Invasive Species: Mission Impossible?;* Lake Mead Nevada

2012-2013 Case Studies

Program Year Theme: Restoring the Land, Sustaining Communities

Fall: *Elwha River Dam Removal and Restoration*; Olympic National Park, Washington
Winter: *The Changing Landscape of Forest Management in SW Oregon*; Coos Bay, Oregon
Spring: *Greater Sage-Grouse Habitat Restoration and Management*; Burns and Frenchglen, Oregon

2013-2014 Case Studies

Program Year Theme: Repurposing the Organic Machine

Winter: *Phasing Out Gill Netting in the Lower Columbia River;* Astoria Oregon
Spring: *US/Canada Columbia River Treaty Negotiation*; Bonners Ferry, Idaho and Libby, Montana
Summer: *Restoring Watershed and Community Health in the John Day Basin;* John Day, Oregon

2014-2015 Case Studies

Program Year Theme: Fire and Water: Complex Interdependencies in Natural Resource Management and Restoration

Fall: *A River Restored? The Yakima Basin Integrated Water Management Plan;* Yakima, Washington
Winter*: Vital Recovery: The Douglas Complex Fires;* Canyonville, Oregon
Spring*: Deep Connections: Re-Balancing Flows in the Deschutes River Basin;* Bend, Oregon

2015-2016 Case Studies

Program Year Theme: Legacies- Adapting Management to Implement Treaties and Laws from Past Eras

Fall: *Treaty Rights at Risk in Western Washington;* Anacortes, Washington
Winter: *Adaptive Management of Malheur and Shelton-Hart National Wildlife Refuges;* Burns, Oregon
Spring: *Implementing the Sealaska Lands Bill in SE Alaska;* Juneau and Ketchikan, Alaska

2016-2017 Case Studies

Program Year Theme: Exploring resilient systems, both natural and organizational

Fall: *Port of Portland: Managing Growth and Change at the Intersection of Industry and Environment;* Portland, Oregon
Winter: *Conservation and Renewable Energy in the California Desert*; Sacramento and Ridgecrest, California
Spring: *Creating Fire Resilient Communities;* Baker City, Oregon

2017-2018 Case Studies

Program Year Theme: Connections between landscape and communities

Fall: *The Paradox of Public Use: Managing and protecting natural resource lands in a time of changing demographics and increasing public use;* Bend, Oregon
Winter: *Preparing for the Big One: Tsunami Preparation and Community Resiliency;* Astoria, Oregon
Spring: *Wildfire, Floods, and Public Support for Managing Risk: Flagstaff Watershed Protection Project;* Flagstaff, Arizona

2018-2019 Case Studies

Program Year Theme: Making life work: Natural Resource Economies in the Rural West

Fall: *Subsistence lifestyles in rural Alaska;* Anchorage, Alaska

Winter: *Aquaculture in Puget Sound;* Port Townsend, Washington
Spring: *Agriculture and ranching in Wallowa County;* Enterprise, Oregon

2019-2020 Case Studies

Program Year Theme: Exploring new ways to organize, think about and address natural resource challenges

Fall: *Watershed Restoration: Innovation in Practice and Risk Reduction;* Ashland, Oregon
Winter: *Innovation in Organization: Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust;* Issaquah, Washington
Spring: *Innovation in Governance and Planning: The Mountain Accord & Central Wasatch Commission;* Salt Lake City, Utah
Spring 2020 case was postponed due to pandemic

2020-2021 Case Studies | Pandemic year

Program Year Theme: Leading in uncertainty: the twin challenge of leading through day-to-day chaotic times while also leading toward long-term policy and organizational goals.
Cases were modified due to pandemic. Significant use of virtual platforms, though field visits were included in fall and spring.

