Critical Intercultural Leadership Process for Social Change:

Critical Consciousness, Resistance and Emancipation in

a Pluri-Ethnic Social Movement Organization

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Critical Intercultural Leadership Process for Social Change:

Critical Consciousness, Resistance and Emancipation in

a Pluri-Ethnic Social Movement Organization

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A mi familia... sin su sacrificio, enseñanzas, y apoyo incondicional, muy poco habría sido posible y nada hubiera tenido sentido.
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Abstract

The current postcolonial world has become the prison of a monologue: The monologue of a dominant culture and worldview. This dominant culture has been imposed through a process of ‘Eurocentric leadership’ that started in the sixteenth century with Modernity and colonialism. Through this process of leadership that situated Western culture at the top of a social hierarchy and the rest of cultures in subordinated positions, the hegemonic culture became a system of domination, social exclusion and control. Marginalized and excluded in American society are Native people, in general, and urban Natives, in particular, who for many are invisible although they represent nearly 67 percent of the total Native American population. This study is a mini-ethnographic case study that includes observations, artifacts collection and interviews, and was conducted in Spokane, Washington within The NATIVE Project, a Native American social movement organization (SMO) that struggles for cognitive and social justice. From perspectives of critical theory and intercultural studies, adapting a relational-centered approach that overcomes dichotomies between individual/social, agency/structure and national/international, I examine how The NATIVE Project understands culture as a field for struggle developing frameworks and structures to shape an organizational culture that raises critical consciousness among its members while unfolding a process of emancipatory ethnogenesis. The four findings of my research are: (1) Making visible the invisible: The sanctuary; (2) We struggle, therefore I am: The platform; (3) United by our differences: The intercultural society; and (4) Emancipatory doxa/Pluri-doxa and transformation: The lines in the sand. I conclude that subordinated social groups seeking recognition and political representation to balance asymmetries of power within postcolonial societies need to prioritize a struggle for the categories that make possible
the order of the world and for transforming the categories of perception of that world. Through a lens of Postcolonial studies and Bourdieu’s concepts of symbolic power and violence, my work opens a new direction for the field of international studies bringing alternative forms of power, hegemony/counter-hegemony and domination/emancipation to the discussion.

*Keywords:* Social Movement Organizations (SMOs), Organizational Culture, Leadership Process, Social Change, Culture, Ethnicity, Symbolic Power, Framing, Collective Action, Emancipation.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Dedicatoria ........................................................................................................ iv

Acknowledgements .......................................................................................... v

Abstract ........................................................................................................... vii

TABLE OF CONTENTS ..................................................................................... ix

LIST OF FIGURES ........................................................................................... xii

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH DESIGN ................. 1
  Conceptual Framework ..................................................................................... 2
  Overview of Related Research ......................................................................... 4
  A Postcolonial World ....................................................................................... 7
  Eurocentric Leadership and Culture: A System of Domination and Control .... 8
  Doxa ............................................................................................................. 9
  Critical Consciousness .................................................................................... 10
  Critical Intercultural Leadership: Culture as a Field for Struggle ................. 11
  Ethnic Social Movement Organizations ....................................................... 12
  Organizational Culture .................................................................................... 13
  Ethnogenesis: Deconstruction and Reconstruction of Social Structures ......... 15
  Intercultural Society ....................................................................................... 15
  Problem Statement .......................................................................................... 16
  Purpose Statement .......................................................................................... 18
  Rationale ......................................................................................................... 20
  Significance of Study ...................................................................................... 22
  Methodology ................................................................................................... 27
    Case Study .................................................................................................... 28
  Philosophical Approach ................................................................................... 29
  Methods .......................................................................................................... 29
    Background of Organization ....................................................................... 30
    Participants ................................................................................................... 30
    Methods of Data Collection ........................................................................ 31
    Methods of Data Analysis and Interpretation ............................................. 33
    Trustworthiness ............................................................................................ 34
    Ethical Considerations .................................................................................. 35
  Limitations and Delimitations ......................................................................... 36
  Summary .......................................................................................................... 37

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW ......................................................... 39
  Origins of the Postcolonial World .................................................................. 39
    Modernity ..................................................................................................... 39
    Colonialism .................................................................................................. 41
    Coloniality .................................................................................................... 43
  The Postcolonial World Today ......................................................................... 49
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY AND METHODS ........................................ 170
Methodology ................................................................................................. 172
  Abductive Analysis ..................................................................................... 174
  ‘Process’ Methodology ............................................................................ 176
Case Study ..................................................................................................... 177
Methods ........................................................................................................ 185
  Methods of Data Collection ...................................................................... 187
Methods of Interpretation .......................................................................... 207
Ethical Considerations ............................................................................... 210
  Researcher Bias ....................................................................................... 212
Issues of Trustworthiness .......................................................................... 214
  Dependability ......................................................................................... 215
  Confirmability ......................................................................................... 216
  Transferability ......................................................................................... 216
Limitations and Delimitations .................................................................. 217
Summary ....................................................................................................... 218

CHAPTER FOUR: CASE STUDY AND THEMES ........................................ 220
History and Background ........................................................................... 222
  Foundation and Evolution: The “Dream” Comes True ......................... 224
  Characteristics: A Diverse Organization as a Holistic Process ............ 229
  The Employees: A Combination of Openness, Empathy, and Awareness 233
External Formal and Informal Relationships ............................................. 235
  A Sanctuary to Balance Asymmetries of Power and Decolonize .......... 240
  Raising Awareness and Educating Hegemonic Institutions ............... 242
Internal Formal and Informal Relationships ............................................. 245
  Diversity of the Staff ............................................................................... 246
  Encouragement for Creativity and Fluidity of Organizational Structures 260
  Commitment with Social Justice and Cultural Resistance ................... 264
  Particularities of the Leadership Process .............................................. 272
Tacit and Explicit Understandings and Meanings .................................... 275
LIST OF TABLES ......................................................................................................................... 308
LIST OF FIGURES ....................................................................................................................... 309
LIST OF EXHIBITS ...................................................................................................................... 310
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ................................................................................................................. 311

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION .................................................................................................... 317
Background ........................................................................................................................................ 317
Rationale and Significance of Study ................................................................................................. 320
Objectives of the Study ....................................................................................................................... 324

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW ............................................................................................... 328
Theoretical Frameworks .................................................................................................................... 328
Purpose of This Section ...................................................................................................................... 331
Conceptual Framework ..................................................................................................................... 333
Understanding Intercultural Society ................................................................................................. 335

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS .......................................................................................................... 337
Methodology ...................................................................................................................................... 337
Participants ........................................................................................................................................ 342
Procedure ......................................................................................................................................... 342

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS ................................................................................................................. 348
Findings One: Making Visible the ‘Invisible’ .................................................................................... 349
Findings Two: We Struggle, Therefore I Am .................................................................................... 356
Findings Three: United by Our Differences ..................................................................................... 362
Findings Four: Emancipatory Doxa/Pluri-Doxa and Transformation: The Lines in the Sand .... 367

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION, INTERPRETATION, AND IMPLICATIONS ......................................................... 374
Discussion .......................................................................................................................................... 374
Lessons Learned from Research .................................................................................................... 376
Recommendations ............................................................................................................................ 380
Conclusions ....................................................................................................................................... 384

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND LESSONS LEARNED .................................................. 393
Conclusions ....................................................................................................................................... 393
Recommendations ............................................................................................................................ 395
Lessons Learned from Research .................................................................................................... 398

REFERENCES ................................................................................................................................. 399
Appendix A: TIMELINE OF THE STUDY .......................................................................................... 408
Appendix B: INTERVIEW/GUIDED CONVERSATION GUIDE .............................................................. 409
Appendix C: INTERVIEWS SCHEDULE ............................................................................................ 412
Appendix D: INFORMED CONSENT FORM ..................................................................................... 417

xi
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Critical intercultural leadership process…………………………………………………… 3

Figure 2. Leadership as a process: Framing and action for world-making……………….. 92

Figure 3. Critical intercultural leadership process theory at The NATIVE Project……297
“Vivir peligrosamente significa correr riesgos a veces grandes, pero la alternativa es demasiado mediocre: vivir en espera, pero sin esperanza”

(José Carlos Mariátegui, 1925).

“To change the world, one has to change the ways of world-making, that is, the vision of the world and the practical operations by which groups are produced and reproduced”

(Pierre Bourdieu, 1989).
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH DESIGN

The phenomenon of leadership is influenced by culture (Peterson, Brannen, & Smith, 1994). However, while culture influences leadership, the dynamics of leadership also shape and determine cultural practices (Guthey & Jackson, 2011), and are central in articulating frameworks with which to make sense of reality (Drath & Palus, 1994). At a global level, the current postcolonial world has become the prison of a monologue: The monologue of a dominant culture and worldview. This dominant culture has been imposed through a process of ‘Eurocentric leadership’ that started in the sixteenth century with Modernity and its darker side, colonialism (Mignolo, 2011). With this process that situated Western culture at the top of a social hierarchy and the rest of cultures in subordinated positions, the hegemonic culture became a system of domination, social exclusion and control. However, in the last decades have emerged different social movement organizations (SMOs) that challenge this system of oppression, its imaginaries, and social structures, from their own ethnic-identity perspective (Jiménez-Luque, 2012). Viewing culture as a field for struggle, these SMOs have decided to initiate processes of ‘Critical intercultural leadership’ to confront hegemonic narratives, cultural assumptions, and social structures, with the aim of building a new intercultural society.

Exploring the phenomenon of a critical intercultural leadership process (which has not been discussed in leadership literature) that emerges in ethnic SMOs to organize cultural resistance and emancipation offers new insights regarding a more inclusive and diverse leadership that goes beyond the Euro-American canon, and contributes to a better understanding of how leadership influences and shapes organizational culture. Additionally, with this research I shed light on leadership processes of social
transformation, and design a developmental model of culture change for organizations that can be reproduced in other contexts.

This chapter begins with a conceptual framework that structures the study and its main concepts, a brief overview of related research, problem statement, purpose of my study, rationale, significance of study, methodology, methods, and limitations and delimitations of the study. The chapter ends with a brief concluding summary.

**Conceptual Framework**

This conceptual framework depicts a process of critical intercultural leadership as a spiral developmental model that brings change from a postcolonial world to an intercultural society (see the text boxes 1 and 2 in Figure 1). For this transition to be effective, I suggest a leadership process that includes four stages with a relationship of growth that goes from the smaller to the bigger: (1) *Eurocentric leadership: culture and doxa as a system of domination and control*; (2) *critical intercultural leadership process: from critical consciousness to culture as a field for struggle*; (3) *ethnic SMOs: organizational culture for ethnogenesis through frameworks of collective action*; and ethnogenesis, a stage that is divided in two: (4.1) *deconstruction* and (4.2) *reconstruction* (see concentric circles in Figure 1). All four stages occur and are experienced within a global sphere of what can be thought or said called doxa which can grow or shrink depending which type of society is created, either an inclusive society (broader doxa), or an exclusive one (narrower doxa) (see circle 5 in Figure 1). To build an intercultural society, a model of critical intercultural leadership process that focuses on developing a more inclusive doxa of all different ways of thinking, doing, and being is needed. However, this process must be reviewed constantly to avoid reproducing oppression and
domination with other subjects or social groups, and to keep a power balance among cultures (see text box 3 in Figure 1).
**Figure 1.** Critical intercultural leadership process: A process of struggle of an ethnic social movement organization from a postcolonial world toward an intercultural society

**Overview of Related Research**

Historically, there has always been contact between cultures in different places around the world. These cultural relationships are known as ‘relational interculturality’ and their main characteristic is that while focused on the contact between cultures, they conceal or minimize the conflict and power relations (Tubino, 2001). Moreover, relational interculturality is limited to contact and relationship, leaving aside social, political, economic and epistemic structures of society, which are those that position cultural differences in terms of superiority and inferiority (Tubino, 2001). For example, the cultural contact between Columbus and the indigenous communities or the Pilgrims and the Native American people can be considered processes of relational interculturality.

Another perspective that emerges in the 1980s in different parts of the world is that of a ‘functional interculturality’ that focuses on the recognition of diversity and cultural differences, and aims to include diversity in the established social structure. The idea is to promote dialogue, coexistence and tolerance in a ‘functional’ way to the existing system, since it does not affect the causes of social and cultural inequalities. Thus, it accepts ‘the rules of the game’ and is fully compatible with the existing neoliberal model (Tubino, 2001). This perspective would come to be the much-criticized liberal multiculturalism in which diversity is accepted and included but in a limited and specific space and always bearing in mind that the hegemonic models and cultures are superior to the rest. In essence, it is a perspective of interculturality that seems to recognize and respect cultural diversity as a strategy of domination and does not aim to
create a more equitable and egalitarian society but to control ethnic conflicts (Tubino, 2001). Examples of this type of intercultural relationship are most of the liberal constitutions of the Western world where diversity is accepted in a subordinated position which normally means a folkloric representation of non-hegemonic cultures (dances, clothes, foods, music, and so on) without valuing and appreciating their epistemologies and political, economic and social projects.

Finally, as a result of the co-option of the term ‘interculturality’ by multicultural liberalism as described above with the concept of ‘functional interculturality,’ Walsh (2010) proposes a new and critical perspective that is the current approach implemented by different ethnic social movements in their communities around the world and particularly by indigenous and Afro-descendent communities in Latin America. This approach, that understands culture as a field for struggle and emancipation, is known as ‘critical interculturality,’ and is organized through a process of critical intercultural leadership to resist cultural domination, and to re-exist creating new political, economic, social and epistemological projects to challenge the social exclusion and the big asymmetries of power between cultures they are experiencing.

In a postcolonial society like the United States, one of these projects of critical interculturality implemented by subordinated ethnic social movements, and the context where my study is located, is The NATIVE Project. This project resulted in a Native American organization created in 1989 which includes members from 17 different tribes, and that offers health services from a Native cultural perspective to the community in general and particularly to urban Indians from about 300 tribes in Spokane, Washington, who are in a situation of cultural, political, economic and social exclusion and marginalization. Native American people in the United States are among the most
marginalized and impoverished groups of the country in terms of human development and this project of critical interculturality thought and implemented from a subaltern leadership perspective, aims to serve urban Native American people from the area and also people of all races and ages.

Thus, the critical intercultural leadership process from a perspective of ‘critical interculturality’ of any subordinated culture in general, or of The NATIVE Project since it is the focus of my research in particular, can be interpreted as the project for emancipation that will foster—through a process that raises critical consciousness and unfolds ethnogenesis—the transition from a postcolonial world of cultural exclusion (see text box 1 in Figure 1) to an intercultural society where different worlds can fit (see text box 2 in Figure 1). This leadership perspective is a developmental strategy for change that aims to transform internal/external structures of domination and oppression implemented through the processes of Modernity and its darker side, colonialism, from an ethnic-identity perspective (see text box 1 in Figure 1).

Critical intercultural leadership assumes leadership as a process where people are in motion making sense of the world through their relations and creating frameworks within which their actions have meaning according to their differing cultural approaches\(^1\) (Drath & Palus, 1994). Moreover, the purpose of this leadership process, that goes

\(^1\) In this study, I differentiate between sense-making and meaning-making. While both concepts can be complementary they are different and one precedes the other one. Thus, sense-making is interpreted as ‘understanding’ and ‘awareness’ at a more individual level. Put it simply, sense-making is seen as knowing the rules of the game and making sense of them. However, at a more collective level, meaning-making is essential to configure any social order and implies not only to ‘understand’ and ‘being aware’ but to understand and being aware towards a purpose or a cause that is meaningful for the person and the community. It is a transformative process of mobilization from resistance to re-existence or, in other words, the transition from knowledge to action, from critical consciousness to ethnogenesis.
beyond the Western canon and differentiates it from a Eurocentric leadership approach, is to build a social order with intercultural structures without oppressive asymmetries of power where different narratives and worldviews can fit, the difference is valued, and cultural groups learn from each other with even conditions (see text box 2 in Figure 1). However, critical intercultural leadership does not have an end because it needs to be revisited constantly to avoid the reproduction of structures of domination and oppression, characteristics of the Eurocentric model of leadership that can undermine the power balance among differing cultures (see text box 3 in Figure 1).

A Postcolonial World

As represented in the conceptual framework in Figure 1, text box 1, the postcolonial world today is the result of the processes of Modernity and colonialism. Modernity is a historical period that resulted in socio-economic and cultural changes in Western Europe and the emergence of eurocentrism, the belief that Europe and its culture were the most advanced and sophisticated of the history of humanity, and the protagonists of Modernity (Quijano, 2010). The other side of Modernity is colonialism, the formal political domination of one country by another with the aim of benefiting from the exploitation of its people and resources (Kloby, 2006).

The relationship between Western culture and other cultures that began during the sixteenth century continues to be one of colonial domination that results in the colonization of the imagination of the dominated (Quijano, 2010). It is a process of Eurocentric leadership that controls the narratives, the imaginaries and social structures presenting them as ‘universal’ and situates Western culture at the top of a cultural hierarchy and the rest at positions of subordination (Smallest circle of the conceptual
framework). This power structure, coined by Quijano as Colonial matrix of power (CMP) or Coloniality was, and still is, the framework within which different social relations of class or estate operate (Grosfoguel, 2010). Through this mechanism is explained and, at the same time, legitimized and naturalized the domination of one group by another and the asymmetries of power in terms of class, race, gender or culture.

**Eurocentric Leadership and Culture: A System of Domination and Control**

Today, most of former colonial institutions have been dismantled, but not the global system of domination and oppression and its new institutions that resulted in Modernity and colonialism, and that uses culture as an element of exclusion and social control of non-dominant worldviews to legitimize asymmetries of power and a hegemonic narrative that is presented as ‘universal’ (As noted in circle number 1 in Figure 1). Among the main strategists of cultural control, Gramsci (1995) coined the concept of *cultural hegemony* which refers to domination achieved through ideological means that produce ‘spontaneous’ consent. The term refers to the ability of a group of people to hold power over social institutions, and thus, to strongly influence the everyday thoughts, expectations, and behavior of the rest of society by directing the normative ideas, values, and beliefs that become the dominant worldview of a society (Strinati, 1995). A second system of cultural control is *culture industry* which was described by critical theorists from the Frankfurt School such as Horkheimer and Adorno (1996) who noted that popular culture is similar to a factory that produces standardized cultural goods with the aim of manipulating mass society into passivity. In addition, culture industry creates false psychological needs that only the capitalist system can satisfy (Horkheimer & Adorno, 1996). Following these ideas, Marcuse (1991), another representative of the
Frankfurt School, went deeper and coined the concept of *mass culture*, a third system of control and domination through culture where false needs create a one-dimensional universe of thought and behavior, and where the requirements and conditions for critical thought vanish. In essence, a universal project which controls discourses, action, and culture, an omnipresent system that co-opts and destroys all alternatives (Marcuse, 1991).

Finally, a fourth system is *symbolic violence*, understood as “the violence which is exercised upon a social agent with his or her complicity” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1996, p. 167), the imposition of categories of thought and perception upon dominated social agents who then take the social order to be just.

**Doxa**

Gramsci’s (1995) ‘hegemonic worldview,’ Marcuse’s (1991) ‘one-dimensional universe of thought,’ and Bourdieu’s (1996) ‘categories of thought’ imposed upon dominated agents conform a space for popular opinion and beliefs called doxa (see circle number 5 in Figure 1). Doxa is understood as what is taken for granted in any particular society, the experience by which “the natural and social world appears as self-evident” (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 162). Notwithstanding, doxa is not either positive or negative in itself because it is an abstract space from where to view the world, but it is central as a space for struggle to establish the borders of what is allowed to be thought and said, the limits and constraints of a narrative or worldview (Bourdieu, 1977). Thus, culture becomes a field of dispute when a particular worldview does not fit doxa and goes beyond the hegemonic canon. At this moment, the rise of critical consciousness from the dominated classes becomes central to start disputing doxa and offering different frameworks to make sense and meaning of the world. Thus, while these subordinated groups have an interest
in pushing back the space of doxa and “exposing the arbitrariness of the taken for
granted; the dominant classes have an interest in defending the integrity of doxa or, short
of this, of establishing in its place the necessarily imperfect substitute, orthodoxy”
(Bourdieu, 1977, p. 169).

**Critical Consciousness**

Although in the postcolonial global order culture is a system of domination and
social control that embeds different aspects of life including the unconscious, processes of
critical intercultural leadership and organization that imply resistance still emerge. These
processes can vary from just the resistance itself, understood as ‘prise de conscience’ or
awareness, to going further toward re-existence, a praxis for the deconstruction and
reconstruction of social identities and structures. With critical consciousness, one focuses
on achieving an in-depth understanding of the world, allowing for the perception and
exposure of social and political contradictions of domination and oppression (see circle
number 2 in Figure 1). According to Freire (2012), “the oppressed, having internalized
the image of the oppressor and adopted his guidelines, are fearful of freedom. Freedom
would require them to eject the image and replace it with autonomy and responsibility”
(p. 47). There must be a struggle for freedom because “freedom is acquired by conquest,
not by gift” (p. 47). Therefore, the oppressed needs to develop a consciousness, “a way
towards something apart from itself, outside itself, which surrounds it and which it
apprehends by means of its ideational capacity. Consciousness is thus by definition a
method, in the most general sense of the word” (Vieira Pinto, as cited in Freire, 2012, p.
69).
Culture is central to transform the postcolonial world because in a system of cultural exclusion and control it serves the ends of domination and oppression. It involves a static perception of the world, and the imposition of one worldview and one narrative upon the others (Freire, 2012). “It implies the ‘superiority’ of the invader and the ‘inferiority’ of those who are invaded, as well as the imposition of values by the former, who possess the latter and are afraid of losing them” (Freire, 2012, p. 160). As a consequence of a hegemonic culture that serves the ends of conquest, Freire (2012) proposes cultural action as a cultural revolution (p. 180). In essence, what is needed is a critical intercultural process of leadership that will articulate new frameworks of making sense and meaning of reality to create a social order with a broader and more inclusive doxa where different doxas can fit conversely to the Eurocentric leadership approach.

**Critical Intercultural Leadership: Culture as a Field for Struggle**

When critical consciousness arises within this global order of oppression where culture is a system of exclusion and control, culture becomes a space for struggle through a process of leadership (see circle that appears from critical consciousness in Figure 1). For example, Gramsci (1970) argues that culture implies organization, discipline of the self, empowerment, and awareness of taking control of reality. Thus, every revolution was preceded by an intense critique and the penetration of a new culture. For Gramsci (1995), a social movement is a reaction against hegemony with the aim of transforming society that emerges as a result of a crisis in authority when the hegemonic groups lose their consensus and start exercising ‘domination’ instead of ‘leadership.’ After this “rupture of the equilibrium of forces” and what Gramsci calls “war of position,” it is the right time for a counterhegemonic alternative to arise (Gramsci, 1995, p. 184).
Another perspective of critical intercultural leadership that uses culture as a field for dispute and social change is the concept of symbolic power. Coined by Bourdieu (1989), the concept affirms that “to change the world, one has to change the ways of world-making, that is, the vision of the world and the practical operations by which groups are produced and reproduced” (p. 23). Thus, a struggle is necessary for imposing frameworks of world-making and acquiring symbolic power, a social authority which is the power granted to those groups who have obtained sufficient recognition to be in a position to impose it, “a power of consecration or revelation, the power to consecrate or to reveal things that are already there” (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 23). As a result of this power with the capacity to create groups and to transform the objective structures of society, the struggle to acquire it becomes fundamental over the existence or non-existence of other social groups, visions, cultures, and leadership processes (p. 23).

**Ethnic Social Movement Organizations**

In the last decades, there has been an emergence of social movements trying to challenge the status quo using their ethnic identity as a counter-hegemonic element with the goal of deconstructing the social structures of oppression of the current postcolonial world, and creating new ones for emancipation seeking an intercultural society. Tilly (2010) defines social movements as a series of performances, displays and campaigns by which ordinary people make collective claims on others. Another definition of social movements that includes the idea of culture is proposed by Tarrow (1994), who sees them as collective challenges to elites, authorities, other groups or cultural codes by people with common purposes and solidarity in sustained interactions with elites, opponents and authorities.
When it comes to emergent ethnic movements, they are characterized by an essence centered on nationality, culture, language, religion, territory, or phenotype (Okamoto, 2013). These ethnic movements seek to create social change through a process of critical interculturality, a project that aims to deconstruct mental and physical structures, institutions and social relations of domination, and to create new ones for emancipation (Walsh, 2010). In terms of leadership, these ethnic social movements create organizations that implement processes of critical intercultural leadership to organize themselves and their own political, economic and societal projects with the aim of resisting and fostering the transition from a postcolonial world to an intercultural society. Therefore, since culture is a field for struggle, ethnic groups’ culture in general and their organizational culture in particular are going to be central in their leadership processes seeking to challenge the hegemonic worldviews and narratives and building a social order with a broader space for doxa where different worldviews are valued and can fit with more even conditions.

**Organizational Culture**

Social movements are usually composed of several formal organizations that have common goals (Zald & McCarthy, 1997). Moreover, these organizations can have coordinating roles and carry out the tasks that are necessary for any social movement to survive and to be successful. According to Schein (2010), cultures emerge from three sources: “(1) The beliefs, values, and assumptions of founders of organizations; (2) the learning experiences of group members as their organization evolves; and (3) new beliefs, values, and assumptions brought in by new members and new leaders” (p. 220) (see circle number 3 in Figure 1). Notwithstanding, organizational cultures “operate in one or more
macrocultures, such as ethnic groups and other larger cultural units” (Schein, 2010, p. 68), and “the processes a group adopts reflect not only the preferences of the founders and leaders but also the macroculture in which it exists” (Schein, 2010, p. 80).

Within an organization, culture is a response “to the uncertainties and chaos that are inevitable in human experience” (Trice & Beyer, 1993) or, as Schein (2010) argues, to the “problems of external adaptation and internal integration” (p. 73). Thus, an ethnic identity organization could be seen as one whole organizational culture where different subcultures interact, whereas at a larger level, it can be thought as a subculture struggling against the hegemonic culture of a country, understanding the country as an organization, too. In both cases, and as a reaction to the hegemonic culture, a counterculture can arise “when a subculture actively and overtly challenges the values, beliefs, norms, and expectations of the dominant subculture” (Hatch, 2013, p. 161). As a result of this challenge, ethnic SMOs develop a particular organizational culture that tries to deconstruct first to “reveal the illusions created by hollow and ambiguous identity claims, rituals, and other meaningless organizational symbols” (p. 184) used to dominate them and which are embedded in an unconscious way, while at the same time reconstructs and changes the culture for broadening doxa and emancipation. As Schein (2010) argues, “group growth and culture formation can be seen as two sides of the same coin, and both are the result of leadership activities and shared experiences” (p. 73). Thus, it is key not only to understand existing cultures but also how culture is created, evolves, changes, or can be destroyed, and how a critical intercultural leadership perspective influences all these processes. In other words, this is a process of ethnogenesis where some cultural identities and structures are deconstructed while others are reconstructed seeking emancipation. “This dynamic view also reflects a more functional point of view in that
we are trying to understand not only what culture is but also what functions culture serves for a given group, occupation, nations, and so on” (Schein, 2010, p. 74).

**Ethnogenesis: Deconstruction and Reconstruction of Social Structures**

To create this subculture or counterculture within the dominant and hegemonic (sub)culture, a process of ethnogenesis is needed, which can be defined as “a concept encompassing people’s simultaneously cultural and political struggles to create enduring identities in general contexts of radical change and discontinuity” (Hill, 1996, p. 1). This creation of identities should be preceded by a critical intercultural leadership process that raises critical consciousness first, and then it is followed by the deconstruction of social structures of domination and the creation of new social structures seeking emancipation (see circles number 4.1 and 4.2 in Figure 1). In the last decades, many ethnic movements which suffered the destruction of their cultures and/or from assimilation, have initiated this process of critical intercultural leadership to create and re-create a new social and political identity and a framework that challenges the place assigned to them by the hegemonic groups at the colonial matrix of power.

**Intercultural Society**

To push back doxa, ethnic social movements have initiated in the last decades a project of ‘critical interculturality’ (Walsh, 2010) organized through a critical intercultural leadership process which will build a new social order, an intercultural society that goes beyond Modernity (Transmodernity) and coloniality (decoloniality) (see text box 2 in Figure 1). Interculturality is not about tolerating or including the difference within the hegemonic culture, it is about re-conceptualizing and re-founding social and epistemic structures where different worlds can fit (Walsh, 2010). Thus, and conversely
to the postcolonial world, an intercultural society: (1) will be one where there will be a broader canon of thought than simply the Western canon; (2) will value epistemic perspectives/cosmologies/insights of critical thinkers from subalternized racial/ethnic/sexual spaces and bodies; and (3) will design an inclusive framework that will make sense and meaning of a pluriversal world which will result from the critical dialogue between diverse critical epistemic/ethical/political projects (Grosfoguel, 2010).

**Problem Statement**

Since the sixteenth century, a system of global domination and oppression was imposed through the processes of Modernity and colonialism (Quijano, 2000). This domination—at least its classic institutions—has been defeated in many parts of the world. However, a specific eurocentered colonial structure of power still produces in our postcolonial societies the specific social discriminations that today are codified by racial, ethnic, anthropological or national forms, which are presented as objective and scientific categories (Quijano, 2010). Moreover, different cultures than the dominant one have been either destroyed, invisibilized, or demonized, and culture has become an element of social exclusion and control to ‘naturalize’ domination and oppression, and to ‘universalize’ a hegemonic social order and worldview as superior to the rest.

In the United States, after centuries of annihilation and assimilation of non-hegemonic cultures, social activism and political struggles in the 60’s contributed to some changes of the legislation to start to include ethnic minorities within American society. According to Ivancevich and Gilbert (2000), since then there have been two predominant viewpoints about the cultural integration of these diverse populations: (1) The idea of a ‘melting pot’ where different cultures blend together and assimilate into a common
national culture; and (2) the concept of multicultural society as a ‘tossed salad’ where each culture retains its cultural characteristics and coexists with the others. However, neither of these two approaches takes into account the racist narratives and discourses embedded in the American society nor the social structures and institutions resulting from Modernity and colonialism that situated non-hegemonic social groups such African American, Latin, or Native American people among others, in a position of subordination with big asymmetries of power between cultures. Thus, it is not about denying difference as the concept of the ‘melting pot’ suggests, because the idea of assimilating all different cultures in one ‘national’ culture means the dominant culture. On the other hand, it is not about relativizing equality either, and to propose a multicultural society where all cultures coexist while big asymmetries of power are hidden (Santos, 2006). Therefore, the challenge would be the articulation of equality and difference policies because “we have the right to be equal whenever difference diminishes us; we have the right to be different whenever equality decharacterizes us” (Santos, 2006, p. 462).

Although culture can be a system of domination (Bourdieu, 1977; Gramsci, 1995; Horkheimer & Adorno, 1996; Marcuse, 1991), it also can be a system for liberation (Bourdieu, 1989; Freire, 2012; Gramsci, 1995; Santos, 2007b; Walsh, 2010). In the last decades, different ethnic social movements in the United States have initiated leadership processes and created different organizations to challenge and resist the hegemonic culture and its Eurocentric leadership that places their cultures at a subordinated position in a social hierarchy. Therefore, to understand how the critical intercultural leadership processes of these ethnic organizations views culture as a field for struggle seeking for emancipation becomes a central question. Moreover, another key element of my study is to explore how the culture of these ethnic social movements in general, and the
organizational culture they create in particular, resist within the hegemonic culture of a country at the same time they struggle for social and cognitive justice\(^2\) and transforming social structures of domination and oppression.

**Purpose Statement**

Understanding culture as a field for struggle seeking for emancipation requires the influence of a critical intercultural leadership process that contributes to articulate frameworks to make sense and meaning of the world, to build new realities of assumptions, beliefs and values, and to create social structures that broaden doxa. However, for this leadership process of developmental change to be possible, two specific elements are central to be advanced: critical consciousness (Freire, 2012) and ethnogenesis (Luna Penna, 2014), the former understood as taking control of reality to articulate a new social order, and the latter as the process of deconstruction and reconstruction of social identities and structures to challenge hegemonic culture. There is little information as to why this phenomenon occurs, therefore my purpose with this case study was to understand how a leadership process contributes to create an organizational culture that raises critical consciousness and unfolds ethnogenesis within an ethnic SMO. Guiding questions that are relevant to this research study include:

1. How does critical intercultural leadership shape the culture of an organization that resists within a hegemonic culture?

2. How are the frameworks articulated to make sense and meaning of reality to resist?

\(^2\) Cognitive justice is understood as a critique on the dominant paradigm of modern science (Santos, 2007b), the recognition of the plurality of knowledge beyond the Western knowledge, and the defense of the right of the different forms of knowledge to co-exist (Visvanathan, 1997).
3. How are the strategies implemented in an ethnic SMO to raise critical consciousness and unfold ethnogenesis?

4. What are the needed conditions (and how can they be created) in an ethnic SMO to raise critical consciousness and unfold ethnogenesis?

5. How are the different social structures deconstructed and reconstructed in the process by the ethnic SMO?

In this study, I focused on the influence of leadership—understood as a process that flows and changes as the result of the relations of leaders, supporters\(^3\), environment, culture, context, and specific purposes—on culture in general and organizational culture in particular. Moreover, although the aim of my study was to explore how the holistic and relational leadership process of a subaltern ethnic group contributes to increase critical consciousness and unfold ethnogenesis through its organizational culture, and I could have selected an African-American, Latino/a, or Asian-American organization, I used the single case study of The NATIVE Project, a Native American organization based in Spokane, Washington. My intention in selecting this organization was not to understand their processes as representative of Native American people in general, but as an example of a subordinated social group that resists and struggles against the dominant worldview. Moreover, within this organization emerges a very innovative process of critical intercultural leadership implemented by one of the most excluded and marginalized ethnic groups in the country that, conversely to a Eurocentric approach, values difference,\(^3\)

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\(^3\) Although leadership studies’ literature normally uses the concept of ‘follower,’ in this study I prefer the term ‘supporter’ because while to be a follower implies a position behind another person, a supporter can be either behind, next to, or even in front of and pulling forward, what in my opinion is more accurate for trying to understand and describe such a complex and deep phenomenon as is ‘leadership.’
aims to balance asymmetries of power between cultures, and is constantly reviewing internal and external social structures to avoid the reproduction of mechanisms of domination and oppression. In addition, The NATIVE Project is an organization led by women and where there are people working from 17 different Native American tribes, African-American, Latinos, and foreigners from seven different countries representing North America, Latin America, Europe, Asia and Africa, which means that this is an intercultural organization that not only navigates within the hegemonic culture of the country but that at the same time presents a high degree of diversity among its members.

Viewing leadership as a relational process, I put the focus on the social process that happens with groups of people who are engaged in an activity together with the purpose of creating and changing a social order. Leaders are not seen as individuals in charge of supporters, but as members of a community of practice (Drath & Palus, 1994), which is understood as “people united in a common enterprise who share a history and thus certain values, beliefs, ways of talking, and ways of doing things” (p. 4). Therefore, leaders, supporters, environment, culture, context, and specific purposes, are all elements of a process that are influenced by and influence to each other. In terms of actors, both leaders and supporters shape culture and influence each other. However, positional leaders can have more impact on shaping culture and influencing supporters due to their position of authority and power, although there is no leader immune to the constant influence exercised upon them by culture and the supporters’ resistance.

**Rationale**

The academic world cannot be an ivory tower separated from society. Its goal needs to be to organize new ways of political action and new epistemological projects
beyond the hegemonic ones. Emergent ethnic social movements are currently developing different narratives and counter-hegemonic alternatives, and the academy needs to support these processes both with its presence and with a theoretical elaboration of them. In other words, the university must establish bridges with the subaltern social movements to first, contribute to a better understanding of the world and to offer tools to deconstruct mechanisms of domination that have been ‘naturalized’ and second, to be an ally for these sectors taking control of their own realities and destinies.

Researchers have a moral obligation to contribute in demolishing dominant beliefs and to support the creation of new technological and symbolic means based on research (Bourdieu, 2001). In essence, against the internalization of oppressive structures of the social world that guide behaviors, conducts, and choices, researchers must propose an ethnogenesis as a mechanism of defense against domination with the aim of deconstructing and reconstructing (Bourdieu & Chartier, 2011).

With this study, my aim was to better understand a leadership process that is influenced by culture but at the same time shapes culture seeking to struggle for social justice and a fairer society. A better understanding of this process, along with developing a model for organizations that can contribute to social change, will benefit today’s increasing multicultural organizations and societies within the current process of globalization we are experiencing. However, my intention with this study was not just to offer a method and a model for social change. This research is a critical endeavor committed with the victims, the oppressed, subaltern societies, or using Fanon’s concept, ‘the wretched of the earth,’ to give hope and offer possibilities of social reorganization for leaders and organizations of non-hegemonic cultures seeking for emancipation and cognitive and social justice. Today it is more necessary than ever to empower those
people who remain locked in the silence of their despair and to recover and value the cultural and epistemological diversity they offer to the world. In essence, it is important to learn from and with other cultural approaches that provide meaning to our existences that go beyond the Western canon of liberalism, individualism, and the logic of market-ridden greed where ordinary people are denied the opportunity to live a dignified existence as a result of being treated as means and not as ends.

**Significance of Study**

Although there is a gap regarding research that views leadership as a holistic process that shapes culture in SMOs and contributes to the emergence of a culture of resistance and emancipation, there are previous studies on how SMOs, leadership, and culture are interrelated which have been approached from different perspectives to try to understand what is a deep and complex phenomenon. For example, Zhao (2010) analyzed the role of culture in social movements protesting in China, arguing that culture shapes collective actions through three mechanisms: as problem-solving tool-kits, as scripts, and as instincts and taken-for granted routines. However, the more well-organized the movement is, the more able to take the cultural repertoire as a tool-kit to pursue the targeted benefits. In other words, leadership and organization are influenced by culture but they also shape culture.

When it comes to challenging doxa, Osterman’s (2006) case study shows how an organization maintains its membership commitment by building a culture of contestation to push back against the elite who dominate the organization. Leaders within a SMO are central for mobilization and maintenance and, through a multisite ethnographic research, Choi-Fitzpatrick (2015) argues that even if leaders are part of the process and influenced
by culture, they are able not only to control organizational processes and outcomes to a certain grade but also to shape culture.

In terms of ethnic SMOs, Hooghe (2005) brought awareness about the differences between a social movement of individuals belonging to a social majority and an ethnic minority SMO with his research in Flanders, Belgium. Thus, ethnic SMOs view culture as a field for struggle and need to create new social structures to be able to develop their agendas because the hegemonic society has not been designed to recognize other cultures. This is the idea of Fitzgerald and Rodgers (2000), too, who proposed a theoretical model of radical social movement organizations (RSMOs) which, rather than emphasizing demands to be recognized by the dominant culture, aims to restructure the system deconstructing and reconstructing social structures same as Hooghe (2005) suggests with ethnic SMOs.

Notwithstanding, before deconstructing old structures designed by the hegemonic culture and to reconstruct or to create new ones seeking emancipation, it is central to deconstruct the mental structures and imaginaries of the dominant culture embedded in our cultural assumptions. Murgia and Poggio (2013) analyzed narratives produced by organizational actors focusing on the practices of resistance and hegemony that oppose change in gender cultures in organizations and stated that without changing the culture first, the symbolic order cannot be challenged. In terms of culture, it is central the process of internal integration and also the processes of external adaptation and the external influences that shape the culture of an organization. For example, after a three years’ ethnographic work in an intercultural organization, Beeman (2015) investigated how external racist culture and color-blind ideology impacts organizational strategies, suggesting that activists in interracial organizations use racism evasiveness strategically
to maintain solidarity, that is, to recognize external racism but to downplay the role of racism at an internal level. However, without overtly addressing racism at both internal and external levels, organizations are less effective to challenge systemic racism by changing social structures.

One central element of leadership within SMOs is to create frameworks for sense-and meaning-making of reality that challenge hegemonic frames and narratives that situate minority groups at subordinated positions in society. Roggeband (2010) investigated, based on a case study of eight migrant women’s organizations in Netherlands, the creation of their own frames to counterbalance the frames created by the State which portray them as victims. Thus, many migrant women’s organizations criticize that the government frames only serve to stereotype and exclude migrant women and have decided to create their own frames to draw attention to the views and needs of migrant women. These processes of leadership are committed with the notion of raising critical consciousness and collective mobilization studied by Rogstad and Vestel (2011) in their research about the processes of articulation through which young people from immigrant families in Norway expressed their political engagement.

From critical consciousness and framing unfolds mobilization for collective action which is central in the process of ethnogenesis understood as the deconstruction and reconstruction of identities and social structures. Ramos (2006) analyzed the process of ethnogenesis with Canadian aboriginal protesters from 1951-2000 to build a Pan-Aboriginal collective identity using regression analysis and concluded that one of the main barriers to create this intercultural identity were the differences among ‘status groups.’ Another similar study on ethnogenesis seeking for social justice and emancipation is the research undertaken by Grégoire (2010) about Pan-African
associations in Belgium. However, while Ramos (2006) identified barriers among groups, Grégoire (2010) shows how a certain African elite went beyond old rivalries and previous failures focusing on shaping an African community ‘here,’ meaning by here Belgium and Europe, and ‘there,’ Africa. Following this topic, Marquez (2001) investigated identity formation in a Mexican-American SMO to better understand the process of identity formation in minority SMOs. Thus, Marquez (2001) argues that identities are arranged for specific political purposes and according to the position of the members of the organization in the existing socio-economic structures. Moreover, Marquez (2001) states that identity formation is centered in the interpretation of three main issues: racial discrimination, economic disadvantage and cultural hegemony. Finally, McGarry (2008) analyzed how the elites and leaders of the Roma social movement in Europe acted collectively to create social and political structures of representation to articulate shared interests.

When it comes to the leadership field, to date, the impact of cultural influences on leadership and leader effectiveness is gaining significance (Peterson et al., 1994). Nevertheless, there is a gap with regards to studies on the dynamics of leadership which have shaped and determined cultural practices that are in turn shaping contextual notions of leadership (Guthey & Jackson, 2011). Moreover, textbooks on leadership “typically discuss models of leadership as universal phenomena without reference to diversity” (Chin & Trimble, 2015, p. 12), and they show a Euro-American bias (Den Hartog & Dickson, 2004). In addition, the current state of leadership studies is concerned with heroic and leader-centric notions (Sinclair, 2007) and when including followers they emphasize the dichotomy of leaders-followers without valuing their relation and the process of mutual influences on each other (Wood, 2005).
In terms of organizational culture, only critical theorists have called to put the focus on the views of all members of a culture, and not just on those at the top of the hierarchy (Martin, Frost, & O’Neill, 2004). Moreover, the same situation occurs between advantaged and disadvantaged subcultures. “This focus on labor versus management highlights conflicts of interest (as well as other subcultural differences associated with demographic markers such as sex or race), and is easily congruent with critical theory” (Martin et al., 2004, p. 22).

Therefore, this study not only expands the knowledge regarding leadership processes that shape culture to create a new social order, but it does so from diverse sectors of society that normally are not the focus of research and particularly when it comes to research organizations and organizational culture. In other words, a more inclusive and diverse leadership field is needed to understand underrepresented groups and their leadership qualities outside of the mainstream framework, and how they deconstruct and reconstruct social structures seeking emancipation. Thus, my aim with this study was to go beyond classic approaches of leadership that contribute to maintain the status quo and to amplify the voice of the voiceless, while doing research on leadership as a relational process for emancipation. Understanding leadership as a process means to assume that people are in motion, constantly doing activities (Kelly, 1955), therefore, “they need, rather than motivation to act, frameworks within which their actions make sense” (Drath & Palus, 1994, p. 5).

In conclusion, with this study I developed a critical intercultural leadership process theory and a developmental model for social change within an ethnic organization that creates critical consciousness and unfolds ethnogenesis seeking broadening doxa and emancipation. According to Martin, Frost, and O’Neill (2004) “although several
literatures are relevant to these questions of change (for example, research on social movements, unions, and sabotage), these issues have received relatively little attention” (p. 23). Moreover, Schein (2010) argues that although there are different models regarding the evolution and change of organizational cultures, “it has been my experience that we still need to see many more cases before any of these models can really be validated” (p. 273). Thus, the findings from this study can have different applications in different areas: (1) To further the field of leadership and organizational culture; (2) to increase understanding regarding critical consciousness and the creation, evolution, change and destruction of culture and social structures; (3) to enhance intercultural sensitivity in multicultural organizations improving relations and establishing bridges between cultures; (4) to provide public agencies with information to work with non-hegemonic organizations to solve structural issues; and most importantly, (5) to have a theory and a model for cultural resistance and organization through critical consciousness and ethnogenesis for non-hegemonic SMOs.

Methodology

According to Bloomberg and Volpe (2016), qualitative research focuses on the complexity of a sociocultural world that human beings experience, interpret, and understand in a particular context and at a particular point in time. A qualitative approach provides information about ‘human’ aspects of different phenomenon such as opinions, emotions, or relationships (Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen, Guest, & Namey, 2005).

Moreover, qualitative research focuses on discovery and description and it is central in order to interpret the meaning of different experiences (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013). Concepts such as oppression, emancipation, critical consciousness, or ethnogenesis
represent the complexity of a social order of objective and subjective structures within which human beings navigate. As a result of my interest in these particular aspects of human relationships, and also because I understand leadership in this study as a relational process, I selected a qualitative methodology. More specifically, because my interest was to understand in-depth how a leadership process contributes to create a culture that raises critical consciousness and ethnogenesis in an ethnic SMO in Spokane, Washington, and how different frameworks, strategies, conditions, and structures are unfolded in order to facilitate these phenomena to emerge, this study was more suited for a case study design.

**Case Study**

According to Creswell (2014), case studies are a design of inquiry that the researcher uses to analyze in-depth a case, event, process, where one or more individuals are involved. In addition, it also describes and analyzes a phenomenon in a specific time or place (Creswell, 2013). Simons (2009) argues that a case study is an in-depth exploration that focuses on the different complexities of perspectives that a specific project, institution, or system has. For Stake (2005), a case study is a design frame where the key is to be eclectic in terms of analysis. Therefore, with this study I used a single case study: The critical intercultural leadership process that emerges at The NATIVE Project organization and shapes its organizational culture with the aim of rising critical consciousness and unfold ethnogenesis. In addition, according to Tuhiwai Smith (2012), when it comes to case studies, this research tradition is an ideal design to work with ethnic organizations and not just to give voice to the voiceless and hear the unheard, but to prevent them from disappearing.
Philosophical Approach

Considering the historical oppression of minorities in the United States, I implemented during this study a philosophical approach of transformative worldview and a theoretical perspective of critical theory. According to Mertens (2012), a transformative worldview combines research with politics and political change to fight against oppression, focusing on marginalized groups, power asymmetries, and political and social action, among other issues. For critical theorists, social structures have an impact on people increasing or limiting their opportunities in life (Hatch, 2002). As a consequence of this material world composed of social structures of oppression, critical theory aims to create consciousness among oppressed sectors of society (Mertens, 2012). Moreover, this theoretical approach seeks to empower human beings with the goal of destroying the barriers they face as a result of race, class, or gender (Fay, 1987). In exposing the structures that maintain hegemonic sectors of society in power, critical theory aims to contribute to social change and transformation (Hatch, 2002). In addition, I bridged critical theory with intercultural studies from an approach of relational sociology that resulted in a perspective of critical intercultural leadership process theory.

Methods

This section is designed to introduce the procedure for accomplishing the purpose of my study. Thus, it is structured in six different sections corresponding to the background of the organization, the selection of the participants, how data were collected, the process of data analysis, the method of interpretation, and finally, ethical considerations regarding the study.
Background of Organization

To analyze the case of a critical intercultural leadership process that emerges in an ethnic SMO and shapes its culture, I selected The NATIVE Project, a Native American owned small business led by women that provides quality services that promote wellness and balance of mind, body, and spirit in Spokane, Washington. This organization is specialized in diverse health areas, including services from their own cultural approach serving Native and non-Native people in five main areas: (1) Medical services; (2) pharmacy; (3) dental services; (4) behavioral health services; and (5) children and youth services. Moreover, they serve comprehensive and health care to the greater Spokane community with an approach of sacred hospitality, an intentionally created practice where compassion meets the needs of patients, staff, and community with a holistic perspective that integrates healing of the body, mind and spirit.

Participants

In general, the participants in this study were the CEO, COO, CFO, Clinical Director, Human Resources Director, and members of The NATIVE Project working in different positions (leaders and supporters) in each of the five main departments of the organization that provide services plus patient services. The selection of participants was based on the members’ level of involvement or understanding of the central phenomenon of the study (Creswell, 2014) and on the identification of informants by other informants (Garson, 2012). Moreover, to have multiple perspectives, the members of The NATIVE Project were selected not only for their knowledge of the phenomenon under study but also seeking for diversity in terms of position, gender, ethnicity, and class. According to Bloomberg and Volpe (2016), stratified purposeful sampling shows subgroups and
facilitates the comparison among them. However, the recruitment process was flexible and, when new topics or questions arose, it was modified (Mack et al., 2005).

**Methods of Data Collection**

There is a broad variety of methods used for qualitative research which provide information to answer the research problem and the purpose of a study. However, depending on the design and nature of the research, some methods are more suited than others. For my study, I (1) observed at the The NATIVE Project office and other settings where they carry out activities; (2) gathered artifacts; and (3) conducted 13 interviews/guided conversations (individually and with groups) with participants of the organization (leaders and supporters).

**Participant observations.** Observation is a key method in qualitative research to discover and explain complex and unique interactions in social contexts (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016). With my study, participant observation data collection was carried out before interviewing/engaging in guided conversations because it was central in determining whom to recruit and the best way to do it. Thus, during six months I collected data at The NATIVE Project office and other settings where they execute their projects and I made careful, objective notes in a field notebook about what I saw.

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4 After having several conversations with different members of The NATIVE Project and my gatekeeper, I decided on not replacing the concept of ‘interview’ but complement it with the term ‘guided conversation.’ The reason to proceed in this way was due to the connotations that the idea of interviews has for Native American people who associate it with interrogatories and human rights violations in the past. Notwithstanding, if initially I thought about complementing uniquely with the term ‘conversation,’ eventually I decided to use the term ‘guided conversation’ following Yin’s (2009) description of interviews for case study research as guided conversations rather than structured queries due to their fluidity.
Moreover, interactions and informal interviews/guided conversations with members of The NATIVE Project were also recorded in the field notes. Finally, to try to avoid personal biases I wrote objective observations of a given event on the left page of a notebook, and my personal inferences on the right page (Mack et al., 2005).

**Artifacts.** Artifacts represent the most superficial layers of culture within a group or organization. According to Schein (2010), artifacts are understood to be architecture, artistic creations, style (clothes, manners, emotional displays), documents, rituals and ceremonies, or myths and stories portraying the organization, among others. Thus, for this study I focused on the analysis of these visual representations of the organizational culture of The NATIVE Project connected with deeper layers of the culture of the organization such as beliefs and values, and assumptions to contribute to consolidate the particular worldview of The NATIVE Project.

**Interviews/Guided conversations.** According to Marshall and Rossman (2015), interviews offer the possibility to capture a person’s perspective of an event or experience. As Patton (2015) argues, through interviewing we take for granted that the perspective of other people is meaningful and has value. For my study, I used semi-structured interviews because, as Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) argue, they are the type of interviews that aim to obtain descriptions of the life world of the interviewees with the aim of interpreting the meaning of the phenomena they are describing.

Therefore, I conducted a total of 13 semi-structured interviews/guided conversations. Eight of the interviews/guided conversations were individual interviews (one interviewee per interview, eight participants in total) while five of the interviews/guided conversations were in groups of two to eight people (two interviews with two persons each one, two more interviews with seven individuals each one, and
another interview with eight people, for a total of 26 persons. Before the interview/guided conversation, I asked the participants with at least 24 hour notice to choose a setting in which they felt comfortable. Then, before conducting the interview/guided conversation, I asked the participants to sign a consent form (see appendix D) and, once the interview/guided conversation began, I deviated from the questions’ protocol to some degree when necessary for the flow of the conversation and research purpose.

Methods of Data Analysis and Interpretation

Before analyzing data, it is necessary to winnow the data first (Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2012). According to Creswell (2014), winnowing is the process of focusing on a part of the data while disregarding others. For this study, I implemented the process of winnowing selecting data that was related to my conceptual framework and guiding questions, as well as data corresponding to emerging patterns. After winnowing the data, the most central process when it comes to analyzing qualitative data is coding, understood as classifying or categorizing individual pieces of data (Babbie, 2013). For Bazeley (2013), coding is a tool to manage, locate, identify, sort, and query data; my objective was to explain social processes such as the critical intercultural leadership process of The NATIVE Project from where emerges an organizational culture that creates critical consciousness and unfolds ethnogenesis. Notwithstanding, before hand-coding I applied NVivo software, a qualitative software with which I had a general overview of the data and that I used later to store data for each topic or concept created, and to provide more nuances and complexity after coding manually.
When coding by hand, I implemented two analytic methods of coding analysis: (1) Open coding. Segmenting information and developing codes to describe the phenomenon of my research as suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985), and from where I categorized codes and generated themes as recommended by Saldaña (2012); and (2) axial coding. I assembled the data in new ways and identified core categories and subcategories as proposed by Creswell (2013). Thus, I identified “the interrelationship of causal conditions, strategies, contextual and intervening conditions and consequences” (Creswell, 2008, p. 434).

After analyzing the data collected, I interpreted data and wrote a case balancing holistic and deep description, analysis, and interpretation through a philosophical approach of transformative worldview and a theoretical perspective of critical theory. Then, I compared the case with theories and general literature on the topic corresponding to transformative worldview and critical theory approaches of research. Finally, following my research and guiding questions, I wrote-up a case describing and analyzing the critical intercultural leadership process that contributes to create a culture that raises critical consciousness and unfolds ethnogenesis within an ethnic SMO with the aim of offering a better understanding of the processes involved and to call for action agendas for social justice and change from other organizations and institutions.

**Trustworthiness**

Trustworthiness is central in any research, especially with issues related to validity and reliability (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016). However, these two concepts are more connected with quantitative research and for qualitative studies Lincoln and Guba (2000) introduce the concepts of credibility (validity), dependability (reliability), confirmability,
and transferability. In this section, I briefly introduce the first two, credibility and dependability, while the rest of the elements will be explained in depth in chapter three.

**Credibility.** Credibility (or validity) is about accuracy and legitimacy and is central in the research design to explain how we measure what we want to measure. For my study, I implemented the three methods for validity in qualitative research suggested by Creswell (2008): (1) Triangulation. Codes and themes were validated using different methods and individuals; (2) Member checking. Several participants from the study were asked to confirm the accuracy of the data interpretation; and (3) Auditing. I asked a colleague acknowledged in data analysis and interpretation to review different concepts of the data analysis process.

**Dependability.** Dependability (or reliability) is understood as consistency of what was measured over time (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016). Thus, in my study, the method of member checking shown above for credibility contributed to this end. In addition, I used an audit trail as recommended by Lincoln and Guba (1985) to describe the evolution of my thinking and to document the logic for the decisions made throughout the research, facilitating the study to be replicated by other similar investigations.

**Ethical Considerations**

For any research study, ethical considerations are central, especially when it comes to protecting the participants (Marshall & Rossman, 2015). The Belmont Report states three core principles universally accepted for research ethics: (a) respect for persons; (b) beneficence; and (c) justice (Mack et al., 2005). All three principles were addressed in my research, and I will explain in depth in chapter three.
In terms of data collection that requires more than casual interaction with a person, a signed informed consent from each person was necessary. Thus, for the interviews/guided conversations in this study, the participants signed an informed consent form with information related to different ethical issues involved in the research. Moreover, throughout the study I anticipated the ethical issues that might arise applying to the Institutional Review Board (IRB), avoiding to side with participants, falsifying evidences, data, findings, or conclusions. In addition, during the entire research process, congruency was maintained with the general idea of this study: to hear the voices that were unheard from a horizontal position in terms of power asymmetries. With this research, I attempted to amplify the message and make visible what was invisible but not to ‘give’ voice to the voiceless because this concept in itself implies a hierarchy and an asymmetry of power.

Regarding bias, my experience with ethnic groups in Latin America (indigenous communities and people of African-descent) can be a potential personal bias for this study because of the different context and dynamics. However, even if this study was carried out within a Native American organization, the scope of the proposal is more centered on processes of cultural resistance led by subordinated cultures in general that challenge the hegemonic culture, and not on a specific subordinated culture.

**Limitations and Delimitations**

Regarding limitations and how they were addressed, my research contains certain limiting conditions related with my study’s research design. Basically, I have identified two main limitations. However, I have considered how to minimize them throughout the study. First, this study only focuses on one case corresponding to an organization in
Spokane, Washington. Second, this is a Native American organization and generalities of its organizational culture may not be applicable to other indigenous tribes or non-hegemonic cultures.

Recognizing these limitations, I took the following measures with my research. First, by way of rich description and detailed information of the participants, the settings, and the methodology, my study will be applied in other contexts and with other ethnic and non-hegemonic groups; and it was not necessary to analyze more than one case. Second, even if there are more ethnic social organizations corresponding to other ethnic groups, focusing on a Native American organization is central to better achieve my purpose in this study as a result of the particular social conditions of this selected ethnic group that situate their people as one of the most excluded and marginalized ethnic groups in the country. Moreover, The NATIVE Project is an intercultural organization with members from 17 different Native American tribes and other cultures such as African-American, Latino/a, and foreigners from North America, Latin America, Europe, Asia and Africa, which makes this organization a unique and exclusive case study of a critical intercultural leadership process.

Summary

Critical theorists within the field of organizational culture have stated the need to put the focus on all the members of a hierarchy and not only on those on the top (Martin et al., 2004). Moreover, they also propose to do the same with disadvantaged subcultures and advantaged ones (Martin et al., 2004). When it comes to the field of leadership, today there is a Euro-American approach that ‘naturalizes’ and reproduces a hegemonic culture – White upper-middle class – and does not value diversity in terms of class, race, sex, or
culture. With this study, I present an experience of critical intercultural leadership process, a more inclusive and diverse leadership framework, and a developmental model for social change within an ethnic organization that raises critical consciousness and unfolds ethnogenesis seeking broadening doxa and emancipation. It is a leadership process which is designed and led from subaltern groups of society with a diverse and non-hegemonic perspective that will go beyond the current paradigms in the field of leadership studies because it (1) will have a broader canon of thought than simply the White upper-middle class perspective; (2) will value epistemic perspectives from diverse leaders and supporters; and (3) will contribute to shed light on how to design future intercultural societies.

In conclusion, to understand how a critical intercultural leadership process that advocates for social and cognitive justice will contribute to transcend from our current postcolonial world of oppression to an intercultural society of emancipation, I provide a critical discussion of what is known regarding these topics in the following chapter. Moreover, in chapter three I describe thoroughly how I conducted my study depicting step-by-step my methodology and methods of data collection, analysis (see Appendix A), and the write-up of my case study and interpretation which are presented in chapter four and five, respectively. Finally, chapter six is dedicated to recommendations and lessons learned through the whole process of this research.
CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

In the following chapter I will provide support for my research question and purpose of my study to create an argument supporting my topics and methodology following the main concepts present in the conceptual framework that was introduced in the previous chapter. These concepts are: (1) Postcolonial world; (2) hegemonic culture and doxa as a system of domination and control; (3) leadership as a process of oppression or emancipation; (4) critical consciousness; (5) ethnogenesis; (6) social movements organizations; (7) organizational culture; and (8) intercultural society.

Origins of the Postcolonial World

Postcolonial world today is the result of the processes of Modernity and its darker side, colonialism. Modernity is a period in history that resulted in socio-economic and cultural changes in Western Europe and the appearance of eurocentrism, the belief that Europeans and their culture were the pinnacle of humanity and its history, and the exclusive bearers, creators, and protagonists of Modernity (Quijano, 2010). The other side of Modernity is colonialism, the formal political domination of one country by another in which the relationship between the two nations is always one of economic exploitation, although the dominant nation may pretend otherwise (Kloby, 2006).

Modernity

Modernity can ultimately be summarized as a set of ideas surrounding a capitalist economy, the modern nation-state, and Enlightenment rationalism (Martin, 1999). It is a process based on reason, as it considers that human reason would illuminate both the darker aspects of nature and human relations. Modernity offers a discourse of salvation as
it liberates human beings from religious and political dogmas (O’Neill, 1999). As Condorcet (1955) stated, “the sun will shine only on free men who know no other master but their reason; when tyrants and slaves, priests and their stupid or hypocritical instruments will exist only in works of history and on the stage” (p. 179).

To date, no consensus exists on when Modernity actually began. Some scholars argue that its origin can be traced to the year 1436, with Gutenberg’s adoption of moveable type; some to the year of 1520, with Luther’s rebellion against Church authority; and others maintain that it was with the American or French Revolution of 1776 or 1789 (Toulmin, 1992). Notwithstanding, the disagreement as to the precise date of Modernity’s origin can be placed between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries in what was a process in Europe from South to North, and from the East to the West. In essence, this was a movement that started with the Italian Renaissance, through the Lutheran Reformation and the scientific revolution of the seventeenth century, until finally culminating in the bourgeois political revolution in England, North America, and France (Dussel, 2005).

Hence, this narrative of Modernity, only “represents an ‘intra’ European, Eurocentric, self-centered, and ideological view, from the perspective of the centrality of Northern Europe that has prevailed since the 18th century, dominating even up to our own days” (Dussel, 2005, p. 12). Although Modernity is seen as a European phenomenon, it is constituted in a dialectical relation with a non-European alterity as its ultimate content. In essence, Modernity appears when the ‘center’ of a world history shifts to Europe and the other continents become its ‘periphery’ (Mignolo & Escobar, 2010). Moreover, what is established through this worldview is a linear concept of the history of human civilization that departs from a primitive stage and culminates in its more
‘sophisticated’ phase, Europe. Thus, while Europe represents ‘modern civilization,’ other regions are labeled as primitive, and these differences are considered as natural, and not consequences of a history of power relations (Quijano, 2010).

This phenomenon is called eurocentrism, when western Europeans thought of themselves as the most developed and sophisticated culture in the history of humanity and protagonists of Modernity (Quijano, 2010). Thus, to better understand eurocentrism and how this concept became the dominant frame of reference, it is necessary to situate this critique outside the European continent in realization that Europe was never the center of world history until the Industrial Revolution at the end of the eighteenth century as a consequence of colonialism. According to Dussel (2005), the history of Modernity was distorted thanks to the mirage of eurocentrism that situated Europe at the heart of the entirety of prior world history. In essence, during Modernity a Eurocentric leadership process that created a framework to make sense and meaning of the world founded on exclusion and exploitation was imposed.

**Colonialism**

Throughout the history of humanity, there were great civilizations like ancient China and Egypt, Greece and Rome, as well as the Inca and Aztec Empires. Because the Western civilization that resulted from the Renaissance and the Enlightenment was the most recent civilization in that time, Europeans felt themselves as the ‘moderns’ and ‘sophisticated,’ and tried to ‘save the world’ making other people be like them (Mignolo, 2011). Through this mindset, Europe was obliged to bring ‘light’ to the world in the name of progress and civilization, but also with the aim of developing and spreading its new economic system, capitalism (Mignolo, 2011). Thus, within a capitalist system, the need
for resources – what Karl Marx (1977) called ‘primitive accumulation’ – provided another foundation for colonialism.

Modern colonialism began shortly after the great boom in global exploration symbolized by the travels of Christopher Columbus, though it is generally agreed to have reached its peak in the late 1800s and the beginning of the twentieth century, even if some European countries kept their colonies for many decades after (Kloby, 2006). One such example is the conquest of America. Quijano (2010) describes how, with the conquest of the indigenous societies which inhabited this continent, began the constitution of a new world order that five hundred years later covered the whole planet (Quijano, 2010). This new global order was established by Europeans through relations of direct, political, social and cultural domination over the conquered. Thus, America was constituted as the first space/time of a new model of power at a global level (Europe was separated from America – and its primitive people – in space, and from Middle Ages in time), which formed the first identity of Modernity (Quijano, 2000). To produce that space/time, there were two historical processes: One was the codification of differences between conquerors and the conquered through the idea of race, with which the people of America, and later the world, were classified within this new model of power. The other process was the constitution of a new structure of the control of labor and its resources and products. This new structure “was an articulation of all historically known previous structures of control of labor, slavery, serfdom, small independent commodity production and reciprocity, together around and upon the basis of capital and the world market” (Quijano, 2000, pp. 533-534). In addition, in associating new historical identities with social roles and geo-historical places, “both race and the division of labor remained
structurally linked and mutually reinforcing, in spite of the fact that neither of them were necessarily dependent on the other in order to exist or change” (p. 536).

This domination, at least its political aspects, has been defeated in many parts of the world, whilst its successor, Western imperialism, “is an association of social interests between dominant groups (‘social classes’ and/or ‘ethnic groups’) of countries with unequally articulated power, rather than an imposition from the outside” (Quijano, 2010, p. 22). This structure of power still produces the current social discriminations of race, ethnicity, or nationality, that are presented as objective and scientific categories (Quijano, 2010). The relationship between Western culture and other cultures that began during the sixteenth century continues to be one of colonial domination whose results are a relationship that consists, in the first place, of a colonization of the imagination of the dominated (Quijano, 2010). In other words, a Eurocentric leadership process resulting in a Colonial matrix of power or Coloniality was imposed, and it is still the framework within which different social relations operate.

Coloniality

As a consequence of these socio-economic and cultural processes, Modernity can be considered a narrative that originates from Europe and “builds Western civilization by celebrating its achieving while hiding at the same time its darker side, coloniality” (Mignolo, 2011, pp. 3-4). There is no Modernity without coloniality because these are two sides of the same coin where Modernity represents the light and coloniality the shadow. Thus, this darker side of Modernity produced two main effects at a global level: a system known as the colonial matrix of power, understood as a framework of world-making, and social structures that designed new asymmetric power relationships.
Colonial matrix of power. According to Quijano (2000), the colonial matrix of power (CMP) is the first effectively global model in human history in several respects:

To begin with, it is the first where in each sphere of social existence all historically known forms of control of respective social relations are articulated, configuring in each area only one structure with systematic relations between its components and, by the same means, its whole. Second, it is the first model where each structure of each sphere of social existence is under the hegemony of an institution produced within the process of formation and development of that same model of power. Thus, in the control of labor and its resources and products, it is the capitalist enterprise; in the control of sex and its resources and products, the bourgeois family; in the control of authority and its resources and products, the nation-state; in the control of intersubjectivity, Eurocentrism. Third, each one of those institutions exists in a relation of interdependence with each one of the others. Therefore, the model of power is configured as a system. Fourth, finally, this model of global power is the first that covers the entire planet’s population.

(PP. 544-545)

On the other hand, Puerto Rican sociologist Ramón Grosfoguel (2010) proposes a broader definition of this matrix of power defining it as an intersectionality of hierarchies of “sexual, political, epistemic, economic, spiritual, linguistic and racial forms of domination and exploitation where the racial/ethnic hierarchy of the European/non-European divide transversally reconfigures all of the other global power structures” (p. 71). This intersectionality of hierarchies could not be possible without assigning to difference and diversity negative cultural value. Through this Eurocentric process of leadership it explained and, at the same time, legitimized the domination of one group by
another in terms of class, race, gender or culture. Thus, alleged differences are often said to be natural, universal, or eternal, based on biology or on God’s teachings. In this respect, both religion and science played a key role in rationalizing domination (Rothenberg, 2006).

In relation to race, Memmi (1996) affirms that the first form of racism consisted of stressing the difference between accuser and victim. However, revealing a characteristic differentiating two individuals or two groups does not, in and of itself, constitute a racist attitude. Rather, it depends in part on how difference is perceived. In its modern meaning, the idea of race does not have an easy trackable history prior to America’s colonization, but from then on, social relations founded on the category of race produced new social identities such as Indians, Blacks, and mestizos, as well as redefining others (Quijano, 2000). Thus, identities such as European, American, Asian, African, and much later, Oceania, were produced, and along with them, relations of domination that constituted hierarchies, places, and corresponding social roles of the model of colonial domination were imposed (Quijano, 2000).

In summary, from the sixteenth century on, Western Europe became the center of the modern world-system, and this ethnocentrism, associated with a universal racial classification, explains why Europeans felt “not only superior to all the other peoples of the world, but, in particular, naturally superior” (Quijano, 2000, p. 541). First with the hegemony of the coasts of the Mediterranean and the Iberian Peninsula, and later with the northwest Atlantic coast, the CMP, imposed through a Eurocentric leadership process, has proven to be the most effective instrument for implementing universal domination through the creation and maintenance of unfair socio-economic and cultural structures (Quijano, 2000).
Social structures of asymmetric relations of power. A structure is a set of patterned arrangements that are repeated. Hence, a social structure can be defined as an arrangement situated in any geographical space that influences or limits the choices and opportunities available to individuals (Barker, 2005). However, other definitions of social structure maintain that rules themselves are reaffirmed if they are followed. In essence, structural properties of social systems are mediums that influence the outcome of practices that constitute social systems (Giddens, 1979).

In terms of Modernity and coloniality, the latter was the first global system where all forms of control in social relations were articulated and, as a result of this process, a unique suprastructure emerged between the different components of the entire system (Quijano, 2000). In addition, each structure of every social sphere was under the control of an institution that produced a process in the creation of the CMP. As we have seen, the institution of capitalism controlled labor and its resources. The bourgeois concept of family did the same with sex and its resources and products, as did the nation-state with authority and resources and products, and eurocentrism with its totalizing intersubjectivity (Quijano, 2000). In short, a global system of socioeconomic stratification based on the place and the time took form, a system that evolved later toward what we currently understand by concepts such as classism, racism, sexism and the epistemicide or elimination of other forms of knowledge.

Colonial administrations have almost completely been eradicated from the capitalist world-system. Nevertheless, ‘colonial situations’ and ‘mental frameworks’ still exist. According to Grosfoguel (2010), these situations are of “cultural, political, sexual, spiritual, epistemic and economic oppression/exploitation of subordinate racialized/ethnic groups by dominant racialized/ethnic groups with or without the existence of colonial
administrations” (p. 74). In short, colonialism is almost over, but coloniality still affects the minds and social imaginaries of both the oppressors and the oppressed. For example, if we look to the core zones of the capitalist world-economy today, one cannot help but notice the overlap with predominantly White/European/Euro-American societies such as Western Europe, North America and Australia. On the other hand, if we make the same comparison with the peripheral zones, they overlap with previously colonized non-European peoples. Japan is the only exception, but curiously, it was never colonized nor dominated by Europeans and, similar to the West, they had a colonial empire (Grosfoguel, 2010). It is worth pointing out that this system of coloniality also includes Global South migrants in the racial/ethnic hierarchy of global cities, suggesting that there is a periphery outside and inside the core zones, and there is also a core inside and outside the peripheral regions (Grosfoguel, 2010).

The ‘decolonization of the world’ during the nineteenth century in Latin America and the twentieth century in the largest part of the rest of the planet, is a myth that has contributed to the invisibility of coloniality today. Decolonization and decoloniality are different concepts as were colonization and coloniality (Grosfoguel, 2010). Thus, we cannot think of decolonization in terms of conquering power over the juridical-political boundaries of a state alone, as all the old national liberation and socialist strategies pretended. This is because global coloniality is not reducible to the presence or absence of a colonial administration or to the political/economic structures of power (Grosfoguel, 2010).

In terms of power, the social structures identified above were central in defining the possible choices of individuals and groups, particularly the position they occupied in the CMP. According to Arendt (1970), “Power is never the property of an individual; it
belongs to a group and remains in existence as long as the group keeps together” (p. 44). In other words, what defined power was determined by one’s group and then one’s position in the matrix of power. Bourdieu (1977; 1990b) also elaborated a similar concept by combining power and identity, arguing that today there is a struggle for social recognition as a type of power he called symbolic power. This is a struggle “to win everything which, in the social world, is of the order of belief, credit and discredit, perception and appreciation, knowledge and recognition – name, renown, prestige, honor, glory, authority, everything which constitutes symbolic power as recognized power” (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 251).

Social groups try to acquire symbolic power, as well as an increase in the value of existing assets, “to impose the taxonomy most favorable to its characteristics, or at least to give to the dominant taxonomy the content most flattering to what it has and what it is” (Bourdieu, 1984, pp. 475-476). Thus, each group seeks to impose its own worldview and frameworks to make sense and meaning of reality as most valuable, in order to secure symbolic power. However, if a group fails to promote its values, it will be forced to accept its inferiority. As Bourdieu (1984) states, “Adapting to a dominated position implies a form of acceptance of domination. The sense of incompetence, failure or cultural unworthiness imply a form of recognition of dominant values” (p. 389). In short, and as a result of the struggles for symbolic power, the CMP supposed a design of a global social system that “distributed” power in an asymmetric way in terms of class, race, gender, and culture. Again, this was according to the position one occupied in the already existing power hierarchy. In our current society, this design is still operative; therefore, without an awareness of one’s own biased processes of symbolic power, social and cognitive justice will be impossible.
The Postcolonial World Today

Despite the fact that today we have terms such as Postmodernity, and almost all former colonial regimes have disappeared, the world system of the twenty-first century is still based on Eurocentric leadership processes of Modernity and colonialism. Among the main consequences derived from these processes and narratives that prevent dialogue among cultures are social hierarchies such as (1) classism, (2) racism, (3) sexism, and (4) cultural epistemicide, along with (5) a system of domination and oppression.

Classism

One barrier to social and cognitive justice among cultures that we are witnessing is classism. It is a system derived from the CMP and the negative value of difference, and the result of the capitalist structure that controls labor and its resources. Classism is depicted as “prejudice and discrimination based on socioeconomic level or class” (Blumenfeld & Raymond, 2000, p. 25). As a result of classism, whilst the wealthiest have privileges and are assigned high status, poor and working-class people and their cultures are stigmatized and disadvantaged (Fiske-Rusciano & Cyrus, 2005). In essence, classism is a tangible result of social and economic inequity, and “the umbrella under which all other forms of oppression are connected” (Zrenchik & McDowell, 2012, p. 102). Classism is also widely internalized by both the rich and the poor. This is what is understood as hegemonic, a governing power that wins consent to its rule from those it subjugates, when “those whose labor is being exploited believe those who benefit from this exploitation to be of greater value” (p. 104). As Marx (1999) argued, to maintain the status quo and the hierarchies, “the maintenance and reproduction of the working class is, and ever must be, a necessary condition” (p. 332).
**Racism**

When the capitalist structure developed in Europe, the control of labor and its resources was based on social classes to legitimate the exploitation of big sectors of society. However, after Europeans arrived in America in 1492, they justified their exploitation of indigenous communities and African slaves emphasizing on race. According to McGoldrick and Giordano (1996), race is not a cultural or genetic matter, but an issue of strictly political oppression. It is constructed through fictions, which is not to say that race is a fiction (Eisenstein, 2006). It is an idea always in part fixated on the body, with a meaning always contextualized, yet the meaning of race precedes its context. Colors, noses, and hair are defined before they are seen, yet, one sees them only through the context of their world (Eisenstein, 2006). Today, the theme of racism is “less biological heredity and more the insurmountability of cultural differences. Historical cultures outline the ‘other;’ the language of incompatibility displaces the superior/inferior divide. Boundary lines are therefore being constantly redrawn and must remain flexible” (Eisenstein, 2006, p. 188). Racism is old and new, static and changing; tied to skin color and pluralized to encompass ethnic/cultural meanings beyond the idea of the inferior/superior divide (Eisenstein, 2006).

**Sexism**

The third cause that hinders social and cognitive justice is sexism, which was the result of a bourgeois concept of family that utilized patriarchy, a former system of domination, to control sex, its resources, and its products. From a Marxist perspective, the bourgeois concept of nuclear family performs ideological functions for capitalism teaching passive acceptance of hierarchy, being central for consumption, and reproducing
class inequality when wealthy families pass down private properties to their children (Engels, 2010).

Patriarchy, a historic creation formed by men and women in a process which took nearly 2500 years to complete, “appeared as the archaic state. The basic unit of its organization was the patriarchal family, which both expressed and constantly generated its rules and values” (Lerner, 2006, p. 253). This family structure has varied throughout history, but one common element is the male dominance in the public realm, institutions, and government (Lerner, 2006). Further, the family not only mirrors the social order in the state upon which it educates its children to follow, it also reproduces and reinforces it (Lerner, 2006).

The basic relations in a patriarchal system are control by, and submission to, those who rank higher in terms of age and gender: duties and obligations are strictly defined along these two axes. “They are marked by inequality but legitimized through the concept of ‘complementarity,’ which means that while roles and responsibilities are dissimilar and unequal, they are idealized as reciprocal and therefore of equal value” (Lerner, 2006, p. 258). For Rothenberg (2006), “the institutionalization of hierarchies of age and gender signifies that older men have more power than younger men, and men in general have more power than women” (p. 258). Marxists argue that the nuclear family performs ideological functions for capitalism – the family acts as a unit of consumption and teaches passive acceptance of hierarchy. It is also the institution through which the wealthy pass down their private property to their children, thus reproducing class inequality.
**Epistemicide**

The last system identified as a consequence of the design of the CMP (along with its negative value of differences) is the epistemicide of other types of knowledge. Through eurocentrism and its Eurocentric leadership process, intersubjectivity is dominated and the world is only conceptualized from Western worldview, which makes the achievement of social and cognitive justice nearly impossible. Santos and co-authors call epistemicide the extermination of knowledge and ways of knowing, and argues that it is not possible to have social justice without global cognitive knowledge (Santos, Nunes, & Meneses, 2007).

The epistemic privilege of the Western world is the result of four epistemicides that took place throughout the sixteenth century. They are against (1) Jewish and Muslim populations in Spain; (2) indigenous people in the conquest of the Americas; (3) Africans enslaved in the Americas; and (4) women burned alive, accused of being witches in Europe (Grosfoguel, 2013). Thus, the canon of thought in the social sciences and humanities is based on the knowledge produced by a few men from among five countries: Italy, France, England, Germany, and later, the United States (Grosfoguel, 2013). Their knowledge is considered superior to the knowledge of all other countries, and they monopolized the authority of such knowledge around the world (Grosfoguel, 2013).

As Maldonado-Torres (2008b) affirms, the other side of René Descartes’ famous quote “I think, therefore I am” is the racist/sexist structure of “I do not think, therefore I am not.” It is the control of intersubjectivity by the CMP, “it is a ‘coloniality of being’ where all of the subjects considered inferior do not think and are not worthy of existence because their humanity is in question” (Grosfoguel, 2013, pp. 86-87).
Domination and Oppression

Modernity and its darker side, coloniality, resulted in asymmetric relations of power that are translated today into relationships of domination and oppression. According to Pincus (2006), oppression is a process by which “one segment of society achieves power and privilege through the control and exploitation of other groups, which are burdened and pushed down into the lower levels of the social order” (p. 145). For Young (2011), oppression, along with domination, define injustice. The former is the institutional constraint on self-development, whereas the later represents the institutional constraint on self-determination. In essence, without developing and exercising one’s capacities and experiences, and without determining one’s actions and its conditions, there is no justice or symmetric relations of power, and therefore there is no possibility for social justice. According to Young (2011), a group is oppressed when it experiences one of the following five dimensions of oppression: (1) Exploitation, (2) marginalization, (3) powerlessness, (4) cultural imperialism and (5) violence. In short, through these five dimensions an individual belonging to a specific group cannot develop, and/or exercise his/her capacities and experiences (oppression), nor determine his/her actions and conditions (domination).

Oppression also refers to systemic constraints on groups and “is structural, rather than the result of a few people’s choices or policies” (Young, 2011, p. 40). Marilyn Frye (1983) defines oppression as “an enclosing structure of forces and barriers which tends to the immobilization and reduction of a group or category of people” (p. 11). In essence, “we cannot eliminate this structural oppression by getting rid of the rulers or making some new laws, because oppressions are systematically reproduced in major economic, political, and cultural institutions” (Young, 2011, p. 40).
The terms of race, class, gender and culture are defined as “a constellation of ‘positionalities’ (e.g., social locations) that classify, categorize, and construct the social value that is assigned to individuals according to various components (e.g. beliefs, concepts, and structures that define social practice)” (Harley, Jolvette, McCormick, & Tice, 2002, p. 220). Positionalities “possess rank, have value, and are constructed hierarchically, particularly those that are visible and discernible” (Robinson, 1999, p. 73).

Reducing racism and classism to the beliefs, ideas, or overt behaviors of individuals is inadequate (Bonilla-Silva, 1996), because racism and classism refer to systems of oppression that occur at multiple levels (Bell, 1997). For example, at an individual level, individuals demonstrate either overt or covert personal prejudices, discriminatory behavior toward people who are of color or who are from lower social classes (Holley & VanVleet, 2006). On the other hand, institutional discrimination is evidenced through “the day-to-day practices of organizations and institutions that have a harmful impact on members of subordinate groups” (Kendall, 1997, p. 306). According to Bonilla-Silva (1996), “racial practices that reproduce racial inequality in contemporary America are increasingly covert, are embedded in normal operations of institutions, avoid direct racial terminology, and are invisible to most Whites” (p. 476).

As a result of this system of domination and oppression, there are disadvantages for members of subordinated groups, but also unearned privileges for members of dominant ones (McIntosh, 1998). However, while at an individual level an oppressed person needs an oppressor, in terms of structures it is not necessary because “while structural oppression involves relations among groups, these relations do not always fit the paradigm of conscious and intentional oppression of one group by another” (Young, 2011, p. 41). It is here where, along with the systems and structures of classism, racism,
sexism and the epistemicide that need to be transformed, social and cognitive justice becomes impossible to realize in today’s postcolonial contexts, absent a critical intercultural leadership process aimed at decolonizing our minds and articulating more inclusive and broader frameworks of world-making. The goal is to seek for the emancipation of cultural groups and their different epistemologies that remain ‘invisibilized’ by the dominant culture and its hegemonic epistemology, positivism.

**Culture: A Framework to Make Sense/Meaning of the World for Stability**

Culture is a collective phenomenon which is shared in a certain way among people who live within the same social environment or is in contact with it. According to Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010), “culture consists of the unwritten rules of the social game. It is the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from others” (p. 5). Thus, culture is learned from a specific social environment because human beings observe the environment and transmit their experiences with other humans. However, “the personality of an individual, on the other hand, is his or her unique personal set of mental programs that needn’t be shared with any other human being” (Hofstede et al., 2010, p. 7). In essence, when human beings learn their culture, what they do is to absorb the influence of a collective programming as well as specific personal experiences (Hofstede et al., 2010).

As Trice and Beyer (1993) argue, cultures are Collective phenomena that embody people’s responses to the uncertainties and chaos that are inevitable in human experience. These responses fall into two major categories. The first is the substance of a culture – shared, emotionally charged belief systems that we call ideologies. The second is cultural forms – observable
entities, including actions, through which members of a culture express, affirm, and communicate the substance of their culture to one another. (p. 2)

Martin (2002) defines culture “as consisting of in-depth, subjective interpretations of a wide range of cultural manifestations (a generalist rather than a specialist view), both ideational and material” (p. 120). Moreover, culture is a phenomenon below the surface within the unconscious, powerful in its impact but at the same time invisible, and creates within us ways of thinking and frames of reference (Schein, 2010). “Just as our personality and character guide and constrain our behavior, so does culture guide and constrain the behavior of members of a group through the shared norms that are held in that group” (Schein, 2010, p. 14).

**Characteristics of culture and cultural differences.** According to Schein (2010), there are four main characteristics of culture: (1) Structural stability. It is what defines a culture, not only what is shared but also the stability, and it is valued because it provides meaning and predictability; (2) depth. It is the essence of a culture, the unconscious part of a group that also provides stability; (3) breadth. It is the capacity that culture has to cover and influence all of a group’s functioning; and (4) patterning or integration. It is the ability of culture to tie together and to give harmony to the different cultural manifestations in order to internalize the natural and social order. In other words, integration is the answer to reduce disorder and anxiety through a view of how things are and ought to be that brings consistency and predictability (Trice & Beyer, 1993).

As Hofstede and co-authors (2010) argue, there are different ways of manifesting cultural difference, and they can be grouped in four categories: (1) Symbols; (2) heroes; (3) rituals; and (4) values. By symbols are understood “words, gestures, pictures, or objects that carry a particular meaning that is recognized as such only by those who share
the culture” (p. 8). These symbols can be developed or copied from other groups, and also can be destroyed or become ‘old’ and disappear (Hofstede et al., 2010). Regarding heroes, they are persons, alive or dead, real or imaginary, with highly valued characteristics in a certain culture and they represent a model to follow by the other members of society (Hofstede et al., 2010). Rituals are collective activities that although they seem superfluous and not effective, are considered essential within a culture. Through gathering and discourses, they serve to reinforce group cohesion or to allow the leaders to assert themselves (Hofstede et al., 2010). In terms of values, these are considered “broad tendencies to prefer certain states of affairs over others. Values are feelings with an added arrow indicating a plus and a minus side” (Hofstede et al., 2010, p. 9). However, values of inclusion for a community can create values of exclusion for members of another, a result of moral circles.

Thus, from childhood “people draw a mental line around those whom they consider to be their group. Only members of the moral circle thus delineated have full rights and full obligations” (p. 12). In other words, the moral circle can be applied for political parties, religions or nations; it “is the key determinant of our social lives, and it both creates and carries our culture” (p. 13). However, the moral circles can be broader or narrower, more inclusive or more exclusive depending upon the culture. According to Hofstede and co-authors (2010), “we live in societies that are so large that blood ties cannot be the only, or even the most important, way to determine moral rights and duties” (p. 15). Moreover, every person has multiple identities “and almost everyone belongs to a number of different groups and categories at the same time” (Hofstede et al., 2010, p. 18), carrying different layers of mental programming within ourselves. Therefore, a solidarity of class among non-hegemonic cultures that focuses on shared identities of domination
and oppression could be a feasible project to broaden the moral circle through a critical intercultural leadership process.

Notwithstanding, in order to broaden that moral circle, the key issue is the depth of the layers of mental programming or layers of culture. In other words, to change a culture is going to be easier or more complicated regarding the depth of the layer where this cultural practice is situated. According to Schein (2010), culture is like the image of an onion with different layers where the outer ones are labeled as practices and the ones at the core are the values. Thus, culture change can be fast for the practices of a culture, but slow for the values which were learned during childhood and give stability to a culture (Schein, 2010).

Within the core of a culture we find values such as gender or nationality; thus, it will be easier to understand how to change culture in general and assumptions and values in particular, within organizations because, even if changing organizational cultures is not easy, the fact that its members joined the organization as adults, makes it ‘feasible’ (Hofstede et al., 2010). Culture is a dynamic phenomenon that it is not static and flows, because culture is constantly created, recreated and even destroyed by our interactions with others. “When we are influential in shaping the behavior and values of others, we think of that as ‘leadership’ and are creating the conditions for new culture formation” (Schein, 2010, p. 3). Thus, when constructing and reconstructing culture we can seek either for domination and social control or for emancipation and social justice. Eventually, the leadership process involved in shaping culture and creating social structures and frameworks to world-making is going to be central to define how culture can define the organization of a society.
**Hegemonic Culture and Doxa: A System of Domination**

Within Modernity, culture has become an element of social exclusion and control to legitimize domination and oppression and a hegemonic discourse that is presented as ‘universal’ and eventually internalized by society (Bourdieu, 1977). According to Fairclough (1992), “A discourse is a social practice not just of representing the world, but of signifying the world, constituting and constructing the world in meaning” (p. 64). Moreover, a discourse or narrative has material effects because it: (1) Contributes to construct ‘social identities’ and to define social positions for social ‘subjects’ and types of ‘self;’ (2) helps construct social relationships between people; and (3) creates systems of knowledge and belief and has the potential to transform society (Fairclough, 1992). Thus, due to asymmetries of power relations and resources between social groups and cultures, the dominant sectors of society have more possibilities of establishing a specific framework and doxa, what is taken for granted in any particular society, the experience by which “the natural and social world appears as self-evident” (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 162). In essence, doxa establishes the borders of what is allowed to be thought and said, the limits of a narrative or worldview.

**Culture, hegemony and social control.** One of the main impediments Marx and Engels (1970) identified to create consciousness of class, political organization, and consequently social change, was the integrative role of hegemony. According to their thesis, the dominant capitalist class not only controls the means of production (material), but also the means of mental production (ideas). Thus, Marx and Engels (1970) argue that every ruling class in the history of humanity

Is compelled, merely in order to carry through its aim, to present its interests as the common interest of all the members of society… it has to give its ideas the
form of universality, and represent them as the only rational, universally valid ones. (pp. 65-66)

Marx understands culture as ideology and compares it to a ‘camera obscura’ that distorts social reality through the production of ideas, concepts, consciousness, and affects all that can be said, imagined, or conceived in the fields of politics, law, morality, religion, metaphysics, and so on (Marx & Engels, 1970). In other words, thoughts and ideas are socially constructed and culture, as an ideology, can be conceived for domination or emancipation through either a Eurocentric or critical intercultural process of leadership.

According to Marx and Engels (1970), ideology is the superstructure that legitimizes the social structures and they describe the concept ‘hegemony of the spirit’ as the consensual aspect of ruling-class domination or hegemony that would be followed later by Gramsci (1995) when he coined the term cultural hegemony, understood as the process of domination implemented through ideological means that result in ‘spontaneous’ consent (Gramsci, 1995). Stated simply, social sectors are successful to hold power over social institutions and, through them, these dominant groups influence the thoughts and behaviors of the rest of society establishing normative ideas, values, and beliefs that eventually will become the hegemonic worldview of the society (Strinati, 1995). Cultural hegemony functions by achieving the consent of the masses to abide by social norms and the rules of law by framing the worldview of the ruling class, and the social and economic structures that go with it, as just, legitimate, and designed for the benefit of all (Strinati, 1995). Moreover, hegemony has different facets and the hegemonic groups succeed in providing “a unison of economic and political aims” and “intellectual and moral unity” (p. 181). This is how the idea of common sense is created, implemented, and embedded in the social imaginaries of society. Thus, the supremacy of
the bourgeoisie is based on two, equally important, facts: Economic domination and intellectual and moral leadership (Forgacs, 2000), that is, power relations through capital and a Eurocentric leadership of exploitation and exclusion to legitimize social inequities.

Regarding the concept of hegemony, Gramsci (1995) made a distinction between rule and hegemony. Rule is expressed through political forms that in times of crisis uses either direct or effective coercion (Williams, 1995). However, “the more normal situation is a complex interlocking of political, social, and cultural forces, and hegemony, according to different interpretations, is either this or the active social and cultural forces which are its necessary elements” (Williams, 1995, p. 595). Hegemony as a concept goes beyond two other concepts such as culture and ideology. The former is the whole social process where individuals define and shape their whole lives, while the latter is the projected system of meanings and values of a particular class interest (Williams, 1995). According to Williams (1995), “‘Hegemony’ goes beyond ‘culture,’ as previously defined, in its insistence on relating the ‘whole social process’ to specific distributions of power and influence” (p. 595). In our current societies, social inequalities do not allow individuals to define and shape their own lives because they are limited by social structures that are barriers for self-development and determination. This is what Gramsci (1995) defined as domination and subordination. Moreover, the concept of hegemony also goes beyond ideology because it is not enough with that conscious system of ideas and beliefs but the whole lived social process organized by a dominant perspective (Williams, 1995). Ideology is an articulated system of meanings, values, and beliefs, understood as a worldview or class perspective (Williams, 1995).

Therefore, hegemony is a conglomerate of practices and expectations, “a lived system of meanings and values –constitutive and constituting–which when experienced as
practices, appear as reciprocally confirming” (Williams, 1995, p. 596). Hegemony gives a sense of reality an absolute for the people in a society, a ‘culture’ understood as the lived dominance and subordination of specific social classes (Williams, 1995). As Williams (1995) argues, a lived hegemony is a process that cannot be reduced, except analytically, to a system or structure because it includes experiences, relationships and activities with tensions and limits that are constantly changing. In other words, hegemony is complex and needs to be renewed, maintained or changed, much as a leadership process of power relations that, at the same time, is resisted and challenged producing the emergence of counter-hegemony and alternative hegemony (Williams, 1995).

A second system of cultural control analyzed by two critical theorists from the Frankfurt School, Horkheimer and Adorno (1996), is the idea of culture industry. For Horkheimer and Adorno (1996), the age of myth is continued with the Enlightenment and Modernity which keeps fulfilling the myths from Medieval ages and ancient times. As Horkheimer and Adorno (1996) state, “Myth is already enlightenment, and enlightenment reverts to mythology” (p. xvi). Thus, one of the main promises of Modernity such as to put an end to myth and superstition, was not true and has led us to a path of destruction in the name of reason (Horkheimer & Adorno, 1996).

Moreover, the rational program of the Enlightenment aimed to differentiate ‘men’ from nature, and eventually, in taking over nature, also took ‘men’s’ own nature, repressing feelings, urges, and desires, and separating the mind from the body. As Horkheimer and Adorno (1996) argue, this separation of the mind from the body resulted in a constant oppression that has taken over all aspects of human life and which is limited to a human rationality designed to exploiting nature, including human beings. Thus, after the Enlightenment, man becomes a master of nature and a connection between
Enlightenment and the scientific method is established situating science as the only legitimate model of explanation for reality overcoming tradition and liberating us from myth and superstition (Horkheimer & Adorno, 1996). In addition, along with reason and science comes bureaucracy and technology, what will make invisible other epistemologies and other knowledge beyond the rational knowledge.

For Horkheimer and Adorno (1996), both fascism and capitalism see human beings as numbers and develop a culture industry and popular culture in subduing the masses. As the authors argue, popular culture means to produce standardized cultural goods trying to manipulate mass society and to transform people into passive actors. These accessible pleasures of popular culture render people docile and content, no matter their economic circumstances. Moreover, culture industry creates false psychological needs that only the capitalist system can satisfy (Horkheimer & Adorno, 1996). In conclusion, this system of control and domination creates a framework to make sense of reality that makes us believe a discourse, a narrative because “The whole world is made to pass through the filter of the culture industry” (Horkheimer & Adorno, 1996, p. 126).

Marcuse (1991), another representative of the Frankfurt School following the idea of culture industry, coined the concept of mass culture to be a system wherein the people are dispossessed of their capacity for critical thinking as a result of the imposition of a one-dimensional world view. Marcuse (1991) argues that consumerism is a form of social control and that our democracies are authoritarian systems where privileged social sectors dictate our perceptions for freedom. Thus, consumers act irrationally buying more than they need, ignoring environmental degradation and sustainability issues, and not being conscious of their own domination and oppression. “All liberation depends on the consciousness of servitude, and the emergence of this consciousness is always hampered
by the predominance of needs and satisfactions which, to a great extent, have become the individual’s own” (Marcuse, 1991, p. 7). As a result of this system of control, individuals lose their humanity and become means to the end of a consumer machine that never stops and is never satisfied.

For Marcuse (1991), there are two dimensions which represent the coexistence of the present system with its negation, what in terms of culture would be expressed in the role of culture as critique of the social order. This critique is needed to unfold any possibility of social change because the two dimensions create a space between what can be thought and what exists where critical thinking can emerge. Within this gap, society can “enable its slaves to learn and see and think before they know what is going on and what they themselves can do to change it” (Marcuse, 1991, p. 40). However, this system of social control eliminates the gap between these two dimensions and imposes a unique one dimension that makes it impossible to think beyond this system’s frame (Marcuse, 1991).

This process of closing the gap and imposing an authoritarian system that does not accept other alternative frameworks is implemented in different ways. According to Marcuse (1991), one of them is the introduction of consumerism culture and public opinion into the public sphere through television, radio, state officials, and so on. Now, social control is exercised through the satisfaction of needs that are created by the system and produces conformity and an imaginary happiness that accepts the values of the system. Thus, Marcuse (1991) argues that Western democracies are not really democratic because people are manipulated not to think critically, and they are offered choices that remain within the dominant framework of the system. Thus, even dissent is controlled and reduced to opinions that do not challenge the system giving the impression that
Democracy appears to be “the most efficient system of domination” (p. 52). As Marcuse (1991) states, “contemporary society seems to be capable of containing social change – qualitative change which would establish essentially different institutions, a new direction of the productive process, new modes of human existence” (p. xliiv). It is a universal project that controls discourses, action, and culture, “an omnipresent system which swallows up or repulses all alternatives” (p. xlix). Moreover, Marcuse (1991) states that systems of domination have evolved: “they have become increasingly technological, productive, and even beneficial; consequently, in the most advanced areas of industrial society, the people have been co-ordinated and reconciled with the system of domination to an unprecedented degree” (p. vii).

Additionally, Foucault (1995) states that science is a powerful force used by elites to govern modern societies. Since the Enlightenment, science acquired a hegemonic status as a discourse that substituted the narrative of religion. According to Foucault (1995), discourses and narratives establish the limits for the thought of a society, and when acquiring a status of truth, they can dominate the world and exclude alternative discourses. However, they require mechanisms of power to reinforce and reproduce them which are called ‘disciplinary technologies of power.’ Through those technologies such as ‘classification,’ ‘standardization,’ ‘surveillance,’ ‘individualization,’ or ‘totalization,’ among others, dominant groups control the daily practices of members of a society in an unconscious form because within a specific belief system, certain views, ideas, or actions become undeniable truths and then it is not possible to think beyond them (Foucault, 1995).

While Foucault shows how power works with institutional discourses and disciplinary practices, Bourdieu uncovers how power embeds its logics into the daily
practices of individuals. Thus, a fourth system of cultural control is symbolic violence, when violence is exercised with the complicity of a person (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1996). Symbolic violence is the imposition of what can be thought and perceived upon the dominated who then think this social order of domination is just and incorporates unconscious structures that aim to perpetuate social structures of domination (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1996). However, Bourdieu (1991) goes beyond a dualism of freedom and determinism and states that “All symbolic domination presupposes, on the part of those who submit to it, a form of complicity which is neither passive submission to external constraint nor a free adherence to values” (pp. 50-51). For Bourdieu (1991), it is even a more organic process than the idea of hegemony for Gramsci (1995) because Bourdieu considers that individuals, through the experience of the social world and its institutions and structures, start taking for granted forms of thinking and behaving. As Bourdieu (1988) argues

More concretely, legitimation of the social world is not, as some believe, the product of a deliberate and purposive action of propaganda or symbolic imposition; it results, rather, from the fact that agents apply to the objective structures of the social world structures of perception and appreciation which are issued out of these very structures and which tend to picture the world as evident. (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 21)

Bourdieu’s work was focused on recognition instead of interest and for him symbolic violence is an act of non-recognition which is outside the control of consciousness and connected with his idea of habitus (Bourdieu, 1977). That is, when men and women internalize particular forms of perception and appreciation within a specific context, and
acquire different dispositions for politics, art, science, same as members from different social classes or ethnic minorities according to their position in the social order.

Symbolic violence then, is the incorporation of unconscious structures that tend to perpetuate the structures of action of the dominant while the dominated accept their position as ‘right’ (Webb, Schirato, & Danaher, 2002). Thus, the more the internalized thoughts and actions are used and shown to ‘work,’ the more they get ‘habitual’ within the unconscious (Bourdieu, 1990b). Therefore, symbolic violence removes the victim’s agency and voice and, in some senses, is much more powerful than physical violence in that it is embedded in the very modes of action and structures of cognition of individuals, and imposes the specter of legitimacy of the social order.

**Doxa and the ‘indisputable.’** In *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (1977), Bourdieu uses the term doxa in relation to his concept of the habitus which supposes an explanation to how the social space that a group of people share works at a micro-level and what are their practices. Practice is defined as the embodied activities and competencies that individuals learn and carry out in social spaces that in turn enable individuals to negotiate interactions with other individuals in that particular social space (Bourdieu, 1977). Moreover, from these social spaces individuals and groups develop ‘dispositions,’ understood as inclinations toward certain responses, and tendencies to make one choice over another, privileging one specific action over another (Bourdieu, 1977). In other words, the habitus enacts the worldview of an individual or a group through their practices.

According to Bourdieu (1977), there are structures that shape the character of particular shared environments such as “material conditions of existence” (p. 72), which constitute the specific social spaces inhabited by different groups. However, what
differentiates habitus and makes it function as a basis for enhancing certain dispositions and practices in all those individuals who are within a particular habitus, is the fact that there is a range of practices and dispositions for each specific habitus, which corresponds to what can be thought within that habitus (Bourdieu, 1977). In essence, there exists a limit and a constraint to the possibilities in any habitus as a consequence of its specific perceptual framework: this is what Bourdieu calls doxa.

Social orders are constructed in arbitrary ways. Notwithstanding, this arbitrariness tends to be naturalized. “Of all the mechanisms tending to produce this effect, the most important and the best concealed is undoubtedly the dialectic of the objective chances and the agents’ aspirations, out of which arises the sense of limits, commonly called the sense of reality” (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 164). As a result of these mechanisms, the different systems of classification that reproduce the objective classes (sex, age, class, and so on) contribute to the reproduction of the power relations of which they are the result, legitimizing the arbitrariness of the social order (Bourdieu, 1977). According to Bourdieu (1977), “in the extreme cases, this is to say, when there is a quasi-perfect correspondence between the objective order and the subjective principles of organization (as in ancient societies) the natural and the social world appears as self-evident” (p. 164). This is how through schemes of thought and perception the subjective order can be presented as objective and experienced as natural and taken for granted (Bourdieu, 1977). Thus, the instruments of knowledge of the social world are political instruments presented as self-evident and which cannot be disputed. Moreover, “the political function of classifications is never more likely to pass unnoticed than in the case of relatively undifferentiated social formations, in which the prevailing classificatory system encounters no rival or
antagonistic principle” (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 164). In other words, the symbolic power to impose the principles to construct social reality is central for political power.

For Bourdieu (1977), to extend the field of doxa, stable objective structures and their reproduction in the agent’s dispositions are needed. Thus, when these structures are internalized as a result of the logic of reproduction, the political order is not perceived as arbitrary or the only possible “but as a self-evident and natural order which goes without saying and therefore goes unquestioned, the agents’ aspirations have the same limits as the objective conditions of which they are the product” (pp. 165-166). Thus, the subjective necessity of the commonsense world is validated by an objective consensus on the sense of the world.

What is essential goes without saying because it comes without saying: the tradition is silent, not least about itself as a tradition; customary law is content to enumerate specific applications of principles which remain implicit and unformulated, because unquestioned; the play of the mythico-ritual homologies constitutes a perfectly closed world, each aspect of which is, as it were, a reflection of all the others, a world which has no place for opinion as liberal ideology understands it, i.e. as one of the different and equally legitimate answers which can be given to an explicit question about the established political order; and nothing is further from the correlative notion of the majority than the unanimity of doxa, the aggregate of the ‘choices’ whose subject is everyone and no one because the questions they answer cannot be explicitly asked. (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 166)

However, even if the arbitrariness of the social order is internalized, naturalized, and legitimated, this legitimacy arises from competition and conflict between groups claiming
to possess it. As Bourdieu (1977) states, when there is either ‘cultural contact’ or political and economic crisis, doxa is questioned. All of a sudden there appears a critique that brings what is indisputable into dispute, what is not formulated into formulation, “which, in breaking the immediate fit between the subjective structures and the objective structures, destroys self-evidence practically” (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 167). However, even the most radical critique will be limited by the objective conditions of the social order. Thus, “crisis is a necessary condition for a questioning of doxa but is not in itself a sufficient condition for the production of a critical discourse” (p. 167). On one side, there is a field of opinion of what can be questioned, and on the other the field of doxa, of what is beyond question as a result of tacit accords to follow social convention. For Bourdieu (1977), both fields are a fundamental objective for a class struggle, “which is the struggle for the imposition of the dominant systems of classification” (p. 168), like the system which was imposed through Modernity and that is still in place within our postcolonial societies.

To be successful, the dominated need to have “the material and symbolic means of rejecting the definition of the real that is imposed on them through logical structures reproducing the social structures (i.e. the state of the power relations) and to lift the (institutionalized or internalized) censorships which it implies” (p. 168). According to Bourdieu (1977), dominant groups of society, when they feel threatened, impose a censorship through an orthodox discourse that establishes the “official way of speaking and thinking the world”, and an overt opposition “between ‘right’ opinion and ‘left’ or ‘wrong’ opinion” (p. 170), which is a strategy for limiting the universe of possible discourses and narratives.
Thus, to question doxa is an act of heresy, “for it is to question the very basis on which not just particular practices or dispositions ultimately rest, but on which the very system that is the basis of all practices in a habitus ultimately rests” (Chopra, 2003, p. 426). Doxa is a space of presuppositions, the taken-for-granted, the unconscious, the untheorized, and liberal, radical, conservative or orthodox thought developed within doxa does not challenge it (Chopra, 2003). However, as noted above, what is doxa for people of one habitus need not necessarily be doxa for the inhabitants of another habitus as a result of the different structures that constitute a particular type of environment which produce habitus (Bourdieu, 1977). Notwithstanding, what if there is the same agency that shapes these habitus through the creation of social structures across the breadth of a society? If so, each habitus would be embedded by the same discourse of what counts as doxa, a paradigm and tool for shaping habitus and creating structures.

For Bourdieu (2000), this agency with the capacity of creating social structures and shaping habitus that will impose doxa as the undisputable truth is the State. As Bourdieu (1998c) argues:

The construction of the state is accompanied by the construction of a sort of common historical transcendental immanent to all its subjects. Through the framing it imposes upon practice, the state establishes and inculcates common forms and categories of perception and appreciation, social frameworks of perceptions, of understandings or of memory, in short state forms of classification. It thereby creates the conditions for a kind of immediate orchestration of habituses which is the foundation of consensus over this set of shared evidences constitutive of (national) common sense. (p. 54)
According to Bourdieu (2000), the State holds a ‘metacapital’ (sum of different capitals) that enables it “to exercise power over the different fields and over the different particular species of capital, and especially over the rates of conversion between them” (pp. 40-41). Regarding the concept of field, it is understood as how a social space in society functions and is composed, and it is opposed to Bourdieu’s theorization of the habitus. Thus, the social space can be conformed of different fields, corresponding to different spheres of activity and practice, such as the cultural, economic, social, and political.

When it comes to the cultural field, each group brings its own set of cultural practices into the field. However, “the criteria for what counts as culture is decreed by the dominant class in that field, which is the class that possesses the most cultural capital, and whose interest that particular structure of the field serves” (Chopra, 2003, p. 427). Thus, the struggle of any group for improving the position within the system and increasing power will reinforce the structure that serves the interests of the dominant class (Chopra, 2003). In other words, the struggle is not just about increasing the capital of non-hegemonic groups but to redefine the terms of the conversation to challenge doxa.

At the level of field, what constitutes doxa is the nomos, a ‘fundamental law’ that limits what can be thought within the field (Bourdieu, 2000). Moreover, nomos is the regulative principle that orders the functioning of a field, and it is a view historically shaped that reflects the interests of the groups in dominant positions in a field. The cultural field is not only about struggling to increase the amount of capital the different groups possess, but also to struggle for which criteria will define what is considered genuine cultural capital, and for the right to define that nomos (Bourdieu, 2000). In essence, the assumption that all participants in a field share is that of increasing their capital through exchange, negotiation or struggle. Notwithstanding, to participate in this
game is contributing in an unconscious way to reaffirm “the structure of the field, that is, the reaffirmation of those practices that serve a dominant class as the most authentic incarnation of that sphere of social activity” (p. 428). Therefore, it is not enough about struggle within the field, it is challenging doxa and the nomos of the field. It is not about getting a bigger piece of the cake, it is about changing the cake.