Fall: *Nexus of Change: The Columbia River Gorge (Gorge Field Tour)*
Winter: *Disruption: The Duty and Opportunity of Leadership in Uncertainty*
Spring: *Coping with Fire Today, Preparing for Fire Tomorrow (Santiam Canyon Field Tour)*

2021-2022 Case Studies | Pandemic year

Program Year Theme: Leadership on the line: managing conflict, unaligned expectations, addressing painful historic injustices and decision making in a context of unknown risk

Fall: *Forest Park: Seeking Balance in Portland's Urban Forest;* Portland, Oregon
Winter: *Disruption: Environmental Justice: Theory and Practice in Northeast Portland*
Spring: *Spirit Lake Tunnel: Infrastructure, Ecology and Catastrophic Risk;* Vancouver, Washington

2022-2023 Case Studies

Program Year Theme: Building Back Resilience – Transitioning to new ways of operating in an uncertain world.

Fall: *Teanaway Community Forest: Community Engagement & Decision Making;* Cle Elum, Washington
Winter: *West Coast Groundfish Recovery: Partnering Back from the Brink;* Newport, Oregon
Spring: *Restoring the Willamette River: From Mitigation to Stewardship;* Corvallis, Oregon

Appendix D: ESP Advisory Board

Executive Seminar in Natural Resources Leadership
2023-2024 Advisory Board

Kyle Abraham, Deputy State Forester, Oregon Department of Forestry

Jenn Bies, Environmental Operations Director, Port of Portland

Edward Campbell, Director of Resource Protection and Planning, Portland Water Bureau

Lisa Charpilloz-Hanson, Director, Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board

Debbie Colbert, Deputy Director, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

MG Devereux, Deputy Director, Metro Parks and Nature

Leah Feldon, Director, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality

Lauren Henderson, Deputy Director, Oregon Department of Agriculture

Lenore Heppler, Acting Associate State Director, Bureau of Land Management

Kim Kratz, Assistant Regional Administrator, National Marine Fisheries Service

Bryan Mercier, Regional Director, Bureau of Indian Affairs

Cory Owens, Assistant State Conservationist, Natural Resources Conservation Service

Bill Ryan, Deputy Director for Operations, Oregon Department of State Lands

Bodie Shaw, Deputy Regional Director, Bureau of Indian Affairs

Lisa Sumption, Director, Oregon Parks and Recreation Department

Dave Teuscher, Regional Chief of Wildlife, Sportfish and Restoration, US Fish and Wildlife Service

David Warnack, Acting Deputy Regional Forester, US Forest Service

Advisory Board Role & Planning Cycle

Advisory Board Member Role

The Advisory Board is crucial to the ongoing guidance, direction and success of the Executive Seminar Program. Advisory Board members play five key roles:

1. Provide general program oversight and feedback;
2. Forecast specific emphases or needs for leadership development in your agency;
3. Suggest possible program year themes or areas of focus;
4. Suggest specific case study ideas and contacts for further exploration of cases;
5. Assist with outreach to your agency and facilitate recruitment.

Meetings and Time Commitment

Specifically, Advisory Board members are asked to participate in two meetings per year: in winter/spring for a two-hour lunch meeting to plan for the coming program year and receive an update on the current year; in June for a morning and early afternoon to meet with program participants and to finalize preparations for the coming year. During the year, members assist with outreach and recruitment to their agencies about ESP. Periodic informal consultation by phone, e-mail or in person at other times of the year with program staff is welcomed and appreciated.

Winter/Spring

1. Advisory Board meets to receive update on current program year.
2. Brainstorm possibilities for the next year's theme/focus on possible cases.
3. Clarify timelines and expectations.

June

1. Advisory Board participates in current program year Capstone presentations, meets with cohort members, provides observations and feedback.
2. Advisory Board meets following Capstone to finalize coming year theme/focus and cases and to project agency participation in the coming year.
3. Advisory Board members provide early commitments for agency enrollment for the coming year.

August-September

1. Program staff prepares cases and launches recruitment for the coming year. Advisory Board members assist with the recruitment process. Final enrollment deadline is August 30.

Questions or more information? Contact Doug Decker, Director, PSU Executive Seminar Program, at (phone) or (email).

4-18-13