For Bourdieu (1977), “what goes without saying and what cannot be said for lack of an available discourse, represents the dividing-line between the most radical form of misrecognition and the awakening of political consciousness” (p. 170). Thus, the space of doxa must be challenged and broadened through new discourses, narratives, and frameworks which will say what until then cannot be said within a narrower and exclusive doxa. It is Marx’s equation that language is both real and practical consciousness, Weber’s Ausseralltäglichkeit, as an extraordinary discourse in times of crisis that is connected with charisma, or Sartre’s expression about ‘Words wreck havoc,’ when a name for what was nameless has been found (Bourdieu, 1977). In essence, any language that can command attention is an ‘authorized language,’ invested with the authority of a group, the things it designates are not simply expressed but also authorized and legitimated. By extension, what is applied in terms of language can also be applied for discourses, narratives, and worldviews; and those that do not fit within the space of orthodoxy-heterodoxy are not considered legitimate and are labelled as heretic. Thus, a group has power when it has “the capacity to objectify unformulated experiences, to make them public – a step on the road to officialization and legitimation – and, when the occasion arises, to manifest and reinforce their concordance” (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 170).

There is, therefore, a “dialectical relationship between authorized, authorizing language and the group which authorizes it and acts on its authority” (p. 171).
One example of imposing doxa was with Modernity and its darker side, colonialism, when hegemonic groups imposed a hegemonic discourse through a process of Eurocentric leadership that was presented as a self-evident truth about the human and social order and which was and still is undisputable. According to Bourdieu (1998a), doxa is “what gives the dominant discourse its strength” (p. 29), and today it is recreated through partisan groups of academics, media, businessmen, and others who spread ideas that reinforce and contribute to the acceptance of the propositions of a system which is seen as an inexorable truth about the social world (Bourdieu, 1998a). Within globalization and the society of information, “to name things is to bring them into existence” (Melucci, 1995b, p. 296). Thus, there is power in naming because “it is language that meets the challenge of meaning or its reduction to signs. It is through language that, today, even nature can be named or erased” (p. 296).

In addition, going from language and naming to dialogue means to transition to “the encounter between men⁵, mediated by the world, in order to name the world” (Freire, 2012, p. 88). As Freire (2012) states, this dialogue is not possible “between those who want to name the world and those who do not wish this naming – between those who deny others the right to speak their word and those whose right to speak has been denied them” (p. 88). As a result of this impossibility, the dominated must claim the right to name the world because in doing so they will start to transform it. This is a critical intercultural leadership process which is not thought to bring to the dominated “a message of ‘salvation,’ but in order to come to know through dialogue with them both their

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⁵ Personally, I would prefer to use the word ‘human’ but Freire uses ‘men’ when he refers to humanity.
objective situation – the various levels of perception of themselves and of the world in which and with which they exist” (Freire, 2012, p. 95).

**Leadership: A Process Toward Oppression or Emancipation**

Leadership can be interpreted as transformation (Burns, 1978), mobilization of people (Heifetz & Sinder, 1988), and “the process by which ‘social order’ is constructed and changed” (Hosking & Morley, 1988, p. 90). In terms of creating and/or transforming a social order, Bourdieu (1989) argues that “to change the world, one has to change the ways of world-making, that is, the vision of the world and the practical operations by which groups are produced and reproduced” (p. 23). However, for any social group, the idea of change and transformation produces anxiety; thus, to gain support for ‘world-making’ it is necessary to unfold a leadership process that develops a collective framework, a vision which gives stability, and a collective action that creates structures and institutions that provide sustainability to this social order.

Moreover, for the implementation of these frameworks that transform, mobilize and create new social orders to be successful, they need to make sense and be meaningful for the people involved in the process of leadership. According to Luhmann (1995), the essence of any social system is its specific mode of meaning creation, and it is not possible to articulate any social configuration without meaning production. “Meaning-making enables organizational members to work together towards a common interpretation of reality. Without such shared understanding, organizational activity lacks coherence and common direction” (Ladkin, 2010, p. 102). For Drath and Palus (1994), leadership is a social process where people of a community of practice are interacting and making sense of the world through the creation of frameworks within which their actions
have meaning according to their differing cultural approaches. Moreover, for a process of ‘world-making’ focused on framing and action to become a leadership process, gaining consensus and commitment is central. When there is no consensus and commitment there is no leadership. However, consensus and commitment can be ‘offered’ because the leader has manipulated the supporters who believe the framework provided and the social order that results from that vision and discourse is the best suited for them even if this framework limits and constrains their capabilities and potential as human beings. Thus, this is the measure to decide when leadership is manipulative or not, when the supporters can develop their capabilities and potential within a social order and they are not limited or constrained, for example, because of lack of money, the color of their skin, their gender, and so on. As noted in chapter one, and I will go in depth in this chapter, concepts such as ‘spontaneous’ consent (Gramsci, 1995), ‘one-dimensional man’ (Marcuse, 1991) or ‘symbolic violence’ (Bourdieu, 1991) can explain the commitment and consensus of supporters while being manipulated by their leaders. Notwithstanding, I consider that, even when there is manipulation to gain consensus and commitment, the phenomenon of leadership is present. In other words, leadership can be a process toward oppression or emancipation.

According to Ladkin (2010), “Meaning-making and its alignment is facilitated by ongoing dialogue and discussion in which those involved disclose their intentionalities, perspectives and emotional responses around the situation in question” (pp. 124-125). Moreover, since in a critical intercultural leadership process there are individuals and groups engaged in the conversation from different cultural perspectives, translation of meaning to articulate frameworks with the aim of creating and changing a social order is central. According to Ladkin (2010), “A hermeneutic rendering suggests that once the
overarching purpose is identified and articulated; gathering the individuals, providing the space and facilitating translating across discourses are key tasks for those taking up the leader role” (p. 125). This process will be central to move from meaning-making to action, and more specifically, from critical consciousness to ethnogenesis.

However, in any relational process there are asymmetries of power that, when excessively high, and even having the ‘spontaneous’ consent of the people, result in a social order of domination and oppression among human beings. During Modernity, a Colonial Matrix of Power was imposed and is still the mental framework of making sense and meaning of the world, legitimizing inequities such as racism, sexism, classism, and the Western world culture’s superiority (Quijano, 2000). Thus, sense-making is political because meaning is political (Fairclough, 1992) and in any relationship where power is involved resistance emerges (Foucault, 1995). In other words, the Eurocentric leadership process imposed since the sixteenth century through Modernity and colonialism generated the appearance of other leadership processes of cultural resistance that started to deconstruct the internalization of that system of domination and oppression while creating a more holistic and inclusive framework for world-making.

In the following sections, an introduction to relational sociology will be followed by a chronological description of the evolution of leadership theory, and then some critiques from a critical leadership studies perspective. I will conclude by presenting the perspective used for this research: Leadership as a relational process for world-making.

**Relational sociology.** According to Emirbayer (1997), “The key question confronting sociologists in the present day is not ‘material versus ideal,’ ‘structure versus agency,’ ‘individual versus society,’ or any of the other dualisms so often noted; rather, it is the choice between substantialism and relationalism” (p. 282). Most of the current
approaches in sociology and other disciplines have as their point of departure the notion that units of inquiry are constituted by a substance (things, beings, or essences) (Emirbayer, 1997). For Elias (1978), this ‘substantialist’ way of thinking is the result of grammatical patterns that configure Western languages. Thus, our languages only depict constant movement or change using verbs and after implying that there is an isolated object resting first and then starts a movement. For example, the idea of a river flowing or the wind blowing assumes that both concepts are a thing at rest at a given point in time (Elias, 1978). In essence, what we do with our languages is to reduce processes of flow and change to static conditions. However, opposed to the different existing varieties of substantialism, there is the perspective of transaction proposed by Dewey and Bentley (1949) that takes place when systems that describe and name are implemented “to deal with aspects and phases of action, without final attribution to ‘elements’ or other presumptively detachable or independent ‘entities,’ ‘essences,’ or ‘realities,’ and without isolation of presumptively detachable ‘relations’ from such detachable ‘elements’ ” (p. 108). This is a relational perspective where the meaning of the different units involved in the transaction is the result of the roles they play within the space for the transaction. This “dynamic, unfolding process, becomes the primary unit of analysis rather than the constituent elements themselves” (Emirbayer, 1997, p. 287).

Individual persons, moreover, cannot be separated from the transactional spaces within which they act. For example, when Marx depicts the concept of capital, he affirms that “capital is not a thing, but a social relation between persons which is mediated through things” (Marx 1977, p. 932). Therefore, the idea of agency is not a property that acts on passive substances (individuals or groups) but an inseparable element from the fluxes and dynamics that are constantly occurring within the fields/spaces of interactions.
among people (Emirbayer, 1997). According to Bourdieu and Wacquant (1996), “We may think of a field as a space within which an effect of field is exercised. . . . The limits of the field are situated at the point where the effects of the field cease” (p. 100).

Regarding leadership studies, the same substantialist approaches are reproduced at both an individual and external level. Thus, the focus on leaders and followers as separated essences with an agency that is also separated from the field of interactions is not acknowledging that, same as consciousness is consciousness of something (Husserl, 1960), agency is “agency toward something” (Emirbayer, 1997, p. 294). In other words, the leadership discipline needs to acknowledge that the phenomenon of leadership is broad and holistic because while at an internal level the agency is toward persons, places, or meanings, at an external level it would be toward culture or structures, and all of them within fields of constant interactions, changes, and struggles.

**Evolution of leadership theory.** According to Horner (1997), “In some cases, leadership has been described as a process, but most theories and research on leadership look at a person to gain understanding” (p. 270). Thus, leadership has been typically defined by the traits, qualities, and behaviors of a leader, and more recently by relations of power and influence, and the importance of context: cognitive and situational theories, and cultural and symbolic approaches.

The first trend of leadership studies was centered in identifying which internal qualities great leaders had with the aim of recognizing them in future leaders (Bernard, 1926). Thus, the focus of research was on personality, and physical and mental characteristics. For example, one focus has been that leadership is ‘reserved’ to only a few privileged individuals who possess a set of innate traits which cannot be developed (Galton, 1869). Trait leadership, on the other hand, is understood as patterns of personal
characteristics that make leaders to be consistently effective across different groups and organizations (Zaccaro, Kemp, & Bader, 2004).

A second major approach was to study what great leaders do in an attempt to train their behavior (Halpin & Winer, 1957). Although Stogdill (1948) and Mann (1959) found similar traits across a number of studies they undertook, there was evidence suggesting that leaders in one situation may not necessarily be leaders in another. Thus, the emphasis of leadership studies shifted away from leaders’ traits to behaviors and new research on behavior came up such as Blake and Mouton’s (1964) recognized model of five different leadership styles, centered on the concern that leaders have for people and for achieving their purposes. As a result of the behavioral approach, the idea of ‘the leader born’ was substituted by ‘the leader can be made’ which contributed to developing leadership methods to teach employees in different organizations how to learn to be a great leader (Saal & Knight, 1988).

A third approach that emerged was the research interested not only in traits, qualities and behaviors of the leaders, but also in theories of power and influence that considered “leadership in terms of the source and amount of power available to leaders and the manner in which leaders exercise that power over followers through either unilateral or reciprocal interactions” (Bensimon, Birnbaum, & Neuman, 1989, p. 7). In 1959, French and Raven developed a model which includes five bases of power – reward, coercion, legitimate, expert, and referent – to which Raven added informational power as a new base of power in 1965, and which is a central study in terms of power and influence (Raven, 1992). From here, additional leadership theories have emerged such as transactional leadership, which uses the position of power of the leader to get followers to accomplish tasks (Burns, 1978; Bass, 1985), or transformational theories, which are
focused on motivating followers by satisfying their needs and engaging them in the processes of work (Burns, 1978; Bass, 1985).

Under the category of power and influence emerged the connection between leadership and motivation, wherein leaders have to create “the right environment, one in which people want to be involved and feel committed to their work” (Horner, 1997, p. 273). In essence, this perspective puts the emphasis on the people being led and not the leader, even if the leader continues at the center of the research. However, even if motivation theories are thought to control the employees from a hierarchical perspective where the leader is at the top, this approach opens in an indirect way the inclusion of another actor within the leadership studies, the follower, along with the environment the leader creates and the culture where all the relations are embedded.

A fourth leadership approach put the focus on how the situation, the context, the task, and environment could affect the leader’s decision. Situational and contingency theories state that what leaders do depends upon characteristics of the particular situation and context within which they are acting (Hemphill, 1949). Thus, leadership scholars started to consider the possibility that leadership could be different according to every situation (Saal & Knight, 1988), which paved the way for more realistic and complex views of the phenomenon of leadership that started to go beyond the figure of the leader and the follower.

With a broader perspective of studying leadership, culture came later to the equation with cultural and symbolic approaches. Thus, if leaders want to be effective, they need to understand the culture of their organizations and in particular how culture evolves and changes to adapt to external factors (Schein, 2010). According to Schein (2010), “Culture is both a ‘here and now’ dynamic phenomenon and a coercive
background structure that influences us in multiple ways. Culture is constantly reenacted and created by our interactions with others and shaped by our own behavior” (p. 3).

Other perspectives such as the one proposed by Manz and Sims (1989) started to focus on self-leadership within each individual conceptualizing leadership as a process in which everyone involved in the leadership phenomenon participates, or Gardner’s (1990) definition of leadership as “the accomplishment of group purpose, which is furthered not only by effective leaders but also by innovators, entrepreneurs, and thinkers; by the availability of resources; by questions of value and social cohesion” (p. 38). Thus, leadership was thought as a more holistic phenomenon involving a group, a purpose, leaders, innovators and thinkers, taking away the idea of leadership as an only person, a leader. Leadership may be rotated among the members of an organization in a formal or informal way, each person may hold leadership responsibility for specific tasks at work, or informal leaders can emerge within the organization (Wilson, George, & Wellins, 1994). Gradually, leadership theories such as contingency, cultural, or power and influence theories started to lay “the groundwork for examining leadership as a process, taking the emphasis away from an individual” (Horner, 1997, p. 278) because “the focus of leadership research cannot be a specific person, even if that person is designated as the team leader, if a comprehensive understanding of the leadership process is expected” (p. 280).

**Dualisms, complexity, and critical leadership studies.** According to Harter (2006), when it comes to leadership studies “dualisms pop up everywhere” (p. 90). Thus, we have dualisms such as: leadership/management; leaders/followers; self/contexts; born/made leaders; task/people orientation; transactional/transformational; organic/mechanistic; or autocratic/participative, to name a few examples. This dualist
view is prevalent in mainstream leadership research when it comes to traits, styles, contingency theories, path-goal, charisma, and so on, “where leaders’ personas and practices have tended to be privileged and psychological perspectives and positivist methodologies predominate” (Collison, 2014, p. 39). However, a dualist leadership perspective can have very negative effects on the leadership field because dualism tends to over-simplify “the complex, inter-connected, and shifting relationships that characterize leadership dynamics. It emphasizes differences by making excessive separations between distinctions and treating these as immutable polarities” (Collison, 2014, p. 39). Moreover, from a critical perspective, dualism also contributes to increase asymmetries of power when privileging, marginalizing and excluding and as a consequence, “important issues, particularly around power, ambiguity, tension, paradox, and contradiction tend to disappear from view” (Collison, 2014, p. 39).

Particularly in the United States, positivist approaches represent the dominant perspective (Martin & Collinson, 2002) and critical visions “may decide to work ‘within’ or ‘alongside’ the mainstream functionalist and positivist perspectives rather than try to engage in thoroughgoing critique” (Collison, 2014, p. 46). Notwithstanding, there are more and more leadership scholars around the world interested in the tensions, paradoxes, and contradictions that the phenomenon of leadership produces, and new research on leadership effectiveness suggests that “leadership effectiveness is more closely associated with versatile, agile and ambidextrous practices that require a capacity to deal with uncertainty, unpredictability, paradox, simultaneity, and ambiguity in more subtle ways” (Collison, 2014, p. 43). Thus, Storey and Salaman (2009) recommend leaders embrace these tensions and contradictions and advocate for organizational systems that “thrive on paradox” because that is the “the essence of leadership” (p. 22).
Dualism is not exclusive of leadership studies, however. Social theory is embedded with binaries between subject and object, individual and society, or action and structure (Collins, 2014), same as organizational theory and dualisms such as centralized and decentralized, differentiation and integration, formal and informal, or change and stability (Dale, 2001). Dualism is very connected with Modernity and its frame for reason and practice which is based on opposition in general and dichotomy in particular. According to Bauman (1991), “Intellectual visions that turn out tree-like images of progressive bifurcation reflect and inform the administrative practice of splitting and separation” (p. 14). For the ‘modern’ human being ambiguity means chaos and anarchy and the new framework of Modernity seeks for stability and order through binary classifications. However, this project of Modernity is unachievable because ambiguity will always emerge producing more ambiguity that could not be classified (Bauman, 1991).

Therefore, to overcome dualism and embrace complexity, critical leadership studies (CLS) offers an approach to better understand the phenomenon of leadership from a more holistic and comprehensive manner. Critical leadership studies is a growing area of research which views power as key to leadership dynamics (Alvesson & Spicer, 2012). Critical perspectives “focus on the situated power relations and identity dynamics through which leadership discursive practices are socially constructed, frequently rationalized, sometimes resisted, and occasionally transformed” (Collison, 2014, p. 37). Moreover, CLS also recognizes that, besides positional leaders in positions of formal authority, leaders can emerge in an informal way in subordinated positions, as well as in oppositional organizations (Knowles, 2007) or revolutionary social movements (Rejai, 1979).
In the following sections, I will focus on the main two perspectives that I used for this study in terms of leadership: Cultural and symbolic leadership and leadership as a process from a perspective of CLS. I used a cultural and symbolic approach focused on how systems of shared beliefs and values that give meaning to organizational life are maintained, reinterpreted, or changed. However, this perspective is still very centered on the role of leaders, and even if I consider this idea very important due to the privileged position of authority and power that leaders have to implement their vision or framework, my research was not concerned uniquely about the role of leaders but more specifically about the constant flux of interactions and changes between different members of the organization and understanding leadership as a process that includes leaders, supporters, environment, culture, context, and purpose to be achieved. Thus, I followed the three main principles of CLS: (1) Supporters’ agency, expertise, and potential for resistance; (2) the fact that leadership dynamics can create unexpected and contradictory consequences beyond leader’s understanding or anticipation; and (3) the interconnection and complexity of leadership which cannot be reduced to a dualism between two static subjects (Collison, 2014).

**Leadership and the cultural and symbolic approach.** According to De Giosa (2009), cultural and symbolic approaches “focus on what culture actually does, by privileging once more an analysis of the processes rather than thinking of culture as an entity and focusing on a description of its structures” (p. 172). In terms of leadership, this perspective is centered on leaders within an organization because it is understood that they have the strongest influence on the organizational culture as a result of their position of authority and power. Thus, they see leadership and organizational culture as ‘management of culture’ in organizations, “because leadership organizes its contents and
manages its modes of construction” (De Giosa, 2009, p. 172). From this perspective, organizational culture and leadership are the two sides of a coin, and the focus is on the leaders because they play “the role of leading actor in this process, the point of reference of the social and organizational set-up” (p. 172). For example, Weick (1995) argues that a true leader must act as an evangelist, a person who identifies and points out the meanings of things to the other members of an organization or community. Thus, to have an impact to impose or facilitate this vision or framework to the other members of the organization, power is a central element.

De Giosa (2009) states that power within organizations “means the ability of a subject to influence others’ behaviours within social relationships” (p. 176). Thus, power expresses a relation, but within an organization or society can also represent an objective position as a result of an organizational structure (De Giosa, 2009). This position is more related with the concept of ‘authority’ which is defined as “the power to make decisions which guide the actions of another. It is a relation between two individuals: one ‘superior,’ the other ‘subordinate’” (Simon, 1945, p. 179). Thus, in each organization, it is authority that shapes its formal structure (De Giosa, 2009) and a person without a recognized formal status or position will have more difficulties and less impact to convince the other members of the organization about his or her vision and framework (Simon, 1945). As a result of these asymmetries of power to impact and to implement a vision or framework, individuals in leadership positions within an organization are an important unit of inquiry to understand the organizational culture. However, leadership is a broader phenomenon that goes beyond leadership positions because “The formal scheme of an organization will always be different from the way in which the organization itself operates, that is, through a number of interpersonal relations, which are
absent from a formal scheme” (De Giosa, 2009, p. 180). In other words, while it is central to focus on individuals in leadership positions because they have more power and impact to implement their frameworks and visions, it is also key to consider the informal aspect of organizations which is related with interpersonal relations and strongly influence the culture of an organization. Therefore, the interest is not only focused on the leader but on the relationships within the organization and also with external actors that eventually configure the culture of the organization. In summary, my study has taken into account several formal or positional leaders within an organization (and also supporters), but the center of the research is the process that contributes to make sense and meaning of reality with the aim of, as Pfeffer (1981a) states, constructing and conserving systems of meanings, paradigms, languages and common cultures.

**The ontological challenge of leadership and processes.** The assumption that leaders have essential traits and abilities that can be measured and trained explains the individualistic approach from a psychological perspective that is often at the origin of leadership theories and research (Wood, 2005). Thus, the assumption around leadership in general and leaders in particular “presupposes only certain individuals can be leaders, only certain leaders are appropriate for certain contingencies, or only certain individuals have sufficient flexibility in their leadership styles to match the needs of a number of different situations” (Wood, 2005, p. 1102). Moreover, there is the idea that leaders are the only ones to create meaning and make sense of reality (Hosking, 1988) and to inspire and transform people and organizations (Maccoby, 2000). However, this is a very limited and simplistic approach to the study of a broad phenomenon such as leadership, and with my research I consider leadership is best understood as a process than a property or substance.
From a perspective of process, each element can be understood as permeable and combines with another element without dissolving into independent parts, thus, “the actual character of leadership extends into a portion of another as a relation or continuity of flow rather than a solid state” (Wood, 2005, p. 1103). Leaders are the result of the past events, relations, and actions but at the same time are in a process of becoming different persons because they are constantly experiencing new events, encounters with other people, and acting through daily practices.

**Process studies.** Process metaphysics is a distinctive branch of philosophical tradition opposed to a dominant Western metaphysic that affirms the nature of reality is “here, now, immediate, and discrete” (Whitehead, 1967b, p. 180). Thus, process metaphysics understands the nature of reality as a process and argues that “processes rather than things best represent the phenomenon that we encounter in the natural world about us” (Rescher, 1996, p. 2). It is focused on becoming instead of being (Chia, 1996), because “process is the concrete reality of things” (Griffin, 1986, p. 6).

When it comes to leadership, concepts such as leaders, followers and organizations are “simple appearances we employ to give substantiality to our experience, but under whose supposed ‘naturalness’ the fundamentally processual nature of the real is neglected” (Wood, 2005, p. 1104). Notwithstanding, this is the dominant approach used currently that separates the individual actor from the ‘different’ rest, disregarding the significance of the internal diversity, or ‘milieu’ of individuals (Deleuze, 1994, p. 211). Whitehead (1967a), defines this perspective as ‘the fallacy of misplaced concreteness,’ which consists in mistaking abstract conceptualizations for concrete things without considering past, present, and future events.
The key issue in process studies is how an actor “condenses within itself . . . a multitude of social dimensions and meanings” (Cooper, 1983, p. 204), because leadership is not situated in “the autonomous, self-determining individual with a secure unitary identity [at] the centre of the social universe” (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000, p. 98). Therefore, leadership is understood as a “systematic complex of mutual relatedness” (Whitehead, 1967a, p. 161) where conceptual interpretations are always “an incompletion in the process of production” (Whitehead, 1978, p. 327). According to Cooper (1983), leadership is “the point of difference” (p. 204), and “is already a ‘complete’ relation, where the relation is the thing itself and each part necessarily refers to another, but without ‘completion’ in a straightforward way” (Wood, 2005, 1105). In other words, the phenomenon of leadership “is the unlocalizable ‘in’ of the ‘between’ of each, a freely interpenetrating process, whose ‘identity’ is consistently self-differing” (Wood, 2005, p. 1105).

Leadership focus misplaced. According to Smircich and Morgan (1982), people look to leaders to create a framework for defining their reality. Notwithstanding, what is seen as real is normally the result of power relations (Wood, 2005). Whitehead (1967a) argues that there is a misperception of reality that makes us believe there exists an order of ‘completed’ things and individuals can comprehend it without realizing that they are social first. Thus, concepts connected with leadership such as “charisma, effectiveness, vision, and transformation only appear as personal qualities because we have mistaken our abstraction of them for concrete reality” (Wood, 2005, 1106). In other words, when we identify a leader or we identify ourselves with a leader, it is through a process of abstraction that emerges from an indeterminate ultimate reality (Griffin, 1986), but is not the essence of a person herself (Wood, 2005). This wrong perspective results in
understanding leadership as the person at the top of a hierarchy (Barker, 2001), or as a relation between things where one thing aspires to be like the other (Wood, 2005). In essence, “The origin of individuality, therefore, is thought to be either an idealized social actor exercising influence on external circumstances, or a discrete relation capable of reconciling singular terms” (Wood, 2005, p. 1107). As Wood (2005) states, mainstream leadership situates the leader at the center and “forgets this individual is already a synthesis of differences, not linked through some principle of identity, but through irreducibly heterogeneous processes, which surround and suffice it” (p. 1107).

New leadership perspectives have started to put the focus on leadership as a process of individuation rather than as a static individual, understanding leadership as a process of transformation and change (Barker, 2001). Simondon (1992) argues that “. . . to grasp firmly the nature of individuation, we must consider the being not as a substance, or matter, or form, but as a tautly extended and supersaturated system” (p. 301). Thus, the process of individuation is understood “as something to be explained, rather than as something in which the explanation is to be found” (Simondon, 1992, p. 299).

According to Tsoukas and Chia (2002), these contributions to the idea of leadership as a process have been central to advancing this topic. However, they are only going to be fully developed “if their calls for a greater attention to process lead to a consistent reversal of the ontological priority” (p. 570). Thus, Hosking (2001) describes the constant connections that construct social realities and refuses to reproduce taken-for-granted elements about processes and relations, and Barker (2001) criticizes the assumptions that an individual person can explain so complex and fluid a concept as leadership. Leadership is “the complex and continuous relationships of people and institutions” and are these relationships that need to be the center of leadership studies
(Barker, 2001, p. 483). Leadership can be defined as a “dissipative system . . . continually renewing itself within a dynamic context” (p. 487). Then, what we are experiencing is in constant transformation within a system composed of microsystems.

**Leadership refocused: A process of world-making.** As noted at the beginning of this section of leadership theory and summarized in Figure 2, I understand leadership as a collective process of world-making with both leaders and supporters as active actors. This process seeks for stability and is exercised by leaders and supporters who, although have the agency to shape and influence, are also influenced by the environment, the culture, the context, and the purpose to be achieved, which is based on the combination of framing and action, and requires consensus and commitment to emerge.

Leadership takes place between people’s relationships with other peoples and with institutions (Barker, 2001), and to make sense and meaning of a complex and uncertain world, emerges in the transaction between leaders and supporters to create frameworks seeking for social stability on the one side, and leaders and supporters with the structures and institutions they create looking for sustainability on the other.

Describing the configuration of a social order, Elias (2000) states

This basic tissue resulting from many single plans and actions of men can give rise to changes and patterns that no individual person has planned or created. From this interdependence of people arises an order *sui generis*, an order more compelling and stronger than the will and reason of the individual people composing it. It is the order of interweaving human impulses and strivings, the social order, which determines the course of historical change; it underlies the civilizing process. (p. 366)
Therefore, what leaders and supporters would do is to impulse a trend, to point out a direction articulating frameworks that provide stability with the aim of creating a social order, because as Elias (2000) argues, the relations between individuals with their actions, plans, and purposes, cannot be foreseen just for the reason that multiple combinations cannot be calculated.

![Diagram of the relationship between leaders, supporters, culture, resistance/power, and environment showing the process of framing and action for world-making.]

Consensus and commitment for a common purpose and meaning: To build and change a social order (Without consensus and commitment there are no supporters therefore there are not leaders and the phenomenon of leadership as a process cannot emerge, unfold, nor develop).

**Figure 2.** Leadership as a process: Framing and action for world-making

When it comes to the concept of leaders, Hosking (1988) defines them as “those who consistently make effective contributions to social order” (p. 153). However, as Rost (1993) argues, the contributions or changes of social order are just ‘intended’ because the changes may take place in the future or not take place at all although the leadership...
phenomenon had emerged and unfolded. According to Stacey (2012), the existing tools and techniques for leaders and managers based on “instrumental rationality” are useless because they “cannot enable leaders and managers to choose the future of their organizations; nor can they enable leaders and managers to control the process of realizing whatever choices they make” (p. 122). Notwithstanding, some individuals, regardless of their position or power, contribute to build and change the social order and gain consensus and commitment of other individuals. Those individuals who receive the support become leaders and those who gave their support become supporters, configuring what is described as the phenomenon of leadership in this study. In other words, leaders and supporters are two sides of the same coin: there are no leaders without supporters and there are no supporters without leaders.

In terms of supporters, they are the individuals who offer their consensus and commitment to the proposals of social order of other individuals who, in gaining support, become leaders. However, the relationship of leaders and supporters is very fluid because the leaders at any time can lose their support and therefore their condition of leaders, but also the supporters can seize the initiative and contribute to social order gaining consensus and support of leaders who, in becoming supporters, ‘transform’ the former supporters in leaders. Therefore, ‘leader’ and ‘supporter’ are not exclusive identities or identities that ‘kill’ each other and cannot coexist as Maalouf (2009) argues, and they can exist simultaneously at a given time regardless the position within an organization or community.

Notwithstanding, in this study I view leadership as a process that goes beyond leaders and supporters influencing each other, and there are other elements such as the environment, culture, context (where I include social structures and institutions), and the
purpose to be achieved, that also have influence in the process of leadership. All those elements are interconnected and it is not only in the ‘in between’ of the relationship between leaders and supporters where the phenomenon of leadership emerges (‘leadership moment’ according to Ladkin, 2010), but also in the ‘in between’ of the relations of leaders and followers with the rest of the elements (see Figure 2).

Since leaders and supporters have agency, leadership is exercised by actors through their relationships. However, it is necessary to deconstruct ‘heroic’ or ‘romantic’ views of leaders as powerful individuals who control the whole process (Meindl & Ehrlich, 1988; Stacey 2012). Within the process of leadership, leaders are not only influenced by the resistance of supporters who, at a given time, can withdraw their support and become leaders of another proposal when gaining consensus and support of other individuals who then will become supporters, but also for the multiple combinations of relationships and environmental and contextual events that leaders cannot control. Leaders have influence in the process of leadership and contribute to achieve a purpose, but they cannot control the whole process of leadership because the phenomenon of leadership is an extremely deep and complex process with many elements involved that cannot be controlled just influenced. However, to understand that ‘heroic’ and ‘glorious’ designs of leadership do not work “does not mean abandoning any idealistic concern with improving the human conditions of life. It simply means taking a humbler stance and working realistically in our own local interactions” (Stacey, 2012, p. 127) According to Hernes (2008), actors within a process “intervene on the assumption that something will become; they assume that there is something there to be reckoned with, and they assume that through organization something will be achieved in a tangible stable, state” (p. 128). Therefore, meaning and sense-making are essential in the process of leadership and when
analyzing leadership as a process to build and change the social order it is important to focus on leaders and supporters because both have agency and certain influence at giving some ‘order,’ ‘redirection,’ or ‘stabilization’ to the process, but it is central to consider how leadership unfolds considering the different elements that, although they can be influenced and shaped by leaders and supporters, they also have an influence upon them. This social order is basically constructed through two sub-processes that combined represent the process of leadership in this study: (1) Designing collective frameworks to make sense and meaning of the world and a particular social order; and (2) developing collective practices to produce and reproduce a particular social order.

**Frameworks to make sense/meaning of the world.** According to Drath and Palus (1994), “making sense is the process of arranging our understanding of experience so that we can know what has happened and what is happening, and so that we can predict what will happen; it is constructing knowledge of ourself and the world” (p. 2). Through a constructivist perspective, human beings create a coherence out of their experiences (Kegan, 1982; Piaget, 1954) and try to understand “using meaning-making structures to construct knowledge about experience so that one is able to interpret, anticipate, and plan” (Drath & Palus, 1994, p. 3).

To make sense of an experience, one creates a frame that explains the way the world is and helps the person to act and behave in the world (Bruner, 1986). It is a process of construction of reality developed at an internal level (Kegan, 1982) but also at a societal level when constructing experience together (Berger & Luckman, 1966) with the aim of communicating and organizing in groups to world-making. Instead of being told what to do, what people need are frameworks within which all their actions will make sense (Drath & Palus, 1994). As noted above, in a complex and uncertain world,
although leaders cannot control events nor the whole process of leadership, they do “the context under which events are seen if they recognize a framing opportunity” (Fairhurst, 2011, p. 2). In addition, cultural frames and framing have material consequences because it is through them that “we create the realities to which we must then respond” (Fairhurst, 2011, p. 27), and from where we create social structures and institutions to produce and reproduce a specific social order.

According to Kegan (1982), people commit to other people, ideas, values, or goals, and in a more general level, to ways of being, acting, and understanding the world. This social and collective level of meaning-making is the culture where we are embedded when we are born (Goodman, 1978) and which limits and constrains what can be said or thought. From this perspective, the most general tool in a society to make meaning is culture and processes of leadership “are connected to the larger cultural frame within which they occur—culture-building is the primary process of meaningmaking in collective experience and thus the primary leadership process” (Drath & Palus, 1994, p. 10).

**Actions to create and transform the social order.** As noted before, leadership is transformation (Burns, 1978), mobilization of people (Heifetz & Sinder, 1988), the construction and change of a social order (Hosking & Morley, 1988). In essence, leadership is about sense-making (Weick, 1995; Pye, 2005) with the purpose of enabling people to act, to transform, and more specifically in this study, to struggle to deconstruct social structures of domination and oppression and to reconstruct new structures for liberation and emancipation.

Melucci (1995a) argues that collective action is a social construction with purpose and meaning. This purpose and meaning emerges from framing to legitimate the actions
(Snow & Benford, 1992). However, framing is also defined throughout the course of collective action transforming elements of the dominant culture, bridging, amplifying, or transforming other frames (Snow, Rochford, Worden, & Benford, 1986). Therefore, framing influences action, but also action influences framing when preexisting beliefs or oppositional values that emerge during the struggle are incorporated within the frames of the groups struggling (Taylor & Whittier, 1995). There is an interconnection between framing and action (Snow & Benford, 1992) and both influence each other in creating a shared reality (Fairhurst, 2011), a new social order. Framing and action configure the process of world-making to transform society and are the glue that puts together and makes sense and meaning of the different elements involved in the leadership process: leaders, supporters, environment, culture, context, and purpose to be achieved.

**Culture, Resistance, Re-existence, and Emancipation**

As a result of the imposition of a space of what can be thought and said, and of what is legitimate and not, it is central to develop a critical consciousness that will articulate new frameworks of making sense and meaning from the dominated classes. Doxa is more than common belief and domination because it also has the potential to give rise to common action and liberation (Bourdieu & Eagleton, 1992). Therefore, it is key for the oppressed groups to understand doxa as a field for struggle and to seek broadening it with other worldviews and epistemologies going beyond the hegemonic narratives and discourses to create a new and more inclusive social order.

According to Freire (2013), in our postcolonial world the subaltern groups are dominated and manipulated by the force of the myths imposed by the hegemonic sectors of society. Thus, without even being aware, the oppressed relinquish their capacity for
choice and are expelled from the processes of decision-making. Moreover, the oppressed internalize the opinion the oppressors hold of them and eventually they become convinced of their own inferiority (Freire, 2012). As a result of this system of domination, the dominated remain unaware of the real causes of their condition and they just naturalize them and accept them as unavoidable (Freire, 2012).

Another element of control implemented during the last decades has consisted in changing the consciousness of the oppressed instead of transforming the situation which oppresses them. As Freire (2012) states, “for the more the oppressed can be led to adapt to that situation, the more easily can they be dominated” (p. 74). Thus, individualism and “the bourgeois appetite for personal success” have been key to dismantle ideas of solidarity in terms of class (Freire, 2012, pp. 149-150). It is a strategy of ‘divide and you will rule’ in order to preserve the status quo where the hegemonic groups of society “try to present themselves as saviors of the women and men they dehumanize and divide. This messianism, however, cannot conceal their true intention: to save themselves” (Freire, 2012, p. 145).

In the United States, the idea of social class disappeared in the 1980s as a sociopolitical category of the discourses of the Democratic Party (same happened in Europe with the social-democracy) as a result of embracing Neoliberalism. As Bourdieu (1998b) argues, “neo-classical economics recognizes only individuals, whether it is dealing with companies, trade unions or families” (p. 96). Thus, neoliberal ideology allowed a dehistoricized and desocialized political program “of methodical destruction of collectives” (Bourdieu, 1998b, p. 95-96).

As a consequence of the process of destroying collectives and class solidarity, policies of redistribution were abandoned and substituted with policies seeking to
integrate minorities and women in the political system struggling against discrimination (Navarro, 2016). These policies were quite successful in the 1990s but most of the people who benefited from them were people belonging to the upper-middle class and not to the majority of minority groups belonging to the working class (Navarro, 2016). Thus, the identity policies without class consciousness did not change the status quo of the hegemonic groups of the American society. As Winant (1995) states, “although somewhat attenuated since the 1960s with the rise of significant minority middle classes, dark skin still correlates with poverty. Class position is in many respects racially assigned in the U.S.” (p. 185). In other words, discrimination in the U.S. is a racial process that has class consequences (Winant, 1995).

According to Freire (2012), “since the unity of the oppressed involves solidarity among them, regardless of their exact status, this unity unquestionably requires class consciousness” (p. 174). In essence, no person can resist the oppression and domination if she does not trust that others are going to struggle with her (Federici, 2016). However, “consciousness of being an oppressed class must be preceded (or at least accompanied) by achieving consciousness of being oppressed individuals” (Freire, 2012, p. 174), thus, the subaltern need to “move from consciousness of themselves as oppressed individuals to the consciousness of an oppressed class” (p. 174).

As Freire (2013) argues:

Just as the prise de conscience cannot operate in isolated individuals, but through the relations of transformation they establish between themselves and the world, so also conscientization can only operate in this way. The prise de conscience, which is a human characteristic, results as we have seen, in a person’s coming face to face with the world and with concrete reality, which is presented as a
process of objectification. Any objectification implies a perception which is conditioned by the elements of its own reality. The prise de conscience exists on different levels. There is a magic level as well as a level in which the objectified fact fails to be apprehended in all its complexity.

If the prise de conscience goes beyond the mere apprehension of the presence of a fact, and paces it critically in the system of relationships within the totality in which it exists, it transcends itself, deepens, and becomes conscientization. This effort of the prise de conscience to transcend itself and achieve conscientization, which always requires one’s critical insertion in the reality which one begins to unveil, cannot, I must repeat, be individual but social. It is sufficient to know that conscientization does not take place in abstract beings in the air but in real men and women and in social structures, to understand that it cannot remain on the level of the individual. It would not be superfluous to repeat that conscientization, which can only be manifested in the concrete praxis (which can never be limited to the mere activity of the consciousness) is never neutral; in the same way, education can never be neutral. (pp. 130-131)

Today every movement “has some capacity to advance a particular agenda to protect certain interests and to veto certain threats. But no movement on its own has the potential to achieve the redistribution of wealth, power, and social priorities that would significantly improve the life chances of their constituents or sustain their deepest aspirations” (Flacks, 1995, p. 252). As a result of this void, a political party or inclusive social movement is needed to represent the common ground of demands for change and social justice as the “obvious framework for mobilizing the political resources and formulating the programmatic agenda for change” (p. 252). Thus, to initiate this project a
leadership process needs to emerge: a critical intercultural leadership process from critical consciousness that will articulate a more holistic and inclusive framework of world-making where different cultures are valued with less asymmetries of power and can fit.

**Critical Consciousness**

Culture can be understood as a system for domination but, when critical consciousness arises, culture can also be a system for liberation and emancipation. With critical consciousness, one focuses on achieving an in-depth understanding of the world, allowing for the perception and exposure of social and political contradictions of domination and oppression. In addition, critical consciousness represents “things and facts as they exist empirically, in their causal and circumstantial correlations” (Vieira Pinto, as cited in Freire, 2013, p. 41). Moreover, critical consciousness also includes taking action against the oppressive elements in one’s life that are illuminated by that understanding (Mustakova-Possardt, 2003).

According to Freire (2013), the oppressed internalizes the norms and behaviors of the oppressor and is fearful to eject that image because a struggle for freedom is required (Freire, 2012). Then, the only possibility to initiate the struggle is to develop a consciousness, a project that transcends itself, a method toward emancipation (Vieira Pinto, as cited in Freire, 2012). Therefore, culture becomes a field for struggle and is central to transform the world because a system of cultural domination and control involves a static perception of the world and the imposition of one worldview and one narrative upon the others.

**Awakening of critical consciousness.** The human being is a conscious body. As Freire (2013) argues:
His or her consciousness, with its ‘intentionality’ towards the world, is always consciousness of something. It is in a permanent state of moving towards reality. Hence the condition of the human being is to be in constant relationship to the world. In this relationship subjectivity, which takes its form in objectivity, combines with the latter to form a dialectical unity from which emerges knowledge closely linked with action. (p. 128)

This knowledge is the ‘logos,’ a critical knowledge that challenges doxa, the popular belief. Thus, some social groups begin to see themselves and their society from their own perspective and not from the perspective and the narratives of the oppressors, and they become aware of their own potentialities (Freire, 2013). “This is the point at which hopelessness begins to be replaced by hope. Thus, nascent hope coincides with an increasingly critical perception of the concrete conditions of reality” (Freire, 2013, p. 11).

At this moment, society is revealed as a construction, something unfinished, and not as something natural or that cannot be transformed. It becomes a challenge rather than a frustrating limitation. However, this “new, critical optimism requires a strong sense of social responsibility and of engagement in the task of transforming society” (p. 11).

The process of awakening critical consciousness has two distinct phases. In the first, the dominated unveil the system of domination and through the praxis commit themselves to transform it through their new framework of the world and ethics. In the second phase, and once the reality of domination has already been transformed, this process has to be reviewed constantly to avoid the dominated reproducing domination. In both phases, strong action is required to confront the system of domination, exclusion and control. “In the first stage this confrontation occurs through the change in the way the oppressed perceive the world of oppression; in the second stage, through the expulsion of
the myths created and developed in the old order, which like specters haunt the new structure emerging from the revolutionary transformation” (Freire, 2012, pp. 54-55).

Awakening critical consciousness is possible because the dehumanization suffered by the oppressed as a result of the violence of the oppressor, is not a given destiny but the result of an unjust order that also dehumanizes the oppressor (Freire, 2012). Thus, even if they do not always obtain it, the dominated always have the potentiality of developing critical consciousness. However, they “must not, in seeking to regain their humanity (which is a way to create it), become in turn oppressors of the oppressors, but rather restorers of the humanity of both” (Freire, 2012, p. 44). This is the task of the oppressed, to seek their liberation and the liberation of the oppressors, because “only power that springs from the weakness of the oppressed will be sufficiently strong to free both” (Freire, 2012, p. 44).

Today, the system of social exclusion and control is embedded in our minds and reaches consciousness to domesticate society. Thus, to confront this system one must acquire critical awareness of the domination and oppression through the struggle. In other words, a praxis consisting in reflection and action upon the world is needed if the goal is to transform it (Freire, 2012). According to Freire (2012), the first step of this process of raising critical consciousness is when the oppressed perceives the possibility of transforming the world because it supposes a motivating force for liberation. However, to be aware of the possibility of change is not enough and it is needed that the oppressed get involved in organizing the struggle to start believing in themselves. Awakening critical consciousness is a combination of intellectual discovery first, followed by action. Simply stated, the process to raise critical consciousness is a praxis that combines reflection and activism (Freire, 2012). This emancipatory and critical intercultural leadership that Freire
(2012) calls “revolutionary leadership” lies in dialogue, because “the conviction of the oppressed that they must fight for their liberation is not a gift bestowed by the revolutionary leadership, but the result of their own conscientização” (p. 49). Therefore, it is not a monologue, or a top-down process but a relational process of leadership from bottom-up that, in order to reach this conviction to transform the world needs the combination of reflection and action (Freire, 2012). As Freire (2012) argues, “while the conviction of the necessity for struggle (without which the struggle is unfeasible) is indispensable to the revolutionary leadership (indeed, it was this conviction which constituted that leadership), it is also necessary for the oppressed” (p. 67). In other words, a critical intercultural leadership process is carried out with the subaltern, and not for them, because as the result of not understanding consciousness as “an empty vessel to be filled, nor the use of banking methods of domination (propaganda, slogans – deposits) in the name of liberation” the dominated are subjects in the process of world-making (Freire, 2012, p. 79).

Consciousness does not precede the world but does not follow it either; to develop critical consciousness means “being conscious of, not only as intent on objects but as turned in upon itself in a Jasperian ‘split’ – consciousness of consciousness” (p. 79). Being conscious of their domination and oppression as a social construction, the dominated and the oppressed reject mythicizing reality, and through critical thinking start the task of demythologizing (Freire, 2012). In essence, the dominated start a process of deconstruction of narratives in order to be subjects of their own destiny and of social structures to take control of their reality. However, as Freire (2012) warns us, it is not enough with reflection on the system of domination and oppression where subaltern groups are considered objects how the oppressed become subjects, but at least they
become ‘Subjects in expectancy’ – “and expectancy which leads them to seek to solidify their new status” (Freire, 2012, pp. 130-131).

In terms of consciousness, there are different phases until achieving the state of critical consciousness. First is the phase of ‘semi-intransitivity of consciousness’ where people do not apprehend problems beyond their biological necessities. It is about surviving every day without a historical perspective. Thus, this phase is limited, because people are impermeable to challenges outside the phase of biological needs (Freire, 2013). However, in amplifying their capacity to perceive and answer questions related with their contexts, people improve their capacity to enter dialogue with others and with the world; this is the second phase, when consciousness becomes ‘transitive.’ In this phase, people are permeable, and they become historical beings concerned with problems beyond their biological necessities (Freire, 2013).

According to Freire (2013), within the second phase there is an initial state of ‘naïve transitivity,’ a state of consciousness that tends to over-simplify problems and gregariousness, have nostalgia for the past, and with a fragility of arguments prefer the practice of polemics and magical explanations rather than dialogue. These persons are “still almost part of a mass, in whom the developing capacity for dialogue is still fragile and capable of distortion. If this consciousness does progress to the stage of critical transitivity, it may be deflected by sectarian irrationality into fanaticism” (Freire, 2013, p. 14).

Finally, the third phase is the ‘critically transitive consciousness’ which is characterized by

Depth in the interpretation of problems; by the substitution of causal principles for magical explanations; by the testing of one’s ‘findings’ and by openness to
revision; by the attempt to avoid distortion when perceiving problems and to avoid preconceived notions when analyzing them; by refusing to transfer responsibility; by rejecting passive positions; by soundness of argumentation; by the practice of dialogue rather than polemics; by receptivity to the new for reasons beyond mere novelty and by the good sense not to reject the old just because it is old – by accepting what is valid in both old and new. (Freire, 2013, p. 15)

For example, while critical consciousness represents objects, facts, and their correlations as they exist empirically, naïve consciousness is superior to facts and understood according to interests. Magic consciousness, in contrast, is characterized by fatalism, the idea of a world that cannot be transformed and a destiny that cannot be resisted because it is unavoidable (Freire, 2013). In essence, “critical consciousness is integrated with reality; naïve consciousness superimposes itself on reality; and fanatical consciousness, whose pathological naïveté leads to the irrational, adapts to reality” (Freire, 2013, p. 42).

As a consequence of these different phases of consciousness, there are different actions. Thus, while critical understanding leads to critical action, magic or naïve understanding brings us to a magic or naïve response; therefore, to reach the critical consciousness one needs “an active, dialogical educational program concerned with social and political responsibility, and prepared to avoid the danger of massification” (Freire, 2013, p. 15).

Undertaking a process that implements dialogue and problem-posing will develop a critical attitude necessary to broaden doxa through the introduction of a different knowledge that goes beyond the narrative imposed by the hegemonic groups in society. “Problem-posing supersedes the old ‘magister dixit’ behind which those who regard themselves as the ‘proprietors,’ ‘administrators,’ or ‘bearers’ of knowledge attempt to hide themselves” (Freire, 2013, p. 111). Thus, the internalization and naturalization of
structures of domination and oppression will start to be deconstructed and a process of building new social structures aiming to create a new society will begin to unfold.

**Ethnogenesis**

According to Freire (2012), “to surmount the situation of oppression, people must first critically recognize its causes, so that through transforming action they can create a new situation, one which makes possible the pursuit of a fuller humanity” (p. 47). Thus, within the system of domination and oppression that represent the current postcolonial world where Western culture is presented as superior to the rest, it is not enough to ‘integrate’ the dominated into the system, it is necessary to organize and transform the system (Freire, 2012). In essence, against the internalization of oppressive structures of the social order that guide behaviors, dispositions, and choices, a process of ethnogenesis as a mechanism of defense against domination with the aim of deconstructing and reconstructing those oppressive structures needs to be unfolded.

The organization of this project of ethnogenesis by the oppressed needs a critical intercultural process of leadership because “either they must organize authentically for their liberation, or they will be manipulated by the elites. Authentic organization is obviously not going to be stimulated by the dominators; it is the task of the revolutionary leaders” (Freire, 2012, p. 148). It is a critically conscious organization, a critical intercultural leadership process that unfolds ethnogenesis to deconstruct internalized oppression and external structures of domination at the same time that reconstructs new structures for emancipation.

As Freire (2012) states:
Cultural conquest leads to the cultural inauthenticity of those who are invaded; they begin to respond to the values, the standards, and the goals of the invaders. In their passion to dominate, to mold others to their patterns and their way of life, the invaders desire to know how those they have invaded apprehend reality – but only so they can dominate the latter more effectively. In cultural invasion, it is essential that those who are invaded come to see their reality with the outlook of the invaders rather than their own; for the more they mimic the invaders, the more stable the position of the latter becomes. (p. 153)

In essence, the ‘invaded’ have become convinced of their inferiority and have internalized the oppression. For example, this is similar to the phenomenon of ‘learned helplessness’ which arises when prior learning in a situation that cannot be solved undermines motivation for future responses in a similar situation and distorts the ability to change the environment (Rabow, Berkman & Kessler, 1983). According to Hiroto and Seligman (1975), “learned helplessness is a trait-like system of expectancies that develops when responding is perceived to be futile” (p. 327). That is, dominated and oppressed groups of people consider that reality controls them and they cannot take control of their own reality; they cannot transform the world. In addition, they have recognized the superiority of the hegemonic groups in society, their values, ethics, and culture, and they want to be like them (Freire, 2012). As a consequence of this cultural invasion, the oppressed need to be aware of the necessity of transforming the world to build a fairer society, but also to recognize that along with a process of reconstruction another process of deconstruction of narratives, imaginaries, and social structures existing in the real world and in their minds, is also needed. In other words, doxa – the unquestionable orthodoxy that operates as the objective truth – influences the practices and perceptions of the State and social groups
(fields), and also the practices and perceptions of individuals (habitus). For Freire (2012), “to divide the oppressed, an ideology of oppression is indispensable. In contrast, achieving their unity requires a form of cultural action through which they come to know the why and how of their adhesion to reality – it requires de-ideologizing” (Freire, 2012, p. 173). It is the start of a process of ethnogenesis at an individual, organizational, and societal level.

Thus, to liberate themselves, take control of their own destiny, and to create their new reality, emergent ethnic social movements view culture as a political, economic, and epistemological manifestation which, through a process of ethnogenesis, will create a counter-hegemonic project with a different narrative and world view. These ethnic movements do not try to threaten the State or its sovereignty but to create political spaces within the State that allow people to local forms of sociopolitical organization (Hill, 1996). Ethnogenesis is about other worldviews, narratives, and frameworks, because “the power to control and define the historical past is perhaps the ultimate form of hegemony” (Hill, 1996, p. 16).

**Ethnogenesis studies.** Weber’s (1978) definition of ethnic identity is understood through group affinity centered on subjective beliefs of shared common ancestry that comes from “similarities of physical type or of customs or both” or “of memories of colonization and migration” (p. 389). Kohl (1998) describes as ‘ethnomorphosis’ the historical process of ethnicity as a process that goes from genesis, maintenance, and disappearance of an ethnic identity. A deeper analysis of ethnicity suggests three components: (1) The way insiders view membership; (2) the way outsiders relate to and interact with insiders; and (3) the way institutions define boundaries and classify people, how they use them, and what are the purposes behind them (Bourdieu, 1990b).
In terms of social relations, feelings of group membership arise with the awareness of subconscious practices that people have in common (Bentley, 1991). These shared practices arise from dispositions called habitus with which people identify because of the similarity to their own practices (Bourdieu, 1990b). When it comes to groups or social classes, “dispositions generate practices that in turn reinforce those same dispositions” (Hu, 2013, p. 374). Thus, people tend toward those who physically and in terms of conduct are similar, but at the same time avoid those who seem and act different (Weber, 1978). However, even if ethnic groups establish boundaries among themselves in terms of ethnicity, nationality, class, and so on, these boundaries are still permeable and ethnicity is dynamic (Barth, 1976). Poutignat (2008) holds that ethnicity is not an inherent quality or property of certain individuals or groups, but a system of organization, a principle to divide the social world which can change according to situations and historic periods. In other words, ethnic groups are not static or bearers of a culture as an essentialist approach can suggest; they are social constructions that try to organize their social life and are subjected to constant change (Luna Penna, 2014). Other authors like Amselle and M’Bokolo (1999) support the idea of a dynamic ethnicity subjected to change, but incorporate new elements from a postcolonial perspective and argue that the idea of ethnicity is a modern concept. There are four principles that allow one to deconstruct an ethnic group: the relation with their past, their internal composition, their external articulation, and the relations established by researchers in their fields (Amselle & M’Bokolo, 1999).

Today, the ‘relational paradigm’ proposes the study of the ethnic behavior, and even without using the concept of ethnogenesis, this field includes the changes and transformations of an ethnic group that in some cases can result in the birth of a new
ethnic group (Luna Penna, 2014). In addition, the ‘instrumental paradigm’ focuses on political, and economic processes that precede the origin of a new ethnic group (Obadia, 2008). As a result of these processes, ethnic movements today explore other forms of membership and solidarity such as social class which inspired struggles and political mobilizations for autonomy, self-determination, or independence (Gallissot, Kilani, & Rivera, 2000), and like the example of indigenous communities in America that in order not to disappear, were capable of re-inventing themselves in this new scenario of globalization. According to Hill (1996), the process of ethnogenesis is developed from the imposition of the hegemonic culture to dominate the indigenous communities, but also from the strategies of the oppressed to resist. In essence, it is a perspective of ethnogenesis in a political dimension and within an ethnic reaffirmation.

In South America, the study of indigenous people included power as a key factor to understand these processes of ethnogenesis, and to propose the decolonization of knowledge in different institutions including the academy (Luna Penna, 2014). These processes of ethnogenesis, related with indigenous communities, are characterized by a strong historical component as a result of the struggles against colonization and conquest, and the big influence of the context associated with social and identity phenomenon (Luna Penna, 2014).

Today, within globalization, a great number of new identities ranging from religious, political, or economic complaints, have emerged all around the world. According to Bonté and Izard (2008), ethnogenesis today is understood as processes of revitalization or emergence of a collective consciousness of usually minority groups that can lean on a common language, pseudo-historical stories, or phenotypic traits. Whatever the criteria selected is, one of the key elements of this contemporary conception of
ethnogenesis seems to be the necessity of differentiation and opposition regarding dominant groups. Notwithstanding, Obadia (2008) has a broader vision of this process and considers the possibility of finding a definition of the concept that combines a fundamentalist approach concerned with ethnicity and culture, and an instrumentalist approach focused on social contexts (Obadia, 2008). Today, globalization allows one to construct common narratives regarding identity but this concept of identity does not have an essentialist connotation anymore, which supposes a theoretical depth to understand better the more complex ethnic identity phenomenon of our postcolonial world (Luna Penna, 2014).

**Resistance against domination and oppression.** According to Voss (2008), “ethnogenesis has become a powerful metaphor for the creativity of oppressed and marginalized peoples birthing a new cultural space for themselves amidst their desperate struggle to survive” (p. 36). In other words, a process of ethnogenesis “can overcome fissions and factions through rallying people against institutionalized inequalities” (Hu, 203, p. 385).

Modernity and colonialism instrumentalized identity to divide work and power in a social hierarchy. Thus, a process of ethnogenesis driven by the hegemonic groups and their eurocentered leadership consolidated and legitimized economic and social domination. Even after the colonial power ceased to exist, these categories imposed by the processes of Modernity and colonialism still keep their relevance and power (Tilly 2005). Therefore, ethnic social movements situated at the lower levels of the hierarchy struggle against dominant classes seeking for emancipation through a critical intercultural process of leadership, and in doing so, they make uniform different practices and material culture among members of the group (Hu, 2013).
Ethnogenesis driven from the State or hegemonic groups during the colonial times and the early stages of nation-state has been studied extensively, but not when this process is led by social movements with minority political entrepreneurs (Wimmer, 2008). One way of challenging the hierarchical ordering of ethnic categories in the United States was the ‘reverse stigmatization’ of hegemonic groups of society resulting in a profound disagreement between individuals on opposite sides of the boundary (for example, Black power and red power movements). Wallman (1978) argues that the boundary “is not a conceptual fence over which neighbors may gossip or quarrel. It becomes instead a Siegfried line across which any but the crudest communication is impossible” (p. 212). A second proposal was to establish moral and political equality—rather than superiority—with regard to the dominant group. The most well-known example was the civil rights movement led by Martin Luther King, Jr. (Wimmer, 2008).

In all these movements, intellectual and political entrepreneurs redefined the meaning of ethnic categories identifying culture as a field for struggle. According to Wimmer (2008), these movements see the privilege of authenticity, they are proud of the culture of their ancestors, and they re-interpreted historical defeat and subjugation into a heroic struggle against injustice and domination. In other words, they “establish a counter-culture shielded from the influence of dominant majorities, and revive ‘traditional’ festivals and rites (from Newroz to Pow Wow), commemorate heroic acts (the occupation of Alcatraz, Rosa Parks) and leaders (Malcolm X, Mullah Mustafa Barzani)” (Wimmer, 2008, p. 1038).

In the last decades, there has been an increase of social movements emphasizing their ethnic characteristics in order to challenge the hegemonic sectors of society while using culture as a field for struggle. Thus, culture has become a system of emancipation
that involves critical consciousness and ethnogenesis to promote processes of cultural resistance and re-existence. These organizations of ethnic social movements have developed different leadership processes centered on their organizational culture with the aim of creating and developing patterns of basic assumptions to cope with problems of external adaptation and internal integration that, when successful, were considered valid and taken for granted (Schein, 2010). In conclusion, ethnic SMOs have deconstructed hegemonic narratives and frameworks, and reconstructed counter-hegemonic ones to create new political, economic, social, cultural and epistemological projects that go beyond the hegemonic canon and that seek emancipation.

**Culture as a Field for Struggle**

As a result of the process of critical consciousness and ethnogenesis, culture becomes a field for struggle wherein ethnic SMOs focus on how organizational culture can be used for emancipation. Ethnic social movements are distinct from social movements in general because they are based on national origin, culture, language, religion, territory, or phenotype, and are enacted with the purpose of promoting or resisting social change (Okamoto, 2013).

As noted earlier, understanding culture as a field for struggle offers the possibility for implementing processes of domination, but also projects for emancipation. For Gramsci (1970), culture means organization, discipline, empowerment, and awareness of taking control of reality; a revolution must be preceded by an intense critique of the dominant culture and the introduction of the new one. Social movements are understood as reactions against hegemony with the aim of transforming society (Gramsci, 1995). A crisis in authority and a “rupture of the equilibrium of forces” is the perfect time for a
counterhegemonic alternative to arise (Gramsci, 1995, p. 184); the ‘crisis in hegemony,’
occurs in a historical social context where the class that dominated through consent
begins to rely on coercion first and eventually domination (Gramsci, 1995). However, to
dismantle the dominant hegemony, a new and alternative hegemony has to arise; what
Gramsci (1995) called ‘war of position,’ a struggle to keep the hegemony on one side and
to dismantle it on the other, and where the dominant hegemony, in spite of the crisis, has
more power to resolve the situation due to economic, intellectual and political power.

Another perspective that sees culture as a field of struggle is the concept of
symbolic power described by Bourdieu (1989), which is the power granted to some social
groups who have gained enough recognition to be situated in a position from where they
can impose their view of the world to the rest (Bourdieu, 1989). It is a struggle over the
existence or non-existence of other social groups, their visions, and their cultures, because
this power has the capacity of creating groups and to transform the objective structure of
society (Bourdieu, 1989).

Moreover, Adorno (1973) argues that the true sense of culture is to overcome the
idea of treating everything like objects and commodities. Thus, it is central to see culture
related with concepts involving politics and economics, too. According to Santos (2007a),
what is new in the last decades is that what is understood as cultural is also economic and
political. Therefore, while in a short term it is central to consider new forms of societies,
in the long term it will be key to consider issues such as the re-foundation of the State and
of democracy. In essence, Santos (2007a) affirms that the State cannot be neutral,
otherwise it will benefit the dominant culture.
**Culture and Social Movements**

According to Fine (1995), social movements are cultural movements supported by discursive practices. Moreover, their main goals are to influence and change the cultural order and perspectives of society in which they are embedded (Fine, 1995). A social movement (or social movement organization) can be understood as a space where actors interact and behave in a specific fashion (Fine, 1981). “The group provides a locus in which behaviors and forms of talk are judged to be appropriate and even encouraged” (Fine, 1995, p. 130). In addition, each social movement, in a certain way, produces culture (Taylor & Whittier, 1995).

**Evolution of social movements and culture studies.** A ‘systemic’ view of culture “affirms the external reality of related conceptions of the world and of patterns of action” (Johnston & Klandermans, 1995, p. 6). This perspective, eloquently described by Clifford Geertz (1973), when applied to social movements sees these movements as reactions to destabilized systems. Another approach in line with this perspective views the cultural system as a factor that shapes and constrains the course of mobilization (Almond & Verba, 1963). “In this view, although movements are defined by their break with the dominant cultural code, they nevertheless are shaped by their inclusion in and modification of aspects of the dominant culture” (Johnston & Klandermans, 1995, p. 6). However, in the last decades there has been a shift in cultural analysis from a systemic view to a performative tradition (Johnston & Klandermans, 1995), an approach wherein social movements are shaped by culture, but that they also shape and reshape it. Thus, “symbols, values, meanings, icons, and beliefs are adapted and molded to suit the movement’s aims and frequently are injected into the broader culture via institutionalization and routinization” (Johnston & Klandermans, 1995, p. 9).
Similarly, Swidler’s (1986) concept of culture is a ‘tool kit’ of rituals, stories, and worldviews that are used to design strategies of action. According to Swidler (1986), in times of crisis the old cultural models are rejected and collective mobilization starts articulating new ones implementing new ways of organization and of “practicing unfamiliar habits until they become familiar” (p. 278). This framing perspective “cuts a middle course between a systemic view of culture and its performative aspects” and combines the focus on social processes and the creative capacity of individuals (Johnston & Klandermans, 1995, p. 8).

Moreover, other elaborations of this perspective shift their analysis to the collective arena (Snow & Benford, 1992). Thus, processes regarding frame extension and frame amplification “are for the most part treated as strategic actions of SMOs and presume systemic relations of social movement culture with the other aspects of culture” (p. 8). This type of frame analysis focuses on organizations and institutions studying “how frames intersect with key cultural patterns and how they might be strategically used in mobilization. These processes are described through organizational documents, key speeches, public records, and media reports” (Snow & Benford, 1992, p. 8). New social movement groups are conscious of these processes and design strategies to construct their own collective identities. “Frame analysis at this level unites the systemic perspective of dominant cultural patterns with a performative analysis at a higher level of analysis: that of groups, organizations, and institutions” (p. 8).

New social movement theorists, especially focused on collective identity, understand social movements as a social construction that challenges political and economic institutions into the limited domain of the social world (Habermas, 1987). According to Melucci (1995a),
Collective identity is a learning process that leads to the formation and maintenance of a unified empirical actor that we can call a social movement. As it passes through various stages, the collective actor develops a capacity to resolve the problems set by the environment and become increasingly independent and autonomously active in its relationships. The process of collective identity is thus also the ability to produce new definitions by integrating the past and the emerging elements of the present into the unity and continuity of a collective actor. (p. 49)

In other words, collective identity is a system of relations and representations which takes the form of a field that contains another system conformed by vectors in tension seeking to establish an equilibrium “between the various axes of collective action and between identification that an actor declares and the identification given by the rest of the society (adversaries, allies, third parties)” (Melucci, 1995a, p. 50).

Taylor and Whittier (1992), describe collective identity as three interrelated processes: (1) Construction of group boundaries to differentiate dominant group from the challenging one; (2) consciousness or interpretive frameworks that came up from the struggle and contributes to identify the interests of the group; and (3) politicization of everyday life using symbols and undertaking actions with the aim of resisting and transforming the dominant culture. Thus, “the concept of collective identity recognizes that the self-understandings around which groups organize are central to the transformation of hegemonic meanings and loyalties” (Taylor & Whittier, 1995, p. 175).

As a result of this set of relations and struggles, collective identity will adopt one form or another depending on shifts and changes within and outside the field. “Collective identity therefore patterns itself according to the presence and relative intensity of its
dimensions. Some vectors may be weaker or stronger than others, and some may be entirely absent” (Melucci, 1995a, p. 50). Thus, both actors and observers describe this field creating a unified, delimited, and static definition of the ‘we’ as a necessity of the collective actor for continuity and permanence (Melucci, 1995a). Today, identification processes are transferred from outside society, when transcendent and metaphysical entities such as myths, ancestors, or the invisible hand of the market were used, to its interior, through the implementation of processes of associative human action, culture and communication, social relations, and technological systems (Melucci, 1995a). “As identity is progressively recognized as socially produced, notions like coherence, boundary maintenance, and recognition only describe it in static terms; but in its dynamic connotation collective identity increasingly becomes a process of construction and autonomization” (Melucci, 1995a, p. 50).

As Melucci (1995a) argues, for new social movements, and in particular those centered on culture, “collective identity is becoming the product of conscious action and the outcome of self-reflection more than a set of given or ‘structural’ characteristics” (pp. 50-51). In other words, collective action is a process of organization based on culture and experienced as an action more than a situation: It is a process of ‘identization’ (Melucci, 1995a).

As a result of the field where relationships take place each ‘movement community’ has access to a set of resources and the organization to struggle for them becomes central. As Tarrow (1988) states, social movements are internally organized as communications networks consisting of both elites (movement entrepreneurs) and adherents (members). This network implements the organization of actions, cultural transmission, and the framing of movement ideology and claims (Snow et al., 1986).
Social movements and culture production. The set of images and traditions created by a social movement is what Fine (1982) describes as idioculture. By idioculture is understood “a system of knowledge, beliefs, behaviors, and customs shared by members of an interacting group to which members can refer and which they can employ as the basis of further interaction” (Fine, 1995, p. 128). It is a process to traditionalize shared experiences, normally through discourse, that creates cohesion among the members of a group distinguishing between insiders and outsiders (Fine 1989; Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983). Thus, culture involves mobilizing both symbolic and material resources, because the existence of an ‘imagined’ community is not enough for collective action. According to Fine (1995), public support, communications, authority and social control, and material resources are central to facilitate cultural expression and mobilization. “An organizational idioculture provides a set of nonmaterial resources and rewards that allows movements to overcome the free rider problem” (Fine, 1995, p. 141). In essence, culture can be a tool by which social movements achieve their goals while serving to express their claims and demands.

As Taylor and Whittier (1995) argue, “focusing on the ways that social movements are engaged in the production of culture is one of the most promising avenues of research for scholars interested in bringing the actor back into the study of social change” (p. 186). Three of the most important processes of cultural production within a social movement are the creation of meaning, naming and the construction of discourses and narratives, and rituals.

Meaning. A key element involved with the process of culture production and consumption is the construction of meaning. Klandermans (1992) suggests three processes of meaning construction in a social movement: (1) Public discourse; (2)
persuasive communication; and (3) consciousness raising during episodes of collective action. Public discourse affects the whole society or a particular sector within society; persuasive communication involves only specific individuals; and consciousness raising during episodes of collective action targets participants involved in the collective action (Johnston & Klandermans, 1995). At each of these levels, the processes to create and recreate collective beliefs are unfolded in different ways: “at the first level through the diffuse networks of meaning construction, at the second level through deliberate attempts by social actors to persuade, and at the third level through discussions among participants in and spectators of the collective action” (Johnston & Klandermans, 1995, p. 10).

**Naming, discourses and narratives.** According to Chartrand (1991), one of the goals for social movements is to resist “outside naming” and to decide “self-naming” (p. 2). It is a struggle for discursive space to imagine the past, the present, and the future of the communities. However, “the power of dominant groups and institutions is a limit on the self-naming of subordinate communities. Yet the latter are never without power” (Jenson, 1995, p. 108). In essence, to constitute a collective identity implies the exercise of power, “and, as in any power relation, such an act of representing a community by name has real, material consequences; it is not simply a struggle over words” (p. 108).

This process of representing a community through naming is central for social movements to design strategies and claims; and the terrain of political discourse is the space where the struggle for constructing identities is carried out (Jenson, 1987). “It is by translating meanings into practice – often within institutions – that actors create, sustain, or change representational arrangements. The creation of meaning is, then, profoundly political” (Jenson, 1995, pp. 108-109). The struggle for constructing identities produces dominant and dominated groups. “Success in occupying space in the universe of political
discourse limits the possibilities of others and may reconfigure the political opportunity structure. Thus, struggle over naming involves the exercise of power” (Jenson, 1995, p. 115).


“Discourse subsumes the written as well as the verbal, the formal as well as the informal, the gestural or ritual as well as the conceptual” (Wuthnow, 1989, p. 16). Moreover, positivist discourses such as those of science, technology, or even education, are key to maintaining the dominant narratives and worldviews (Smith, 1990). Therefore, new social movements “target not only the state but civil society, specifically institutions specializing in the transmission of cultural codes such as schools, families, religion, medicine, and the therapy industry” (Taylor & Whittier, 1995, p. 181). In addition, State institutions are central to deciding criteria of inclusion and exclusion; that is why social movements not only create a collective identity within the movement but seek recognition of their identity by public institutions (Jenson, 1995, p. 115). “Thus, the choice of a name will configure the space available to the extent that it generates resources, identifies allies and opponents, and directs the routing of claims” (p. 115).

Rituals. In a field for struggle, those excluded from power need to adapt to their subordinate position creating cultural forms and expressions that challenge the dominant values and beliefs. One of these cultural forms and expressions is rituals, understood as “the cultural mechanisms through which collective actors express the emotions – that is, the enthusiasm, pride, anger, hatred, fear, and sorrow – that mobilize and sustain conflict” (Taylor & Whittier, 1995, p. 176). Emotions are ‘the glue of solidarity’ (Collins, 1990), and rituals create moral solidarity mainly by evoking emotion (Durkheim 1961;
Rituals are what Gordon (1981) described as the ‘emotion culture’ of a group. However, these cultural expressions of subcultures or counter-cultures cannot be developed openly as a result of their position of subordination and domination (Scott, 1990). Therefore, dominated groups operate in private, isolated from the control of the dominant groups of society, creating ‘havens’ or ‘free social spaces’ where the dominated can organize their challenge to the dominant narrative and ideologies, deconstruct old and create new meanings, construct emergent cultural forms, and transmit the culture (Fantasia & Hirsch, 1995).

**Collective action and frames to produce culture.** Melucci (1995a) argues that “action is an interactive, constructive process within a field of possibilities and limits recognized by the actors” (Melucci, 1995a, p. 61). Regarding collective action, it is understood as a social construction with purpose and meaning, that is not only derived from structural constraints, and cannot be reduced either to leaders’ discourses or militants’ options, or to public behavior (Melucci, 1995a). Therefore, an action research and research intervention that focuses on how action is constructed and aims to analyze action as it unfolds while built by actors provides a more holistic perspective of the phenomenon of social movements (Touraine, 1978). In addition, action is fundamental to develop collective frames. According to Snow and Benford (1992), collective frames are a discourse, a set of beliefs and meanings that seek to legitimate the actions and goals of social movements. Gamson (1992) describes three components of collective action frames: injustice, agency, and identity. Injustice refers to the moral indignation; agency to the consciousness that through collective action it is possible to transform society; and identity refers to the process of defining the ‘we’ versus ‘they’ with different interests or values (Gamson, 1995). These three components are described in a similar vein by Snow
and Benford (1992) but identified as (1) punctuation, or bringing attention to the injustice suffered; (2) attribution, or describing the causes and solutions for the injustice; and (3) articulation, or connecting different experiences. Moreover, Klandermans (1988) suggests the concept of consensus mobilization to explain how social movements use communication to recruit supporters to their cause. In this view, frames are not only meaning systems but also strategic tools for recruiting participants.

As Snow and co-authors (1986) have suggested, collective action frames are defined throughout the course of collective action drawing from and modifying elements of the dominant culture, bridging, amplifying, extending, or transforming collective frames. Therefore, “collective action frames incorporate preexisting beliefs and symbols as well as oppositional values that emerge in the course of a group’s struggle” (Taylor & Whittier, 1995, p. 168). The process of creating collective action frames includes elements such as ‘habitus’ (Bourdieu, 1984; 1990b) or cultural ‘tool-kit’ (Swindler, 1986) which are central to provide groups with a distinctive set of beliefs, values, and resources to organize their resistance.

Frame transformation unfolds when “new ideas and values . . . replace old ones” and “old meanings, symbols, and so on are discarded [and] erroneous beliefs and misframings are corrected” (Taylor, 2000, p. 512). In other words, frame transformation is part of the process of ethnogenesis and supposes a “general reframing of the issues” within a social movement (p. 512). Frame transformation is a key process to the success and sustainability of social movements because without processes of rethinking and change “numerous social movements have risen and fallen partly as a result of atrophy and lack of reflexivity” (Pellow & Brehm, 2015, p. 187).
Ethnic identity, social movements, and critical interculturality. As a result of culture as a field of struggle, in the last decades there has been an emergence of social movements trying to challenge the status quo using their ethnic identity as a counter-hegemonic element. Tilly (2010) defines social movements as a tool for ordinary people to participate in public politics, and are composed of a set of performances, displays and campaigns with the aim of making collective claims on others. Social movements are a tool for ordinary people’s participation in public politics. According to Tilly (2010), there are three main elements in a social movement: (1) Campaigns, understood as a sustained, organized public effort making collective claims of target authorities; (2) Repertoire, or the employment of combinations of political action (associations and coalitions, public meetings, solemn processions, vigils, rallies, demonstrations, petition drives, statements to and in public media, and pamphleteering); and (3) participants’ concerted public representation of worthiness, unity, numbers, and commitments (WUNC) on the part of themselves and/or their constituencies.

Tarrow (1994), adds to the definition the idea of culture and sees social movements as the interactions and collective challenges to elites, authorities, groups or cultural codes, of people with common purposes and solidarity. These social movements, in negotiating a common understanding of their motivations and the problems they try to address, construct collective action frames (Snow & Benford, 1988). These frames, seek social change when they bring new ideas and values that replace old ones correcting or discarding them in a process of general reframing (Taylor, 2000). Moreover, new social movement theorists, particularly focused on collective identity, see social movements as a social construction, a process based on culture and action that aims to challenge political and economic institutions.
One particularity of emergent ethnic movements is that their essence is centered on culture, language, or religion, and they create social change through a process of critical interculturality. According to Walsh (2010), interculturality can be used as a project built from bottom-up and aims to transform physical and mental structures, institutions and social relations of domination, while creating new ones for emancipation. Moreover, interculturality is a pedagogic tool for everybody that (1) challenges domination and asymmetric relations of power; (2) visibilizes different ways of being, knowing, and organizing; and (3) creates the conditions for an effective and true intercultural dialogue (Walsh, 2010). In essence, interculturality is the project led by ethnic SMOs that will foster the transition from a postcolonial world to an intercultural society using culture in general and organizational culture in particular, as a field for struggle and liberation.

Today, we have “entered an epoch in which normal politics not only are failing but cannot be restored in the traditional ways. Government based on representation through political parties and capable of steering national economies is now obsolete” (Flacks, 1995, p. 263). In addition, globalization has threatened the modern notion of nation-state and while politics has remained at a local-national level, power has fled to a global sphere (Bauman, 2006). As a result of this lack of power, national political parties cannot find solutions to global problems and “the fate of democracy and the chances for social justice will depend on the movements’ capacity to take ongoing responsibility for the social future” (Flacks, 1995, p. 263). In essence, for these social movements to be effective and to have impact in transforming society, organization will be needed in general, and an organizational culture that will raise critical consciousness and unfolds ethnogenesis in particular.
Culture and Organizations: Deconstruction and Reconstruction

Social movements are cultural movements which aim to have influence and change the cultural order and perspectives of their societies (Fine, 1995). To be more sustainable, they create organizations and structures that produce culture (Taylor & Whittier, 1995). Regarding ethnic identity-based organizations, they not only create culture but also destroy manifestations of a hegemonic culture that hinder their processes of emancipation and, in the process, they increase critical consciousness which is not only about awareness and theory but also about praxis. Ethnic SMOs raise critical consciousness while they unfold processes of ethnogenesis to deconstruct social structures of domination and to reconstruct social structures of emancipation within their organizations and societies.

**Culture and organizations.** According to Hofstede and co-authors (2010), organizing is needed to answer two questions: (1) Which person has the power to decide what? and (2) what are the rules and procedures implemented to attain the desired goals? “The answer to the first question is influenced by cultural norms of power distance; the answer to the second question, by cultural norms about uncertainty avoidance” (Hofstede et al., 2010, p. 302).

An organization is the result of a group of people working together for a common purpose. As Schein (2010) argues, “the basic relationship between the individual and the organization can, therefore, be thought of as the most fundamental cultural dimension around which to build a typology because it will provide critical categories for analyzing assumptions about authority and intimacy” (p. 163).

Etzioni (1975) distinguishes between three types of organizations in every society: (1) Coercive organizations, where authority is arbitrary and absolute and the individual
must obey the rules because she is subjected to physical or economic reasons; (2) utilitarian organizations, where authority is a negotiated relationship and the individual provides his or her work for a salary and accepts the rules of the organization; and (3) normative organizations, where authority depends on personal consent and the individual is committed because his or her goals are the same as the organization.

**Organizational culture**. Since the early 1980s, several scholars made popular that “the ‘excellence’ of an organization is contained in the common ways by which its members have learned to think, feel, and act” (Hofstede et al., 2010, p. 47), and corporate culture is understood as “a soft, holistic concept with, however, presumed hard consequences” (p. 47).

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6 Most of the literature on organizational culture and the literature that I use in the following sections is very focused on leaders even if my emphasis is on the relationship between leaders and supporters. However, the fact that it is a ‘leader-centered’ research does not invalidate its rigor and value and it just needs to be complemented with a more ‘relation-centered’ perspective. Moreover, as noted before in this study, supporters can become leaders when contributing to social order and the identities of leaders and supporters are not exclusive of each other and can coexist so a ‘leader-centered’ research can be applied for leaders, supporters, and leader-supporters, regardless their position in an organization. ‘Leader-centered’ research can omit other elements of the process of leadership (either supporters, environment, culture, context, or purpose to be achieved), but it is central to understand the agency of leaders in contributing to create, shape, change, or destroy culture, although I argue that they cannot completely control the whole process of leadership. In addition, when comparing the literature on how social movements create and shape culture with how leaders do it according to studies on organizational culture, many similarities emerge although the social movements research uses a more collective perspective and the organizational culture studies are more centered on the individuals, concluding that using different approaches that analyze the creation, change or destruction of culture can enrich the rigor and depth of this study. Finally, the more ‘mechanic’ literature on organizational culture in the following sections is complemented with a more ‘organic’ approach from Bourdieu’s work on culture which is more connected with my definition of leadership in this study.
Organizational cultures are a phenomenon different from national cultures because an organization is a social system with different characteristics than a nation. Basically, although members of a national culture were born within it, the organization’s members were not; in addition, they “had certain influence in their decision to join it, are involved in it only during working hours, and will one day leave it” (p. 47). Thus, even if the national culture, or macro culture, has an influence, “research results regarding national cultures and their dimensions proved to be only partly useful for the understanding of organizational cultures” (p. 47).

According to Schein (2010), there is no standard definition, but scholars of corporate culture agree that organizational culture is: (1) Holistic, because the whole is more than the sum of the parts; (2) historically determined, because it reflects the history of the organization; (3) related to the cultural domains anthropologists study, such as rituals and symbols; (4) socially constructed, because it was created and preserved by the group of people who form the organization; (5) soft, although Waterman and Peters (1995) state that ‘soft is hard;’ and (6) difficult to change, although there is no agreement on how difficult.

As noted earlier, Hofstede and co-authors (2010), defined culture as “the collective programing of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from others” (p. 5). Consequently, organizational culture can be understood as “the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one organization from others” (Hofstede et al., 2010, p. 343). However, the organizational culture is not only internalized by the members of the organization but also by the ‘stakeholders’ and everyone who interacts with the organization because culture is about interactions and relationships.
Schein (2010) affirms that organizational culture is
A pattern of shared basic assumptions learned by a group as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, which has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems. (p. 18)

Thus, organizational culture becomes a field for struggle and liberation when ethnic SMOs can ‘invent, discover, or develop’ basic assumptions that challenge the hegemonic culture and what is allowed to be said and thought. Because “the development of a worldview with its shared understanding of group identity, purpose, and direction are products of the unique story, personal interactions, and environmental circumstances of the group” (Smircich, 1983a, p. 56), for any social group it is central to create and maintain its own frameworks of meaning to make sense of the world.

Moreover, the culture of an organization does not necessarily require homogeneity to hold together the members of an organization. Heterogenous and diverse members of an organization can develop a sense of belonging through the articulation of a “common frame of reference or a shared recognition of relevant issues” (Feldman, 1991, p. 154). For Martin (2002), the cultural observer has to attend to aspects of working life to seek “an in-depth understanding of the patterns of meanings that link these manifestations together, sometimes in harmony, sometimes in bitter conflicts between groups, and sometimes in webs of ambiguity, paradox and contradiction” (p. 58). From Bourdieu’s (1993) perspective, culture is seen as “a system of schemes of perception, expression and historically constituted and socially conditioned thinking” (p. 233) that consecrates a social order and is achieved only when this system becomes ‘natural,’ a habitus, after the
objective structures of society are embodied in the categories of perception of individuals and groups of people.

In this study, culture is about the stream and flow of relationships, interactions, interconnections, disagreements, and struggles at an internal and external level among cultures and subcultures that configure the ‘cultures in an organization.’ In short, culture is not static but fluid because it is constantly evolving within a field where, through struggle, is decided what each (sub)culture can do and how others interpret it.

**Levels of culture within an organization.** According to Schein (2010), “Some of the confusion surrounding the definition of what culture really is results from not differentiating the levels at which it manifests itself” (p. 23). Basically, Schein differentiates three levels of culture from the most superficial to the deepest: (1) Artifacts, (2) espoused beliefs and values, and (3) assumptions. Thus, to understand the essence of a culture, it is central to decipher the pattern of basic assumptions otherwise “you will not know how to interpret the artifacts correctly or how much credence to give to the espoused values” (2010, p. 32).

**Artifacts.** Artifacts represent what is visible to a group or organization. For example, among the artifacts we find architecture, language, artistic creations, style (clothes, manners, emotional displays), myths and stories portraying the organization; rituals and ceremonies, documents describing values and ethics, and technology and products (Schein, 2010). For Martin (2002), artifacts are not necessarily superficial and it depends how people interpret their meaning, that is, they are interconnected with espoused beliefs and values, and assumptions, so it is not about the cultural manifestation by itself but how people interpret it. “The depth of a researcher’s analysis of these interpretations—that is, the patterns of meaning underlying a collection of cultural
manifestations—can (and I argue should) approach the depth of understanding that Schein terms ‘basic assumptions’” (Martin, 2002, p. 47).

The symbols that these artifacts represent, “make it possible for there to be a consensus on the meaning of the social world, a consensus which contributes fundamentally to the reproduction of the social order” (Bourdieu, 1991a, p. 166). Thus, artifacts and symbols construct society by providing people with a social being recognizing it publicly. Artifacts and symbols, therefore, are political and embedded in relations of power because they represent a space where general social relations can be represented and negotiated (Bourdieu, 1994).

**Espoused beliefs and values.** Cultures cannot prove that their beliefs or values are superior to others. However, if these moral and ethical systems are reinforced to each other, eventually they will be taken for granted. Gradually, “the group learns that certain beliefs and values, as initially promulgated by prophets, founders, and leaders, ‘work’ in the sense of reducing uncertainty in critical areas of the group’s functioning” (Schein, 2010, p. 26). Thus, if beliefs and values keep comforting the group, they will become indisputable and will be embodied in the philosophy of the organization as the resource to deal with uncertainty or turbulences. For Martin (2002), “because espoused values are an attempt to create an impression on an audience, usually portraying the organization in an attractive light, they tend to be highly abstract and somewhat platitudinous” (p. 89).

According to Bourdieu (1991), delegates or leaders base universal value on themselves and “monopolize the notions of God, Truth, Wisdom, People, Message, Freedom, etc. They make them synonyms. What of? Of themselves. ‘I am the Truth.’” (p. 210). Thus, they become sacred and establish a division between them and ordinary people. However, if the narratives, values and explanations of a habitus suggested by
leaders do not make sense, the dispositions, knowledges and values of the supporters will change and they will not give them their support anymore (Bourdieu, 1977).

Two central elements regarding espoused beliefs and values are the processes of internalization and identification. Yukl (1994) argues that the former occurs when the members of an organization perceive the leader’s proposals as desirable and support them, while the latter consists in the imitation of the leader’s behavior to please or to be like her. Moreover, social identification is understood as a process of influence that involves definition of self at a group or collective level, becoming one of the member’s different social identities (Ashforth & Mael, 1989).

From a Bourdieusian perspective, countries, communities, and organizations can have collective habitus, understood as shared beliefs and perspectives on the world, common values, and shared dispositions to believe and behave in particular ways. This habitus is orchestrated in a certain way through the creation of the conditions under which the social order comes to be viewed as natural and inevitable and others unthinkable. However, to be able to create these conditions, power and capital are needed (Webb, Schirato, & Danaher, 2002). A powerful mechanism used by a community or the State to internalize a specific social order or vision of the world is to establish what constitutes acceptable behavior and how deviance should be punished. Notwithstanding, perhaps the most effective way to orchestrate this collective habitus “is by ensuring that it is seen by the people it governs as being ‘the voice of the people’, which gives it legitimate authority to rule us, and even to exercise violence against us” (Webb et al., 2002, p. 93).

Basic underlying assumptions. According to Argyris and Schöön (1996), basic assumptions are ‘theories-in-use’ that guide behavior, and inform group members how to perceive, think, and feel. When a solution to a problem works repeatedly, it is taken for
granted and considered ‘natural,’ becoming a basic assumption for the group (Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck, 1961).

Like doxa, what can be said or thought, a basic assumption is not discussed because it is taken for granted. As a result, to change basic assumptions is extremely difficult and “requires us to resurrect, reexamine, and possibly change some of the more stable portions of our cognitive structure” (Schein, 2010, p. 28). Moreover, the challenge of basic assumptions destabilizes our view of the world and releases anxiety, unfolding a psychological process that ultimately can distort, deny, project, or even falsify to ourselves what is happening around us with the aim of avoiding that anxiety (Schein, 2010). In addition, this level of culture provides its members a sense of identity and establishes the values that produce self-esteem (Hatch & Schultz, 2004). In essence, “Cultures tell their members who they are, how to behave toward each other, and how to feel good about themselves. Recognizing these critical functions makes us aware why ‘changing’ culture is so anxiety provoking” (Schein, 2010, p. 29).

McGregor (1960) states that assumptions about ‘human nature’ are central to perpetuate systems of oppression and control because when people are treated consistently based on specific basic assumptions, eventually they will behave according to them with the aim of getting stability and predictability. However, this process of domination based on exclusion and injustice can also be a system of emancipation centered on inclusion and justice. Thus, in terms of leadership, it is central to “understand the deeper levels of a culture, to assess the functionality of the assumptions made at that level, and to deal with the anxiety that is unleashed when those assumptions are challenged” (Schein, 2010, p. 33).
For Bourdieu (1989), “Habitus is both a system of schemes of production of practices and a system of perception and appreciation of practices” (p. 19), and understands the unconscious as the process that both emerges out of and naturalizes the agendas, strategies, goals, values and desires of the habitus (Bourdieu, 1990b). In other words, we incorporate the habitus within the self when we suspend disbelief and believe without thinking, without critical consciousness (Bourdieu, 1990b).

Organizational culture from an academic approach. According to Martin (1992), there are three main academic perspectives when it comes to doing research on organizational culture: integration, differentiation and fragmentation. From each perspective, one views culture in a different way but at the same time all three approaches can be complementary from a holistic and relational perspective: This is how culture is understood in my research.

The focus of integration studies is on a pattern of consistency of interpretations of the different cultural manifestations, and look for consensus and clarity within an organization (Martin, 1992). Culture is “an area of meaning carved out of a vast mass of meaninglessness, a small clearing of lucidity in a formless, dark, always ominous jungle” (Berger, 1967, p. 23). In essence, there is no ambiguity and it is argued that which is ambiguous is not part of culture.

Helms-Mills and Mills (2000), state that cultures are “an explanation of what causes them to cohere in the first place” (p. 57). From this perspective, cultural change is an organization-wide cultural transformation, and even if conflict and ambiguity occur during this process, it is seen as the substitution of a strong culture by another one (Martin, Frost, & O’Neill, 2004). Thus, dissent is understood as an ‘anomaly’ and it is not considered a subculture or counterculture within the organization. The focus is not on
diversity and variety but homogeneity and a unified culture as desirable (Martin et al., 2004).

On the other hand, differentiation studies consider that consensus uniquely can occur within subcultural boundaries, and only subcultures can show clarity even if there is ambiguity between their relations (Martin et al., 2004). Thus, they propose to go beyond the superficial representation of culture as a whole and go deeper to understand subcultures and their relationships. Moreover, besides including cognitive and symbolic elements of culture, differentiation scholars suggest to consider material manifestations, environmental influences and to look for inconsistencies between what is said and what is actually done, between the formal and the informal aspects, and, above all, between the different interpretations of each group within an organization (Martin et al., 2004). For the differentiation scholars, cultural change happens when, “within one or more subcultures, alterations tend to be incremental, and innovations are triggered primarily by pressures from an organization’s environment” (Martin et al., 2004, p. 15). Therefore, organizational culture is not unitary and can be understood as an overlapping set of subcultures within the permeable boundaries of an organization that are affected by environmental influences (Martin et al., 2004).

Those taking the fragmentation perspective interpret cultural manifestations as multiple and complex, accepting contradictions and confusion within culture. Moreover, there is no consensus organization-wide nor within subcultures because consensus among individuals is fluid and changes depending on the issues and affinities. Thus, “the essence of any culture is pervasive ambiguity” (Martin et al., 2004, p. 16), which can include irony, paradox, contradictions, and multiple meanings because “change is a constant flux, rather than an intermittent interruption in an otherwise stable state” (p. 17). For the
fragmentation scholars, any research on culture that does not acknowledge ambiguity is an incomplete and oversimplified representation of the fluxes and complexities that characterize any organization today (Martin et al., 2004).

**Combining integration, differentiation and fragmentation.** According to Martin, Frost, and O’Neill (2004), when an organization is studied in depth, elements from the different academic approaches arise. For example,

Some issues, values, and objectives will be seen to generate organization-wide consensus, consistency, and clarity (an integration view). At the same time, other aspects of an organization’s culture will coalesce into subcultures that hold conflicting opinions about what is important, what should happen, and why (a differentiation view). Finally, some problems and issues will be ambiguous, in a state of constant flux, generating multiple, plausible interpretations (a fragmentation view). (p. 31)

From a perspective of critical theory, “a strongly unified culture is an oppressive hegemony that successfully controls employees, in some cases even giving them a false consciousness that approves of their own oppression” (Martin et al., 2004, p. 21). Thus, what is understood as the culture of an organization from an integration perspective is what is imposed to the other subcultures: a hegemonic subculture which dominates the rest of subcultures. According to Bourdieu (1991a), a culture that “unifies (the medium of communication) is also the culture which separates (the instrument of distinction) and which legitimates distinctions by forcing all other cultures (designated as sub-cultures) to define themselves by their distance from the dominant culture” (p. 167).

In differentiation studies, a critical theorist focuses on vertical differentiation between “advantaged and disadvantaged subcultures, drawing attention to the
organizational life of non-managerial employees. This focus on labor versus management highlights conflicts of interest (as well as other subcultural differences associated with demographic markers such as sex or race)” (Martin et al., 2004, p. 22). However, it can be still a ‘static’ way of approaching culture within an organization. For Bourdieu (1996), social reality and cultures are fluid because they are the result of a relationship between objective and subjective structures and they exist twice,

In things and in minds, in fields and in habitus, outside and inside of agents… the world encompasses me… but I comprehend it… precisely because it comprehends me. It is because the world has produced me, because it produces the categories of thought that I apply to it, that it appears to me as self-evident. (pp. 127-8)

Therefore, in my study, I propose a conversation among the three perspectives of approaching organizational culture because culture is understood as a field for struggle where different groups relate with the aim of imposing their views within the organization but also at an external level with other cultures. Thus, the culture of the organization can be either the imposition of a subculture to the rest of subcultures, or can be a ‘culture’ that results from the consensus of an intercultural dialogue. That is, a culture can be integrative, differentiated, and fragmented at the same time, but the key issue is how and in which terms the ‘culture’ of the organization is created: top-down domination and/or bottom-up consensus.

As Martin, Frost, and O’Neill (2004) state, using all three perspectives results in a more complex understanding of organizational culture because a three-perspective framework is a meta-theory that allows the research to move “to a higher level of abstraction” (p. 32). Today, as a result of globalization, internet and the transportation revolution, boundaries around culture are more permeable and fluid than ever and it
seems more accurate to understand the research on culture as “an open conversation rather than a struggle for intellectual dominance” (Martin et al., 2004, p. 42). Moreover, organizational culture scholars have usually focused on individuals or groups, ignoring larger contexts of an organization such as the social, political, and legal (Barbour, 1999). Thus, Barbour (1999) suggests a perspective of anthropology to broaden the scope and comparison among cultures, to better understand the interconnectedness of components within a system and how humans create cultural frameworks to give meaning to their lives. Therefore, in my study, culture is understood as relationships and interactions considering “cultural boundaries as moveable, fluctuating, permeable, and blurred” (Martin et al., 2004, p. 40), and as a political project within a field for struggle, it would also be necessary to consider the social, political, and legal perspectives.

Organizational culture and social movements organizations. Normally, social movements are organized through organizations with coordinating roles designed to carry out the tasks that are necessary for any social movement to survive and to achieve their goals. Within these SMOs, culture can be understood as a mechanism of social domination and control and a tool to manipulate members to make them perceiving, thinking, and feeling in specific ways (Van Maanen & Kunda, 1989). Simply stated, just another way for those in power to mask their manipulation and control of others (Martin, 1992). However, through a process of critical intercultural leadership, organizational culture can also be a tool for liberation and social emancipation. As O’Reilily and Chatman (1996) state, “the challenge for organizations is to maintain the delicate balance between making organizational membership fulfilling, and intensely controlling thoughts and actions” (p. 192). In essence, organizations can either empower or disempower, and in terms of empowerment, culture can be the tool for enactment through raising critical
consciousness and unfolding a process of deconstruction and reconstruction of social structures and identities. According to Martin (2002), “By conceptualizing the boundaries of a culture as permeable, moveable, and fluctuating, we allow for intercultural penetration and cultural change” (p. 340). Thus, redefining culture boundaries from a perspective of ethnogenesis offers a new perspective of approaching the study of culture. Moreover, when people exist in relationship with each other in collectivities, for example within an organization with a structure arranged in space where people work together, they create cultures. Thus, as an aspect of a collectivity, “Culture can be defined as patterns of interpretation composed of the meanings associated with various cultural manifestations, such as stories, rituals, formal and informal practices, jargon, and physical arrangements” (Martin, 2002, p. 330). According to this definition, culture is seen as a system of constructed ideas instead of the physical presence of individuals within a boundary; the construction, deconstruction, and reconstruction of these ideas are going to define if the culture of the organization seeks domination or emancipation. Therefore, it is central to better understand how culture is created, embedded and transmitted, evolves, changes, and can be destroyed within organizations in general, and particularly within a social movement organization (SMO) that challenges the dominant culture with the aim of replicating processes of critical intercultural leadership in other organizations.

**Macrocultures, cultures and subcultures.** Schein (2010) argues that cultures emerge from three sources: (1) Beliefs, values, and assumptions brought by founders of organizations; (2) learning experiences of group members during their time at the organization; and (3) new beliefs, values, and assumptions brought by new members. However, organizational cultures are developed within one or more macrocultures, and the processes a group adopt are the result of both: the preferences of founders and leaders
and the macroculture in which the organization exists (Schein, 2010). Moreover, while national cultures are part of the ‘mental software’ acquired during the first ten years of our lives, the organizational culture is learnt when we enter a work organization and, therefore, is more superficial (Hofstede et al., 2010). Thus, to understand culture at any specific level requires certain understanding of all other levels: National, ethnic, occupational, organizational, and Microsystems (Schein, 2010).

In addition, an organization can be seen as a set of subcultures interacting within a bigger context, what would be the culture of the organization, or at a largest level, a subculture as a whole (for example, a Native American organization) struggling against the hegemonic culture of a country understood as an organization (Hegemonic White culture in the United States). “These subcultures share many of the assumptions of the total organization but also hold assumptions beyond those of the total organization, usually reflecting their functional tasks, the occupations of their members, or their unique experiences” (Schein, 2010, p. 55). Thus, if an organization tries to be effective, it needs to align and harmonize its different subcultures and also the microcultures that can emerge as a result of multicultural teams in the current period of globalization (Schein, 2010).

For Schein (2010), subcultures appear when managers and leaders in charge of divisions in an organization want a certain grade of autonomy. Thus, “As that division develops its own history, it will begin to develop a divisional subculture that reflects its particular technology and market environment, even if it is geographically close to the parent company” (Schein, 2010, p. 268). Moreover, as the number of people in an organization increases, the most common solution is to create additional layers in the hierarchy, contributing to creating levels within an organization that foster the emergence
of new subcultures (Schein, 2010). Thus, it is central to encourage a dialogue among different subcultures that will develop in the long term a common language, goals, and procedures of decision-making (Schein, 2010).

From a Bourdieusian perspective, it is central to understand that “the description of objective regularities (structures, laws, systems) do not tell us how people use – inhabit, negotiate, or elude – those objective regularities” (Webb et al., 2002, p. 36). In other words, subcultures also emerge as a result of the intentionality and agency of the members of an organization or, from a Foucauldian approach, as a consequence of their processes of resistance against power.

**How culture emerges in new groups.** When a group first meets, the main issues at an organizational level are related to what is their mission and their goals. Notwithstanding, at an individual sphere, the members of the group are also concerned about their personal survival and how they are going to fit within this new group (Schein, 2010). Moreover, although each member brings his or her own cultural approach, the group starts without a specific culture and they start developing a mission when the “members begin genuinely to understand each other’s needs, goals, talents, and values, and as they begin to integrate these into a shared mission and define their own authority and intimacy system” (Schein, 2010, p. 201).

When all members within an organization witness the same behavior and responses of other individuals, there emerges an emotional environment that confirms they belong now to a group (Schein, 2010). Shared emotional responses normally occur the first few hours of group life when the members of a new group are struggling “with the personal issues of inclusion, identity, authority, and intimacy, and the group is not really a group but a collection of individual members, each focused on how to make the
situation safe and personally rewarding” (Schein, 2010, p. 203). At this stage, the members of the group are still acting at an individual level and looking for their safety so it is difficult to find consensus on what to do and the group is very dependent on the leader to avoid anxiety. Gradually, as the group deals with different events, a sense of groupness arises and norms start to be created in an unconscious way unless attention is drawn to it (Schein, 2010). In other words, norms are formed “when an individual takes a position, and the rest of the group deals with that position by either letting it stand (by remaining silent), by actively approving it, by ‘processing’ it, or by rejecting it” (Schein, 2010, p. 208).

For Bourdieu, capital is central to impose a vision or what is considered legitimate within a community. Thus, capital is a social relation within a system of exchange, and is extended “to all the goods, material and symbolic, without distinction, that present themselves as rare and worthy of being sought after in a particular social formation” (Harker, Mahar, & Wilkes, 1990, p. 1). Regarding the position a person has within a field, understood as a social site where people and institutions engage in specific activities, and the amount of capital she possesses, she will be able to designate what is ‘authentic’ capital (Bourdieu, 2000). Therefore, the person with the better position within the field and with the most capital will have the capacity to manage regulatory and coercive discourses within the field. In essence, considering the relations within the field and the habitus, Bourdieu (1977) argues that “‘interpersonal’ relations are never, except in appearance, individual-to-individual relationships and that the truth of the interaction is never entirely contained in the interaction” (p. 81).

In terms of processes of social influence, Shamir, House, and Arthur (1993), describe two main concepts among others: (1) Social identification, when the supporters
identify themselves with the group and they feel proud to be part of it; and (2) internalization, when the leader’s vision reflects values and concepts of the supporters and start seeing their work role as inseparably connected to their self-concept. Another term connected with social influence is social contagion, which was coined by Meindl (1990), and which is focused on processes of social influence among the supporters themselves and not centered on the leaders. Social contagion is understood as the spontaneous development of emotions and behaviors among groups of people who reject their inhibitions, basically established social norms or fear, and start acting in different ways. These behaviors are imitated by others and feed upon themselves resulting in collective actions that individual persons would probably not do such as mob, riot, loot, or, for example, burn cars. When the group gets a sense of ownership that influences the processes of decision-making, the importance of the leader diminishes gradually. From then on, leadership is not seen as a leader who knows what to do but as a shared set of activities within an organization (Schein, 2010).

**Culture formation in organizations.** According to Schein (2010), “all groups and organizations face two archetypical problems: (1) Survival in and adaptation to the external environment, and (2) integration of the internal processes to ensure the capacity to continue to survive and adapt” (p. 73). When it comes to the formation of assumptions, there are two basic mechanisms which are connected with these archetypical problems: “(1) Positive problem solving to cope with external survival issues, and (2) anxiety avoidance to cope with internal integration issues” (Schein, 2010, p. 215). Thus, assumptions are consolidated when norms and behaviors have been successful in navigating with external survival issues and avoiding anxiety while coping with internal integration challenges (Schein, 2010).
Therefore, to understand the evolution of a culture within an organization, it is central to identify the challenges that any group faces, at internal and external levels, from its origin to maturity and decline. “Without a group, there can be no culture, and without some shared assumptions, some minimal degree of culture, we are really talking only about an aggregate of people, not a ‘group’” (Schein, 2010, p. 73). Simply stated, group growth and culture formation are two sides of the same coin, and they unfold as a result of shared experiences, transmission of knowledge, and communication.

**Shared experiences of the group.** Groups are created with criteria of inclusion and exclusion. Without perceiving who is a member of the group and who is not, “new members cannot really function and concentrate on their primary task if they are insecure about their membership, and the group cannot really maintain a good sense of itself if it does not have a way of defining itself and its boundaries” (Schein, 2010, p. 97). With new organizations, the criteria are established by the founders and leaders, but as the group starts to interact these criteria can be broadened or narrowed (Schein, 2010). Thus, members of the organization make sense and meaning of the world together against the internal and external environments and gradually configure their organizational culture. It is a process of reaching consensus to build a shared social reality, a leadership process that involves leaders, supporters, environment, culture, context, and specific purposes.

When it comes to shared experiences of the group, Bourdieu uses a concept called ‘misrecognition’ which is key for the function of symbolic violence. According to Bourdieu (2000):

The agent engaged in practice knows the world…too well, without objectifying distance, takes it for granted, precisely because he is caught up in it, bound up
with it; he inhabits it like garment...he feels at home in the world because the world is also in him, in the form of the habitus. (pp. 142-143)

In other words, even if agents are subjected to forms of violence they do not perceive it like this because the situation seems to be the ‘natural order of things.’ Thus, it is through misrecognition that leaders or managers can appear to be acting in a ‘disinterested’ manner ‘for the field’ and its values (Webb et al., 2002).

\textit{Transmission of knowledge and communication}. A common language is needed to achieve any kind of consensus and to have an efficient communication. “This common understanding begins with the categories of action, gesture, and speech that are often provided by the person who brought the group together or by the more active members of the group once it is together” (Schein, 2010, p. 97). If the members of an organization come from the same culture the common language is going to be already present. However, as the group evolves they create words with special meanings that only the group understands, making more difficult the communication for outsiders (Schein, 2010).

Within most organizations there is a process of accumulation of knowledge that is constantly learned and shared by the different members. This knowledge is passed on from one member to another and can be represented through language, dress, demeanor, technology, rituals, and ceremonies (Barbour, 1999). As Schein (2010) states, “To function as a group, the individuals who come together must establish a system of communication and a language that permits setting goals and interpreting and managing what is going on” (p. 94). Within an organization, language is the channel of transmission for cultural knowledge, and contains specific terms, phrases, ideas or concepts. Moreover,
it can be symbolic and deal with the spiritual, while it also can be materialistic and manage the physical (Barbour, 1999).

For Bourdieu (1991a), since the struggle to impose on others a particular view of the world is symbolic, language is both the battleground and the weapon. This is what Bourdieu refers to when he writes about language and symbolic power. Language becomes powerful when it is used in particular ways, or by particular groups and institutions and it is “both a ‘structuring structure’ (it provides the means for understanding the world) and a ‘structured structure’ (it is the medium by which these understandings are communicated)” (Webb et al., 2002, p. 95). Thus, when leaders or managers control ‘legitimate language,’ or in other words the structures and the media of meaning-making and understanding, results in ensuring that citizens of a state or members of an organization will accept their right to rule them.

According to Bourdieu (1991a), language has an ‘oracle effect.’ He argues:

If I, Pierre Bourdieu, a single and isolated individual, speak only for myself, say ‘you must do this or that, overthrow the government or refuse Pershing missiles’, who will follow me? But if I am placed in statutory conditions such that I may appear as speaking ‘in the name of the masses’… that changes everything. (p. 212)

Language is, then, one of the most effective instruments for embodying the structures and relations of the objective structures within the sense-making apparatus of the individual in order to constitute the practical reason of the habitus (Bourdieu, 1991a).

**How actors create, embed, and transmit organizational culture.** Founders of an organization define the basic mission of their organization according to their philosophy and also through the influence of other members. Organizations are the result
of planning and design and just a few of them form accidentally (Schein, 2010). Thus, in terms of adapting to external influences and coping with issues of internal integration, the leader implements her ideas and solutions that, in case of being successful and contributing to avoid anxiety, will become norms and eventually assumptions.

As Barbour (1999) argues, actors in an organization are varied and involve key people who can be in contact with the leader and influence others to create values and norms in the organization. The function of leaders within an organization “involves relationships in the transmission of cultural knowledge and in the social relationships with others in the work culture” (p. 56). There is a communal aspect of work derived from the value system of the organization and which is based on the “need to rely on others in the performance of work or in the need to exchange the products of work” (p. 56). In essence, work within an organization involves members from within the community and from outside the community, and both networks contribute to shape the culture of the organization.

During this process, other members than the leader of the group can propose their ideas and solutions but leaders have certain advantages in the initial stages because they normally have well-articulated theories about how the group and the organization should work (Schein, 2010), besides their power and bigger impact as a consequence of their position. However, if the leaders/founders do not have ideas and solutions or those do not work, the group will become anxious and others can emerge as leaders, empowered by the group looking to avoid anxiety within the organization (Schein, 2010). Moreover, if the environment changes and those assumptions that used to work start to fail, the organization will need to change part of its culture which will be extremely difficult due to how founders and leaders have been embedding and transmitting their assumptions to
the different members of the organization (Schein, 2010). According to Bourdieu (1977), the habitus not only coordinates practices but also requires practices of co-ordination since the agents adjust themselves within the field and “since undertakings of collective mobilization cannot succeed without a minimum of concordance between the habitus of the mobilizing agents (e.g. prophet, party leader, etc.) and the dispositions of those whose aspirations and world-view they express” (p. 81).

Moreover, to understand how authorized spokespersons – party or union boss, for instance, – constitute and institute their power, it is not enough about analyzing their specific interests or structural affinities that link them with whom they represent but to study “the logic of the process of institution, ordinarily perceived and described as a process of delegation, in which the representative receives from the group the power of creating the group” (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 248). According to Bourdieu (1991),

The mystery of ministry is one of those cases of social magic in which a thing or a person becomes something other than what it/he is, a person (minister, bishop, delegate, member of parliament, general secretary, etc.) able to identify and be identified with a set of people (the People, the Workers) or with a social entity (the Nation, the State, the Church, the Party). The mystery of ministry is at its peak when the group can exist only by delegating power to a spokesperson who will bring it into existence by speaking for it, that is, on its behalf and in its place. The circle is then complete: the group is created by the person who speaks in its name, thus appearing as the source of the power that he exerts over those who are its real source. (p. 249)

The paradox is that isolated agents who want to constitute themselves as a group to be heard in the political field, cannot do it “unless they dispossess themselves and hand over
their power to a political apparatus: they must always risk political dispossession in order to escape from political dispossession” (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 249). In essence, a group or a social class only exists and has force in the political field when representatives with the “plena potentia agenda” may be and feel authorized to speak in its name like for example “the Party is the working class”, or “the Pope is the Church” (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 250).

In addition, to create, embed and transmit culture it is necessary to have power. Thus, narratives and discourses that support dominant practices are going to be amplified, repeated, reproduced and remembered if the actors involved have power to construct an official history that will eventually configure the shape of the society while this process of cultural construction will be seen as both natural and inevitable (Webb et al., 2002, pp. 90-91). For example, Bourdieu (1994) argues that the systems of organization that a State develops with national laws and policies, bureaucratic procedures to operationalize these, and educational institutions where people are trained how to think, are the tools by which “the state molds mental structures and imposes common principles of vision and division” (p. 7).

Returning to the organizational culture literature, another explanation of how leaders embed and transmit culture is through ‘charisma,’ understood as the ‘magical’ ability to capture the subordinates’ attention and to communicate assumptions and values in a deep and clear manner (Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Conger, 1989; Leavitt, 1986). However, not all leaders of organizations have this ‘mysterious’ gift and they embed and transmit culture implementing different primary and secondary mechanisms.

**Primary embedding mechanisms.** These mechanisms are visible artifacts of the organizational culture which create the ‘climate’ of the organization (Ashkanasy, Wilderom, & Peterson, 2000; Schneider, 1990). One of the most effective mechanisms
for leaders to transmit culture is to show to what they pay attention. For example, what they notice and comment on which questions they make, what they measure, control, reward, or in general, what they deal with on a daily basis (Schein, 2010). Through these elements then, it is possible to understand what are their priorities, goals, and assumptions.

When Bourdieu (1990b) analyzes the cultural production of art, he concludes that something becomes art when it is named as such by legitimized persons or gatekeepers. This is the same process that occurs when imposing what counts as ‘good taste’ that is basically decided by ‘cultural arbitrary,’ understood as the difference between cultural power relations constructed by dominant groups which, after being inscribed in the habitus of the community, appear universal. In other words, for Bourdieu (1990b) something becomes culture because it is in the interest of some dominant person or institution, and among these dominant persons or institutions are included the government, the education system, major cultural institutions, and important gatekeepers.

Another important situation to transmit culture is when organizations face crisis, particularly crises that arise around the major external survival issues (Schein, 2010). Leaders of organizations are generally aware that their behavior is central to communicate assumptions and values to other members of the organization because informal messages are the more powerful mechanisms to teach and communicate (Schein, 2010). How leaders react and deal with the crisis “reveals important underlying assumptions and creates new norms, values, and working procedures. Crises are especially significant in culture creation and transmission because the heightened emotional involvement during such periods increases the intensity of learning” (Schein, 2010, p. 243). Basically, with any crisis within an organization, anxiety increases, and to reduce the anxiety, it may be
necessary to change cultural elements and to learn new others. “If people share intense emotional experiences and collectively learn how to reduce anxiety, they are more likely to remember what they have learned and to ritually repeat that behavior to avoid anxiety” (p. 243).

According to Bourdieu (1994), people tend to accept authority of a government or State and “the question of the legitimacy of the state, and of the order it institutes, does not arise except in crisis situations” (p. 15). For Bourdieu (1994), because the State is able to engender a collective habitus, a shared identity and a set of dispositions, it can convince its population that was there for them. However, in case the State neglects public need, it will no longer be seen as the most effective actor to take care of the population. As Bourdieu (1994) argues, “the social world is riddled with calls to order that function as such only for those who are predisposed to heeding them as they awaken deeply buried corporeal dispositions, outside the channels of consciousness and calculation” (p. 14).

*Secondary embedding mechanisms.* These are mechanisms of articulation and reinforcement, and only work if they are consistent with the primary mechanisms. If so, they create organizational ideologies and contribute to formalize what has been informally learned until then (Schein, 2010). “In a young organization, design, structure, architecture, rituals, stories, and formal statements are cultural reinforcers, not culture creators. Once an organization has matured and stabilized, these same mechanisms come to be constraints on future leaders” (Schein, 2010, p. 250).

Routines and bureaucracy in an organization lend structure and predictability and, as formal structures do, create a predictable life within the organization with the aim of reducing ambiguity and anxiety. Thus, “given that group members seek this kind of
stability and anxiety reduction, founders and leaders have the opportunity to reinforce their assumptions building systems and routines around them” (p. 252). Moreover, the creation of systems, procedures, and routines contribute to reinforce the message of the leaders when they are able to formalize the process of ‘paying attention’ (Schein, 2010). These symbolic ways of formalizing assumptions are key artifacts to observe but are difficult to decipher and “they might be considered important reinforcers of key cultural assumptions if those assumptions are made clear by the primary embedding mechanisms” (Schein, 2010, p. 254).

The final mechanism of articulation and reinforcement is the formal statement. By formal statement is understood the attempt by leaders to state explicitly their values or assumptions (Schein, 2010). However, these statements normally emphasize a small part of the leader’s assumption or ideology, and particularly the one that can be made public; that is why formal statements are not considered a way of defining the culture of an organization (Schein, 2010). According to Schein (2010), these are considered espoused values that “at best they cover a small, publicly relevant segment of the culture – those aspects that leaders find useful to publish as an ideology or focus for the organization” (p. 257).

According to Bourdieu (1977), “the structures constitutive of a particular type of environment (e. g. the material conditions of existence characteristic of a class condition) produce habitus” (p. 72), that is, structured structures that function as structuring structures. Thus, the day-to-day material conditions ‘turn you,’ against your own inclinations, into a specific person with particular dispositions and values and make you feel “like a fish in water” (Bourdieu, 1996, p. 127).
How culture evolves within an organization. Since an organization is created its culture evolves and changes as a result of different processes at an internal and external level. From a perspective of organizational culture studies, evolution and change occur in the following ways: (1) Through general and specific evolution; (2) through insight; (3) through hybrids; (4) through promotion of subcultures; (5) through technological seduction; (6) through infusion of outsiders; (7) through scandal and explosion of myths; (8) through turnarounds; (9) through mergers and acquisitions; and (10) through destruction and rebirth (Schein, 2010).

Evolution and change through general and specific evolution. According to Sahlins and Service (1960), the culture within an organization evolves since it is founded and through the assimilation of what works best over the years following two basic processes: general evolutions and specific evolution. General evolution involves “diversification, growing complexity, higher levels of differentiation and integration, and creative syntheses into new and more complex forms” (Schein, 2010, p. 273). Thus, the growth of subcultures, diversification, aging, and so on unfold possibilities for new structures, systems, and cultural alignments to emerge (Schein, 2010). Specific evolution, on the other hand, involves “the adaptation of specific parts of the organization to their particular environments and the impact of the subsequent cultural diversity on the core culture” (Schein, 2010, p. 276). In other words, it is through this mechanism that subgroups within organizations develop different subcultures.

Evolution and change through insight. Schein (2010) argues that if the goal of culture is to avoid uncertainty and anxiety, then “we should be able to help the organization assess for itself the strengths and weaknesses of its culture and to help it modify cultural assumptions if that becomes necessary for survival and effective
functioning” (p. 277). Thus, members of the organization can do an assessment of their culture in terms of strengths and weaknesses and be willing to change some of their cultural assumptions by others.

**Evolution and change through hybrids.** One mechanism of gradual change is the promotion of insiders who, although they can accept much of the cultural core of an organization, at the same time can bring different assumptions and new ways of thinking and acting. Thus, even if they can get negative reactions when trying to change some elements of the organizational culture, at the same time they have credibility because they understand the culture and the changes that can be needed (Schein, 2010).

**Evolution and change through systematic promotion from selected subcultures.** A midlife organization becomes stronger when the diversity of its subcultures increases because diversity improves its adaptive capacity. Thus, when a subculture is more successful than others, leaders can decide to assess “the strengths and weaknesses of different subcultures and then biasing the corporate culture toward one of those subcultures by systematically promoting people from that subculture into key power positions” (Schein, 2010, p. 283).

**Evolution and change through technological seduction.** For Schein (2010), a very effective way of changing cultural assumptions within midlife organizations is “through the subtle, cumulative, and sometimes unintended consequences of new technology that they introduce deliberately or take advantage of” (p. 284). The introduction of new technologies within an organization is not only intended to increase efficiency and productivity but also with the aim of creating a common way of thinking and acting among their members (Schein, 2010).
Evolution and change through infusion of outsiders. Culture change within midlife organizations can be fostered “by systematically bringing outsiders into jobs below the top management level and allowing them gradually to educate and reshape top management’s thinking” (Schein, 2010, p. 288). In essence, the outsiders start reshaping the culture of some subgroups and, when successful, their model is adopted by the organization. Moreover, besides generating a new model for the organization, a group of managers who can be promoted into higher positions with more influence within the organization is created (Schein, 2010).

Evolution and change through scandal and explosion of myths. Within mature organizations, scandal and myth explosion become primary mechanisms to change the culture. “Nothing will change until the consequences of the actual operating assumptions create a public and visible scandal that cannot be hidden, avoided, or denied” (Schein, 2010, p. 291). Thus, public scandals force members of the organization to review norms, practices, and assumptions that were taken for granted and were not disputed before. Scandals do not change culture by themselves, but create the conditions for challenging assumptions and disputing the indisputable.

Evolution and change through turnarounds. A ‘turnaround’ is a rapid transformation or destruction of either some parts or the totality of the culture of an organization with the aim of adapting after a crisis or scandal. To implement a turnaround, strong managers or ‘transformational leaders’ are going to be needed to unfreeze the organization and launch the change programs (Kotter & Heskett, 1992). Turnarounds normally require the involvement and commitment of all members of the organization to learn new values and goals, and to accept the transformation of certain structures (Schein, 2010).
The two more common leadership models to manage turnarounds are the ‘strong vision model,’ where the leader has a clear vision of the future of the organization (Tichy & Devanna, 1987), and the ‘fuzzy vision model’ where the leader proves the necessity to change but asks other members of the organization how to do it (Pava, 1983). In essence, while the first model would mean ‘we need to change and I have a plan,’ the later would be supplemented with the idea ‘…and we need your help’ (Schein, 2010).

**Evolution and change through mergers and acquisitions.** With mergers and acquisitions emerge cultural shocks derived from the encounter of different cultures that, depending how they are managed, can result in chaos or innovation, turbulences or efficiency. Thus, there are different ways of managing these cultural shocks: (1) The different cultures evolve on their own; (2) one of the cultures dominates the others; or (3) a blend among cultures is produced using elements of the different cultures (Schein, 2010).

**Evolution and change through destruction and rebirth.** According to Schein (2010), there is little information about the process of destroying culture. However, it is accepted that “a culture or at least some key elements of a culture can be destroyed by removing the key culture carriers” (Schein, 2010, p. 295). Yukl (1994) argues that to change a culture, it sometimes can be necessary the “elimination of some cultural forms that symbolize the old ideology, modification of other cultural forms to express the new ideology, and creation of some new cultural forms as well” (p. 373). For example, the elimination of outmoded practices and the destruction of old ceremonies, rituals, rites, slogans, symbols, and labels that, in some cases, can be substituted by new ones.

Conversely, from a Bourdieusian approach, culture evolves because it is the result of “the struggle for the monopoly of the legitimate representation of the social world”
This struggle is executed within the cultural field where individuals, through relations among institutions, rules, rituals, conventions, categories, designations, appointments and titles, attempt to determine what is defined as capital within that field, and how that capital will be distributed (Bourdieu, 1990a).

Objects of the social world can be perceived and expressed in different ways because they always include some degree of indeterminacy and vagueness because:

The most constant combinations of properties are never founded on anything other than statistical connections between interchangeable features; and also because, as historical objects, they are subject to variations in time and their meaning, in so far as it depends on the future, is itself in suspense, in a pending and deferred state, and is thus relatively indeterminate. (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 234)

This element of uncertainty offers a basis for the plurality of world views, points of view, and to all the symbolic struggles to produce and impose a legitimate vision of the world and, more specifically, “to all the cognitive strategies of fulfilment which produce the meaning of the objects of the social world by going beyond the directly visible attributes by reference to the future or the past” (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 235).

Moreover, within each field there is a habitus, the relationship between the historical and cultural production of individual practices and the individual production of practices. The habitus produces history through individual and collective practices and in accordance with the mental schemes and dispositions engendered by history (Bourdieu, 1977). Thus, it is fluid as a result of the combination of strategic thinking and acting of people using the rules of the game to their advantage on one side, and the influence that values and expectations from the habitus exercise upon them on the other (Bourdieu, 1977).
**How culture changes.** As Trice and Beyer (1993) argue, cultural change requires the leaders to offer the impression of competence, to articulate an ideology, to clearly communicate convictions, to be a role model, and to have confidence and motivate the supporters. In addition, cultural innovation leaders need to be dramatic and expressive with their vision and require a source of additional power to implement new ideas and to deal with the resistances (Yukl, 1994).

At an individual level, it is easier to change culture than at a group level because changing the culture of a group means that “all interpersonal relationships have to be renegotiated. However, if new tasks or a new environment force such a renegotiation, there is a good chance that undesirable aspects of the old culture will be cleaned up” (Hofstede et al., 2010, p. 375). For a process of cultural innovation and change, two roles are needed: (1) A ‘Machtpromotor’ or expert in making the right diagnosis of the organizational culture and subcultures because organizations from the top are very different than from the middle or bottom where the actual work is done; and (2) a ‘Fachpromotor’ or power holder who preferably has charisma to convince the members of the organization that change is needed, in particular with all the resisters (Witte, 1973).

Tichy and Devana (1987) propose four approaches for leaders to increase awareness for culture change within an organization: (1) Encouraging objective critiques and dissenting opinions; (2) external evaluations of the organization’s strengths and weaknesses; (3) foster travelling and visiting other organizations to learn; and (4) measure performance against competitors. Thus, to have the support of key actors who acknowledge the necessity for change within the organization is central to facilitate the process because “organizational cultures only change when new values are introduced by the decree or example of top management” (Schein, 2010, p. 185). However, this theory
also recognizes that “only when the new values are absorbed into unconscious assumptions will the culture actually change, giving employees a controlling role as well” (p. 185). Tichy and Devanna (1987) state that for a vision to be successful it is needed more than a leader because the vision evolves throughout time and is the result of a participative process that includes key actors who have to support the new ideas and changes. Moreover, Bennis and Nanus (1985) argue that rarely does the leader conceive a vision from nowhere; rather, the vision is the result of formal and informal networking with people within the organization and also with outsiders.

Forces for stability and change co-exist within an organization, but change is produced when “assumptions are symbolically challenged within the interpretation process and this starts a chain of effects” (Schein, 2010, p. 191). In other words, it is a double process of deconstruction first and reconstruction later, because as Martin (1992) states, a ‘postmodern’ organization that deconstructs and then reconstructs would support diversity, plurality, and ambiguity. This double process to change culture within an organization needs persistence and consistency. Process change is about “instituting new procedures, eliminating controls or establishing new controls, implementing or discontinuing automation, and short-circuiting communications or introducing new communication links” (Hofstede et al., 2010, p. 375). At an individual level, personnel changes mean new policies regarding hiring and promoting employees. Human resource managers unconsciously maintain their model when it comes to hiring for the organization and they are key to changing culture hiring individuals that will fit within the new culture and not the old one anymore (Hofstede et al., 2010). Moreover, new symbols are central because they are easily visible. For example, a new “name, logo, uniforms, slogans, and portraits on the wall – all that belongs to the fashionable area of corporate
identity” (Hofstede et al., 2010, p. 376). However, symbols represent the surface of a culture; that is why if they do not have the support of fundamental changes at the deeper levels of the culture of the organization they will not be sustainable at the long term (Hofstede et al., 2010).

To change culture within an organization is complicated and structural changes such as closing and opening departments, merging or splitting activities, or moving people can facilitate the process (Hofstede et al., 2010). In addition, external crisis of survival can influence the process of change as a result of the discredit of their leaders and they have a positive effect when challenging assumptions. Organizations going through survival crises discover in their responses deep assumptions that need to be transformed to adjust to the new situation. Thus, new senior managers can start leading and fostering changes within the organization that, if successful, eventually will become assumptions and will change the culture of the organization (Schein, 2010).

From a Bourdieusian perspective, because the categories of perception of the social world result from incorporating the objective structures of the social space, people are inclined to accept the social world and take it for granted instead of rebelling against that social order and struggle to impose a different worldview. However, Bourdieu (1991) argues that since some cultural fields and institutions are alienated and marginalized, members of those fields can keep a strong commitment to the field’s inalienable ideals and values through their habitus from where they can initiate processes of resistance.

Moreover, the indeterminacy of the objects of the social world and certain degree of agency and reflexivity applied to those objects, offers an “Archimedean point” for political action (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 235). As Bourdieu (1991) argues, the categories that make possible the order of the world are central for the political struggle, “a struggle
which is inseparably theoretical and practical, over the power of preserving or transforming the social world by preserving or transforming the categories of perception of that world” (p. 236). Thus, this objective element of uncertainty provides a base for symbolic struggles to impose the legitimate vision of the world. According to Bourdieu (1989), these symbolic struggles can adopt two different forms: (1) Collective actions of representation that aim to display specific realities, as for example, demonstrations that visibilize the group; and (2) individual actions of representation, which include all the strategies of presentation of self with the aim of manipulating one’s self-image and particularly the image of one’s position in social space. Moreover, the symbolic struggle adopts the form of transformation of categories of perception and appreciation of the social world, essentially the words and names that construct social reality as much as they express it, or what Bourdieu (1989) calls the “struggle over the legitimate exercise” or “theory effect.” (p. 21).

In the struggle for the production and imposition of the legitimate vision of the social world, not all projects of world-making have the same importance, “and holders of large amounts of symbolic capital, the nobles (etymologically, those who are well-known and recognized), are in a position to impose the scale of values most favorable to their products” (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 21). For Bourdieu (1989), world-making consists “in carrying out a decomposition, an analysis, and a composition, a synthesis, often by the use of labels” (p. 22), and to carry out this process, symbolic power, the power that through words preserves or transforms objective principles of union and separation, and social classifications, is needed. Moreover, as any form of performative discourse, symbolic power depends on the possession of symbolic capital, which is understood as “the power granted to those who have obtained sufficient recognition to be in a position
to impose recognition,” and, to be symbolically efficient, “on the degree to which the vision proposed is founded in reality.” (p. 23).

Symbolic power creates ‘reality’ with words because it “is a power of consecration or revelation, the power to consecrate or to reveal things that are already there” and the “‘theory effect’ is all the more powerful the more adequate the theory is” (p. 23). As Bourdieu (1989) states

In fact, as a constellation which, according to Nelson Goodman (1978), begins to exist only when it is selected and designated as such, a group, a class, a gender, a region, or a nation begins to exist as such, for those who belong to it as well as for the others, only when it is distinguished, according to one principle or another, from other groups, that is, through knowledge and recognition (connaissance et reconnaissance). (p. 23)

Although changing culture is a difficult process, for ethnic SMOs, this process can be a key tool to create alternative spaces and pushing back the assumptions and values of what was imposed by the dominant culture, since “cultural forces are powerful because they operate outside of our awareness” (Schein, 2010, p. 7). Thus, it is not only about understanding existing cultures but also how culture is created, evolves, can be destroyed, and how leadership influences all these processes. “This dynamic view also reflects a more functional point of view in that we are trying to understand not only what culture is but also what functions culture serves for a given group, occupation, nations, and so on” (Schein, 2010, p. 74). Because if the function of a social order is to “provide meaning to its members, to create psychological safety through the rules of interaction that protect face and self-esteem, and to define personal boundaries and the interactional rules for love and intimacy” (Schein, 2010, p. 154), what happens when the social order has been
designed by a dominant culture for a dominant culture? In a scenario like this, subcultures and countercultures need to focus on culture as a field for struggle and a tool for emancipation mastering the art of creating, changing, deconstructing, and destroying when necessary. Thus, culture can be either a system of domination resulting from Modernity and colonialism, and implemented through a process of Eurocentric leadership, or a project that can be effective to transit from our current postcolonial world to an intercultural society with minimum asymmetries of power where different narratives and worldviews can fit and learn from each other with even conditions.

**Toward an Intercultural Society**

Eurocentrism was imposed as a global hegemon during colonization, and imagined Modernity and rationality as exclusively European products and experiences. Moreover, intersubjective and cultural relations between Western Europe and the rest of the world were codified in new categories: East-West, primitive-civilized, magic/mythic-scientific, irrational-rational, traditional-modern, Europe and not Europe (Quijano, 2000). As a result of this dualism that excludes and that does not see difference as complementary, the European culture is the only rational one, it is the only one that can contain ‘subjects’–the rest are not rational, they cannot be or harbor subjects. This false dilemma presents other cultures as different and unequal, and inferior by nature (Quijano, 2000). There are subjects and objects; there is one model of person (White upper-middle class man) and one region (Western world) as the house of enunciation, while the rest are just enunciated and are denied enunciation (Mignolo, 2011). As a consequence of these relationships, every relation of communication, of interchange of knowledge, and of modes of producing knowledge between cultures is blocked. It is a colonial epistemology,
not dialogic, that does not allow any other form of knowledge to enter into dialogue (Mignolo, 2011).

According to Freire (2012), social orders proposed by both the ‘right’ and the ‘left’ are reactionary because they develop forms of action that negate freedom: The former imagines a ‘well-behaved’ present and is willing to continue in that way, while the latter imagines a predetermined future that they already know. In other words, it is their own truth, and not the truth of men and women struggling to build their future. Moreover, it is not “the truth of men and women who fight side by side and learn together how to build this future – which is not something given to be received by people, but is rather something to be created by them” (Freire, 2012, p. 39). Thus, an intercultural society is the society where there are no owners of the discourses and the narratives and where the people take control of their realities naming and transforming the world from their cultural perspectives and worldviews. As Freire (2012) argues, “who are better prepared than the oppressed to understand the terrible significance of an oppressive society? Who suffer the effects of oppression more than the oppressed?” (p. 44). Their emancipation will be gained by themselves through reflection (intellectuality) and action (praxis), through a critical intercultural leadership process that goes from critical consciousness to ethnogenesis.

Therefore, what is needed first is a leadership process from social movements separated from the bonds existing between rationality/modernity and coloniality, and then, to destroy the coloniality of world power (Quijano, 2010). According to Escobar (2010), “critiques of modernity, in short, are blind to the (epistemic and cultural) colonial difference that becomes the focus of modernity/coloniality” (p. 40). As a consequence of this lack of perspective, epistemological decolonization is key in any leadership process.
As Quijano (2010) states, “epistemological decolonization is needed to clear the way for new intercultural communication, for an interchange of experiences and meanings, as the basis of another rationality which may legitimately pretend to some universality” (p. 31). This thinking from the excluded other or thinking otherwise is not just a question of changing the contents of the conversation but the very terms of it (Escobar, 2010). It is a new intercultural model of leadership understood as a process from the borders and the margins and with their people, an emancipatory and critical leadership process.

Today’s social movements are more radical, complex and inclusive than former movements such as liberals, anarchists, or socialists (Hunter, 1995). They are radical because they seek for a holistic transformation of society that goes from structural changes to deconstruct social imaginaries and frameworks instead of proposing cosmetic political reforms. Moreover, while former social movements used to think that taking over power was enough to transform the system of domination and oppression, new movements are aware of a broader and comprehensive struggle in different fields such as the objective and subjective social structures that conform the social order of the world (Hunter, 1995). In essence, “radical new social movements seek to change the rules of the game, ‘not just the distribution of relative advantages in a given organization.’ Indeed, only by changing those rules can their ends be achieved” (Hunter, 1995, p. 331).

These new movements aim to build an intercultural society that overcomes the postcolonial world of domination and oppression that many marginalized groups experience. Because in the current society both objective and subjective social structures do not allow diversity, and a new society not built on Eurocentric frameworks of domination is needed. This should be a new society where different cultures can coexist and interact without being objectified, where there is a dialogue and not a monologue
among cultures, where there are even relations of power among groups, and where the
difference is valued and appreciated (Viaña, 2010). According to Walsh (2007),
interculturality means processes of construction of different knowledges, different
political practices, different social power, and a different society, and different ways of
thinking and acting regarding Modernity/Coloniality through political praxis. It is a
thought, a praxis, a power, and a paradigm of and from the difference that goes beyond
the dominant forms while challenging them (Walsh, 2007). In a postcolonial society
where culture is a system of domination, exclusion, and control, an intercultural society
seeks for emancipation to overcome the objectification of culture. Here, culture is
understood as economy and politics including different worldviews and projects beyond
the Western world canon (Santos, 2007a). In addition, the debate about the re-foundation
of the idea of Nation-state and the liberal concept of Democracy is promoted to create
more inclusive forms of territorial, political, and economic systems of organization from
bottom-up.

To build an intercultural society, there is a need for a new model of critical
intercultural leadership as a social movement. This process of leadership could produce a
new intercultural cultural matrix that substitutes the hegemonic matrix to reduce the big
asymmetries of power between cultures, and decolonizes our minds to value difference
and to overcome the obstacles that hinder social and cognitive justice. One would
understand this new model as a process that goes beyond current political projects and
seeks to include the difference within the hegemonic worldview, because it: (1) would
have a broader doxa (or more than one doxa) than simply the hegemonic doxa; (2) would
value cultural and epistemic differences; (3) would design a pluriversal world resulting
from a true and efficient dialogue between cultures; and (4) would constantly review the
creation of internal and external structures and institutions to avoid reproducing asymmetries of power between cultures and new mechanisms of domination and oppression. The challenge is immense, however, when the alternative is a postcolonial world of domination and oppression, building a world of social and cognitive justice where different worlds can coexist cannot wait anymore.

Therefore, it is central to understand how does a critical intercultural leadership process shape the culture of an organization that resists within a hegemonic culture and what are the frameworks articulated to make sense and meaning of reality to resist? Thus, this study could shed light on the processes of leadership from a postcolonial world to an intercultural society. Moreover, it is central to discover the strategies that are implemented in an ethnic SMO to raise critical consciousness and unfold ethnogenesis and if, in order to do so, there are needed conditions (and how can they be created). In addition, any sustained process of leadership that aims to transform society needs to be concerned with social structures both mental and physical, and particularly how these structures are deconstructed and reconstructed in an ethnic SMO through a process of critical intercultural leadership. Finally, what differentiates a critical intercultural leadership process from the Eurocentric leadership is the development of processes of constant revision of the structures created with the aim of avoiding the creation of new asymmetries of power and structures of domination and oppression between cultures. In other words, it is a process without an end willing to change a hierarchical system for more horizontal structures and institutions where a true and effective dialogue can be unfolded, and not about changing the subjects at the top of the hierarchy and reproducing a new monologue from a different cultural perspective.
In conclusion, to understand the process of critical intercultural leadership, I implemented a mini-ethnographic case study research of The NATIVE Project, a Native American organization led by women that through a process of critical intercultural leadership, resists against the hegemonic Western culture in the United States. In Chapter three I will discuss the methodology and methods implemented with my research and, considering the historical oppression of minorities in the United States, a transformative worldview and theoretical perspectives of critical theory with the aim of exposing the arbitrariness and inequities of the social order, advocating for social and cognitive justice.
CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

Transformative approach emerged in the 1980s as a critique to postpositivist assumptions that present structural laws and theories which neither apply to marginalized people in our society nor address issues of power, social justice, discrimination, and oppression (Creswell, 2014). These inquirers, basically critical theorists, Marxists, feminists, indigenous people, postcolonial researchers and so on, consider that the constructivist approach does not advocate enough for an action agenda to struggle with marginalized peoples.

According to Mertens (2008), a transformative worldview advocates for a research inquiry intertwined with politics and an agenda that focuses on political change to struggle against social oppression at whatever levels it occurs. Moreover, a transformative approach focuses on groups traditionally marginalized, inequities that result in asymmetries of power relationships, political and social action, among others (Creswell, 2014). Mertens (2012) describes the transformative paradigm as an umbrella that researchers can use to further social justice. This paradigm is based in an axiological assumption which represents a conceptual framework from where the rest of assumptions of the paradigm flow. Researchers try to learn norms of behaviors and ethical approaches for research from other cultures. Moreover, there is a transformative ontological assumption which accepts different perspectives about what is real. However, focusing on the power and privilege of people, not all visions are equally legitimate in terms of social justice. Finally, an epistemological assumption exists which places the researcher in a position of establishing rapport with the community members.
Regarding the theoretical perspective of critical theory, Habermas (1971), one of the most prominent critical theorists, describes three types of research: Technical, which is focused on control using theory to manipulate the environment and predict effects; practical, which is value neutral and aims to develop a deep understanding of a context seeking for actions; and emancipatory, which promotes the creation of a space for interaction with even conditions and where there is no domination. This type is characterized by its explicit critical edge.

Horkheimer (1982), a critical theorist from the Frankfurt School, argues that any theory that seeks “to liberate human beings from the circumstances that enslave them” (p. 244) can be considered a critical theory. For critical theorists, “the material world is made up of historically situated structures that have a real impact on the life chances of individuals” (Hatch, 2002, p. 16). Thus, when interpreting data, critical researchers focus on raising the consciousness of the oppressed “because of historically situated structures tied to race, gender and class” (p. 17). Moreover, it is not only about raising critical consciousness; this paradigm is also concerned with empowering the oppressed to overcome the barriers and obstacles they experience as a consequence of their race, class, or gender (Fay, 1987). With consciousness and empowerment comes the opportunity to provide understandings that can lead to social change.

Therefore, my purpose with this research is to understand how a leadership process contributes to create an organizational culture that raises critical consciousness and unfolds ethnogenesis within an ethnic social movement organization. I believe that a better understanding of this phenomenon will contribute to the field of leadership studies shedding light on the recent interest for diversity and leadership at an individual, organizational, and global level. Moreover, this study would allow public agencies and
educational institutions to proceed from a more informed perspective in terms of designing policies and structures for multicultural contexts. Last but not least, with my study I will contribute to a better understanding of a developmental model for change and social emancipation.

In this chapter I describe my research methodology and methods. I include discussions in the following areas: (1) Methodology, qualitative research, and case study overview; (2) methods of data collection, research setting, participants, and process of gathering data; (3) data analysis methods; (4) methods of interpretation; (5) ethical considerations and researcher bias; (6) issues of trustworthiness; and (7) limitations and delimitations of the study. The chapter culminates with a brief summary.

**Methodology**

Qualitative research includes a variety of approaches that focus more on the quality than the quantity of phenomenon (Bazeley, 2013), and “provides information about the ‘human’ side of an issue – that is, the often contradictory behaviors, beliefs, opinions, emotions, and relationships of individuals” (Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen, Guest, & Namey, 2005, p. 1). In addition, qualitative methods are central to identify non-tangible factors, “such as social norms, socioeconomic status, gender roles, ethnicity, and religion, whose role in the research issue may not be readily apparent” (Mack et al., 2005, p. 2). Behind qualitative research methods there is a qualitative stance which involves “focusing on the cultural, everyday, and situated aspects of human thinking, learning, knowing, acting, and ways of understanding ourselves as persons, and it is opposed to ‘technified’ approaches to the study of human lives” (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 12). According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), in a complex world and reality
Everything influences everything else in the here and now. Many elements are implicated in any given action, and each element interacts with all of the others in ways that change them all, while simultaneously resulting in something that we, as outside observers, label as outcomes or effects. But the interaction has no directionality, no need to produce that particular outcome….it simply happened.

(Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 151)

Thus, naturalistic inquiry is holistic and inductive, a ‘naturalistic’ rather than ‘rationalistic’ method of inquiry with which the researcher avoids manipulating research outcomes and that goes beyond subject-object interactions, generalizations, causality, and the role of values to describe the nature of reality (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). “Naturalistic inquiry uses qualitative over quantitative methods because they are more adaptable to dealing with multiple realities” (p. 40), and qualitative researchers study objects, individuals and groups in their natural settings, making sense of, or interpreting phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Moreover, naturalistic inquiry considers that all inquiry is value-laden and influenced by the researcher's values, her choice of paradigm, and her choice of theories (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Therefore, concepts from this study such as oppression, emancipation, social structures, cultural assumptions, sense- and meaning-making, critical consciousness, or ethnogenesis are part of the complexity of the sociocultural world that human beings experience, interpret, and understand in a specific context and point in time, and are more related with naturalistic inquiry in general and the qualitative methods and stance in particular.

Regarding qualitative data “one can preserve chronological flow, see precisely which events led to which consequences, and derive fruitful explanations” (Miles &
Huberman, 1994, p. 1). As a result of my interest in specific aspects of human relationships, interactions, and the processes involved in them such as leadership and organizational culture, a qualitative methodology was selected for this study because as Denzin and Lincoln (2013) argue, the qualitative approach focuses on discovery and description and it is central to interpret the meaning of experience. Moreover, from the five intellectual goals that Maxwell (2013) argues are especially suited for qualitative research, two of them are particularly pertinent to my study: “2. Understanding the particular contexts within which the participants act, and the influence that this context has on their actions… 3. Understanding the process by which events and actions take place…” (pp. 30-31). In addition, naturalistic inquiry is understood in my research as an encompassing methodological perspective to accompany my overarching critical theory perspective and, since it is an approach open to context, it also works as an explanatory frame of my view of leadership as a process.

**Abductive Analysis**

According to Tavory and Timmermans (2014), the central challenge with qualitative methodology today is not to justify its scientific character “but to rethink what it means to collect and interpret data with an eye on theory construction” (p. 3). The authors differentiate between *induction*, which refers to “the process of collecting new data and using it to strengthen or problematize well-established theories,” and *deduction*, which “suggests a hypothesis about specific observations that is already based on existing theory” (Tavory & Timmermans, 2014, p. 4). However, neither induction nor deduction is particularly creative, because neither leads to new theories. For Tavory and Timmermans (2014), it is necessary “to move away from our preconceived notions and to create new
narratives about the phenomenon we are trying to explain” (p. 5). This is the context where *abduction* can occur, understood as “a creative inferential process aimed at producing new hypotheses and theories based on surprising research evidence. Abduction produces a new hypothesis for which we then need to gather more observations” (Tavory & Timmermans, 2014, p. 5).

When working with an ethnic organization where emerges a critical intercultural leadership process that through culture challenges doxa raising critical consciousness, and also deconstructs and reconstructs social structures, a creative inferential process aimed at generating new narratives and theories is needed. According to Barbour (1999), theory is developed in four stages: ‘out of the field’ or the pre-field work, ‘into the field’ or fieldwork and preliminary data analysis, ‘back again’ or the data analysis and writing, and ‘then some,’ when the theory is tested in other frameworks and missing pieces are added. In essence, it is a process of theory construction that flows from theory to the field and from the field to theory in a gracious and constant form. In my study, following an abductive approach, I sought to understand the process of leadership that creates a particular organizational culture moving constantly: (1) ‘Out of the field.’ Following the conceptual framework I looked for existing research that supported my study and wrote a literature review with theories that contributed to build my argument; (2) ‘into the field.’ Creating bonds and developing trust with the members of The Native Project first, I collected data later; and (3) ‘back again.’ I shaped my conceptual framework and the design of my research according to conversations with members of the organization under study and as a result of the data analysis.
‘Process’ Methodology

Understanding the construction of theory as a process has similarities with the concept of processual leadership. Leadership as a process results in three methodological factors that are interconnected: (1) Leadership always occurs in social practice and not in a definite figure, which situates “the space of the stage or scene to the centre of analysis and not the immediate individuality of a social actor who can be simply located, or the discrete relations, which obtain between familiar representations of ‘leaders’ and ‘followers’” (Wood, 2005, p. 1116); (2) since leadership is basically a process and not an object, this phenomenon tends toward novelty, innovation, and emergence. A process methodology seeks to study change instead of things that change (Bergson, 1974); and (3) considering that what we recognize as figures in a particular context are “an ongoing creative advance, our methodological concern should be with the identification of an essential movement, a movement that has a certain temporal dimension, a process in time” (Wood, 2005, p. 1114). Therefore, the phenomenon of leadership implies a methodology focused on “relations, connexions, dependences and reciprocities, over time: a set of advantageous circumstances becoming identical with the ‘objective’ subject of leadership” (Wood, 2005, p. 1117). In this study, I selected a methodology and a set of methods that best suit, harmonize, and apprehend the complexity of a fluid and processual phenomenon of leadership with a holistic perspective focusing on interactions and change.

As Bazeley (2013) states, qualitative analysis is basically case-oriented because “data are contributed by and analysis is centred around cases. This case-oriented approach of qualitative analysis emphasizes the situated interrelatedness of different features and causes within each example of that phenomenon” (p. 5). In this study, in order to
understand how a relational leadership process within an ethnic organization contributes to create a culture that raises critical consciousness and unfolds ethnegogenesis, and how are the frameworks, strategies, conditions, and structures needed, a case study design was more suited.

Case Study

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), naturalistic inquiry prefers a case study approach because it is more adapted to describing multiple realities, local conditions, beliefs and values. Cases can take different forms. As a consequence of this variety, “there is little in the way of organizational structure to guide the intending case inquirer” (Bazeley, 2013, p. 511). According to Ragin and Becker (1992), the term “case” and other terms linked with the concept are not well-defined in social science as a result of a ‘variable’ orientation instead of a ‘case’ orientation in research. From a methodological point of view, practitioners have difficulty articulating their steps and as a result of this problem, the case study “survives in a curious methodological limbo” (Gerring, 2004, p. 341). Therefore, the question that arises is: What then, is a case?

Stake (2005) provides a wide perspective considering a case study as a design frame where ‘analytical eclecticism’ is central and should not be seen as a method. Creswell (2014) defines a case study as “a design of inquiry found in many fields, especially evaluation, in which the researcher develops an in-depth analysis of a case, often a program, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals” (p. 14). A case study is understood as “an exploration of a ‘bounded system’ or a case (or multiple cases) over time through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information rich in context” (Creswell, 2013, p. 61). Simons (2009) argues that a case
study is “an in-depth exploration from multiple perspectives of the complexity and uniqueness of a particular project, policy, institution, program or system in a ‘real life’ context” (p. 21).

For a case to exist, it is necessary to identify a characteristic unit which can be observed but that has no meaning in itself (Wieviorka, 1992). In essence, in order to talk about a ‘case,’ the means of interpreting or situating the case in a context are crucial (Wieviorka, 1992). Notwithstanding, Thomas (2011) states that, as a result of the ‘looseness’ of the case study, it is not possible to explain anything identifying only a subject (a ‘practical, historical unit’), and a theoretical frame to analyze the circumstances of a subject is needed “for the study to constitute research” (p. 513). According to Thomas (2011),

Case studies are analyses of persons, events, decisions, periods, projects, policies, institutions, or other systems that are studied holistically by one or more methods. The case that is the subject of the inquiry will be an instance of a class of phenomena that provides an analytical frame—an object—within which the study is conducted and which the case illuminates and explicates. (p. 513)

Stake (1995), when talking about people and programs in case study research, describes a case research as entering “the scene with a sincere interest in learning how they function in their ordinary pursuits and milieus and with a willingness to put aside many presumptions while we learn” (p. 1). As Stake (1995) argues, the case could revolve around individuals such as a journalist, or a group of journalists, and can be focused on an experience such as the preparation of an athlete for competition, or a process like planning a wedding. Thus, after a few weeks or months of fieldwork and additional note-
taking, the researcher may have a sense that the data are sufficiently in place to begin analyzing findings (Stake, 1995).

According to Yin (2009), the case study design may involve either quantitative or qualitative approaches and there are three different models: (1) Explanatory. The case examines the data thoroughly at both a superficial and a deep level to explain the phenomena in the data; (2) Exploratory. The case explores any phenomenon in the data that can be of interest to the researcher; and (3) Descriptive. The case describes the natural phenomena that occur within the data. Notwithstanding, Yin (2009) warns researchers against trying to separate these three models or to understand them as a hierarchy. Therefore, case studies can be explanatory, exploratory, and descriptive at the same time depending on the researcher’s approach. For this study, I was interested in an explanatory model focusing on the concepts of my conceptual framework. However, I also examined data in an exploratory manner, and approached the natural phenomena in a descriptive fashion. In essence, all three models are represented with my study at a certain level.

Research methods have limitations (Babbie, 2013), and regarding case study method Yin (2009) identifies three specific concerns: (1) Lack of rigor; (2) lack of generalizability, and (3) lack of applicability. In terms of rigor, Yin (2009) argues that case study research can be considered academically rigorous since the design of the case includes clear guidelines for data collection and analysis. For Shank (2006), academic rigor is based on carefully designed research with tools of data collection and analysis evaluation in place. Great concern was taken to make sure that the qualitative method matched the guiding questions, and I also took care when entering the field to collect data and during the analysis following the guidelines proposed in this chapter.
When it comes to generalizability, Yin (2009) affirms that qualitative case study results more in generalization of theories and ideas than in populations and samples. The power of case study research remains in explanation instead of prediction, which can be considered as the case main limitation in terms of generalizability. In my study, I am concerned about its generalizability to reproduce processes of leadership that create a culture that raises critical consciousness and unfolds ethnogenesis in other social movement organizations (SMOs), but above all I am interested in understanding how the process develops.

Finally, about applicability, case study research involves multiple sources of data which results in a triangulation effect that offers objectivity and reliability of data collection and analysis (Yin, 2009). To prevent my study from lack of applicability and becoming an exhausting case study, I implemented different research methods and refined thoroughly the material included in the results.

**Single case design.** One of the main decisions in designing a case study research is to select either a single or a multiple case. Yin (2009) suggests five reasons to use a single case design in the following situations: (1) The case is a critical case that tests a theory; (2) the case represents an extreme case or a unique case; (3) the case constitutes a typical case; (4) the case reveals a phenomenon previously inaccessible to scientific investigation; and (5) the case is a longitudinal study that involves studying a single case at two or more different points in time.

For my study, I used the single case study of a critical intercultural process of leadership that contributes to create a culture of resistance that raises critical consciousness and unfolds ethnogenesis. I utilized the single case method because: (1) There is research regarding cultural resistance (Bourdieu, 1989; Freire, 2012; Walsh,
2010) and leadership processes of shaping culture (Guthey & Jackson, 2011; Martin, 2002; Schein, 2010) that can be tested with the case; (2) the organization chosen can be considered an extreme or unique case because it is an organization where a process of critical intercultural leadership and cultural resistance takes place; and (3) a complex phenomenon of a leadership process that creates a culture that raises critical consciousness and unfolds ethnogenesis has not been previously addressed by scientific investigation.

**Holistic and embedded case design.** Another important decision for case study design is whether to use a holistic or an embedded case design. While a holistic case design explores “the global nature of an organization or of a program” (Yin, 2009, p. 43), an embedded design provides the opportunity to examine subunits of the organization such as divisions, departments, projects, and so on (Yin, 2009). According to Yin (2009), a holistic approach can avoid detailed aspects of the phenomenon that is studied resulting in writing-up an abstract case while the embedded case can contribute to focusing the inquiry. However, with the embedded design researchers can become so focused on a specific unit of the organization and ‘forget’ to go back to the larger unit of analysis (Yin, 2009). For the purpose of my study, a holistic and embedded design was used. Since I understand leadership as a process for cultural resistance that emerges within an ethnic organization, the most appropriate unit of analysis is the whole organization. Notwithstanding, in my study organizational culture was approached from three academic perspectives of integration, differentiation, and fragmentation, so it was also central to take into consideration different department, services, and projects with their respective (sub)cultures as described with the differentiation and fragmentation approaches.
The process to be studied as case. The purpose of my case study was to gain a deeper understanding of how a process of leadership creates a culture that raises critical consciousness and unfolds ethnogenesis in an ethnic organization. Thus, the case being studied was the process of critical intercultural leadership within The NATIVE Project that resulted from the struggle for cultural resistance of different Native American tribes and other minority groups in Spokane, Washington. To accomplish this purpose, it was key to identify an organization where this process of critical intercultural leadership emerges because that particular organization views culture as a field for struggle seeking social emancipation through a process of critical intercultural leadership which broadens doxa and is more inclusive of different cultures.

The NATIVE Project is a Native American owned small business led by women that provides quality services that promote wellness and balance of mind, body, and spirit for individuals, staff families and communities, in Spokane, Washington. As an organization committed to offer health services from their own cultural perspective and with an activist approach that aims to raise awareness of issues related with social justice in the community, The NATIVE Project is of particular relevance to better understand how emerges a critical intercultural leadership process which contributes to create an organizational culture that raises critical consciousness and unfolds ethnogenesis.

Regarding single case studies, Creswell (2013) argues that there are three central structural components in single case studies: (1) The case is clearly identified; (2) the case is bounded in time and location (from one to six months of data collection in a single location); and (3) the case uses multiple sources of data to provide an in-depth picture. My study fits Creswell’s definition because: (1) It was clearly identified as the critical intercultural leadership process that emerges within The NATIVE Project; (2) was
focused on time (six months) and location (Spokane, Washington); and (3) multiple methods of data collection were used such as observations, artifacts gathering, and interviews/guided conversations.

Merriam (1998) defines case study research as the process of carrying out the study, the unit of analysis, or the final product. A case study is an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a phenomenon or social unit that defines both the scope and process of inquiry. Thus, in terms of harmonizing research design and research method, Yin (2009) recommends the researcher consider the type of guiding questions used, her control over behavioral events, and the degree of historical or contemporary focus. For this study, the guiding questions focus on how a leadership process unfolds processes of cultural resistance and how shapes the organizational culture of The NATIVE Project. These questions are open-ended and ideally suited to the case study methodology because, “‘how’ or ‘why’ questions are more explanatory and likely to lead to the use of case studies, histories, and experiments as the preferred research strategies” (Yin, 2009, p. 6).

**Case study design and ethnography.** Yin (2009) suggests there is a confusion with ethnography and case studies. For Yin (2009), a case “does not depend solely on ethnographic or participant-observer data. You could even do a valid and high-quality case study without leaving the library and the telephone or internet” (p. 11). Since I understand leadership as a process from where emerges an organizational culture that raises critical consciousness and unfolds ethnogenesis, a case study design frame was best suited to identify operational links between events over time (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Yin, 2009). However, even if case studies and ethnography are different designs, in my study I also include an ethnographic perspective. According to White, Drew, and Hay (2009), it
is central “to move on from a dichotomous consideration of case study versus ethnography and consider instead the possibilities of assembling a combination of ethnographic and case study approaches” (p. 22). Ethnography is a qualitative research design that aims to explore cultural interactions and meanings of a group of people (Barbour, 2010), exploring feelings, beliefs, and meanings resulting from relationships between people’s interactions within their culture or reacting to the encounter of different ones (Fields & Kafai, 2009). This ethnographic approach is pertinent to understanding topics of this study such as organizational culture, change, and leadership as a process of sense- and meaning-making. Notwithstanding, the classic ethnographic study can take years to complete because it is not only needed that the researcher becomes part of the culture (Storesund & McMurray, 2009), but in addition the time length requires a bigger budget to stay in the field. As a result of the big amount of time and budget necessary to undertake an ethnographic research, ‘mini-ethnography’ came into being because it can be conducted in a week, a month, or up to a year (Storesund & McMurray, 2009). Mini-ethnography is a research design that aims to understand cultural norms, values, and roles as are relevant to what participants remember (White, 2009).

Wolcott (1999) provides a list of advantages for conducting ethnographic research over other methodological approaches that were used in my study. For example, an ethnographic research perspective allowed me to conduct the study on my own and did not require expensive tools or equipment. Moreover, I was able to implement a longitudinal approach to observe and record changes while collecting data in a ‘natural’ setting focusing on verbal and nonverbal behaviors. In addition, with an ethnographic research perspective the participants are considered subjects and not objects and I got an insider’s view of reality while conducting the study with marginalized groups of people
who are closed to other forms of research. Finally, this methodological approach allowed me to integrate my professional and personal life and provided me with detailed and rich data that I can use for further studies. Therefore, my case study research which took six months of fieldwork could be considered a ‘mini-ethnographic’ case study.

**Methods**

There are four areas of information typically needed for most qualitative studies: contextual, perceptual, demographic, and theoretical (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016). With this case study of critical intercultural leadership at The NATIVE Project, I sought to understand how a leadership process creates an organizational culture for cultural resistance. To answer this question, five more questions determined by the conceptual framework and related to the guiding questions were explored to gather the information needed: How does critical intercultural leadership shape the culture of an organization that resists within a hegemonic culture? How are the frameworks articulated to make sense and meaning of reality to resist? How are the strategies implemented in an ethnic SMO to raise critical consciousness and unfold ethnogenesis? What are the needed conditions (and how can they be created) in an ethnic SMO to raise critical consciousness and unfold ethnogenesis? And how are the different social structures deconstructed and reconstructed in the process by the ethnic SMO?

Contextual information refers to the context within which the participants work. It is information that describes the culture and environment of The NATIVE Project, and it is essential information to collect when doing a case study because elements within the environment or culture may influence behavior (Lewin, 1935). From an ethnographic perspective ‘fieldwork’ is central because it represents a form of inquiry that requires the
immersion of the researcher in the social interactions of individuals and groups carrying out the research (Wolcott, 2012). According to Bloomberg and Volpe (2016), this information will provide us knowledge regarding the history, vision, goals, and strategy of an organization and also, “information on an organization or institution’s leaders and its structure, organizational chart, systems, staff, roles, rules, and procedures would be included in this area of information” (p. 149). Moreover, with my case study of critical intercultural leadership within an organization with its organizational culture, contextual information is central because “the field of culture provides many opportunities for the development of new concepts because it has not yet been studied enough in group, organizational, and occupational domains to have spawned new theory. It is still an evolving field” (Schein, 2010, p. 2).

The field of culture is going to provide the researcher with perceptual information which refers to participants’ perceptions related to the particular subject of the inquiry. Regarding my study, this information was key in terms of leadership processes, critical consciousness, and ethnogenesis, because participants described their experiences such as influences they had in decision making, whether they changed their opinions, what they value or to what extent their objectives were met (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016).

Demographic information describes the participants in my study – whether they are Native American or not, where they come from, social class, level of education, and other personal information such as age, gender or occupation within The NATIVE Project. Demographic information is central within an ethnic organization because it helps to explain “what may be underlying an individual’s perceptions, as well as the similarities and differences in perceptions among participants” (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016, p. 149).
Finally, theoretical information includes information from the various literature sources to assess what is already known regarding my topic of inquiry (see chapter two). This information provided an orienting framework for the study of the group sharing a specific culture (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; Wolcott, 2010). Moreover, it was useful to support the methodological approach, design the conceptual framework, and give strength to the interpretation, analysis, and conclusions (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016).

**Methods of Data Collection**

Since the 1980s, qualitative methods have become key for social research (Kvale & Brickmann, 2009). According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), qualitative methods of research are more pertinent for naturalistic inquiry because realities are multiple, constructed and holistic; the knower and known are interactive and inseparable; only time- and context-bound working hypotheses are possible; all entities are in a state of mutual simultaneous shaping so that it is impossible to distinguish causes from effects; and inquiry is value-bound (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 37).

When it comes to methods, they are understood as “codified processes designed to maximize abductive reasoning, in which we force ourselves to remain with the phenomenon and try to form as many links and hypothesis as possible in light of our theoretically positioned knowledge” (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 61). Since qualitative researchers are concerned about the validity of their research, there are a set of procedures to guarantee rigor such as redundancy of data gathering and procedural challenges to explanation. These procedures are called triangulation, and aim to clarify meaning using multiple perceptions. For Bloomberg and Volpe (2016), “the use of multiple methods of data collection to achieve triangulation is important to obtain an in-depth understanding
of the phenomenon under study” (p. 154). Moreover, the use of multiple methods not only provides an in-depth understanding but also guarantees rigor and authenticates evidence of the data obtained (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

Regarding case study data, Yin argues (2009) that there are six main sources: (1) Documentation; (2) archival records; (3) interviews; (4) direct observations; (5) participant observations; and (6) physical artifacts. However, Rossman and Rallis (2003) suggest only interviewing, observing, and reviewing material culture. In terms of ethnographic case study methods of data collection, Fusch, Fusch, and Ness (2017) suggest five main methods: (1) Direct observation; (2) field notes; (3) reflective journal; (4) informal/unstructured interviews; and (5) focus groups. For my study at The NATIVE Project, I used three methods to provide an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under research, to guarantee rigor, and to authenticate evidence of the data obtained: I observed at the office and settings where the members of The NATIVE Project carry out their activities, collected artifacts displayed within the office or other places where they organize events including artwork, clothes, documents, rituals and ceremonies and even language, and conducted 13 individual and group interviews/guided conversations with employees of the organization (including people in leadership positions and supporters).

**Process of Gathering Data**

In this section I detail the three different methods of data collection that I implemented in my study --participant observation, artifacts gathering, and interviews/guided conversations-- and I provide specific methodological literature regarding these chosen methods. Moreover, I describe how participants were specifically selected for each method, and how, when, and where data were gathered.
**Participant observation.** Observation is “a central and fundamental method in qualitative inquiry and is used to discover and explain complex interactions in natural social settings” (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016, p. 155). Participant observation has its roots in traditional ethnographic research, and aims to help researchers learn the perspectives held by the study population. Its particularity is that “the researcher approaches participants in their own environment rather than having the participants come to the researcher” (Mack et al., 2005, p. 13).

What people can say in an interview or can write in the mission statement of an organization about what they believe or do are often contradicted by their behavior. Moreover, participant observation is also useful to understand the physical, social, cultural, and economic contexts in which participants live, their relationships, behaviors, and activities (Mack et al., 2005). At the first stages of a research project, participant observation enables the development of positive relationships among researchers and participants to improve the design of other methods such as interviews or to improve the cultural understanding of the setting and the organization of the study (Mack et al., 2005). In addition, through this method of gathering data, the researcher obtains a first-hand account of the phenomenon of interest but “raises the issue of ‘positionality,’ that is, the researcher’s relationship with participants, the nature of that involvement, how much of the study’s purpose will be revealed to participants, and how ethical dilemmas will be managed” (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016, p. 155).

Observations in case study research may occur in formal settings such as group meetings or classrooms, and in informal conditions such as walking through an open work area, traveling with a team to organize an event, or listening to a side conversation (Yin, 2009). According to Yin (2009), if the researcher is prepared in advance,
observation in the field can be one of the most rewarding elements of case study research. Thus, to be prepared is central to be familiar with the ‘problématique’ or topics of study before entering the field, helping the researcher to focus on the most prominent experiences and events. Moreover, another key element is to avoid going into the field with preconceived conclusions that can contaminate data. To counterbalance these preconceptions, Yin (2009) suggests developing the ability of accepting and trying to understand contrary findings.

In terms of ethnographic research, Wolcott (2012) suggests that researchers need to ask themselves if they are ‘using’ the participant observations to learn what they want to know, and if what they want to know is the best use of each specific observation. When conducting participant observations, Wolcott (2012) offers some recommendations that I implemented in my study. For example, I practiced reciprocity for the other culture being flexible and accepting ambiguity to cope with cultural shocks through personal determination. Moreover, I reviewed the notes to make sure that I was coupling the analysis with observations throughout the process and I reviewed constantly what I was looking for and whether it was possible to see it in the circumstances of the observation. In addition, I made part of my daily routine to take notes and writing-up and looking for recurring patterns or themes in behavior, action, or inaction.

Regarding my study, I observed at the organization in general and particularly at each of the five departments offering services at The NATIVE Project how the critical intercultural leadership process that shapes a culture of resistance emerges during my six months of field work. Moreover, observing before interviewing/engaging in guided conversation was key in determining whom to recruit for the interviews and to have conversations during the participant observations. In addition, from participant
observation I learned to design questions for the interviews/guided conversations that gave me the best understanding of the phenomenon being studied. Thus, during six months I was at The NATIVE Project office and other settings where they execute their projects to make careful notes about what I saw and listened at meetings, events, hallways and so on, describing all accounts, observations, and interactions related with the phenomenon under study.

Another key element involving participant observations was the informal observations: Conversations at open work areas, walking to have coffee, travelling to events outside the office, and so on, with members of The NATIVE Project. These conversations were also registered in the field notes, in as much detail as possible, along with messages communicated through mass media such as the Internet. Finally, to filter out personal biases I wrote objective observations of a given event on the left page of a notebook, and then my personal inferences and subjective interpretations of the same event on the right page.

**Artifacts.** Each culture has different levels of depth. According to Schein’s (2010) metaphor, culture can be seen as an onion with different layers. The most superficial is the layer that corresponds to artifacts, which represent what is visible in a culture within a group or organization. Among these artifacts, there is architecture, artistic creations, style (clothes, manners, emotional displays), rituals and ceremonies, myths and stories portraying the organization, documents explaining the values of the organization, and so on (Schein, 2010). The fact of being situated at a superficial level, conversely to beliefs and values at an intermediate level, and assumptions at the deepest, does not mean they are not important. As Martin (2002) argues, all different layers of culture are connected
and intertwined and are important to understand the organizational culture of an
organization.

With my study, I focused on collecting the artifacts of The NATIVE Project
interconnected with deeper layers of the culture which eventually contribute to
consolidate the particular view of the world of the organization and its members. Thus,
during six months I observed and took notes about all possible artifacts I saw during my
observations at each of the different departments of the organization including the
artifacts displayed at events outside the main building. Among the artifacts gathered there
was architecture (building, offices, furniture, televisions, computers, and so on), artistic
creations (all the artwork displayed around the building from paintings, musical
instruments, or sculptures, to catch dreamers, blankets, or cushions), employee’s and
patients’ ‘style’ (clothes, outfits, bracelets, rings, manners, and emotional displays), and
rituals and ceremonies during meetings and events (prayers, songs, or sharing food). All
these artifacts collected are key to contribute to shape a culture that raises critical
consciousness and unfolds ethnogenesis. Separate from the fieldnotes for observations, I
kept a specific notebook for artifacts to avoid confusions and which facilitated the data
analysis in later stages of the research.

**Interviews/Guided conversations.** The interview is a fundamental tool in
qualitative research and has the potential to elicit rich, thick descriptions (Seidman,
2012). Moreover, this method is useful to clarify statements and probe specific
information (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2013). Normally “interviews for qualitative research
are in-depth in order to capture perceptions, attitudes, and emotions of the interview
participant” (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016, p. 155). According to Marshall and Rossman
(2015), the most important benefit of collecting data through in-depth interviews is that
they offer the possibility to capture a person’s perspective of an event or experience. As Patton (2015) argues, when it comes to interviewing, it is needed to assume that the perspective of others has meaning, can be known, and it is possible to make it explicit.

Interviews can be either unstructured, usually conducted in conversational style, or semi-structured, using an interview guide (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016). However, the qualitative interview is sometimes called an unstructured or nonstandardized interview “because there are few prestructured or standardized procedures for conducting these forms of interviews, many of the methodical decisions have to be made on the spot, during the interview” (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 16).

Most of the knowledge produced in interview research is based on participants’ experiences and opinions. This knowledge represents doxa, the common beliefs or popular opinion (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). However, when viewed through the lenses of classical philosophy, doxa does not constitute knowledge understood as episteme, which evolves through conversational and dialectical questioning (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Qualitative interviews have the potential of being both doxastic and also epistemic because they can offer important descriptions and narratives of participants’ experiences and opinions, but at the same time they can also be used as “conversational ways of producing knowledge that has been justified discursively in a conversation” (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, pp. 36-37). Notwithstanding, most recently interview studies have experienced a preference toward doxastic interviewing as the most appropriate way of conducting an interview. According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2009), “texts on qualitative interviewing frequently regard the use of confronting questions that ask respondents to give reasons or reflect on abstract issues as an unfruitful way of conducting qualitative interviews” (p. 39). Therefore, to overcome this existing bias, my interview/guided
conversation protocol included a set of questions that went from specific to abstract issues to combine a doxastic but also epistemic ways of interviewing (see Appendix B).

According to Yin (2009), case study interviews can be conceptualized as guided conversations instead of structured queries because the stream of questions will be probably more fluid than rigid. Guided conversation interviews can offer rich and extensive material and “can consume two or more hours on more than a single occasion” (Yin, 2011, p. 12). These conversations can occur with a researcher and one or more participants and the flexibility of these interviews permits “[a revealing of] how case study participants construct reality and think about situations, not just to provide the answers to a researcher’s specific questions and own implicit construction of reality” (Yin, 2011, p. 12). How participants construct reality provides important information for the case, especially if the “participants are key persons in the organizations, communities, or small groups being studied, not just the average members of such groups” (Yin, 2011, p. 12).

When it comes to ethnographic interviews, Spradley (1979) describes them as a series of friendly conversations where the researcher gradually introduces new elements that assist informants to answer as informants. In case the researcher only uses these ethnographic elements when interviewing or introduces them very quickly, the interview could become an ‘interrogation’ that eventually may hinder the rapport and could finish the cooperation. Notwithstanding, Spradley (1979) argues that “At any time during an interview it is possible to shift back to a friendly conversation. A few minutes of easygoing talk interspersed here and there throughout the interview will pay enormous dividends in rapport” (p. 59).
Spradley (1979) states that to build rapport with interviewees is central for the researcher. To do so, the researcher needs to let people talk about whatever they want at the beginning of the interview, explore the relationship and to consider what questions can be asked and not, and cooperate when the interviewee values the inquiry as much as the inquirer does. In this stage, the interviewee teaches the researcher and creates questions for the interview apart from the questions of the inquirer. Moreover, during the whole interview the researcher cannot be defensive about the answers and comments of the interviewee and needs to be open to any different view. According to Spradley (1979), some of the characteristics that differentiate a ‘typical’ friendly conversation and an ethnographic interview understood as friendly conversation is the fact that the researcher has an explicit purpose, asks more questions, encourages the interviewee to talk, repeats what has been said to clarify, or pauses to let the interviewee think about her answer.

For my study, I conducted 13 semi-structured interviews which are defined by Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) as “an interview with the purpose of obtaining descriptions of the life world of the interviewee in order to interpret the meaning of the described phenomena” (p. 3) (see Appendix B). However, considering the historical oppression of minorities in the United States and their traumas regarding interrogations and violence, I was very careful to conduct these semi-structured interviews more like ‘guided conversations’ as Yin (2011) suggests and ‘friendly conversations’ following ethnographic procedures recommended by Spradley (1979) to build rapport with the interviewees.

While Western worldview and epistemology considers the individual mind the source of knowledge and existence, traditional cultures argue “the individual’s existence (and knowledge) is contingent upon relationships with others” (Ladson-Billings, 2003, p.
For example, the data that emerge with focus groups can be seen as the result of the interactions of the group and not the individual minds. “Focus groups are of particular value because of their ability to allow researchers to study how people engage in collective sense-making; i.e., how views are constructed, expressed, defended and (sometimes) modified in the context of discussion and debate with others” (Wibeck, Abrandt-Dahlgren, & Öberg, 2007, p. 249). However, currently “plenty of attention has been paid to the development of the focus group as a research tool but, oddly, very little attention has been paid to the relational dynamics that are intrinsic to its use” (Farnsworth & Boon, 2010, p. 605), and just a few researchers have delved into how focus group interactions create data as a result of a collective process of sense-making (Wibeck et al., 2007). In other words, even if focus groups offer the possibility of taking into account the ways of knowing of indigenous people, most of the literature on focus groups does not contemplate this option (Romm, 2015). Therefore, with my study I did not implement focus group methods but instead group interviews/guided conversations. As noted, the term ‘conversation’ was the concept that emerged in my discussions with members of The NATIVE Project and my gatekeeper. Moreover, I preferred not to have methodological constraints or limitations and to ‘freely’ explore a new method of data collection that was shaped between the researcher and the participants throughout the process.

‘Group interviews’ can be useful depending how comfortable interviewees may feel with the perception of interrogation or asymmetry of power between interviewer and interviewee in individual interviews. Besides the history of colonization of Native American people with torture and interrogations, research interview is not a conversation between equals because the interviewer, and the same happens with focus groups, “has
scientific competence, he or she initiates and defines the interview situation, determines the interview topic, poses questions and decides which answers to follow up, and also terminates the conversation” (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 33). Moreover, ‘group interviews’ can also be a useful method to provide important data on the interactions of the participants, their process of collective sense- and meaning-making, and power relations, and some participants interviewed individually can participate in the group interviews, too, to reveal how interviewees construct reality and think about situations in a relational way. In addition, before and during conducting both types of ‘guided/friendly conversations’ (individual and groups), it was central to use participant observation and artifacts’ collection to become knowledgeable about specific topics, the organization and its history, to improve the quality of the interviewsguided conversations.

Thus, from the 13 interviewsguided conversations, eight of them were ‘individual interviews’ (one participant per interview, eight in total) while the other five were ‘group interviews’ (two interviews with two persons each one, two more interviews with seven individuals each, and another interview with eight people, for a total of 26 grouped persons). Thus, combining individual and group interviewsguided conversations I interviewed 34 different participants altogether; none of the participants of the ‘individual’ option chose to be included in the ‘group’ interview, although they had the option of participating in both types of interviewsguided conversations. Moreover, to fully display multiple perspectives about the case study, the CEO, COO, CFO, Clinic Director, Human Resources Director, at least one positional leader and one supporter from each of the five departments of the organization (medical, pharmacy, dental, behavioral health, and children and youth) plus staff from patient services, participated in either the individual or group interviewsguided conversations as a stratified purposeful
sampling (see Appendix C). In addition, participants were varied in terms of gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and education, with the aim of obtaining the largest picture of the complex phenomenon coherently with the notion of leadership as a process that involves leaders, supporters, environment, culture, context, and a specific purpose.

To decide who might have knowledge regarding the critical intercultural leadership process that takes places within the organization, I based my decision from previous participant observations and key informants as recommended by Bernard (2002) for anthropology, and also I was open for opportunistic sample as suggested by Creswell (2008). Therefore, the recruitment process was flexible and was modified if new topics, guiding questions, or subcultures emerged or when certain data collection activities or groups of people proved not to be useful in answering the guiding questions (Mack et al., 2005).

The interviews/guided conversations were conducted the last two months of fieldwork to have more knowledge and insights about the organization and to identify which members could provide more knowledge regarding the phenomenon under study (see Appendix A). The participants chose a setting in which they felt comfortable for the interviews/guided conversations which did not need to be conducted at The NATIVE Project building. For all 13 interviews/guiding conversations I used the same interview protocol which is focused on understanding the critical intercultural process of leadership that takes place within The NATIVE Project (see Appendix B). However, as a result of the different number of participants, the six semi-structured ‘individual interviews’ took around 60 minutes while the ‘group interviews’ took between 60 to 80 minutes. Before the interview/guided conversation I asked the participants to sign an informed consent form; the names of the interviewees were real names unless they considered it preferable
not to appear with their authentic identity in which case each of the participants’ identity and position within the organization was coded to assure anonymity.

**Research setting.** This exploration into raising critical consciousness and unfolding ethnogenesis within an ethnic organization or, in other words, this case study of a process of critical intercultural leadership for cultural resistance, was conducted at The NATIVE Project office or other locations where the organization performed activities in or near Spokane, Washington such as the Spokane Public Montessori, Cannon Park, or Riverside Park. It is within the NATIVE Project, a Native American-owned small business that delivers health services, where the case study of this research emerges.

Prior to the investigation, I contacted the director through a Native American person I know who has been collaborating with The NATIVE Project since its creation and who has been the gatekeeper for my research. Moreover, before going into the field to collect data, I developed relationships with members of the office. Also, to know better the setting and the activities they carry out, I had several meetings with them and accompanied them to different public events organized by different departments.

When it comes to selecting an appropriate research site, Creswell (2008) suggests a set of options: (1) The research site must be possible to provide the necessary participants; (2) processes which contribute to the phenomenon which is investigated must be present; and (3) the researcher must be able to develop the appropriate role and relationships for the study. Considering these research criteria, The NATIVE Project office fit all three: (1) The organization’s executive leadership, staff, and clients were pertinent and accurate participants for the research; (2) Within The NATIVE Project emerged the process of critical intercultural leadership that creates a culture for cultural resistance because the organization understands culture as a field for struggle and
challenges doxa through a process of critical consciousness that aims to deconstruct unfair social structures at the same time reconstructing new ones; and (3) my gatekeeper guaranteed that I would be able to establish relationships within the organization to develop my research in the most appropriate way.

**Research participants.** In qualitative research, selection of the research sample is purposeful (Patton, 2015). According to Bloomberg and Volpe (2016) “the logic of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases, with the objective of yielding insight and understanding of the phenomenon under investigation” (p. 148). As Reybold, Lammert, and Stribling (2013) argue, the logic of selection in qualitative research is grounded in the value of information-rich cases and in-depth understanding which cannot be achieved through random sampling. In other words, purposeful selection “is a strategy for accessing appropriate data that fit the purpose of the study, the resources available, the questions being asked, and the constraints and challenges being faced” (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016, p 148). Following these criteria, participants in my study were selected from each of the five services The NATIVE project provides plus patient services, and according to their degree of involvement in the process and/or understanding of the central phenomenon of the study.

Agar (1980) suggests that finding a key informant is central for the process of selection of participants because this individual can help the researcher to meet people who can provide the needed information. Notwithstanding, it is important that these key informants are viewed as ‘neutral’ and they are respected by other cultural members of the community. Moreover, the more social networks the researcher develops, the more insights and knowledge she will possess to decide from whom to gather information (Agar, 1980). In addition, to ‘hang out’ is central to gain trust and establish rapport with
participants and it can also be useful to gain knowledge about which participants can contribute with better information of the phenomenon under study (Bernard, 2002).

As Garson (2012) argues, traditionally the ethnographer focuses on a community and selects informants with accurate knowledge of the community. When identified, these informants are asked to select other informants in a process that is central in making visible common cultural denominators related with the topic and concepts of the research (Garson, 2012). In my study, the participants were the CEO, COO, CFO, Clinic Director, Human Resources Director, and employees of The NATIVE Project working in different positions (leaders and supporters) of the services provided (medical, pharmacy, dental, behavioral health, children and youth, plus patient services) who were selected according to their accurate knowledge of the critical intercultural leadership process that takes place within the organization which was determined based on participant observations, key informants, and the development of my own social networks and relationships.

**Data Analysis Methods**

After collecting data for six months with participant observations, artifacts gathering, and interviews/guided conversations, a set of skills were needed to enter the stage of data analysis. According to Barbour (1999), these skills are

Skills of organization, analysis and flexibility to be able to flow from the role of observer to analytical scholar, a duality of roles requiring the researcher at one level to say little in the way of comments, and in another sense to begin to say much leading to the interpretation of data. (p. 58)

As Dey (1993) states, in qualitative work “there is no single set of categories waiting to be discovered. There are as many ways of ‘seeing’ the data as one can invent” (pp. 110-111). In terms of case study research, Yin (2009) argues that there are three main general
analytic strategies for case study data which require an overall analytic strategy from start to finish: First consists in relying on theoretical propositions because they contribute to designing the data collection plan, to focus attention on certain data ignoring not relevant information, and defining alternative explanations to be assessed. Second strategy is to think about rival explanations because they help to define and test rival explanations collecting evidence about other influences to increase the reliability of the findings. Finally, the third analytical strategy involves one to develop a case description as an alternative when theoretical proposition and rival explanation cannot be applied.

With this study, I developed a case description, but my research design and conceptual framework rely in theoretical propositions that contributed to focus on certain data and examine alternative explanations of leadership studies. Marshall and Rossman (2015) identify seven steps of qualitative analysis that I implemented in my research. Thus, I organized data using data-gathering logs for data collection and NVivo analytical software for data management and analysis. Then I read and reread the data until I became familiar with the critical intercultural leadership process that takes place within The NATIVE Project, its members, culture, and main events and experiences, with the aim of generating categories, themes, and recurring patterns of the process under study and of its main components such as actors’ actions and structures. Moreover, I coded data to give it meaning and interpreted it using analytic memos to bring the analysis from the ordinary to the creative. In addition, I searched for alternative meanings and reflected on the conclusions from data, and eventually I wrote a case that balances holistic and deep description, analysis, and interpretation of the data collected.

According to Creswell (2014), data analysis in qualitative research can be developed while collecting data and writing-up findings. For example, during the
interviews/guided conversations I started analyzing data and the memos that I wrote during the whole process of research so that could be included in the final case. However, before starting the analysis of the data, it was necessary to *winnow* the data first (Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2012), a process which consists of focusing on part of the data and disregarding other parts of it (Creswell, 2014, p. 195). Basically, winnowing consists of selecting the most significant or exemplary data and to separate it from non-significant data (Hopper, 1986). To drive this process of winnowing the data collected in my research, I followed the conceptual framework’s main themes and concepts, the research and guiding questions, and the repetitions and patterns within data that emerged to decide which data were more significant.

After *winnowing*, “the key process in the analysis of qualitative social research is coding–classifying or categorizing individual pieces of data–coupled with some kind of retrieval system” (Babbie, 2013, p. 396). Coding is analysis, a tool to discover, a problem-solving, the first step toward a more rigorous analysis and interpretation (Saldaña, 2012, p. 8). There are three categories of coding: Topics that the reader expects, based on literature and common sense; surprising codes that nobody expects; and unusual codes that are of conceptual interest to readers (Creswell, 2014). Notwithstanding, before coding by hand, I planned to use NVivo qualitative software to store and locate data first, and then to capture nuances related with patterns, similarities, and differences that could provide a useful general view of the data. Later, after hard coding, I implemented NVivo software to do a deeper analysis using queries and analysis tools. This qualitative software provides a storage area for each topic or concept created which are not segments of data but references to the exact location of the coded data in the original document. Thus, it is through the references that “the software is able to locate and retrieve all the...
coded passages for a particular code or combination of codes from the source records. The passages themselves are never copied, cut, or physically moved as they are coded” (Bazeley, 2013, p. 137).

Computer-based coding of qualitative data can offer more complexity and depth than manual thematic sorting. As Bazeley (2013) argues

Rather than identifying a passage with one all-inclusive thematic code, when using a computer the coder can separately identify, by using several codes on the same passage, what is going on, contextual factors such as when, where, and who is involved, what attitudes, feelings, or responses are being revealed, what issues are raised, what the outcome is, and so on, with the confidence that the computer can reconnect codes used for the same passage of text. (p. 139)

According to Bazeley (2013) “coding provides a means of purposefully managing, locating, identifying, sifting, sorting, and querying data. It is not a mechanistic, data reduction process, but rather one designed to stimulate and facilitate analysis” (p. 125). As Morse and Richards (2002) argue, “once coded, the data look different, as they are seen and heard through the category rather than the research event” (p. 115). Thus, coding gives meaning to data and “assists the researcher to break out of an ‘imprisonment in the story’ to see new connections as alternative ways of framing and interpreting a text of situation” (Maxwell & Miller, 2008, p. 469).

In the stage of coding by hand, all data passed through two analytic methods of coding analysis related with but not exclusive of grounded theory. The first method was open coding. After reading data carefully, I looked for developing codes describing, naming or classifying the phenomenon under study following the open coding system of segmenting information (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Then, I read the data to get a central
idea or the essence of the information and, as Saldaña (2012) argues, based on the relationship between codes, codes frequency, and the underlying meaning across codes, the researcher categorizes codes and generates themes. Notwithstanding, these initial codes, categories, and themes were tentative and could change throughout the research as Saldaña (2012) suggests. The second method is axial coding. I assembled the data in new ways after open coding and I identified core categories and related (sub)categories in a combination of inductive and deductive thinking (Creswell, 2013). This stage involves identifying relationships among the open codes and what are the connections among the codes. Thus, through axial coding, the researcher is able to answer questions about ‘when,’ ‘where,’ ‘why,’ ‘who,’ ‘how’ and ‘with what’ consequences (Saldaña, 2012).

Moreover, it is important to highlight that throughout data analysis, codes were constantly revised as the work proceeded. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), we can decide that coding and recoding is over “when all of the incidents can be readily classified, categories are ‘saturated’ and sufficient numbers of regularities emerge. By saturation it is understood the situation when no new categories are ‘emerging,’ that is, being found in the data” (Bazeley, 2013, p. 152).

During coding, the researcher looks for repetitive patterns, consistencies, and regularities in the data, and sorts the descriptive labels into smaller sets. Thus, the researcher develops themes from those groups of smaller sets and identifies possible connections between the information (Roper & Shapira, 2000). According to Hatch (2002), a pattern can be characterized by similarity, when things happen the same way; difference, if they happen in predictably different ways; frequency, because they happen often or seldom; sequence, when they happen in a certain order; correspondence, if they
happen in relation to other activities or events; or causation, because one appears to cause another.

Regarding the ‘mini-ethnographic’ case study research, I included a detailed description of the critical intercultural leadership process that takes place within The NATIVE Project, the organization and its members, and an analysis of the data for patterns and themes as suggested by Wolcott (1994). These patterns or connected findings were related to my guiding questions and theories of my conceptual framework to make sense of the rich and complex data collected to, eventually, write-up the case on the critical intercultural process of leadership that takes place in The NATIVE Project.

Moreover, as Patton and Appelbaum (2003) argue, “the ultimate goal of the case study is to uncover patterns, determine meanings, construct conclusions and build theory” (p. 67). According to Eisenhardt (1989), the analysis of data “is the heart of building theory from case studies, but it is both the most difficult and the least codified part of the process” (p. 539). Thus, with my case study research I went into the field with an abductive approach with which researchers can overcome the dichotomy between deduction and induction using a “logic of inquiry and inference that connects methodology to theory construction” (Tavory & Timmermans, 2014, p. 19). Moreover, as Creswell (2013) urges researchers, I see qualitative data analysis involving multiple levels of analysis and with potential for blending with other specific approaches. For example, I went into the field with theory to be validated in a deductive process, but even if it was not my first intention, I also considered the possibility of any new theory that could emerge in an inductive way through coding processes related with grounded theory but without implementing a methodology of grounded theory.
Methods of Interpretation

The case was developed focusing on description with the aim of better understanding a leadership process that creates a culture of resistance and to call for action agendas for social justice and change. Then, the case was interpreted and discussed in light of my study’s conceptual framework, guiding questions, and literature review from chapter two, to reflect thoroughly on the meaning of the findings of my research, with its practical and theoretical implications.

Moreover, all data were interpreted through a philosophical approach of transformative worldview and a theoretical perspective of critical theory to amplify the voice of the ‘voiceless’ and give agency to cases, rather than to variables (Abbot, 1992). Through a qualitative approach, one starts seeing people who were lost in a variable-based ‘statement of fact’ as ‘real people’ (Bazeley, 2013). In addition, qualitative analysis “seeks to understand a given research problem or topic from the perspectives of the local population it involves. Qualitative research is especially effective in obtaining culturally specific information about the values, opinions, behaviors, and social contexts of particular populations” (Mack et al., 2005, p.1).

From a perspective of ethnographic research, Wolcott (2001) argues that it “is in the write-up, rather than in the fieldwork, that the materials become ethnographic” (p. 164). According to Wolcott (2001), it is when the ethnographer pulls together the whole fieldwork experience, consisting of observations and other ethnographers’ writings, when data takes ethnographic shape. Thus, to shape this data with an ethnographic approach is central to describe the different processes occurring within a particular group or community, and a cultural interpretation of how the behavior of the group or community ‘makes sense’ to those involved (Wolcott, 2001).
According to Geertz (1988), when it comes to presenting ethnographic research, the ability of anthropologists to get us to take what they say seriously has less to do with either a factual look or an air of conceptual elegance than it has with their capacity to convince us that what they say is a result of their having actually penetrated (or, if you prefer, been penetrated by) another form of life, of having, one way or another, truly ‘been there.’ (pp. 4-5)

Thus, when writing-up my case it was essential to convince the reader that ‘I was there’ through description and the presentation of details of the critical intercultural leadership process that emerges within The NATIVE Project and offering insights that only the researcher can know because I have truly ‘been there.’

In terms of case studies, Yin (2009) describes several methods to write up findings. One is the ‘linear-analytic’ method that uses a sequence of subtopics that goes from the problem being studied and literature review, methods implemented, findings from data collection and analysis, and finishes with conclusions and implications from the findings. Another method is the ‘chronological’ when the case follows the early, middle, and late phases of a case history presuming causal sequences that occur linearly over time. Also, the research can write up the findings in an ‘unsequenced’ manner when the sequence of sections does not have particular importance and in case of changing the chapters there is no alteration of the descriptive value of the case, or with ‘suspense’ when the case is not linear and the outcome of the case is presented in the initial chapter because the rest of the case explains the outcome. A fifth method is the ‘comparative,’ which repeats the same case study two or more times, to compare different descriptions or explanations of the same case. Finally, there is the theory building method when the case
follows theory-building logic that depends on the specific topic and theory and that in each section reveals a new part of the theoretical argument being made.

Baxter and Jack (2008), argue that writing a case study can be a very complicated and difficult task as a result of the complexity of this approach. “It is difficult to report the findings in a concise manner, and yet it is the researcher’s responsibility to convert a complex phenomenon into a format that is readily understood by the reader” (Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 555). Thus, the goal of writing a case study is to describe the study in a holistic and comprehensive way allowing the reader to have the impression of being an active participant in the research and to decide whether the study findings could be applied to her own situation (Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 555).

There is no unique way of writing a case study and “some suggested ways are by telling the reader a story, by providing a chronological report, or by addressing each proposition. Addressing the propositions ensures that the report remains focused and deals with the research question” (Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 555). One of the main difficulties when writing cases is to be distracted with interesting data that is not relevant for the research question. Thus, it is central to return to the propositions of the research and to compare and contrast the findings with literature that has been already published with the aim of situating the new data into preexisting data (Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 555). Therefore, as I wrote the case, I combined a linear-analytic and theory-building method as two of the six methods suggested by Yin (2009), and, as Baxter and Jack (2008) recommend, I described both the context within which the phenomenon occurs, and depicted the phenomenon itself allowing the reader to ‘feel’ as an active participant in the study.
In terms of interpreting the findings, I put them into context to transcend just the facts and engage in a productive discussion. Thus, I interpreted the findings and themes that emerged from data analysis with the philosophical and theoretical frame designed with my conceptual framework, guiding questions, and literature review from chapter two, with the aim of giving them meaning, identifying rival or competing explanations, and describing possible implications of my study for the field of leadership studies. In addition, I compared the propositions of my conceptual framework, the context, and the phenomenon under study with theories and general literature regarding transformative worldview and critical theory to produce a critique of the structures of domination and oppression that maintain and reproduce asymmetries of power in our societies which are the barriers for social and cognitive justice.

**Ethical Considerations**

Any research in general, but particularly a study like this one designed to transform and change society focusing on marginalized social groups, “needs to be aware of the general agreements shared by researchers about what is proper and improper in the conduct of scientific inquiry” (Babbie, 2013, p. 62). Ethical considerations are central in any research study, and specifically when it comes to protection of the participants (Marshall & Rossman, 2015). According to The Belmont Report, there are three core principles universally accepted for research ethics. First principle is respect for persons, ensuring the autonomy and protecting research participants. The second is beneficence, or the commitment to minimizing the risks and maximizing the benefits associated with research. Finally, the third principle is justice, as the commitment to ensuring a fair distribution of the risks and benefits resulting from research. Another principle suggested
is respect for communities or the obligation of respecting the values and interests of the community in research (Mack et al., 2005).

In my research, I addressed these four principles of ethical concern with the following procedures. I treated with respect and dignity all participants, informing them about the purpose of my research, and obtained informed consent from the interviewees. Moreover, I took into consideration the participant’s choices and decisions about participating in the research and using or not using their real names without pressuring them. I did no harm and considered thoroughly an assessment of risks and benefits for the participants of my study. In addition, I ensured the participants were not coerced or threatened during the research. I shared the findings of my study with The NATIVE Project and I was available to discuss my case and insights with them. Finally, I had conversations about ethical issues with the members of The NATIVE Project to make sure I addressed ethical concerns from their cultural perspective too, and not only from the Belmont Report’s approach. According to Shore (2006), the Belmont Report can be viewed as ‘one size fits all’ without considering different cultures and worldviews regarding ethical issues.

As noted before, I used an individual informed consent for data collection activities that required more than casual interaction with a person such as the interviews/guided conversations (see Appendix D). Moreover, for in-depth interviews/guided conversations, participants were told the purpose of the research, what was expected of them, expected risks and benefits, participation was voluntary and they could withdraw at any time with no negative repercussions, how confidentiality would be protected, and my name and contact information in case there were questions or problems related to the research, in line with suggestions by Mack and co-authors (2005).
Throughout the whole process (prior to beginning the study, after beginning the study to collect and analyze the data, and finally to write-up the case, share and store data), I anticipated the ethical issues that could arise: Having the approval of the university Institutional Review Board (IRB), disclosing purpose of the study and not putting pressure on participants, avoiding siding with participants, or falsifying evidences, data, findings, or conclusions when writing-up the case, among others. Finally, during the whole process of the research, congruency was maintained with the general idea of this study: to hear the voices that were unheard from a non-dominant position in terms of power asymmetries.

**Researcher Bias**

Every researcher must be aware of her/his biases and, also, needs to know the available tools to detect and counterbalance bias, assumptions, and values. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), the researcher has to be self-aware of personal biases and how these biases influence the research. In my study, my personal experience with ethnic groups in Latin America (indigenous communities and people of African-descent) could be a potential bias for this research since I analyzed the critical intercultural leadership process that emerges in a Native American organization in the United States which is a completely different context although there might be similarities. In terms of ‘leadership’ conceptions, I began this research with the idea of leadership as a relational process of multiple combinations where there are events that cannot be controlled. However, I also have the belief that organizations and cultures are in a certain way influenced and shaped by leaders because they have positional power to impose or spread frameworks to make sense and meaning of the world which eventually will have material consequences in the
process of ‘world-making.’ Bourdieu (1989) defines ‘world-making’ as the combination of the vision of the world (sense/meaning-making) and the practical operations by which groups are produced and reproduced (practices and social structures). Thus, I expected that data would reveal a direct connection between social structures created by individuals within processes of leadership which at the same time influence individuals in their behaviors and dispositions. My assumption is that creating a culture for social emancipation can be unleashed through processes of leadership where leaders, among other elements of the process such as their relations, the context, and the culture, can have certain influence when they are aware of how the ‘game’ is played. Thus, it is not about training specific skills and abilities but understanding, educating, and raising awareness regarding how systems of domination and emancipation unfold through power relations between cultures and how a critical intercultural leadership understood as a relational process can be central to deconstruct and reconstruct social structures seeking for social justice.

As a researcher, before attributing meaning to an observation, I tried to understand what I observed following Crotty’s (1998) suggestion for bracketing researcher bias allowing the experience of a phenomenon to talk to me first. It was about identifying my biases and cultural assumptions, putting them in ‘stand by,’ and being able to see beyond my mental limitations resulting in frameworks that make sense and meaning of the world. Thus, being aware and identifying my biases, assumptions and values before starting this study helped me to counterbalance them with principles of bracketing that allowed me to go beyond my mental limitations and frameworks.
Issues of Trustworthiness

Qualitative data is still discredited by strict positivist quantitative research scholars (Creswell, 2008), and it is central to demonstrate the validity and verification of data. Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Creswell (2008), among others, have methodically explored the issues related with validity and reliability in qualitative studies. When it comes to trustworthiness, it is important that the researcher address the more traditional quantitative issues related with validity, or how we measure what we want to measure, and reliability, understood as consistency over time of what was measured (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016). With issues of trustworthiness, researchers attempt “to control for potential biases that might be present throughout the design, implementation, and analysis of the study” (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016, p 176). Lincoln and Guba (2000) state that the concepts of validity and reliability are more related with quantitative research and a qualitative study needs to introduce the concepts of credibility (validity), dependability (reliability), confirmability, and transferability.

Credibility

Credibility (or validity) is a key component of the research design and means that the findings are accurate and credible from the perspective of the researcher, the participants, and the reader (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). Its aim is to test the validity of conclusions reached and focus on both methodological and interpretive validity (Mason, 1996).

By methodological validity is understood how well-matched is the method to the guiding questions and what the researcher is seeking to answer. Additionally, interpretative validity informs us how valid the data analysis is and the interpretation on which it is based (Mason, 1996). For example, Creswell (2008) proposes three methods
for establishing validity in qualitative research: triangulation, member checking, and auditing. Thus, to demonstrate validity with my study I implemented all three methods.

**Triangulation.** All of the categories or themes were verified through the use of triangulation processes. That is, codes and themes were corroborated and confirmed from several different data methods: participant observations, artifacts gathering, and interviews/guided conversations. This method ensured the accuracy of the study because the information drew on multiple sources.

**Member checking.** Following this process, I asked several participants from the study to check the accuracy of the data interpretation during the interviews/guiding conversations and at the end of the study to improve the credibility and to maintain the integrity of the participants and their different perspectives. Participants’ agreement with the accuracy of the findings increased the credibility of the research.

**External auditing.** Lincoln and Guba (1985) argue that an external audit provides reliability to a study and compare this method with a fiscal audit. In my study, a person with knowledge about the topics and the phenomenon under research examined both process and the product of the research examining whether the findings, interpretations, and conclusions were supported by the data with the aim of assessing the accuracy of my research.

**Dependability**

Dependability (or reliability) is understood as to what extent the research findings can be replicated by other similar studies. As argued by Lincoln and Guba (2000), the most important issue is whether the findings are consistent and dependable with the data collected or not. According to Bloomberg and Volpe (2016), in qualitative research “the
goal is not to eliminate inconsistencies but to ensure that the researcher understands when they occur. Thus, it becomes incumbent on the researcher to document her procedures and demonstrate that coding schemes and categories have been used consistently” (p. 177). Toward this end, I maintained an audit trail as recommended by Lincoln and Guba (1985) to chronicle the evolution of my thinking and to document the logic for the decisions made throughout the research.

**Confirmability**

According to Bloomberg and Volpe (2016), “The implication is that the findings are the result of the research, rather than an outcome of the biases and subjectivity of the researcher” (p. 177). To achieve this end, I implemented the audit trail that, along with all the field notes, transcripts, and memos, provided the reader a possibility to assess the evolution of my thinking and the findings of this study.

**Transferability**

Transferability involves the ways in which the reader determines if the findings about a specific phenomenon in a particular context can be transferred to another particular context and to what extent (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). Regarding transferability, Patton (2015) suggests thinking of ‘context-bound extrapolations,’ which the author defines as speculations about the possibilities of applying the findings to other situations with similar conditions. Thus, I used thick, rich description of the participants, the context, and the process of critical intercultural leadership to provide depth and detailed description that could be relevant in some broader context as suggested by Schram (2003).
Limitations and Delimitations

Regarding limitations and how they were addressed, my research contains certain limiting conditions related with my study’s research design. Basically, I have identified two main limitations and I have considered how to minimize them throughout the study. On the one hand, this study only focuses on one case, and on the other, this single case design corresponds to the critical intercultural leadership process that takes place within The NATIVE Project, a Native American organization in Spokane, Washington, United States.

Recognizing these limitations, I took the following measures with my research. First, following Yin’s (2009) five reasons to use a single case design, the critical intercultural leadership process that takes place within The NATIVE Project is a critical case that tests the theory of a leadership process which creates an organizational culture that raises critical consciousness and unfolds ethnogenesis within an organization. Moreover, it is also a unique case of critical intercultural leadership because it is an organization led by women where there are different Native American tribes represented, along with other ethnic minorities and immigrants from abroad. Second, even if there are other ethnic social organizations in the United States where similar processes of critical intercultural leadership take place, focusing on a Native American organization is central to better achieve my purpose with this study as a result of the particular social conditions of the ethnic group selected that situate their people as the most excluded and marginalized ethnic groups in the country. Moreover, since in The NATIVE Project there are people from 17 different Native American tribes, African-American, Latinos, and foreigners from North America, Latin America, Europe, Asia and Africa, it can be described as an intercultural organization because it not only navigates within the
hegemonic culture of the country but at the same time there is a high degree of diversity among its members. Therefore, the leadership process that emerges within The NATIVE Project is representative of the purpose of my study in three ways: It represents a case of critical intercultural leadership, a SMO, and an ethnic organization.

Summary

Qualitative methods are central to identify non-tangible factors, such as social and cultural issues and it is a pertinent approach to research about human life and forms of organization. Moreover, case studies are analyses of persons, events, projects, organizations, or institutions in a holistic way. This research is a single holistic/embedded case study of the critical intercultural leadership process that shapes the organizational culture of The NATIVE Project, a Native American small business led by women that provides quality services that promote wellness and balance of mind, body, and spirit for individuals, families and communities, in Spokane, Washington. Moreover, considering the historical and structural oppression of Native Americans in the United States, a philosophical approach of transformative worldview and a theoretical perspective of critical theory was used throughout all the research.

The process of collecting data was implemented at The NATIVE Project office and at the sites where the organization undertakes any events and used three main methods such as participant observations, artifacts collection, and interviews/guided conversations. In terms of data analysis, I used NVivo software to organize and analyze data before coding to offer a general picture of patterns and categories that were confirmed with the process of hand-coding that followed later, and I also used the software after coding by hand to look for depth and complexity within data. Moreover, all
data passed through two analytic methods of coding: open and axial coding analysis. Thus, as a result of these two analytic methods for the coding process, essential aspects about The NATIVE Project’s critical intercultural leadership process were captured to write a case that balances holistic and deep description, analysis, and interpretation of the data collected. Finally, throughout the whole study I anticipated the ethical issues that could arise and I maintained congruency with the general idea of the research: to hear the voices that were unheard.

In the following chapter, I present the case study with an emphasis on description because my intention is to let the voices of the participants speak using their own quotes from the transcripts of the interviews. Conversely, in chapter five I offer my personal interpretation of the case study supported by philosophy and theory present in chapter two. Finally, I dedicate chapter six to recommendations and major lessons learned through the whole process of the study.
CHAPTER FOUR

CASE STUDY AND THEMES

With this chapter, I describe the case study of the critical intercultural leadership process which creates an organizational culture that raises critical consciousness and unfolds ethnogenesis at The NATIVE Project. It is with the write-up when data take ethnographic shape (Wolcott, 2001) and, as recommended by Geertz (1988), my aim with this mini-ethnographic case study is to convince the reader through description and the presentation of details that I was truly there while allowing those who read this work to have the impression of being active participants in the research (Baxter & Jack, 2008). This chapter is presented in five different sections with corresponding themes and subthemes that emerged from data analysis to better represent the culture of the organization created by a critical intercultural leadership process: (1) History and background; (2) external formal and informal relationships; (3) internal formal and informal relationships; (4) tacit and explicit understandings and meanings; and (5) current challenges.

The research was conducted at The NATIVE Project building and other locations in Spokane, Washington where the organization developed activities such as the Spokane Public Montessori, Cannon Park, or Riverfront Park. This organization is a Native American-owned small business led by women that delivers health services from a Native American cultural perspective in the Spokane area. Besides observing and gathering artifacts for six months, I interviewed 34 employees of The NATIVE Project working in different positions (leaders and supporters) and services (Medical, Pharmacy, Dental, Behavioral health, Children and youth, plus Patient services), who were selected
according to their accurate knowledge of the critical intercultural leadership process that emerges within the organization (see Table 1).

Moreover, after analyzing the data, I present this mini-ethnographic case study letting the words of The NATIVE Project employees speak as often as I can. Although I have been working with indigenous communities and people of African-descent in Latin America for the last ten years, I am aware of my Western thought perspective and all the biases that it implies. Therefore, to write-up this chapter I tried not to speak for the participants and allow their thoughts and words to describe the critical intercultural leadership process they contribute to unfold everyday through their daily work, social and political struggles, and cultural resistance.

Notwithstanding, it is important to clarify that the selected quotes in this chapter are representative of the ‘general’ thinking of the members of The NATIVE Project because the quotes chosen describe the main patterns that emerged through the analysis of data. In other words, these quotes are not just one person’s opinion, but a person’s opinion that implies an existing pattern resulting from data analysis and which better summarizes the critical intercultural leadership and culture of the organization.

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7 Since with this research I am committed to guarantee the confidentiality of opinions and views of the participants, at the end of every quote there will appear a code to identity the person who is talking. The codes follow this system: The letter L for the positional leaders of The NATIVE Project (CEO, COO, CFO, Clinic Director, and Human Resources Director), followed by a random number from one to 34 (L22, L11, and so on), and the letter S for the rest of employees or supporters of the organization including directors of the different services (Medical, Dental, Pharmacy, Behavioral Health, Children and Youth, plus Patient Services), followed also by a random number from one to 34 that has not been used for the Leaders before (S15, S1, and so on). With this coding system, the reader will be able to track what the different positional leaders and supporters are saying, and how often they are talking.
History and Background

According to the civil and human rights coalition The Leadership Conference (2016), Native Americans in the United States suffer from many of the same social and economic problems as other subordinated groups in the country that experience long-term bias and discrimination, including, for example, disproportionately high rates of poverty, infant mortality, unemployment, and low high school completion rates. Moreover, Native people suffer from the three typologies of violence defined by Galtung (1990): Direct, structural, and cultural violence.

Direct violence are all those behaviors that threaten life itself and/or reduce the capacity of human beings to meet their basic human needs (killing, bullying, sexual assault, or emotional manipulation). For example, according to research from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on 47 states between 1999 and 2011, Native Americans were even more likely than African Americans to be killed in the hands of law enforcement. In terms of structural violence, this type of violence is understood as the systematic ways in which certain social groups have more difficulties in enjoying equal access to opportunities, goods, and services to fulfill their basic human needs (unfair legal structures, or lack of access to education or healthcare). Finally, cultural violence represents the existence of social norms that ‘naturalize’ direct and structural types of violence, and which are seen as ‘right’ or ‘fair’ (stereotypes and cultural assumptions about lack of intelligence, laziness, or inclination to violent behavior of some social groups).

To address these political, social, and economic problems with subordinated groups in general, and particularly with Native American population, it is central to focus on all three types of violence in a holistic and comprehensive way. Thus, when it comes
to Native American communities, the emphasis needs to be put on issues such as: (1) Raising awareness about the killing, bullying, sexual assault, and emotional manipulation exercised upon Native people; (2) transforming the social structures that situate Native population at a subordinated position within a social hierarchy with big asymmetries of power, and limit their access to good education, job opportunities, and healthcare; and (3) debunking myths and deconstructing cultural assumptions about lack of intellect, laziness, or ‘primitive’ behavior, that ‘naturalize’ a system where racism, sexism, classism, and a cultural epistemicide overlap and are interdependent.

While referring throughout my study to subordinated cultures in general, and Native American culture in particular, it is important to clarify that Native population is not homogeneous. Today in the United States there are 567 tribes legally recognized by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) which share common cultural elements but also present many differences. Moreover, there are differences when it comes to Native communities living within the reservation and Native population living in urban areas.

During the last decades, more than one million American Indians and Alaska Natives have left reservations and other rural areas and moved to metropolitan regions (Urban Indian Health Commission Report, 2007). This change of lifestyle has had a big impact in the health of this population who for many are invisible although they represent nearly 67 percent of the nation’s 4.1 million self-identified American Indians and Alaska Natives (Urban Indian Health Commission Report, 2007). In the 1980s, within that context of lack of health services for ‘invisible’ urban Indians of the Spokane area who were dying due to substance abuse and suicide on the one side, and a system of cultural violence that portrayed Native people as primitive and situated them at the lowest levels
of the social hierarchy of power on the other, a group of 15 urban Native Americans from different tribes living in Spokane decided to found The NATIVE Project.

**Foundation and Evolution: The “Dream” Comes True**

By the end of the eighties, this group of 15 Native Americans, identifying that their people were dying systematically as a result of not having access to basic health services in Spokane, and that their cultures were disappearing as a consequence of a process of epistemicide initiated during colonialism with the aim of destroying any other knowledge and epistemology that went beyond the Western canon, felt the necessity of creating the organization to address these two main issues. Thus, The NATIVE Project was founded in 1989 with the aim of enhancing the lives and promoting cultural appreciation and resistance for Native Americans in Spokane. The organization started only with a treatment section for drugs and alcohol abuse (the two big causes of death among Native people in the 1980s) and just one employee on the payroll. Moreover, the founders also decided to continue organizing leadership camps as they had done in 1987 and 1988, focused on the young urban Native Americans to give meaning to their lives and to encourage them to be proud of their cultural traditions and worldviews while training them as future Native leaders who would serve the urban Native community of Spokane and struggle for social justice and cultural resistance.

As one of the founders of The NATIVE Project remembers when talking about the reasons that were central to create the organization:

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8 Although The NATIVE Project was founded in 1989, two years earlier, in 1987, and also in 1988, some of its founders organized leadership camps for young urban Native of Spokane to teach them about Native culture and to raise their awareness about the social struggles of the community. These leadership camps were the origin of the organization and have been organized since then increasing each year the number of young Native registered.
Only one out of every four kids were getting to high school. And of those one in four kids that got to high school, only one was going to graduate. And those are the super-achievers that were also going to go to college. But there’s a lot of suicide, substance abuse… All that was happening in between. And they said, ‘There’s got to be some way that we can make a difference!’ So, we formed The NATIVE Project. (L33)

To start The NATIVE Project, one of the main problems that the founders faced was to find the resources.

We passed the hat. Literally, a baseball cap. And 15 Indians we came up with just a little over a hundred bucks to open a bank account. Then, we found out that the incorporation cost was 150. So, one of the members had an old Pinto car, bright orange, and we took it up to Cusick pow wow and raffled it off. We got enough money to get the incorporation money, and then [two people] wrote a grant. A federal and unprecedented. And never happened that anyone you talk to that you write your first grant you get it funded. And not only get funded, but it was a three-year federal grant. (L33)

The founders felt the responsibility and obligation of creating The NATIVE Project to help the youth and the future generations of urban Native Americans. During the interviews conducted, the founders talked about how Native Americans today are not dying systematically as a consequence of direct violence as used to happen during the last centuries, but from structural violence. More specifically, the main cause for Native deaths today is due to the lack of access to education and healthcare that results in a pattern of no employment, depression, substance abuse, and suicide among the young people.

Since the inception of the project, the founders have been very community-oriented from bottom-up, listening to the community needs, and trying to identify the best way of helping them to make their lives better. Initially, the community was understood as the urban Native population from Spokane with problems with drugs and alcohol abuse. However, when the urban Native patients started to bring their relatives and
friends from the reservation and even non-Natives to the organization, the founders decided to broaden the concept of community and serve everyone.

After a few years, in 1995, the Indian health clinic that provided services in Spokane for urban Native closed and the urban Native community started to ask the leaders of The NATIVE Project to create a clinic, although these leaders did not have previous experience with health clinics and even less with the Indian Health Service (IHS) system. According to the IHS (2017) website, they are an agency within the Department of Health and Human Services responsible for providing federal health services to American Indians and Alaska Natives. The provision of health services to members of federally-recognized tribes grew out of the special government-to-government relationship between the federal government and Indian Tribes. The IHS is the principal federal health care provider and health advocate for Indian people, and its goal is to raise their health status to the highest possible level. However, it seems that two problems emerge with the services the IHS provides: (1) Poor funding that results in low quality of service, and (2) most of the budget is implemented in the reservations while just a small part goes to the health centers for urban Indians. As one employee of The NATIVE Project noted:

I grew up in the IHS system. It’s a real crappy substandard subhuman way to treat Natives and it starts from birth if you have to go to IHS. Their standard of care is ridiculously low and it’s caused a lot of deaths. (S18)

While another employee stated:

The IHS services get lousy. I have been to my reservation recently and the two clinics are substandard care. The only reason why I am living here and doing what I am doing, I had to move home because I couldn’t get health care out here. (S16)

Finally, after four years trying to resist the petitions of the urban Native community of Spokane asking for a health clinic, the founders of The NATIVE Project decided to create
a clinic to provide basic health treatment to urban Indians in the Spokane area because the IHS has a low quality and the health centers for urban Indians were underfunded. Since its foundation in 1999, the leadership of the organization have been focused on quality service and holistic medicine as the Mission statement claims: “Our Mission is to provide quality services that promote wellness and balance of mind, body, and spirit for individuals, staff, families and communities.” Notwithstanding, the challenge of transitioning from just a treatment service of substance abuse to a health clinic was huge, and as one of the founders remembers, they encountered different barriers:

The most underfunded piece of part of Indian health is the urban. We get 1% of the funding. The tribes and the Indian Health Clinics get 99% of the funding. So, I mean, we just made it happen. We all did two jobs. We save, save, save. When we built this building, we had 900,000 dollars in savings. (L22)

According to the founders, saving and buying, saving and building, with a long-term and sustainable perspective was the “Indian way” that seems to be the opposite of a Western mindset of immediate reward, economic debt, and overexploitation of natural resources without considering future generations. As one of the leaders of the organization said: “There was like no grand design. Nobody rode in on their white horse and saved us” (L22). In other words, the urban Native community in Spokane needed to take control of their own reality and destiny as active subjects instead of waiting to be saved. Moreover, it was a leadership process based on organization, work, and sustainability, and not a vertical heroic leadership or movement. In addition, to consolidate The NATIVE Project, a lot of sacrifice and work was needed,

People didn’t get big bonuses at Christmas and I personally worked for 11 years with no benefits, with no healthcare, no savings or 401(k)s. So now here I am [mature age]. I look at my 401(k) on my retirement and there’s this over a decade gap of no retirement. But, you know, I was willing to do that. (L22)
Gradually, the organization started to grow from a treatment service where there was one employee, to 15 people working when they opened the health clinic with basic services in 1999, up to the 57 employees they have on the payroll today. Currently, The NATIVE Project specializes in Medical services (providing comprehensive care to Native and non-Native people), Dental services (providing exams, cleanings, fluoride varnish, fillings, extractions, and so on), Pharmacy (exclusively for their patients who can see the provider and get their prescriptions filled at the same visit), Behavioral health (offering chemical dependency assessments, chemical dependency outpatient, aftercare/relapse prevention program, and so on), and Children and youth (organizing leadership camps, summer programs, and community wellness programs).

The secret for growing was the “Indian way:” A lot of work, sacrifices, quality services, and saving, along with good audits that attracted more money from loans and particularly from donations.

The biggest change is that we are more prosperous like any business that started small with two people and then 10 and now 57 people. But prosperity didn’t come because we had a casino or we had a benefactor. Prosperity for us came just in a very old fashion way which Native people have done for hundreds, thousands of years. You know that you’re frugal with your resources, you’re not crazy. We didn’t pay ourselves big salaries so that’s the biggest change. Now we have salary scales, people… we’re the best paid behavioral health people in town, but that wasn’t how it used to be. (L22)

Although with the growth of The NATIVE Project the providers working at the different services started to see more patients than before, the organization, until the current time, has been able to keep its focus on quality service and holistic medicine as described in its Mission. Thus, the organization keeps offering the patients longer visits with the providers than average Western clinics do, and at The NATIVE Project the patients are encouraged to talk about personal issues to facilitate the understanding of the providers
who, with all the information and background gathered, can practice a more efficient and holistic approach of medicine. In addition, since its foundation in 1989, The NATIVE Project has been aware of their role not just as health providers but also as a social movement organization (SMO) that contributes to create a culture of social and cognitive justice in Spokane:

From my standpoint, it seems like they’ve not only grown in size and able to handle more patients, but it seems too that they’re working on trying to leave a lasting legacy. It’s a lot of people that are here now being almost founders, and I think they’re either trying to leave administrative policy or culture and instill that in new comers to keep our values as well as just keep The NATIVE Project standing and keeping growing. (S5)

Today, the organization can be considered much more than a business in the field of healthcare as a result of the social justice motivations that originated its foundation trying to address the systematic deaths of young urban Native as a consequence of substance abuse, and the particular characteristics of SMO of The NATIVE Project, organizing collective actions to struggle for cultural resistance.

**Characteristics: A Diverse Organization as a Holistic Process**

First characteristic that one can observe when entering The NATIVE Project is that the organization is a space of diversity that honors, recognizes and embraces other people’s cultures within a regional context where most of the population is White. On the payroll of the organization there are people from 17 different tribes (Bad River Chippewa, Blackfeet, Chippewa Cree, Cheyenne, Coeur d’Alene, Colville, Gros Ventre, Hopi, Native Village of Kotzebue/Inupiaq, Mandan, Navajo, Nooksack, Pine Ridge Sioux, Rosebud Sioux, Spokane, Turtle Mountain Chippewa, and Yakama), and from seven different countries (England, Canada, India, Kenya, Mexico, Vietnam, and United States) representing five different continents (Africa, North America, South America, Asia, and
Europe). As one founder stated: “We’re inclusive and we have probably the most diverse staff in all of Spokane, eastern Washington” (L33). Moreover, besides a huge diversity in terms of ethnicities and nationalities within the organization, The NATIVE Project is also characterized because it is a business led by Native women working within a field of health dominated by White men, and struggling for cognitive and social justice in a social context of racism, patriarchy, and sexism.

Other two central ideas that better characterize the organization and which are described at the vision and ‘sacred hospitality’ statements, are a holistic perspective for life in general and medicine in particular, and a community-centered approach with a short-term focus on healthcare and a long-term perspective of activism and social justice. According to the website of The NATIVE Project, the vision statement affirms:

The NATIVE Project has a vision of community that promotes balance and harmony in the pursuit of:

Drug and alcohol-free lifestyles;

Spiritual, cultural and traditional Native values;

Wellness and balance of mind, body and spirit for each person;

Respect and integration of all healing paths to wellness for self and others;

Lifestyles which encourage and are supportive of prosperity;

Education and awareness.

By creating a circle of care using one team and one voice, individuals, staff, families and agencies will utilize skills, leadership, cultural and spiritual consciousness to give back to his or her community by living as: Warriors, nurturers, scholars and community activists. (The NATIVE Project, 2018)
While the vision statement of The NATIVE Project was designed along with the Mission in 2008, the concept of Sacred Hospitality was introduced more recently in 2014. According to the organization’s foundational documents, Sacred Hospitality is understood as

An intentionally created practice where our compassion meets the needs of our patients, staff, and community; where they are welcomed, cherished, and respected as human beings; where stories are shared and valued; and where healing of the body, mind, and spirit can happen. (The NATIVE Project, 2018)

Theirs is a holistic approach to medicine and, at the same time, a process of raising awareness and empowering the community, facilitating collective action, and resisting to maintain their own cultural traditions. It is a deep and complex concept that implies a general process articulated with different sub-processes. As one of the leaders of the organization noted:

Our characteristics are strength, wisdom, perseverance and resistance. There’s a lot of depth. It looks superficial on the outside, but there’s a lot of depth. It looks like a clear, clean water on top of the lake but then there’s so much movement going on under. You’re not seeing it, but it’s happening and it’s awesome. It’s like this awesome thing. (L2)

Since NATIVE Project is very community oriented, and the needs of the community change over the years, the organization is also characterized by a high degree of flexibility to better serve the generational changes that the community experiences like, for example, the evolution from substance abuse as the main cause of death among Native population in the eighties and nineties, to the epidemic of diabetes today. Moreover, since its foundation in 1989, The NATIVE Project has been dependent of governmental funds and donations that, according to the political ideology of the administration at the
moment, can represent more or less budget and resources to provide the different services to the community.

Therefore, as a result of an environment of economic dependence and political uncertainty, the organization has developed flexible structures and a capacity to adjust to different scenarios and to make the most of the resources they have at any given period.

There’s always things in flux, like plans. And I think in order to be successful here you definitely need to be able to adapt. That’s probably one of the key elements of success here, I think is adaptability, just because of its size. And we seem to kind of be growing rapidly. And just to best serve our Mission, too. I think it’s a pretty important characteristic. Personally and organizationally. (S6)

Another strategy to cope with the uncertainty that can generate different changes within the political administration in general, or particularly within the healthcare system, is to try to develop foresight and always to think ahead of time to be ready when the problems appear. The leadership of The NATIVE Project has the capacity to understand the organization and its structures as a holistic process, and they are aware of the multiple elements, relations, and possible combinations in any process and, therefore, about the need to try to think ahead of different future scenarios for better adjustment. As an employee argues when talking about vision and leadership:

It’s very empowering that we never just shoot for the status quo, which I see a lot in Native culture. We are like, ‘all right, here’s our plateau, we’re going to get you just to right here,’ which is functional. Hopefully, we make that functional. But always around here, whether we like it or not, we’re always shooting for that next one. And our leadership will not let us be status quo. It’s like we’re always going to be a step above. That’s where we’re aiming. We’re not aiming for the bottom tier. And that’s one thing I like and I think that’s one thing that especially our youth need to see. (S10)

Moreover, The NATIVE Project is an organization characterized by its passion, creativity, optimism and humor. According to one of the founders, “We are culturally based and mostly that means we have humor, food, laughter, and self-care” (L22).
Through optimism and humor, employees of The NATIVE Project cope with the multiple challenges they have been encountering since its foundation as any other business in general, and the barriers they have been facing for being a Native business led by women in a predominantly White and patriarchal society that exercises violence against subordinated social groups such as Native American people and women.

**The Employees: A Combination of Openness, Empathy, and Awareness**

Today, The NATIVE Project has 57 employees working at the organization and there are plans to increase the number of services provided and the staff within the next years. Most of the staff are young professionals between 25 to 45 years old, and there is a gap of age regarding the founders who are all around 60. When it comes to the age of the leadership of The NATIVE Project, there is a lot of variety going from founders over 60 years old to young leaders around 30. Approximately, 65 percent of the 57 employees on the payroll of the organization, including 80 percent of the leadership, and 100% of the founders who are currently working at The NATIVE Project, are women.

In terms of personal and collective characteristics, these employees are characterized by their openness to new cultures and socioeconomic differences. The NATIVE Project is one of the most diverse spaces of Spokane and where a majority of the patients belong to the most impoverished social sectors of the area:

You have to be open to the different cultures because we have Vietnamese, we have Russian, we have Caucasians, we have Blacks, we have Natives, and I think you have to be open to that. And also to the poverty in the community and the challenges they face. (S1)

Also, to adjust to different types of cultures and people, employees of The NATIVE Project need to have an openness to embrace flow and change because every patient is different and with unique socioeconomic backgrounds:
You need to be able to adapt and understand the patients you’re working with. I think that has to do with every department, behavioral health, all the way to medical. All the people we serve have different ethnicities and backgrounds. You have to look at that and different aspects when you come from different places. (S5)

It seems that this openness of the employees of The NATIVE Project is the base from where empathy to think about the context of the patient is developed. Conversely, to Western medicine that only focuses on the health issues without considering the social context, employees of The NATIVE Project have a holistic perspective of medicine and when they treat their patients they are aware that those suffer from health issues that are situated within historic and social contexts of racism, classism, and sexism, that cannot be denied. Thus, the organization provides holistic health because they not only care about the disease or the outcome but also about the social, mental and spiritual state of the patient:

A lot of people come in and they’re not happy. We haven’t been in their shoes so when they come in and they’re difficult you have to realize some of that difficulty stems from their lifestyle and poverty and their drug use and their mental health. I think you have to remind yourself through that throughout the day, especially the front desk. They get damned every day, bam bam bam! (S1)

This empathy seems to result in responsibility and commitment, too. For example, one of the leaders stated:

Working with our most vulnerable people… if they’re sick they get cranky. If they have behavioral health issues they don’t understand what you’re saying. So, just be compassionate. Just put yourself in their shoes and understand that you’re probably the only thing that is keeping them out of the hospital or from a mental health institution. Just try and bear with them. (L11)

Two central elements when it comes to enhance the development of empathy and a sense of responsibility are awareness and knowledge. This is the reason why the leadership of The NATIVE Project emphasizes on transmitting the history and culture of their people to the different employees. One of the founders argued that new employees,
They need to know like oral history. They need to know the historical context of why they work here. They need to know about trauma. They need to know the truth about what happened to Native people. We’re sitting in this building today as a direct result of historical trauma. The genocide and how it shows up now. They killed almost most of us, so we better be on-board all hands-on deck to save what is rest of us. (L22)

It is a process of raising awareness among those employees who are not familiar with the story of Native people in the community, the region, and the country, either because they are non-Native or because they are urban Native who have been disconnected from their cultural traditions and practices. One non-Native leader explicitly noted:

Some of my White colleagues don’t necessarily understand why the Native population has a different set of needs than the White population does. I’ve worked on reservations in Alaska in the past and one sees what happens to indigenous Natives sometimes not getting a fair shake. So, I think understanding the history from where folks come from would be really helpful for most of the new employees. (S25)

And concluded that as a result of colonialism and how the United States was built,

Most of this population has in their families experienced drug abuse, alcohol abuse, suicide, homicide, child abuse. In my family, nobody experienced any of that. I don’t know about your family, but the majority of the dominant culture, I think, doesn’t have that experience and I think the majority of the indigenous culture does have that. So, one needs to be aware that we’re just different. (S25)

Thus, non-Native employees and also Native staff who were disconnected from their cultural traditions and practices have the opportunity of learning and/or re-learning about Native culture and raising their awareness when it comes to issues of social justice involving Native communities in the United States in general and in the Spokane area in particular.

**External Formal and Informal Relationships**

There is a general consensus among The NATIVE Project employees on discrimination, White privilege, and strained cultural relationships existing in Spokane.
and the United States between the dominant White culture and subordinated cultures in general, and with Native American people in particular.

Non-Native members of the organization are aware of the history of the United States and the impact that all the abuses and violations of human rights have had in Native American people and in their Native patients.

We totally screwed the Native American population. There’s a fair amount of cultural injury that came from that and there’s a lot of post-traumatic stress. It’s as if your reason for being was to work or whatever your reason for being is and somebody just took it away and said, ‘screw it you can’t work anymore.’ And their way of life was functioning quite well in the 1500s. Everybody was doing something. There was a purpose for being, and over the subsequent 400 years their reason for being was taken away. (S25)

However, while it seems that for the non-Native people the situation for the Native American population in the United States has improved overall, Native employees consider that they are still living in a scenario of domination and oppression although in a less overt and subtler way.

I think there’s genocide still happening in this country. And slavery in the prison system. We’re being taught in our school system that that stuff was over with and done for and not happening because it was ancient history. I feel like the fact that this stuff is still happening right now, is really conflicting, because the people that are suffering from those things can’t pretend that those things are happening. They’re happening. It’s affecting our lives. Affecting our cultures. And we’re not taking ownership. There’s a lot of ownership that’s not been taken or taught about what’s still happening in our country. (S10)

Apparently, while for the Native members of the organization the past is still present and the current context is still one of domination and oppression, for White employees the past is over and even if they are aware that Native people are suffering from traumas originated in the past, they are more optimistic and consider that the situation has improved substantially. According to one non-Native employee when talking about the
evolution of cultural relations in the United States: “It’s a journey and we’re far from completion of the journey, but I think we’ve done pretty well” (S25).

Traditional cultures, in general, conceptualize time in a more circular way, or understand it as a spiral where, with the aim of projecting the community into the future, it is needed to look at the past while living deeply and growing collectively in the present. Conversely, the Western world conceives a more linear concept of time, where the past seems to be over, the present has not too much relevance, and the emphasis is mainly on a future that does not exist (Little Bear, 2000). Therefore, the different forms of understanding the concept of time for different cultures may seem to explain why Native employees consider that the relations between their culture and the dominant one are still based on colonialism and genocide, and for the non-Native those terms belong to the past and are not applicable anymore.

According to The NATIVE Project employees, there is a general lack of knowledge regarding the Native American culture in general and in particular the ‘invisible’ urban Native in the United States. For example, as one Native employee who used to live in a big city noted:

I feel like a lot of times that people don’t even know Native Americans still exist and that’s like a big culture shock growing up in a suburb of [big city] which was pretty much [a big city], right? I mean, so a huge city. I was probably the only Native student at high school and some of the students thought I still lived in a teepee. Then, if I didn’t live in a teepee, they didn’t know I even existed. (S16)

And regarding Spokane, although the presence of Native populations is very important in this region because the area is situated in the land of the Indigenous peoples of the Northwest Plateau, the lack of knowledge about Native people is also very generalized. As one of the founders stated:
Relations in the U.S. are strained. Very not respectful and not integrated. And I feel the same in Spokane. We’ve been here 28 years and people still ask me what’s The NATIVE Project? What do you do there? And I thought that’s the definition of White privilege that you don’t know where the resources are for every single person and every kind of person in the city. It’s true, police officers asking me what do you guys do here? Or we go to the ER and the ER docs go, do you have real doctors there? (L22)

In the same line of argument, another of the founders stated: “I think there’s a lot of lack of understanding, and it’s privilege. If it doesn’t affect me it’s not my problem” (L33).

Moreover, one of the leaders argued about the marginalization and ‘invisibilization’ of Native people in American society today:

We’re the forgotten. We have all of our celebrations, our cultural events, and things like that. We choose not to let anybody forget us, but I see us as being forgotten, or maybe not even forgotten, but just put aside. I just see this as somebody that we were put aside on our little reservations, and hopefully never seen or heard of again. (L11)

One of the reasons that seems to explain this lack of knowledge and misinterpretations is an education system and a ‘White curriculum’ that situate Native culture and Native people in museums as a manifestation of the past and objects without agency, and make invisible the contemporary cultural manifestations and processes of cultural resistance:

I feel like learning starts traditionally in United States in the classroom K-12 and I feel like a lot of the history books that are written are written not from an indigenous perspective. When they do treat on topics of Native American history or more contemporary issues that we face, they are sort of glossed over and they sort of depict us as being ancient versus here today, and I feel like we have to become the teachers of our culture. We’re tasked with that. (S14)

Another common concern that emerged through the conversations with The NATIVE Project’s staff was the current political climate with Trump’s administration that, according to their views, seems to have promoted a more overt racism in the United States than in the last years, and empowered far-right groups to stop being ‘politically
I think when you turn on the TV and you see the Black Lives Matter movement and things like that, I think that’s pretty indicative of the cultural climate. With the current administration, it’s more overt than it has been since like the 60’s-70’s. Just like it was last night at Fenway Park where they unleashed that banner that said, ‘Racism is just as American as baseball.’ (S14)

One leader criticized multiculturalism in the United States because ‘difference’ is celebrated but always in a position of subordination regarding the dominant culture contributing to maintain the status quo:

I think there’s a lot of talk about embracing culture, about celebrating culture, but I think what we say and what we do are two completely different things. Because I think we might not be aware of our own prejudices, and our own biases, and things like that. And when we look at viewing other cultures I think it comes from a place of the viewpoint of looking at somebody else’s culture as, maybe it’s on purpose, maybe it’s not on purpose, that it’s inferior or less than your own. And so, you know yourself, but when you learn about others it becomes it’s less than. (L8)

Thus, a supporter argued that American multiculturalism was struggling in terms of inclusion because: “My experience living here is that it’s just like it’s not a melting pot, it’s more like a tossed salad. Let’s put it like this. In the same bowl but they are not really mixing well” (S14). In addition, another employee was criticizing the current social divisions in the United States society as a result of colonialism, and advocated for a ‘class solidarity’ that unites all subordinated cultures and social groups regardless their race, ethnicity, gender, or social class:

If we were able to switch over to looking at our similarities when it comes to economics… if the poor got together, the way that we were founded, no matter what color, there would be a lot more movement. But the way that we are divided so much in our minds, it’s just hard to stop. (S10)

This employee was proposing, I believe, at a macro level what The NATIVE Project represents at a micro level: A general movement, a SMO that tries to overcome the social
divisions that an hegemonic system imposed through a colonial matrix of power to justify and legitimate their domination and oppression based on categories of race, class, or gender, which situated a few people (basically White rich men) at the top of the social hierarchy while most of the population remained subordinated.

A Sanctuary to Balance Asymmetries of Power and Decolonize

When it comes to these “strained” social relations between cultures in the United States, one of the key elements that emerges from data analysis is the existence of asymmetries of power in a divided society. Within this context of domination, oppression, and social divisions where the hegemonic culture is at the top of the social hierarchy, The NATIVE Project represents an answer to try to counterbalance those asymmetries of power providing an independent platform and channeling a collective action. As one of the founders explained,

Any system you work in, whether it’s education, government, even healthcare... If I were to work in those systems I would never have power. I would have to always acquiesce to the power and control of the colonizer because they own every system in this country. I get that. So, I just had conversations with people and we’re like ‘we can do this ourselves, we can make systems that maybe from the outside look like their system so if it’s palatable enough they’ll give us money or... but underneath really like nurture the spirit or the core of it.’ We know that it’s safe here to be an Indian organization even though we do work that is dominant society work, if that makes sense. (L22)

The organization is a safe space where Native people can be who they really are. As another of the founders noted: “We have worked to be accepted for who we are and what we do based on who we are and what we do, and not on expectations” (L33). Therefore, The NATIVE Project becomes a sanctuary for subordinated cultures in general and Native people in particular where they can be who they want to be, and where they can live their lives how they want to live them.
Spokane being that it’s not such a diverse city, the diverse population that we do have really finds comfort in coming to The NATIVE Project because we are diverse staff, because they’re staff that look like them. Who might come from the same country they do, or might talk like them, or have the same language, and go through the same struggles, the same background, and probably celebrate the same holidays or family traditions, and things like that. (L8)

It is a sanctuary where people can feel comfortable and safe, and at the same time can feel empowered through frameworks of collective action. Moreover, it is an organization where, on a daily basis, one encounters and can ‘practice’ diversity, social justice, and cultural resistance. As an employee stated:

The NATIVE Project allowed you more of a practice of interculturality and social justice, like maybe enlightenment. You know, working for a non-profit, at the end of the day, it’s not just about making money for the organization but also the benefit for the society and patient care for the group that we serve. So, I think it allows us to practice to that which is why I’m here. (S6)

The leadership of The NATIVE Project seems to be very aware of the difference between paternalism and ‘assistentialism’ on one side, and critical consciousness and empowerment on the other. Thus, leaders of the organization emphasize practicing a holistic medicine and a patient-centered care where the patients take an active role in their health and work closely with the providers. A patient-centered care aims to convince patients to take control of reality in their own hands, to be aware, and to be active and take charge of their health and lives instead of being passive and dependent.

People who have a hard time here are what you call ‘codependence.’ They want to do things for other people and we’re very clear that’s not what we’re doing here. I mean, really isn’t the best way to undo colonization. To be free is to be independent. We teach people to be autonomous, healthy, independent, to live on their own, and to take care of their own health and their mental health. So, it’s been a challenge sometimes because I think some professions like social work, medicine, or counseling have an unhealthy part that teaches people to be codependents and take care of other people… that is not our culture. (L22)

The organization is a space for decolonization of minds of both Native and non-Native employees and also a project that aims to deconstruct social structures of domination and
oppression. Within The NATIVE Project, social justice issues are present every day, and for example, White members of the organization can perceive even more their privilege and try to use it to advocate for and amplify the voice of people from the subordinated cultures with whom they work. As one White employee said:

I feel that as I’ve learned more about Native culture here I feel like I’m able to actually empower the Native besides the Native people individually. For example, going to Dentist associations and organizations I can bring a voice for them that often contrasts with normal private practice or something like that... And just bring the concerns that a lot of Native people have for their sake or lack of care or need for better care, or better accesses as it needs to the attention of say the state legislature or something like that. I think it’s a great opportunity like I said, empower those around me about Native concerns. (S4)

Decolonization it is not just an endeavor of subordinated cultures but also from allies belonging to the dominant culture who need to be aware of their privilege and use it to advocate for a transformation of a system of domination and oppression that hinders the potential of human development of all those who are not at the top of the social hierarchy.

**Raising Awareness and Educating Hegemonic Institutions**

Notwithstanding, although allies from the hegemonic culture are necessary since they are part of the problem, and therefore, of the solution, Native people at The NATIVE Project are not voiceless and they exercise their voice and their agency to raise awareness and educate about Native culture and traditions to a predominantly White community in Spokane and their main institutions such as the City Council or the Spokane Police Department (SPD).

The leadership of The NATIVE Project works on improving relationships with the City Council and the SPD to raise awareness among them about Native people’s presence in the Spokane area.
NATIVE Project has always worked to have a good relationship and improving that with City of Spokane. It’s been an ongoing process. I started with NATIVE Project in 1999, and I have watched the improvement in the relationships with the city and I think [the founder and CEO] does a wonderful job of educating people about Native culture and people of color. (S1)

Moreover, at the same time, they try to ‘educate’ those institutions about the political, economic, and social struggles of Native population in Spokane and the region.

One key is education. Going out and educating people. [The founder and CEO] has sent people to the hospital to meet our clientele and invite them over to see the clinic and see what we do, the fire department, the ambulance, the police… We’ve had people from senators and their staff come over to be introduced. Yeah, it’s amazing. (S1)

Regarding the SPD, it seems that their relationship with The NATIVE Project has improved through the years even if there still may be a history of police abuse and violence with Native people. For example, one employee explained:

If you have kids or relatives that are identifiably Indian and Native relatives or whatever, I always tell them that ‘If the police say stop you stop. You stop. I said you don’t have to tell them anything else, you can call me, but at least stop and identify yourself and don’t put your hands in your pockets for God’s sake.’ But you tell them that even here in Spokane, you do because in Lincoln County if a person of color drives through Lincoln County you don’t want to go one mile over the speed limit because you will get a ticket. These are really the laws of the country. (S15)

Two anecdotes combining the humor that characterizes the organization and certain sadness inherited from historical genocide and abuses, describes the strained relations between the law enforcement and Native communities today:

Our police came in uniform to meet with [the founder and CEO] and we had one patient run to the bathroom, one patient turned around and went out the door, one patient refused to come through… It was just like that, but also it can be traumatic for kids. I saw a little kid and when she saw a policeman started crying because she said ‘that’s when my uncle died and they came into the house and they took me away and blah, blah, blah, and all this,’ you are like ‘God!’ …That’s your memory of the policeman. (S15)
Thus, the leadership of The NATIVE Project tries to improve the relationships between the urban Native community of the Spokane area and the SPD, organizing different specific events with them like roundtables or workshops, or just inviting the police department to participate in social gatherings like the summer camp graduation. Through a more fluid and constant relation and presence of the SPD in activities organized by The NATIVE Project, the police officers get to know better the urban Native community, their traditions and cultural practices on one side; and the Native population of the Spokane area has the opportunity to express their concerns and to share their historical traumas resulted from decades of violence exercised by the military and the police, with the aim of raising awareness among police officers and also for healing and reconciliation.

I think the relationship with the Spokane Police Department like they did our summer camp for our kids, which was really positive. And then [the founder and CEO] hosted a focus group, a public forum for them to come in and it was sort of a hot seat for them because it was the community being able to ask these hard questions. And I commend all of them for coming in and putting themselves in a spot like that, but I don’t know the extent of the relation, working relationship, just that they have made themselves an appearance with The NATIVE Project. (S14)

Although the relationship is not perfect and has its setbacks, it seems that, as a consequence of the initiative of the leadership of The NATIVE Project to establish a fluid communication, today the SPD sees the organization as a liaison with the Native communities of the Spokane area.

I think for good or bad I think they see us representing Natives in the community, so whenever they have a Native issue they come and talk to [the founder and CEO] and that’s good and that’s right. I mean, she will always say I don’t represent… she will always tell them I don’t represent the Natives here in this community, I represent NATIVE Project myself. (S20)

When it comes to the City council of Spokane, the relationship between them and The NATIVE Project appears to be neither fluid nor good. According to one of the leaders, the communication is almost nonexistent:
City council, mayor… those guys they all want to talk to you when they need something. That’s what I always feel like. I always feel like it’s always about what their needs are, and never about what our needs are. And they don’t want to talk to you unless they need something. I don’t really see any of them here. (L11)

Finally, at a federal level, The NATIVE Project is dependent on IHS funding and tries to get grants and have some sort of influence in the government decisions sending people to Washington D.C. occasionally to advocate for the cause of urban Native population in the Spokane area. As one of the employees put it:

On the federal level, we’re pretty dependent on IHS for funding, in terms of grants to help us. So we’re always doing some outreach. Like we have an outreach right now for postcards to our governors and senators to try to raise awareness for importance of a grant that helps subsidize some of our positions here. So, I think we’re in pretty good communication. I think people do visits to the capital and discuss legislation that can affect our funding and things like that. (S6)

For any ethnic organization within the United States, in order to survive, it is central to learn to navigate between cultures and systems and the leadership of The NATIVE Project knows how the political and health systems work and how to navigate them to get funds for the sustainability of the organization while keeping their independence.

Internal Formal and Informal Relationships

Formal and informal relations within The NATIVE Project represent a big variety of different encounters, interactions, miscegenation, power, and resistances that are influenced and shaped by different elements. Among the main ones there are: (1) The diversity of the staff; (2) the encouragement for creativity and the fluidity of the organizational structures; (3) the commitment of the organization with social justice and cultural resistance; and (4) the particularities of the leadership process that emerges within the organization.
Diversity of the Staff

The NATIVE Project, a Native American organization led by women with 57 employees on the payroll belonging to 17 tribes, and with people from seven different nationalities representing five different continents, is probably one of the most diverse places in Spokane, a predominantly White area in the State of Washington. As one leader noted:

I remember when I first came here and I was like, ‘wow, this is fun, there are a lot of people of different cultures here!’ That was refreshing because as you’ve come to appreciate, Spokane at large is pretty uni-cultural. There’s pockets of everything, but the dominance, by far, is White Americans. (S25)

Formal and informal relations that unfold in a daily basis within the organization are strongly influenced by this diversity that is mainly appreciated in the relationship of Native and Non-Native perspectives, the constant feeling that one experiences at the organization of navigating between cultures, and the strong sense of family that arises among a very diverse staff and acts as a sort of glue for the employees regardless their culture, race, ethnicity, class, or gender.

Native and non-Native. Within a space where people from different cultural backgrounds and worldviews work together, it seems inevitable that cultural differences, shocks, and conflicts emerge. As one leader noted:

We see a lot of cultural conflicts. It’s not just Natives that work here. We have Vietnamese and Kenyans. We have different cultures that we’re trying to intermix and a lot of my time is a lot of miscommunication in personnel, coaching in here with a lot of the departments or staff coming in here and like, ‘so and so said this’ or ‘so and so said that.’ I go, ‘okay, let’s take a step back and see what the miscommunications was.’ Because 99% of the time it is a miscommunication issue or a cultural exchange that somebody’s not getting. I say, ‘let’s talk about that. Here’s the space to talk about it and you guys aren’t forced to be friends, but you do need to understand each other at some point because you are serving the same patients!’ We have that constant. (L2)
While observing and interviewing at The NATIVE Project, one of the most visible aspects that one notices regarding the diversity of the organization is the relationship between Native and non-Native people and their different cultural perspectives. For example, an interesting concept that emerged from the analysis of data in terms of differences between Native and non-Native staff is the degree of respect that each group of employees has for elders and ancestors. As one Native leader explained:

Culturally, you follow the elders. Elders have the most knowledge. Elders have the most life experience. But there are also elders that teach and mentor those people within the organization, or even within the community, that have shown and demonstrated trust and bond relationship and rapport in the American Indian community. (L2)

This concept of respecting the elders appears to be much stronger among Native employees than with non-Native, and seems connected with a mentality of mentorship in life in general, and particularly within the organization. Thus, the leadership within The NATIVE Project promotes and encourages the mentoring of other employees, patients, and above all the youth. As an employee stated:

[The founder and CEO] is a great mentor and she believes in empowering her staff. She believes in mentoring the young ones to follow up and assume her position when she’s gone. For instance, her daughter, and [the director of Human resources]. I’ve watched them be mentored to come up, and she talks about it all the time: Mentoring our Native kids to educate and to take over and to keep doing that. (S1)

Everybody is mentored at The NATIVE Project regardless if they are Native or non-Native.

Being White, I wasn’t exposed to any culture growing up. I was just surrounded by White people and so my sister is African-American and Native American and she had a horrendous time here. I got some exposure to her experience, but working with these kids, working with Native American kids, or working with the Latino kids... I have mentors that can teach me. Because I don’t know everything. You know? And I love that. (S32)
Today, around 25% of the employees on the payroll participated when they were kids in past editions of the leadership and summer camps organized by The NATIVE Project. This statistic shows that a main focus of the leadership is on empowering young urban Native, and also proves that the system of teaching and forming future leaders for the community has been effective and sustainable until now. As one of the leaders who was part of the leadership and summer camps as a kid described:

I think working here I have become prouder, and feel more celebrated, and hopeful. Before I came here, there wasn’t really a place that had a bunch of professionals who were like, ‘Hey, you’re awesome as you are. Come join us.’ That kind of thing. And when I came here and then saw these people who are movers and shakers in the community, who are doing awesome things, who’ve asked me to sit at the same table as they have... I didn't have to sit at the kids’ table. (L8)

This culture of mentorship at the organization is reproduced generation after generation, and particularly with the young who once were mentored and now work at The NATIVE Project and feel the obligation of mentoring others. Interestingly, although Native and non-Native employees stated during the interviews that they were mentored at a certain point and they consider it a very positive practice, just Native American interviewees made explicit their will to mentor others as a consequence of having a responsibility and duty with future generations. I would suggest this does not mean that non-Native employees do not mentor in their lives or within the organization, because mentorship is a very spread idea around the United States, particularly in businesses and colleges, but there seems to be a higher and deeper level of commitment and awareness with mentoring others among Native employees than with non-Native who, although made reference to the importance of being mentored within the organization, did not talk explicitly about mentoring others. As one young Native leader stated:
I obviously want to be able to offer the same opportunities for other people after me, and I want to make a community, a workforce, and a place like that for other people. And in order for that to happen I have to be part of the conversation. I have to have a conversation at work. I have to have it outside of work. Talking about fairness, and equality, and cultural competency when it comes to certain things. And NATIVE Project has taught me how to have that conversation, and taught me how to really be who I am and stand my ground. And to share with others my gift. (L8)

Another difference between Native and non-Native employees and perspectives within The NATIVE Project emerges when it comes to understanding the practice of medicine.

On one side, there is a Native approach that focuses on the long term and implements a holistic perspective, while on the other, there is a Western model centered on the short-term and exclusively emphasizing the outcome.

Our providers, the more and more they work in medicine, the more and more they get upset and jaded because they’re saying, ‘I’m only treating the outcome, I’m not treating the cause.’ You see them kind of like, ‘well, I’m the provider and I am just going to treat the outcome and that’s how medicine is running right now.’ And in an Indian organization you really have to take cue from the tribe and the tribal leadership on where your health efforts are going to go and that’s the challenge I often observe in the work setting with our providers. They know they’re doing outcome and they really, really are passionate and Mission driven and want to make people healthy, but at the same time, they know they’re going to have to treat chronic disease if our prevention efforts or our wellness efforts aren’t interjected during that lifespan of the family. (L2)

While cultural differences such as the degree of respect for elders and the commitment with mentoring noted before do not imply a conflict within the organization, differences in understanding medicine of some non-Native providers seem to contradict the basic principles of holistic medicine stated by the Mission and Vision of the organization and can result in a negative environment. Therefore, this different approach to medicine represents a concern for the leadership of The NATIVE Project when it comes to hiring new employees who can meet the professional requirements to work at the organization but may have a too rigid and non-flexible Western mindset wherein it may be difficult
providing health care from a holistic perspective. Thus, the department of Human Resources becomes central, not just to decide who can work at The NATIVE Project, but also to preserve the organizational culture and the Mission and Vision statements. As one leader noted when describing the process to hire new employees:

At first, I’m like, ‘oh, they just need to be oriented and blah-blah-blah.’ Now I say, ‘oh no, you have to do a lot of cultural norming with them!’ And even with our seasoned senior providers, you still have to do a lot of cultural norming with them and also coaching. And sometimes you just ask a question back to them and let them guide them, but they got to make their own mistakes and their own miscommunications so they learn from that. You can’t be like helicopter administrator down there trying to figure it out. So, I think for the most part the organization it’s very traditional of a Western concept, but it’s non-traditional in how we practice that. (L2)

When it comes to solving these conflicts among employees, conversely to a more ‘Western’ procedure like for example complaining to the Board or Human resources, the system implemented at The NATIVE Project is to ‘call a circle.’ The circle is mentioned in the book of policy and procedures of the organization as ‘circle management’ and, although it may sound as a managerial concept, its origin comes from the traditional tribal circles where people used to have conversations about different issues, planned, had arguments, and made decisions face-to-face in a circle.

You’re not working at Deaconess or Sacred Heart hospital anymore [hospitals in the city of Spokane]. This is really a life shift for them. They need to know how we started and why, and this isn’t their private practice. If they are unhappy they don’t go to the board and bitch about it. That’s a very White corporate way of doing business go up and down the chain. No, this is ‘sit right here and work this out, let’s work it out in your circle.’ (L22)

For Native American people within the organization, this system appears to be very ‘natural’ and they seem to be very comfortable ‘calling circles’ to address personal and organizational issues because they are familiar with this cultural practice. However, for non-Native American employees, it seems to be a very uncomfortable and sometimes
even traumatic procedure because it does not provide confidentiality: “Some staff who
first came here when they were in their first circles were just freaked out. Especially
healthcare workers” (L22). Notwithstanding, as non-Native employees get more
awareness about Native culture, most of them end up being comfortable with the circle
and eventually prefer to call a circle instead of complaining to human resources or asking
for confidential evaluations.

Some staff who used to freak out with the circles later said ‘Oh, I want to call a
circle on that,’ because they realized the power of it. I hate doing things like
evaluations. Evaluations are absolutely worthless. What does that teach someone?
How about a circle with all your co-workers? Yeah, why don’t you hear it from
them what you’re fabulous at? What you could work on? Or what you’re not
fabulous at? Don’t you think you’re going to remember that more than a little
piece of paper that I didn’t sign? (L22)

Non-Native members of the organization who learn to navigate between different cultural
practices such as the circle, gradually get more awareness about Native history and
worldviews that results in the improvement of their work and relation with patients. They
start to see medicine in a more holistic way and understand the need for context and
connection of different elements such as the history, the culture, or the socioeconomic
status of the patient to provide healthcare. As one non-Native employee noted:

In Dental specifically, a lot of Native American experiences have been terrible.
Kind of we deal with a lot more anxiety. There’s always the general anxiety
because everybody kind of has a dental anxiety. But coming from someone who
doesn’t have a Native background to somebody who is Native, I feel like that’s a
lot more negative. Their experiences were a lot more negative as children. Not
saying that there’s not negative experiences for everybody but like being
everybody put on a bus and brought to the dentist like cattle, whereas I didn’t
grow up like that. (S5)

In general, as a result of being aware and knowing better Native American history and
culture, it seems that non-Native employees end up developing a higher grade of
understanding and from knowing more about the context of their patients they develop empathy toward them.

We try to relate to their ethnic or cultural backgrounds. Different socioeconomic backgrounds. We have homelessness, we have people with mental health issues and minorities. People who are impoverished. So, trying to relate to what conditions they might encounter or what they have endured in their life or try to have an understanding. (S6)

However, not all employees learn to navigate between cultures and are able to develop a better understanding of Native culture and medicine. When new employees do not agree with the organizational culture and mindset of the organization, it seems that for the leadership of The NATIVE Project it is very clear that these people need to leave. For example, as noted before regarding cultural and training differences that emerge when it comes to resolving personal conflicts with the native practice of circles instead of complaining to human resources, one leader said:

It’s really a training exercise to teach people to resolve their conflict one-on-one. It’s kind of aversion therapy because people don’t want to go back in the circle. I think it’s so in corporate America where is that at. Everybody goes to HR, but here that is not [the human resources director] job to babysit you on the job. You have a problem with your co-worker then work it out or go work at the bank. I don’t care. (L22)

And the same leader continued:

I don’t care what you do at Spokane Mental Health. I don’t care what you did at Sacred Heart Hospital. You’re at The NATIVE Project now. But that’s part of the colonization too. People drag their old stuff in, or ‘we don’t like this… up there it was better.’ I’m like ‘I don’t care. I do it like this and it works for our community.’ (L22)

Apparently, there are certain lines in the sand that cannot be trespassed such as the concept of holistic and long-term medicine, the circle management, and the Mission and Vision statements which I believe represent a decolonial framework or core of values and cultural assumptions that cannot be adjusted, modified, or changed. The rest of the
principles, values, or believes can be discussed, adjusted, modified, or changed through the dialogue among cultures, but there is a core that guarantees the decolonial mindset and the autonomy of the organization that appears to give The NATIVE Project its particular identity.

Navigating between cultures. As a result of a workplace where there are employees and patients from different tribes, nationalities, ethnicities, classes, gender, professional mindsets and types of training, members of The NATIVE Project are obliged to learn how to navigate between different cultures in order to fit and to be able to offer quality services. One leader compared the diversity within the organization with a former job, and stated the necessity to navigate between cultures at The NATIVE Project:

We are navigating between cultures here every single day. I worked as [former job] for 20 years prior and I didn’t. I was in a private practice and I wasn’t having to navigate it so much. But yeah, it’s constantly here, and I actually like it. I really do. I feel like it keeps me on my toes. (L11)

Notwithstanding, there is a noticeable difference between Native and non-Native employees (in particular, those individuals belonging to the hegemonic White culture) because the former seems more used to navigating between cultures as a result of living between their own culture and the dominant one since they were born, and the non-Native who appear to need more effort when it comes to relating with other cultures. According to one of the founders:

I’m a biracial person. I have privilege because of my skin color till I open up my mouth because my brain isn’t really biracial although I do understand them. I think the old days in a lot of Native language mix-blooded people will call the interpreter. People that could explain both sides, and a lot of times I see that as my role. And I think it irritates White people and sometimes it irritates Indians, so I just say ‘Hey, this is what they mean.’ (L22)

Conversely, for non-Native people the process is not that smooth and they need to learn how to navigate in an easy way:
One of the things about making myself more accustomed to the Native American culture is to acknowledge that I know nothing about them. Very quickly I became very aware that for me to be able to take care of them I need to understand where they’re coming from. I need to understand the history. I need to be aware of what their needs are. I have colleagues here that are Native Americans. And I started asking questions. (S4)

One of the strategies that the leadership of the organization implements to facilitate the process of navigating between cultures is to share information and knowledge about Native issues in every meeting or event that The NATIVE Project organizes:

I think learning to navigate for me is first to learn. NATIVE Project did a great job of kind of sharing what Native culture meant to them as well as a lot of history that they have gone through, whether it be positive and proud or kind of negative experiences that we’re trying to overcome. I think by learning that knowledge and having kind of, I suppose, first or second-hand knowledge on kind of these experiences, say domestic violence or alcoholism, or something like that, it just allows me to be more empathetic to individuals’ situations or even to broad situations such as the Dakota Access Pipeline or something. (S4)

This process of learning is not exclusive for non-Native people but also for Native who are not very aware of their culture and in particular urban Native who can be disconnected from their cultural roots as a result of processes of cultural assimilation into the Western culture. As one Native employee argued:

When I first came, even though myself I am Native, I was very much an urban Native. I had never been on the reservation. I’m an enrolled [Indian tribe], but I never lived on the reservation, so I was very White. I did have to learn to navigate between cultures then and get educated. So, they’ve done a great job. (S1)

The NATIVE Project leadership facilitates navigating between cultures sharing information and knowledge regarding their culture, history and political struggles, and also offering the employees and the community spaces for interacting and dialogue. For example, there is a monthly ‘All Staff Meeting’ where all employees meet to discuss the situation of the organization, general policies, and designs to follow; weekly ‘Directors Meetings’ where the directors of every service provided by the clinic update the
leadership of The NATIVE Project and each other to coordinate their work; ‘Departments Meeting’ weekly, where members of each department inform each other about their tasks and share ideas to improve the services they provide; and ‘Employee Appreciation Day’ on Friday, to share and know better about each other in a more informal way. Moreover, there are different events organized every week outside the office where the employees can participate and, in general, the whole building is a big space to interact when working, walking, having lunch, or resting.

Overall, individuals belonging to the White hegemonic culture in the United States do not need to know about other cultures as a result of a system that bestows White people with the ‘privilege’ of living in a society designed by and for them. However, when it comes to working at The NATIVE Project, they are going to face diversity when interacting with Native colleagues and patients and they are going to feel the need to learn and to know about subordinated cultures and social groups. According to one employee, these ‘formal’ spaces to interact in the organization were central to meeting with different cultures and also to be empowered in terms of learning to navigate between cultures:

Providing the environment for me to meet with other people and to meet with Native American community. I think that by itself is empowerment. Several community events like the pow wow and the fun run and things like that have been the building blocks where I have been able to tap into meeting people in the community. A lot of questions are how I met with people and asked those questions, and I feel more empowered that way. (S3)

Moreover, as one leader argued, besides the ‘formal’ spaces, employees can always interact with each other creating ‘informal’ spaces within work and also outside work:

I call it setting the sacred space, it could happen anywhere. It could happen in my office, it could happen privately, it could happen in a group depending on the situation. It could happen at the all staff. You set the sacred space and you set the tone and that’s different than where you want to see elsewhere. I call it studying the sacred space and having those conversations and making sure it’s safe. (L2)
Notwithstanding, navigating between cultures does not just mean learning from the cultural backgrounds of the different members of the organization but also from the community in general and the patients in particular. As one employee argued:

We get time to talk to our patients, whereas not a lot of places get that. It’s not a run in, run out experience, and that’s gotten for me it’s made me kind of relax a little bit with getting involved in their lives. I talk to people a lot more. I know a lot more where they’re coming from as opposed to ‘oh, they’re going to be 20 minutes late, too bad.’ I was like ‘why are they going to be 10 minutes late? What’s happening? There’s probably something happening.’ We’re not rushed through, and that’s been my experience at most other offices, and here it’s not, which has been nice for me. (S5)

Relations between employees, and between employees and patients, are valued and, conversely, to a more Western approach that presents a rigid organizational system based on an industrial concept of society centered on productivity, The NATIVE Project represents a more relational and fluid way of organizing, while still being able to provide high quality standards for an important number of patients.

**Sense of family as the glue of the organization.** In spite of all the cultural differences, conflicts that may emerge, and difficulties for some employees in navigating constantly between cultures, the general mentality that seems to predominate at The NATIVE Project and acts as the glue that keeps together the organization is that of a ‘family’ where differences are accepted and valued as strengths. Thus, all employees seem to be aware of being part of The NATIVE Project family, and they understand this sense of belonging that unites them and goes beyond any possible argument or conflict.

One of the employees said regarding the organization:

I guess it’s more of like a sense of family. I like that feeling. There’s familiar, but then you’re learning new things from the other people who are here. I like all the events that we offer to the community members and our youth and our teenagers. I like that we do that. Not a lot of work innovations do stuff like that, and I think that we’re unique in that we do that and keep up with it and something that we do every year. (S27)
Moreover, another employee stated regarding working at The NATIVE Project:

There is a lot of diversified Natives that we have but we all look at them because of who we are and where we come from and we want to make sure that we can help them to do whatever they want, but we’ll do a white, yellow, black, red, indifferent. It doesn’t matter, they all need help and I think it’s from all of us being Native and being so closely connected to our family and our family ties that we are able to do this successfully and continue doing it without burning out. (S18)

In addition, another employee described how important is the sense of belonging to a community that protects and cares about you both as a professional and as a person:

I really appreciate the fact that we are all here together. And I think that’s been one of the best parts about this. It is just like learning so much about the Native American culture and having that sense of like family and community. You can get up and go to work every day and just know that you have people around you that care. And they care about what they do and what you do at work. (S21)

And another employee coined the term of ‘urban reservation’ for depicting The NATIVE Project when stating:

I think NATIVE Project sort of like is a pillar in the community and I think you feel like you are family. I left the ‘res’ to come here and you sort of make up your own reservation with the people you work with and they become your family and it’s Natives helping Natives, it’s Natives helping other non-Natives, and it’s non-Natives helping… you know what I mean? It’s just that melting pot and I think I am trying to process that while protecting it. (S14)

For one of the leaders, the organization was not just a community or family but home, because it represents the place where people can be who they really are and to be celebrated and honored:

Just being Native in a non-diverse place, being gay in a very conservative city… it’s nice because you can be what you want here, and celebrated. This is a place of diversity to the max, and in Spokane it’s hard to find places like that. That’s why I’m really thankful and so blessed to be able to call NATIVE Project my home, and to be able to really be myself here, and to be celebrated, and that feels really good. (L8)

However, like normally happens with every family, there are arguments, and it seems that although the relationship between employees and departments is good, there are strong
personalities within the organization that occasionally can lead to some sort of personal and/or departmental arguments or conflicts. From the data analysis of the observations and interviews, emerged that some employees considered that the Medical department was not totally understanding medicine in a fully holistic way; others had the perception of existing certain preferences from the leadership of the organization for some services over others; and other members of the staff experienced a slight feeling of frustration when implementing the idea of Sacred Hospitality for the employees and not just for the patients.

For example, regarding the criticism to the Medical department and their difficulties to understand medicine in a more holistic way, one employee noted:

> We have different perspectives of how we’re going to treat clients. And that affects the function of the program. I know behavioral health. About having fun, relaxing… And compared to the medical side, there’s a difference in that mentality. There’s different things that the team helps out with that no one else probably would help out with. And I think that part of it contributes to the whole foundation of what NATIVE Project is. Because it’s not about treating, providing medical service. It’s not just you know doing counseling sessions, but there’s an underlying piece behind that as you know relaxing, having fun, talking. And participating in events and having that time to do those things. (S10)

When it comes to the rivalries between departments, one employee said: “We used to think behavioral health was kind of favored but I don’t think so, but they were there the longest. They were at the beginning and we were added on” (S1). And a leader stated that although hierarchies between departments did not exist, there could be differences in terms of some services making more money or being more strategic:

> My guess is Medical makes the money for this place. I think if you ask [the CFO] she would say Medical floats the other things that we do because we get a lot of money. And so, it’s important that Medical function well to generate that money. (S25)
When it comes to implementing the concept of Sacred Hospitality, it seems that although it is gaining more clarity between the staff, it is not clear enough yet, and there is a certain degree of confusion to agree upon how to define the concept and the procedure to implement it. As one employee explained:

I think as a family, you don’t always treat the ones that you’re closest to the best. You treat your guests way better. I think that that’s what needs to shift for all of us. I value you and treat each other almost like guests, but as closely and as nicely as we would… but I think we’re getting better. I think for a little while this term, ‘Sacred Hospitality’ would almost make you cringe, because it really wasn’t all mindset yet. And I think we’re getting better at that. (S10)

It appears that discussions and arguments are common in the organization but what differentiates The NATIVE Project from other organizations is that these conflicts are not necessarily understood as negative or destructive, because the organization seems to view differences and conflicts as opportunities that, when channeled in a positive way, can result in resilience and social change. One leader noted:

Sometimes there’s a lot of disagreements, and sometimes there’s some side remarks or whatever kind of thing. But one of things I learned from [the CEO] was that she said this building wasn’t built in quiet rooms. There was shouting. There was yelling. There was passion behind people’s samplings. And because of some of that passion work we had we’re now sitting in the building that was once a conversation. And when you want to really impact change, affect change, and really help people, it’s not a quiet process. (L8)

And one founder summarized, arguing: “It’s a little brutal at times, but it is what it is. We come from a matriarchal society, and decisions are made, and discussions are had, and sometimes very loudly” (L33). Similarly as the example noted before, when talking about how non-Native employees felt very uncomfortable with the circle of management and the fact of having to ‘tell the truth’ face-to-face to other colleagues, it seems that while for the Western worldview issues regarding differences, arguments, and conflicts have a negative connotation and are systematically avoided, erased, or hidden behind a
‘politically correct’ behavior, Native cultures feel more comfortable with differences, arguments, and conflicts as part of a diverse and fluid reality and believe that they can be used as catalysts for social change.

**Encouragement for Creativity and Fluidity of Organizational Structures**

Regardless the differences between Native and non-Native people and other cultural differences in terms of nationality, class, gender, or position, another characteristic differentiates certain groups within The NATIVE Project. On one side, there are those employees who appear to feel more comfortable with the fact of having freedom to be creative and enjoy being encouraged to think outside the box, and on the other, there are staff members who prefer more direction and planning to develop their tasks. Moreover, it also appears that some employees navigate better with fluid structures that are constantly changing and evolving, and others who feel more comfortable with static and rigid structures that offer them more stability to develop their work.

Overall, both groups work well together and keep a good and professional relationship, but it seems that the group advocating for creativity and fluid structures is the one with more power and influence to impose their vision upon the organization. For example, one of the leaders was arguing about the need to find providers with creativity and imagination focused on developing quality relationships instead of just high productivity and efficiency:

Finding a provider who wants to think outside the box, and who presents ideas and creative challenges that are exciting, would be wonderful to have it here. I think the creativity is what’s exciting about helping to find a practitioner. I feel that here at NATIVE Project it’s not about how many patients do I have to see in a day or how long their appointment is. It’s about who do I get to work with, how do I get to work with them, and what ways do we get to help impact the community in creative ways. (L2)
Thus, the freedom that exists within the organization to develop that creativity can represent a struggle for some employees while an opportunity for others:

If you think we’re doing something wrong let’s improve it. And for me, there’s always a freedom of trying to improve it. It freaks people out when you have that much freedom and creativity. Some of them just don’t do well because they want the structure and you’re like, ‘oh well, go ahead and do it,’ and it just boggles their mind. ‘What do you mean, go ahead and do it?’ And for me, I’m like, ‘okay…’ Some people that I directly supervise need to be coached a lot and then some people just do it because they love it, they love the creativity. (L2)

And the same leader when referring to the fluid structures at The NATIVE Project said:

Here there’s a structure, but it’s not as strict as corporations would like it. We take on the title like a corporation, but I feel like it’s fluid, like horizontal. And then there’s some staff that don’t get that so then you have this cultural block, like, ‘well, you guys aren’t following the chart’ or ‘you’re not following the structure I’m used to.’ Then, they have issues and anxiety and worries and you’re like, ‘okay… well, that’s a Western model, can we have this conversation again?’ Honestly, I feel like I have the Western concept model or White privilege model or the White male privileged discussion one to five times a week. (L2)

Besides a Native worldview that is not as embedded of an ‘industrial’ mindset as the Western culture when it comes to understanding organizations, different reasons appear to explain the fluidity of the structures of The NATIVE Project. One of them seems to be related with the evolving context in terms of community needs; a second explanation would be the political environment and the changes of political parties governing at different levels; and a third reason seems to be related with the rapid growth of the organization in the last years. Thus, to cope and adjust with all the changes and uncertainties derived from the community, the politics, and the growth, The NATIVE Project has been creating fluid and flexible structures that will contribute more efficiently to a better adjustment and survival of the organization. In terms of the evolution of the community needs, one leader stated:

The needs of the community have changed. Diabetes has gone down, but hypertension has increased. Anxiety and stress have increased, but smoking has
gone down. So just things like that. And how NATIVE Project evolved with that is listening, being an agency that really listens to the community. What do you really need from us, and let the community say, and take that with truth, and then go back and rearrange the public to make it work. (L2)

Regarding the political environment, another leader was pointing out the necessity for flexible structures to adjust to rapid political changes that have a big impact on the organization:

We always have to look at our lawmakers, our legislative, and our policy makers. I feel like we’re always having to keep our eye on that externally. Every time a new President comes in, every time a new House of Representative, Senator, Congress person, Commissioner, City Council person. I feel like that is one of the things we are always keeping our eye on as an administrator. I don’t know about the other employees in the building, but you’re always keeping your eye on that to make sure the policy changes. What’s plan A, B and C for the viability and sustainability of building as a whole? (L8)

Moreover, the growth of the organization has had an influence on developing fluid structures, and particularly, in terms of keeping an efficient degree of coordination between the different services offered.

We’ve grown rapidly. I’ve worked here for a while, but we went from four exam rooms to this huge clinic. We all are under one roof, now. So, having even just combining Medical with Behavioral health in the same building has been a challenge. Trying to figure out how to navigate the patients to the right channel. Getting the right paperwork done. Making sure they get the services they need. It’s really been like getting to know the other programs and how they operate, when you’re all under one roof. (S24)

Thus, when asked how the organizational structures of The NATIVE Project could be described, one leader summarized the capacity to be fluid and adjust:

Just go with the flow. Figure things out. We try and do everything we can within our power if that makes sense. Just trying to give the best you can with what you have. (L11)

Besides coping and adjusting to the evolution of the needs of the community, the change of the political environment, and the rapid growth that the organization experienced since the health clinic was created in 1999, fluid and flexible structures contribute to a good
coordination among departments, which it is a cornerstone for providing holistic medicine under one roof. As one of the employees was describing:

We do have medical. We do have dental. We do have prevention, and insurance, and all that. A patient can really come here and get all of their needs met. And if I don’t know something, I can run and find it somewhere, you know. (S13)

Within The NATIVE Project building you can have medical, dental, behavioral health, pharmacy, and children and youth services. All of these services under the same roof is very useful for patients who, the majority of them, belong to the most impoverished social sectors of society and, for example, may not have a car, can have problems with personal mobility, or may live far away from Spokane. Moreover, it seems that the fluidity of structures has another positive effect when it comes to involving all the different services and departments to work together and have feedback from each other.

I think respect and professionalism exist through every department, but particularly having them together there is almost like a synergy and what may normally be a barrier between your medical clinic and a pharmacist, which usually may just be physical, doesn’t exist here. We can go over and discuss and decide what the best care is. Bring more than just one mind and get to know how that person does take care of their patients and provide outside perspectives. I think that exists between Medical and Pharmacy, Dental and Pharmacy, Dental and Medical, Dental and Behavioral health… I think just that lack of almost logistics, physical barriers, makes one person’s care go that much further. (S4)

However, although as a result of fluid structures there is good coordination and feedback between departments, it appears that some issues of communication have started to emerge as a consequence of reaching a certain size at the organization. As one of the leaders described:

Because of the size we don’t see everybody all the time. We do have our weekly meetings so we can stay in touch with communications. We have our weekly, what’s it called, directors meetings. And we have medical meetings, and then all of the teams have their own special little meetings for each other. We all try and communicate. We still fail in the... We could always do better when we communicate. I feel like we’re always working on ways to get better at it. We haven’t found the perfect model yet. (S3)
And these issues regarding communication seem to gain a new dimension when it comes to the relationship between ‘boomers’ and ‘millennials’ who have different ways of using technology and social media. As one young leader who strongly advocates for the use of technology noted:

We have a workforce with different generations, and different styles, and the incorporation of technology into the practice. Some people like to embrace that and some people don’t. Some people like it more traditional, whereas some were really looking for different, creative ways that they’ve never seen before. You have these different languages coming together, and it’s hard to find a happy medium. Now it’s about technology and access for everyone. How do you create a document that 20 or 30 people can see at once rather than making something that only a select few can see when you tell people you have a voice at the table? You have to be able to back that up, and some technology can help you do that. Incorporating technology, and not being afraid of it, and not thinking of it as a setback, but more as a helpful tool. (L8)

Certainly, technology and social media can improve communication within the organization and contribute to developing more horizontal processes of decision-making. Notwithstanding, technology can also have a big impact in shaping or changing the culture of an organization and it seems that, so far, the founders who are still working at The NATIVE Project, although are aware of this conflict with ‘millennials’ and have decided to increase the use of social media to improve the external relations and visibility of the organization, are not willing to implement the use of excessive technology at an internal level because they feel more comfortable with ‘classic’ procedures that so far have been implemented in a successful way.

**Commitment with Social Justice and Cultural Resistance**

Within The NATIVE Project, and as a consequence of interacting between different cultures in the spaces that the organization provides, facing issues of injustice and cultural struggles in a daily basis, and the continuous encouragement of the
leadership to share information and knowledge regarding those struggles for cognitive and social justice, awareness and critical consciousness raise among the employees. From gathering and analyzing artifacts, I discovered one central strategy implemented by the leadership at the organization to raise awareness and empower urban Native people begins with showing a very clean and well conserved space full of beautiful Native artwork where highly qualified Native American professionals work.

I think it’s empowering as an employee or a patient to walk through those doors and to see a lot of different Natives specializing in a lot of different areas of medicine, social services, administration. I know when I started with them I was just like blown away. I am like ‘Wow these tribal members from different tribes all coming here for the greater good of The NATIVE Project of Spokane community and our people!’ And I am also a patient there so sitting there as a patient and the way it’s designed like with the artwork and with the Sacred Hospitality you feel you come to a place where you are going to be understood. (S14)

This strategy of showing a very clean and well conserved building plenty of beautiful artwork makes visible the invisible and empowers the Native community providing them with a framework that challenges and rewrites the hegemonic narrative that situates Native people at subordinated positions because of their ‘supposed’ lack of intellectual ability and capacity to perform. One of the founders described how important it is to empower employees and patients in general, and the youth urban Native in particular, making visible a safe space that offers high quality services from their own cultural perspective:

I think that’s the thing that I want: Staff, especially young staff, to get that it’s kind of like a sanctuary place. And it’s also a really good place to work that if you took any other dominant society business like ours and put us next to it we would still score better. I mean, not only do they work in a brown place, they work in a really good brown place. (L22)

Debunking myths that are part of the cultural violence against Native people that depicts them like primitives or ‘objects’ that belong to museums without intelligence or education
enough, The NATIVE Project contributes to balance asymmetries of power in society between cultures and social groups. Thus, observing Native people that act as role models struggling for social justice and challenging those myths, contributing to raising personal awareness and an interest for social activism. As one of the young leaders explained about observing relatives getting involved and sacrificing to create The NATIVE Project:

[Members of my family] and a group of 13, 14 other people helped build this place, so as a child I got to see it from the outside in. I saw a lot of the sacrifice and time that the board and staff made to this place. They put their own lines of credit on the line. They put extra hours in….but growing up seeing that, I was able to volunteer as a high school student. Me and a couple of my friends from a youth leadership program got to volunteer and be youth leaders in their Indian youth programs so we volunteered a lot of our time in high school doing that. (L2)

Visibilizing Native people’s struggles and successful experiences providing health services to the Spokane community regardless if they are Native or non-Native situates the organization at a better position in the social hierarchy from where they can have a dialogue with other cultures with more horizontal conditions than if they would try to do it from the subordinated position that the system bestows them. One of the founders described American society as still colonized, and claimed for the need of a space from where decolonizing as one of the main reasons that convinced them to create the organization:

I do see some people of color when they start working with systems they acquiesce, they change to be colonized and then they become the colonizer. So, I always tell myself ‘when I die I want to be the freest person in the room. I want to be decolonized.’ And it’s really hard because I’m not. I’m not, you know? Especially at this age we’ve been… like especially in our public school systems we’ve been really told a bunch of lies and so you’re deeply entrenched into really making good conscious decisions. We’re not going to do that anymore. And when you don’t do those anymore it does make the dominant society uncomfortable. (L22)

In addition, within The NATIVE Project there is an issue of valuing other epistemologies that go beyond the hegemonic epistemology, mainly focused on positivism and science,
and the only ‘valid’ knowledge that the system legitimates through the monopoly of bestowing ‘official’ degrees:

If I just worked in a regular hospital or clinic I would have to worship the ‘God of intellect.’ Worship the ‘God of degrees.’ And to say, there’s people here that can bring other things to the healing work we do, especially the therapy work we do. The most popular therapist we have does not have a degree and the kids follow that person everywhere. He uses his power for good and I’m like ‘should I have to eliminate him from our circle? No, no… we need that healing!’ (L22)

Another strategy to raise awareness and critical consciousness for action is to ‘offer’ a space from where one can participate in ‘the struggle.’ It is within the struggle, and when one ‘lives it’ on a daily basis, it seems that employees get more empowered and critically conscious, and their commitment with social justice increases. It is an individual empowerment to act through a framework of collective action, combining the individuality of every person (and not neoliberal individualism) with the collective.

If you learn about the Native Americans, they have gone through a lot of stuff. But over years they have bounced back, even though we can still see the aftereffects in terms of comorbidities and things like that. Looking back at the Native American community in a greater panorama I feel empowered. Also, tapped into the experiences and just that human spirit of keep moving, keep living regardless of adversity. I feel empowered by that because the things we deal with, you know, clinic, are very difficult. (S3)

And the same employee noted regarding ‘living’ the struggle:

Being able to identify those people that are vulnerable, thinking about those social determinants of health, poverty, and lack of housing, lack of transportation and cultural background and things like that. I think when you’re living it in theory is different than when you come to the particular community. And that has really changed the paradigm shift for me in terms of the lenses I see the world in. I have to kind of take their lenses and see from their aspect, not just how I’m seeing the world. (S3)

And another supporter affirmed:

I think broadening perspective of other challenges of other people and growing up, coming as someone who’s White from essentially a privileged background, not having to worry about basic challenges like food scarcity or domestic violence or drug abuse, I think being confronted with those issues here has just developed my
consciousness for others in being more giving and being even more so willing to help out others with either volunteering or donating time or money. Whatever you can do to help because you just feel by broadening your perspective you’re doing pretty well and you should help other people to get there too. (S4)

This awareness is raised among the different employees of the organization regardless their ethnicity or nationality. As a non-Native employee said:

I have just gained a lot of insight just into Native American culture seeing a lot of issues first hand that are also present in every other society, but maybe more here in this population. I think it definitely shines a light on my life that you should be thankful and giving back and I think this is a really good place to give back and help others. I think more than anything it’s kind of changing my own, broadening perspective and just kind of respect for other people’s situation and empathy and contentment, I should be content with my own life. (S4)

The NATIVE Project is not just a Native organization but a women-led health clinic with a very matriarchal approach that has a strong influence in the design of the organization and in providing holistic medicine. Thus, a non-Native leader explained how his awareness about Native culture was raised, but also in terms of gender issues and biases.

I think I’m more culturally aware. There are things that I say and do that I’m more cognizant of now that I’ve been historically. I’d say that’s probably the biggest thing and some of that culture is just, again, working with women. Some of the Native American, some of it’s in the context of this entity which is not the traditional medical clinic that I’m used to working in. (S25)

According to the leadership of the organization, when new employees are hired, they need to commit to at least one of the four big events The NATIVE Project organizes every year for the community: (1) Healthy pow wow, (2) Leadership camp, (3) Summer program graduation ceremony, and (4) Pow wow Fun run. As one employee argued:

I’ve been at the pow wow before. And then we did like a school event, as well. And I think there’s a lot of community involvement. It’s almost expected that we all at some time get involved in the community. The community are our patients, yeah. (S3)
Through this involvement with the community outside the office, employees of The NATIVE Project get more awareness about personal and collective struggles for social justice and raise their critical consciousness. As one employee stated:

I think getting involved is key to raise critical consciousness. I’ve never been to a pow wow before, so getting involved was really cool. Events like that. And just to see our patients outside of the healthcare setting is kind of interesting to see the dynamic there, you know? Kind of get to know them a little more personal level. So that’s nice. I think that’s probably helped to raise it. (S6)

Besides having conversations about these social struggles with other employees and patients, and experiencing “in your face” all these issues of social justice on a daily basis, the leadership of The NATIVE Project encourages their staff to get involved with the community as employees of the organization but also as individuals in their free time. This is a very holistic concept of the person not just as professional workers but also as citizens and human beings connected with a community conversely with seeing the work at The NATIVE Project as separated or compartmentalized from the community and the world. Thus, employees at The NATIVE Project are expected to be involved with outside events organized by them and other events that, although they are not part of The NATIVE Project, can bring back a value for the community and contribute to the common good.

Being an employee here it brings awareness to some of the issues going on in the community, and where a lot of our staffs are involved in like the school boards, the parent committees, that type of thing. Just making them more aware of issues. And I think not necessarily me personally, but we have staff who serve on parent committees, and they’re not even parents. But they know the issues that Native American children are facing in the community, and so they want to make sure that those are heard. I think that we do have a lot of staff more aware of issues whether they have children or not, that it’s affecting the community. (S24)

For the patients and the community, this strategy of bringing the providers and the staff of The NATIVE Project outside the office to visit and socialize with them is very
encouraging and empowering because they feel respected and valued. As noted before, most of the patients of the organization belong to the most impoverished social groups, the invisible, the forgotten, the dehumanized, so the fact of being visited by their providers has a big impact in their self-esteem and individual process of empowerment.

I think the pow wows when we go to those and when we go to the diabetic screenings and the blood pressure. I think the community is surprised to see providers out there, the doctors and the nurse practitioners, and the medical assistants out there working and needing them and learning about them and their lives and what’s going on. I don’t see that happening at other places. I just don’t see it being that encouraged. (S1)

In terms of empowering patients, the key element of The NATIVE Project is to make them realize that they need to take control of their health and their reality. They are not treated like passive agents and objects, but as subjects and masters of their own destinies in spite of the structural inequalities and injustices they have to face every day.

I know a lot of our clients have some serious barriers that prevent them from moving forward. And I think because we have the diversity that we have, we can accept that these are real and true. We don’t pretend like they don’t exist. We don’t try to say that’s not fair and people shouldn’t do that to you and go and be strong. We don’t do that. We go, ‘Hey, what can you do with this barrier? How can you deal with this? How can you live with this?’ (S30)

Employees of The NATIVE Project contribute to deconstruct a former framework of world-making that depicts the social groups whom their patients belong as passive, useless, or objects, by a new framework where they are active, powerful, and take charge of their own life. Gradually, employees and patients get more empowered, increase their critical consciousness and decide to act collectively for social change.

It may seem obvious to say that all employees working at The NATIVE Project without exception, and particularly Native members, were already aware and critically conscious in a certain degree before joining the organization. However, there are different levels of critical consciousness and praxis and, although Native staff can be more aware
than non-Native as a consequence of experiencing issues of social injustice and cultural resistance in their daily routines, to join the organization and live the decolonial struggle that The NATIVE project is developing, raises even more their awareness and critical consciousness to higher levels of social activism and change. For example, one Native employee stated that she not only raised her awareness working at The NATIVE Project but also learned how to act and to contribute to social change, something she did not know before:

I think The NATIVE Project helps people in becoming more active. Like for example the diabetes program that is going to end right now. They have cards where patients can fill them out and send to their legislators. I didn’t know, when I started working here, I was [young age]. I had no idea how to contact my legislator and how to voice my concerns or whatever. So, I think not even so much being more conscious, but knowing how to make a change. (S24)

Going from a hegemonic framework and social order that create myths of inferiority that eventually may affect Native people with, for example, lack of confidence, helplessness, or just wanting to be like the oppressor, The NATIVE Project provides an emancipatory framework aimed to offer hope and empowerment through a path of collective action that can be shared and transmitted. It is a framework of critical intercultural leadership that works as a sort of charter of action, a guide to behavior for collective action that gives sense and meaning to many urban Natives in Spokane. One of the young leaders said:

I got to come in here as a [young age] student, and I was treated with the same respect as an 80 years old elder. I was asked to sit at the same table, not a different one. That helped me find my own voice and I learned a lot. And then, being an advocate from my own community, using that same voice to speak up for others, and help give other opportunities to other people to be able to pass that down. I think NATIVE Project has really helped me with that. (L8)

This is a process of ethnogenesis where some cultural identities and structures imposed through cultural violence are deconstructed while others are reconstructed seeking emancipation. As every cultural process, this process of ethnogenesis that starts with
individual empowerment is not individualistic as understood from a neoliberal perspective of empowering individuals to compete among themselves. Conversely, this cultural process of individual empowerment is designed through a framework of collective action that raises critical consciousness as an action system for social justice and the cultural resistance of the community.

**Particularities of the Leadership Process**

In this process of individual empowerment through collective action, critical consciousness, praxis, and ethnogenesis, the role played by the leadership of The NATIVE Project is central in providing spaces for interaction, sharing information and knowledge, encouraging employees to be involved and to connect with patients within and outside the building, and creating frameworks of action that transmit values of cognitive and social justice. One cannot fail to notice that besides being a Native American health clinic, the main characteristic of the leadership of The NATIVE Project is that it is a matriarchal organization led basically by women.

This organization is pretty matriarchal. Strong woman who knows what she wants and she is correct 99% of the time and always right. She believes in circles and she does empower a lot of people. That was a hard one for me. Well, and they gave us a little more freedom but she didn’t at first. It’s gotten a lot better over the years. It’s been a growing experience for everybody I think. (S1)

According to one of the young leaders:

We have a very strong leadership model of women, and from a lot of childhood friends and family. In the other places it’s predominantly men, and here we have all women. And being that Spokane, again, is conservative, they had to fight a lot to be able to be allowed to enter the room, to be allowed to have a voice. And they do that time and time again, even in 2017. And it just shows their passion for the work, because they could’ve easily given up and say, ‘you know what? They’re not going to invite me to the table, so I’m not going to go anymore.’ They still show up every single day. You have to admire them, because they have something to say, and they represent a patient population that needs help, and needs to be
recognized, and served... It’s different, and I think it should be celebrated and recognized. (L8)

This strong leadership seems to be very focused on one person, the Founder and CEO:

I think she’s [the founder and CEO] very relationally based. If she gets along with you, life is good. If she doesn’t get along with you, life is not good. Some of the people that have worked here haven’t gotten along with her and they disappear. So, I think that’s important to figure out how to get along with her, what she likes, what she doesn’t like. It’s very interesting to me how she dominates this world… but she dominates this world. (S25)

Moreover, as a result of the rapid growth of the organization since its foundation, this leadership has been evolving in its structure from a more horizontal and based on circles, to a more hierarchical and ‘western’ style. As one of the founders put it:

When we first started we tried to do a circle management where every voice was heard, but when you get to a certain size you just have to become institutionalized, and you have to by law, and rule, and funding source. Every funding source has their own set of rules that they dictate upon you. You kind of have to start looking more and more like the dominant White culture. So, there’s hierarchies now that didn’t used to exist. (L33)

Although overall, this strong leadership personalized in one person appears to be well accepted by the staff of The NATIVE Project who seem satisfied with this approach, some criticism has emerged among some employees:

I believe that a successful organization should be run with the horizontal type of leadership where employees are engaged in the decision-making. I think people in organizations have more success that way. The top down or the vertical hierarchy organization model used to be the common place, used to be what used to run organization. And still we have organization that are run that way, even though most organizations now are changing to be more horizontal. But in this organization, I would say there is a little bit of both. Some things I would feel are more engaged, some things are not. (S3)

In a future, this leadership model could have more difficulties in terms of processes of succession that may spark potential struggles if not well managed. From the interviews conducted at the organization, different conversations emerged about the future of the leadership at The NATIVE Project and, as one employee noted:
I look at this organization and say it’s really built on one person’s vision and one person having the strength to be able to make things happen and surrounding herself with other people that makes it happen and controlling that entirely and there’s pros and cons to that. When you start something new, kind of like the grass roots level, that’s the way you get things done and at some point, you need to evolve into something different. And I think we’re near that point of evolution potentially. (S25)

It seems complicated for the leadership who started this project to step out and let go.

Notwithstanding, from observing and interviewing I observed that this conversation is taking place, at least in an informal manner, among leaders and supporters within the organization. According to one of the founders:

Before I worked 10, 12 hours a day and just all the time, all the time, all the time, probably at the expense of my family, at the expense of my health, and my sanity. But people always say that when they have a passion that they want to do... Now I’ve just learn that I don’t have to do everything. I can trust other people that I’ve trained them well enough. I’ve indoctrinated them. I always think having indoctrinated a small army of Native kids. Lots who work here now. That’s how I’ve changed, I’ve just like gone with the flow a little bit, but still feeling good about. (L22)

One of the young leaders involved in this future process of succession had a particular opinion regarding this issue but also regarding the growth of the organization:

I think one of the challenges is that as we’ve grown, we might not be able to see and have more hands on as we used to. We have to add more staff, and give some of that staff some of our original duties or possibilities, and charge them with handling things that we’ve always done. And having a little bit of anxiety about, ‘well, I used to do that and now they’re doing it.’ And being less control freaks basically. And realizing that there’s a new way of talent from here that we have to instill our mission of values, and hope that they are making good decisions in faith for The NATIVE Project and for the community. I think that’s challenging here, because we have staff who’ve been founders of this agency. Who’ve had to let some of those responsibilities go to other folks, and they have to step back a little bit and let other people who will be tasked with those job duties. (L8)

And the same leader was comparing the process of succession and letting go with that of parents who see their kids growing and going to school:

It’s like you’re going to have to send your kids off to school. Can’t be with them all the time now. You’ve got to let them be in the school, you’re not going to
watch them all day, you got to go and do your own thing, and then come back later and say, ‘well, how was it? Did you do okay?’ And having that responsibility. This was hard through the growth process, and it’s going to happen even more if we have the organization full of patients. We can’t be at every building so we have to charge somebody with that oversight and be comfortable enough to not be there and say, ‘everything’s okay so far’ and that kind of thing. (L8)

As one of the employees summarized: “It’s hard to let go and let somebody else take the steps and make mistakes, and let them make the mistakes. I mean it’s not the end of the world if they do. I think that’s a challenge” (S1).

Tacit and Explicit Understandings and Meanings

Among the main tacit and explicit understandings and meanings for employees within The NATIVE Project is the fact of navigating between cultures. However, while for Native people the navigation seems more tacit and comes in a more ‘natural’ way as part of their cultural assumptions, for non-Native employees it appears to be more explicit and less embedded within their core values and beliefs. For example, one Native employee explained:

I feel pretty comfortable with myself between the two cultures, and I try to be very conscious about other people’s cultures. Even between people’s cultures between medicines, like a naturopath versus Western medicine, versus Eastern medicine… I think I do it naturally. (S1)

Regarding the fluidity of identities and the fact of navigating between cultures in a smooth way, one of the founders said:

The only time I’m a minority is when I drive home, when I drive to work on the street, and when I drive home… Because in my community I’m not a minority, in my home I’m not a minority, in my tribe and family I’m not a minority. So yeah, you just take that hat on, take it off, take it on, take it off. (L22)

And another founder described the process of not just navigating between Native and Whites’ culture, but between professional cultures, too:
I have a degree in [Western field], so I know what the rules are for the dominant White culture. But I’m still Indian, so I know what’s expected of me in the [Western] culture. But I also know who I am. So, you do what you do. (L33)

As a result of having to navigate between the Native and the hegemonic White culture since they are born, Native people have developed a capacity to transition from different cultural perspectives in a fluid and ‘natural’ manner, and it appears they take it for granted. Moreover, since the founders of The NATIVE Project and most part of the leadership are Indian women working in a White and male environment, besides ethnic and cultural discrimination, they often experience gender biases. As one woman leader noted: “In this environment I could say something and so a guy could say it a minute later. Then, somebody will hear what he says versus what I said, and I’m like, ‘Wait a minute. I just said that.’ Things like that” (L11).

On the other hand, regarding non-Native staff, and more specifically White employees, they seem to require more effort to transition between cultures as a result of living within a system and society that have been designed for them. Moreover, within The NATIVE Project, non-Native employees represent a minority, and particularly non-Native males.

This is a women dominated culture at this building and I’m a guy. And then there’s the Native American culture… I don’t really think much about the other cultures so I’m very well aware they’re here….the Native American culture is the dominant culture at this facility. (S25)

Notwithstanding, and as noted before, although for non-Native employees seems more complicated and requires more effort to navigate between cultures than for Native people who are more used to it, the fact of ‘living’ between cultures on a daily basis contributes to improve their skills, abilities, and consciousness:

I feel that navigating through different cultures has become easier over time. It used to be difficult especially if you don’t know people’s way of living, what they
believe in, cultural sensitivity about different subjects... It was difficult. But over time you learn how to assimilate and acculturate, and in the process, you become comfortable working with them. But I’m still learning, still trying to navigate through. (S3)

It seems that all the process is about knowing and doing, but also about being. It is a cultural consciousness and intelligence that contribute to navigating in an easy way between different cultures and that is developed through knowledge and immersion until it becomes a cultural value, belief, or even assumption. Thus, overall all employees of The NATIVE Project eventually take for granted to transition from one cultural perspective to another in a very fluid and ‘natural’ manner.

**Curiosity, Openness, and no Fear**

Another tacit understanding and meaning that all employees at The NATIVE Project share is curiosity for learning from other cultures, and an openness and acceptance to be transformed with other knowledge and experiences, theories and practices, without fear for the ‘Other,’ or for the ‘unknown.’ These characteristics of curiosity, openness, and no fear, appear to be essential to develop cultural sensitivity and to learn to navigate between cultures in a fluid and ‘natural way. It is not enough about knowing and doing, but also about being, because the transformation of oneself is needed to establish authentic intercultural relations with even conditions. As one employee put it: “We’re all humans, we all have our different ways of thinking and you have to be accepting and curious about how other people, and why… how and why they do the things they do” (S1). For one of the founders of the organization, it is not just about cultures and an ‘essentialism’ that attributes static characteristics to a social group, but also about personal characteristics like openness and acceptance regardless your cultural or ethnic background that makes The NATIVE Project employees so genuine:
Even though there are different tribes and different countries, different ethnicities, NATIVE project employees are kind, they’re generous, they’re hopeful, they laugh. And so underneath it’s more like a characteristic rather than cultures, because we’ve had some honorary Indians here. We’ve had some honorary White people here. They didn’t have those values and like they had to go work somewhere else. (L22)

Additionally, not being afraid is also central to be able to encounter, interact and learn from other cultures instead of shutting down and avoiding communication:

I think it is key one being open to other people and cultural experiences, not being necessarily afraid of others. Maybe that’s just having a positive demeanor that people have overall good intentions and good values, letting that be open and not afraid to receiving other cultures. And even if they’ve not done right in front of you giving them the benefit of the doubt. (S4)

These characteristics of curiosity, openness, and no fear are embedded in the core values and beliefs of employees, and have an impact in the way of treating and serving the patients. It appears to be a cultural and professional humility that ‘pushes’ the employees to want to learn and share. As one employee described:

I think there’s a willingness to learn. There’s an open-mindedness. I mean there’s respect. There’s curiosity. There’s acceptance. There’s so many things that I would hope as medical providers or behavioral health counselors that we have these qualities, because how the hell are we going to serve our patients in an effective way if we don’t carry these qualities ourselves? I think that is so important. There is such value to life and to culture. There’s so much to experience and learn, and to share. (S24)

It seems there is a will to learn and share, but at the same time an awareness of the differences that are valued and understood as strengths for the organization. At The NATIVE Project everyone is proud of their culture and they just want to share it, learn from other cultures, and use all this knowledge to better serve the patients:

I’ve learned things that if they say ‘well, I do this,’ and I’m like, ‘I have no idea what that means,’ and ask them. And then go ask around. ‘Does anyone know about this?’ Or, ‘has anyone ever participated in this?’ So, it’s more valued for our patients, too. It’s not just a question we ask. We’re able to incorporate that in how we treat them and how we connect with them. (S32)
Curiosity, openness, and no fear for other cultures seem to be the values and beliefs of NATIVE Project employees. It is a cultural humility that accepts the limitations of each culture and takes for granted the strengths that different ways of knowing, doing, and being can bring to the organization and to the community to improve and grow.

Moreover, members of The NATIVE Project understand different cultural encounters as opportunities to share and learn from each other and being more efficient providing services, instead of seeing the cultural differences as barriers that difficult their work.

**Intercultural Society and ‘Common’ Identity/Purpose**

Since cultural differences are valued and shared within The NATIVE Project, and there is a continuous cultural dialogue with more or less even conditions where, although the Native culture is the majority, there is not a culture considered superior to others, the organization can be considered a critical intercultural organization or a critical micro intercultural society. By interculturality, and more specifically critical interculturality, it is understood a society or organization where cultural differences are valued and the relationship among cultures is developed without big asymmetries of power. Therefore, it is not about a multicultural society where cultural differences are simply tolerated but not appreciated, and non-hegemonic cultures are situated at positions of subordination regarding a dominant culture or cultures. As one employee said: “It’s not about tolerance, it needs to be like more about value. Tolerance isn’t acceptable, that’s all it is. It’s not an understanding” (S1). Added another employee: “I think that more than anything NATIVE Project shows that just by one example these other cultures that you don’t necessarily know have a lot to offer and you want to respect them and learn more about them” (S4).
Moreover, one of the young leaders went deeper and explained that everyone has to be proud of her own culture and learn from other perspectives and worldviews but without cultural appropriation:

I’m not trying to be a Vietnamese person. I’m not trying to be Kenyan. I do want to know about it and love it about you, and try to understand it about you, so, our patients are community. We like to share that and you’re going to get more American Indian and Alaskan Native exposure to intercultural exchange in here. But yeah, there’s still a lot that, you know, what do you call it… supports it, supports that activity. And, I like it when it happens because then I’m learning something new. But I’m not stealing your culture and trying to live it or co-op it either. (L2)

And this intercultural mentality is extended when it comes to treating the patients, too.

I think that no matter who walks in here, they’re not looked at any differently than the next person that walks in here. It is more like as an individual person and like the needs that they need to better their health. I don’t think that any person walks in here and says ‘well, they’re Native American, so they’re getting special treatment’ versus like, ‘I’m White and I’m not getting that same treatment.’ I think everybody that comes in here has a sense of community and a sense of belonging. That’s a really important piece about, um… community and multi-cultural, bringing people together in the community. (S21)

Regarding the establishment of relations with external institutions in Spokane, The NATIVE Project contributes to making visible what was invisible and, because the important role within the community that they exercise, the organization is able to enter a dialogue with local actors with less asymmetries of power than the ones existing in society between Native people and the hegemonic culture in general. As one non-Native employee stated:

There’s a face and The NATIVE Project plays a role of having that face and saying, ‘hello, we’re here. There’s Native Americans in your community and there are Native Americans in your medical community.’ And when you can put on a reasonable face to better health together with other institutions is very important. We’re working with some of your clients and the hospitals that say, ‘Hey, we’re trying to play together well.’ I think because this entity exists it allows conversations that would not otherwise happen. It would be an individual who is Native American as opposed to an appreciation to a culture that exists within our city. (S25)
Having a dialogue with the institutions of the hegemonic culture with more ‘horizontal’ conditions contributes to creating an intercultural society in Spokane because different perspectives are acknowledged and considered. For example, traditionally, when any Native person or group entered a conversation with the Spokane Police Department or the City Council, it was exercised as a monologue where the hegemonic institutions talked and the subordinated cultures listened. Today, although still far away from an ideal and fair relationship in terms of asymmetries of power and with many barriers still to overcome, when The NATIVE Project initiates a dialogue with the Spokane Police Department or the City Council, what used to be a monologue becomes a dialogue with both sides talking and listening.

Then, if The NATIVE Project can be considered an intercultural society with internal and external relations, what would be the common ‘identity’ of this society that differentiates them from others? What would be the values, beliefs, and assumptions of the critical intercultural society of the organization? Basically, besides the characteristics of curiosity, openness, and no fear noted earlier, it seems that two more characteristics are shared by the employees of the organization and considered as their common ‘identity’: (1) A will to meaning transcending themselves represented by the desire to help people and their capacity of experiencing empathy; and (2) a high level of resilience to adjust to challenges, uncertainties, and changes, developed through flexibility and a sense of humor. Regarding helping people and empathy, one employee stated:

We all share the identity of the client or the patient. They’re always our main concern. Without them we have no jobs. They are our number one priority and I think we all share that. We all share the identity, the Sacred Hospitality that we talk about, of enabling the client. I think that would be something that we all share, and it centers around the client. (S1)
Following the same argument, another employee talked about the Mission but emphasized how the desire to take care and help people was the main reason:

I think we all just really, as the common core, we all just care about other people. There’s just no other way to put it. You can say it’s the Mission. It could be the Mission, which deals with people, but I feel like we just want to help people. That’s what we want to do. (L11)

In terms of empathy, one supporter agreed that:

Over here it’s very empathetic. That’s almost a necessity just because of the huge amount of people with needs and diversity and different backgrounds. I think empathy is one of our common identities because sometimes it can be a very challenging patient population. (S6)

When it comes to developing resilience, understood as the capacity to adjust and overcome adversity, it appears that flexibility and humor are central mechanisms for releasing stress, coping with all suffering and injustices that the employees of The NATIVE Project deal with on a daily basis, and adjusting to uncertainties and changes in an efficient manner. According to a young leader describing the organization:

Here I think it is a sense of humor. I’ve noticed here that there’s a lot of joking, and a lot of laughter, and a lot of having fun, because you’re dealing with teens and people who are dealing with some serious issues. Broken families, domestic violence, health care diagnosis, just a variety of different things that really can hurt. And then, as a practitioner, you’re working in different capacities with these patients and these families, and you have to find an outlet to let that go and find some sort of release. And we all, collectively as a team, find ways to just laugh and have fun, because if you did that every day and didn’t laugh, your heart would be really heavy all time. You have to release that. We try to have fun here. We try to be as relaxed as possible, and then try to sit down and get to know each other, and share a good laugh, and make a happy workplace. (L8)

Or as a founder stated, humor in the organization is a way of optimism and motivation between each other:

One thing that I think NATIVE Project employees share as their identity is that they’re funny, everybody laughs. They have a weird sense of humor like a hopeful view. I mean, if you didn’t have a hopeful view nothing would be funny to you, right? I think everybody shows up like ‘yeah, this is going to go good today and
Transcending oneself while helping people and being empathetic toward causes of social justice, and developing resilience through flexibility and humor, seem the common characteristics among employees of the organization and are part of the core values and beliefs of the organization. While valuing caring and helping people is essential to providing health services, to feeling empathy and developing humor are central when it comes to the struggle for social justice and cultural resistance to be resilient and sustainable in a long-term struggle.

**Safe Space and Sanctuary for Social Justice and Cultural Resistance**

The organization, seen as an intercultural society where their members share a common identity, values, beliefs, and cultural assumptions, also represents a safe space and a project of struggle for social justice and cultural resistance. For any project to be trustworthy, and considering that The NATIVE Project is a health clinic, the first step is to show congruency and professionalism with the values that the organization tries to sensitize the community. Thus, the leadership at The NATIVE Project tries to educate their employees to be role models for the patients and the community.

In our structure, there’s an element of service that you have to be seen in the community. So, if you’re drinking, if you’re doing drugs, if you’re falling down, getting your name in the paper for domestic violence, then you probably shouldn’t work here. I know people do it. I can’t really mandate it. But we have a conversation about it, you know… But I’m talking to the staff and so we’re calling staff out do your own work. (L22)

As noted before, besides employee’s image, the appearance of the building is very important to transmitting these ideas of congruency and professionalism, too.

We want to have a very nice facility that people come in and not only do they feel welcome, but that it is clean and we don’t have crappy furniture and where you
know everyone is well dressed. Our staff over there have matching outfits, which you know is an investment. Because it’s a lot of money. We just ordered shirts for all of us that have The NATIVE Project thing on them. And the artwork, which I know a lot of people wouldn’t know, but a lot of this artwork that is around this building it’s expensive. Like if you tried to buy this stuff, you couldn’t. And the agency invests in it. (S13)

Moreover, the employees are very aware of what they represent for the patients and the community and they understand their job as a responsibility and commitment not just toward the employer but above all toward the community. One employee, describing sometimes feeling overwhelmed with work and was asking for more partnerships to help them, said:

If I don’t go out there and do that for that Native kid, nobody else would. And that’s where if I had more community partners… If we had more funding behind our community partners, who are kind of struggling compared to us, would be better. (S10)

Or another, describing the commitment of the employees, noted:

We are anxious about it, we are concerned about it, it’s one of the last things I think about when I go to bed at night. First thing I think about when I get up in the morning. But I have the resources. I have enough money to buy food. I have health care. I can take care of my family. But these people who don’t have that, it’s just heartbreaking and embarrassing that we are going to allow these people who have been marginalized their entire lives to continue to fall through the cracks. I don’t know. (S19)

Staff at The NATIVE Project seem to go the extra mile to serve their patients because they have commitment with the cause of social justice and cultural resistance and they believe in what they do. As one of the founders described the sacrifices they had to undergo to create and consolidate the organization:

If you are to lead a people you must become their servant. And that is true. You can’t be of the mindset of, ‘oh, I’m above scrubbing the toilets, or mopping the floor, or working 17 hours days five days a week, six days a week.’ Oh wait. I did it seven days a week for 12 years, but that kind of commitment is there. And it has to be there, because if you truly are going to lead a people you must be their servant. (L33)
Particularly during the first years of The NATIVE Project, the sacrifices were immense and the founders only resisted because of the strong values, beliefs, and commitment with a cause and a clear vision that gave them energy to keep the struggle.

During decades, we scrub toilets ourselves. We mop the floors after group was done over there at night. Then we take out the garbage. We mopped the floors. We clean the bathrooms. We vacuum. That was part of our job before you went home. It didn’t matter if you were the CEO, CFO… I was just the accountant at that point. There’s just department of one, and we just did that. We did the yard work on weekends. We came in and we just painted. We came in on weekends and did that kind of stuff because you have to make that big of a commitment. (L33)

And another founder noted when talking about energy and resilience:

People didn’t realize how little money we had and how many hours a day we had to work to make this happen. But most of the time I never felt tired and I think the other people involved did not feel tired or exhausted or burned out. It was like higher powered. It’s like energy from a spiritual source that you are supposed to do this. I think this is what I was supposed to do. I think I might do some other things but I don’t know. (L22)

It seems like it was just the fact that if something needed to be done it would get done even if the money was not there: “I mean, it’s like Native Americans or other indigenous people… it’s like ‘we’re going to survive, we’re going to make the best of it and we’re not going to whine about it,’ you know” (L33). There appears to be within the organization a cultural ethics that fosters and promotes the struggle for social justice and cultural resistance, implementing a framework designed by the leadership of The NATIVE Project that is transmitted and provides a project of critical intercultural society while showing a path of social justice and cultural resistance to accomplish it.

**Social justice.** It seems that members of The NATIVE Project are committed to social justice for the community because they believe in a world where all individuals and groups can have the same opportunities to develop their capabilities and potential regardless of race, ethnicity, class, or gender.
We get to set our agenda based off of the voice of the community of Spokane, and we get to answer to them. And our board of directors is really passionate about that. They’ve said, ‘whatever the community needs are what our to do list needs to be,’ basically. Whereas it’s not based off of popularity. It’s not based off of money. It’s not based off of greed. It’s really what do people need, and how we, as 57 professionals who come to the same building every day, how are we going to tackle that. And I really like that about it. (L8)

As one leader noted:

We get people in here that have behavioral health problems. That have mental health problems. They’re physically broken. All this stuff. And we’re trying to come up with solutions, and work with them on ways to get better, and feel better, and help them as much as we can so that they don’t have to navigate everything. I feel like it gives people optimism, and we try to be creative, and use our resources to the best of our ability, in general. Things like that. It makes me happy. (L11)

The organization becomes sort of a safety net for all the people that are disenfranchised, regardless of culture, ethnicity, class, gender, age and so on. Moreover, when it comes to non-Native employees, they are particularly committed with the organization because they are aware of both their privilege and the fact of serving the most impoverished and oppressed groups in the country. One of the employees said:

I actually have a good affinity for Native populations so I like working with this group of people. I think they’re a good people. I think they’ve been stepped on. I like working with people who have been stepped on, who are underserved or disenfranchised. (S25)

And another one stated regarding Native Americans’ health issues:

I like the idea that I am here to serve the Native American community. And if you think about the Native American community when you look at the incidences and the prevalence of diseases… I’ll just give you an example: Diabetes. Native Americans have about four-fold risk of having diabetes as compared to the American White, ok? You look at something like hypertension. Similar incidents. If you look for something like obesity, alcohol use, tobacco dependence… All those things are at higher risk, and their culpabilities are higher, and I believe their life expectancy at best is also lower as compared to other communities. (S3)
It is about looking after the least of all, those without insurance, those without healthcare access and so on, who deserve to have access to quality health services. This is the commitment of The NATIVE Project employees with social justice:

Just serving the underprivileged, the uninsured. When that patient comes in and they’re homeless, and they’re sick, and they don’t have a home, they don’t have anything… And you are there, trying to figure out how they can just be able to afford and be able to have just the basic human right, which is basic health. I think it’s a great privilege for me. (S3)

For the members of the organization, health care is not a business, it is a human right and they are committed to fight for it:

I think sometimes the political administrations think that health is a privilege and not a right, and I think very differently. I think that is definitely something that I would hope that all men would fight for everyone to be able to have access to strong and good health care. (L8)

To bring the struggle for social justice to a higher level, some voices within the organization consider the necessity of developing more partnerships and networking with external organizations of the Spokane community:

I believe that the CEO, and also the others, really tried to partner with other organizations and making the NATIVE Project, all the community around Spokane, all aware of what we do here and where we stand. We have been engaged in different levels in the community from the administrative point of view, at least from my understanding. On the other hand, I feel there is some aspect of multiculturality where we’re kind of like in asylum, you know. And again, I’m not in the administrative. But from my opinion, I would say we can do better in terms of partnering with local organizations and creating that aspect of partnership and let’s work together and let’s remove, you know, like different barriers that are making us more isolated, you know, and things like that. (S10)

Or as another employee explained in terms of how to improve the quality of the service:

I think it would be very nice to create better partnerships in the community to meet more community partners that are more inclusive so that they feel ownership and as much of a sense of responsibility as we do. Because it could only make more resource for our clients. (S34)
From the interviews, this conversation about bringing the struggle to another level involving better partnerships with the community of Spokane is going on in an informal way among different employees. However, right now does not seem to be a priority for the leadership of the organization who appears to be more focused in consolidating the growth and the organizational culture of The NATIVE Project, before considering any sort of partnerships or common platforms that could have an influence in changing the culture of the organization.

**We shall overcome: Cultural resistance.** Within any struggle, resilience and sustainability are central to keeping the momentum in a consistent way, and adjust to any different scenario or barrier than can emerge. Thus, if one of the shared characteristics by the employees of the organization is humor, like a mechanism of releasing stress in a daily basis, optimism and resilience seem to be other central concepts which appear to be more effective for the long term. As one of the young leaders explained when talking about difficulties resulting from the current political climate:

I think there’s hope though. I think the future is going to be a lot better. I’ll have to pick up on that. I think the future will be a lot better. I just think any time something like that happens there’s a cultural bonding between different communities where they kind of come together and bridge together. Because if they don’t, then the oppressor wins, and we’re just not going to let that happen.

(L8)

And the same young leader continued describing the ‘dream,’ the framework that gives sense and meaning to their struggle:

Those conversations that happen in DC don’t strip us away from being strong minded, and don’t tear down the dream that we have as far as what NATIVE Project could be next. If we have a will we’ll find a way, and there’s always a will, and there’s always been a way. There’s been administrations that have come through who wanted to do community help and needed help out of the budget. And in the midst of that we built a brand new building. It wasn’t about leading with fear, but it was about leading with love and compassion, and that’s what made this building happen. It was we could sit there and just wait it out, or we can
say, ‘you know what? Let’s go full steam ahead because the patients need this.’ And that’s what we did. And I feel NATIVE Project as being strong in a sense of not being afraid to make change, and being able to fight for itself, and advocate for itself, and to really be a strong agency to protect the community of Spokane to use its services. (L8)

And one of the founders stated regarding the optimism and resilience of the struggle:

I think in all of America you still see hope. You still see someone saying, ‘screw this. We’re going to continue to do what we’re going to do. We’re going to continue, and we’re not going to let ICE dictate. We will protect our neighbors.’ And you know, I don’t think anyone’s going to get deported from Spokane without there being a huge outcry. I think we just need a little wake up call. (L33)

In conclusion, The NATIVE Project is not only a health center that offers high quality services for Native and non-Native people from Spokane and the region but also a project of struggle for social justice and cultural resistance that raises awareness and critical consciousness, gives hope, empowers individuals and communities through collective action, and shares strategies and frameworks for sense- and meaning-making to contribute to build a better society without big asymmetries of power for all.

**Current Challenges**

Among the main challenges that The NATIVE Project faces today, one problem appears to be related with money and funding to sustain the organization and to be able to grow, while continuing providing high quality services to the community. Apparently, the historical dynamic of Spokane’s governmental institutions for funding does not prioritize activities related with culture and ethnic minorities:

The funding for cultural activities it’s not as big as it should be with the city council, and that’s what we’re kind of fighting against. They allocate something that they get from businesses, but it goes to more like sports activities. Kind of non-kind of cultural things, or trying to work to divert some of that money to more cultural activities. Not just for us, but for people who are trying to grow these things. I think it starts with those things at the city council, and it’s not really supported. (S9)
Moreover, with the current political climate, the funding is in jeopardy because the funders perceive uncertainty and do not know what to do and to say to The NATIVE Project leadership. Therefore, not only the organization’s ability to grow is under threat but also its sustainability and the provision of some basic services. For example, one of the founders noted:

"Resources are always a challenge, and right now even more with the current administration where everything is up in the air and we don’t know. Under the Affordable Care Act, we were just starting to make money where we could put stuff aside and start looking at expansions and stuff, but that might end. We don’t know." (L33)

And this uncertainty is not only affecting The NATIVE Project leadership and staff but above all impacting the patients.

"The uncertainty in the Affordable Care Act is like ‘where is healthcare going, you know? And you see that in patients as well, like ‘well, am I going to pay more for my coverage next year? Am I going to have coverage next year? Am I going to be able to afford my medications? Am I going to be able to come here anymore?’ That’s probably one of the greatest challenges, to see where we’re heading. And I think the uncertainty creates anxiety in the public, and we can see that in patients. A general anxiety starts to step up a little bit." (S6)

Another main challenge that emerged with the interviews is the dissonance between what the founders think, and what some leaders and supporters believe when it comes to implementing the Mission. For example, for one of the founders the Mission seems to be very clear for all staff:

"Our Mission statement is over every single desk, every single workstation. We talk about it in staff retreats. We talk about it in staff meetings. All staff meetings. And you walk to the building you see Sacred Hospitality. Sacred Hospitality is the coin fairy, is a Mission that for everyone our commitment for your health, whether it be mental, physical..." (L33)

However, for one of the young leaders, practicing the Mission does not appear as obvious and perhaps more work is needed:
With all the employees, we do obviously orientation. All staff meetings, things like that. We try to reiterate what we’re here for and what we do. Probably do better at that. We’ve asked staff to post that on their office space so they can have a reminder of what our work is here, but I think as an agency, I think we would be even stronger if we were really focused on instilling that, and it’d be a dream if we could just have everybody on staff be able to recite it word for word and know what each of those words really mean. We’re nowhere near that, and that’s part of administration to set that tone, and that’s part of the things we have to walk and talk. Because if administration can’t recite the Mission statement word for word we can’t expect the staff to do it either. (L8)

Additionally, for another leader:

I think at times we lose sight of it. At times we say it, but don’t enact it. I will contend that there are times that leadership are the farthest ones away from the Mission and that’s unfortunate, but I think it comes from their own injury or history that they can’t get beyond that. I don’t know that we’re really good about sharing that. I think sometimes there’s just the verbal, you know, here’s our Mission, read the Mission, but, I don’t think we always enculturate that. (S25)

Interestingly, although The NATIVE Project has experienced a rapid growth since its foundation, it seems that another of the main challenges is their poor visibility and the lack of knowledge regarding their existence and the services they provide within the Spokane community. One of the founders, when asked what would you like the community to know about The NATIVE Project said:

That we are here. Even after almost 30 years people don’t have a clue that The NATIVE Project exists. So, I would have them know who we are, that we serve everyone, and we have a complete palette of services available. (L33)

One leader of the organization also complained that although the community could have heard about The NATIVE Project, there is still a lack of knowledge regarding what the organization offers and the quality of the services they provide:

First of all, many people don’t even know what we do still. They don’t know that we’re a health facility, that we have all these great services here. I’d like them just to know what we do, number one. Number two, I want them to know that we have qualified and very good talent here. This is not the reservation where people go to because they can’t get a job anywhere else. Does that make sense? I want them to know that we’re a very viable organization. And then our Mission obviously. We want them to know what we’re about. (L11)
Yet another leader mentioned that misunderstanding and added the lack of awareness about the full health package of the organization which is one of its strengths:

The biggest misconception about NATIVE Project is that we only serve Native people. But we serve everyone. And we have a unique infrastructure to help provide a wide range of services for them. It’s not just a one thing get out of it. It’s a complete wellness package that we offer here. You’re not going to come here just for a doctor’s appointment. We’re here for being healthy, for Dental, and Pharmacy, and prevention, and wellness, and healthy eating, and exercising, and diabetes care. (L8)

Among the staff, a common idea that emerged with the interviews regarding why The NATIVE Project is not well-known within the community, is the apparent misinterpretation of the name of the organization. For several members of the organization, the name brings confusion among the Spokane community and in particular with non-Native people who think they cannot be treated at The NATIVE Project. Thus, one employee was very critical with the name:

I think the name NATIVE Project it’s deceiving. I think probably the clinic would rebrand this but it’s not up to me to decide. One of the things that I get from my patients is, ‘oh, I thought you guys only see Native Americans because the name is NATIVE Project, right?’ (S3)

In the same line of argument, another employee stated:

Even from family and friends. They say: ‘So only Native people can go there, right?’ And I’m like, ‘No. It’s open to the whole community.’ And that’s something we actually need to work on, to get that message out a little bit better, you know. (S20)

Finally, another of the main current challenges that The NATIVE Project faces and has been facing since its foundation, is an environment of stress and pressure which has had an impact on turnover within the organization for the last years. For example, as a result of the uncertainty that sometimes can produce the lack of funding and the political instability, staff and patients can be affected by stress and anxiety. Moreover, members of
the organization are dealing with patients who are suffering personal dramas and to deal with these situations and testimonies on a daily basis can be very hard and emotionally eroding. In addition, the organization promotes many programs and events with the aim of reaching out to the community and for some employees this can be too much added workload. According to one member of the organization, as a consequence of this context of stress, pressure, and high workload, not everybody is able to work at The NATIVE Project: “It can be a stressful job; people relying on you and being able to affect their life can weigh heavily on you. That’s not for everyone” (S4). Thus, it seems that a lot of passion, commitment, and resilience are needed to work at The NATIVE Project and sometimes employees just need a break from the organization before coming back. For example, it seems common at the organization to take a break, leave, and come back after working for a while in another organization. As a leader argues, “sometimes it is good to leave and to bring back new ideas” (L8), a practice that seems to be very common at The NATIVE Project and is called by the members of the organization “stealing shamelessly.”

Everybody should do something that they’re in love with, and if you’re not in love with what you’re doing here, then this probably isn’t the best place for you. Anybody who’s ever worked here has always been, and always will be, part of The NATIVE Project family. But sometimes you have to go away and come back. We have a rule here where everybody gets to come back to NATIVE Project at least three times, and people do. (L8)

Among the negative impacts derived from a high turnover, several employees agreed that one negative consequence is a lack of stability for the patients who see different people going and coming every time they visit the organization.

I’ve seen a lot of people come and go, come and go like providers and medical assistants. And that has always created a lot of turbulence because my goal is to provide a safe space. When I say safe I’m talking about a constant and stable environment where a patient will meet the same person throughout, and they would feel more comfortable, kind of like a home. Does that make sense? (S3)
Moreover, for many employees, the turnover is perceived as a personal struggle because of the strong sense of family within the organization and the close relationships among staff:

> We have had a lot of turnover. We have lost a lot of people. A lot of people. We have had a lot of turnover. Lots of people have gone. From my perspective, I see that and that’s been a struggle. I think a little bit because we have gotten from here to here and we are trying to figure out how to do this and still maintain all those qualities that make it a comfortable place to work and to help people. And then, the high number of people that have gone… but we were part of the family and now they have moved on. (S15)

In addition, another negative consequence of the high turnover is that it implies an organizational struggle due to the amount of time and money invested to train people who, eventually, will leave the organization.

> Since I’ve been we’ve gone through so many people. And like once we get some great people to stay, it’s awesome. But I don’t know. I feel bad for [member of the organization] and some of the people who have to train constantly. Like it’s just a lot of extra work for them. (S23)

However, although the leadership of The NATIVE Project is aware of the negative consequences of a high turnover for the organization, it seems that they also understand this process as a certain way of filtering those employees who fit to work in a stressful environment and are committed with the Mission and Vision of The NATIVE Project, from those who are not.
CHAPTER FIVE
DISCUSSION, INTERPRETATION, AND IMPLICATIONS

As described in chapter one, to understand how a critical intercultural leadership process contributes to create an organizational culture that raises critical consciousness and unfolds ethnogenesis within an ethnic social movement organization (SMO), I addressed the following guiding questions in this study:

1. How does critical intercultural leadership shape the culture of an organization that resists within a hegemonic culture?
2. How are the frameworks articulated to make sense and meaning of reality to resist?
3. How are the strategies implemented in an ethnic SMO to raise critical consciousness and unfold ethnogenesis?
4. What are the needed conditions (and how can they be created) in an ethnic SMO to raise critical consciousness and unfold ethnogenesis?
5. How are the different social structures deconstructed and reconstructed in the process by the ethnic SMO?

In the present chapter, I synthesize major themes and subthemes from chapter four into four significant findings after reflecting thoroughly on their meaning and practical and theoretical implications. To interpret these findings, I put them into context to transcend just the facts and engaged in a productive discussion using the philosophical and theoretical frame designed with my conceptual framework and guiding questions from chapter one, and literature review from chapter two, with the aim of giving them meaning, identifying rival or competing explanations, and describing possible
implications of my study for the fields of political science, international studies, sociology, and leadership studies.

The findings provide an understanding of how the critical intercultural leadership process that emerges at The NATIVE Project creates an organizational culture that raises critical consciousness and unfolds ethnogenesis, following my conceptual framework from chapter one that transcends from a Postcolonial society and an Eurocentric framework of leadership towards an Intercultural society. This conceptual framework implies also a developmental model (see Figure 1 in chapter one) that, through a critical intercultural leadership process, goes from critical consciousness and culture as a field for struggle to organizational culture and frameworks of collective action for ethnogenesis.

The reason to present the findings according to the conceptual framework/developmental model from chapter one instead of following the order of the guiding questions is because I considered that the findings from researching a very holistic and complex process like the creation of an organizational culture can be better analyzed and presented following this conceptual framework/developmental model in spiral than answering the guiding questions in a linear way. Notwithstanding, since these guiding questions were essential to guide my research and to come with the four major findings presented in the current chapter (see Figure 3), although not in a linear way, they will be discussed throughout the four main findings presented in this chapter. In addition, I note that the conceptual framework/developmental model in chapter one is only the basic structure used to develop chapter five, wherein I describe the four major findings resulting from collecting and analyzing data, providing more depth and a more complex critical intercultural leadership process than the one I had theorized before going into the field, thus resulting in new theoretical model.
Figure 3. The critical intercultural leadership process theory at The NATIVE Project

The four findings of my research (noted in Figure 3) are: (1) Making visible the invisible: The sanctuary; (2) We struggle, therefore I am: The platform; (3) United by our differences: The intercultural society; and (4) Emancipatory doxa/Pluri-doxa and
transformation: The lines in the sand. The first finding of this mini-ethnographic case study is the necessity of ‘Making visible the invisible.’ Within a context of a Postcolonial world, The NATIVE Project makes visible the invisible denouncing a situation of social injustice while debunking myths and imaginaries of the dominant culture that portrays Native people as primitive or inferior. Moreover, with the foundation of the health clinic, there is created a space for safety and a ‘sanctuary’ for critical reflection for Native people in the Spokane area; The second finding suggests that ‘We struggle, therefore I am.’ The NATIVE Project provides a ‘platform’ for action and it is at this platform where critical consciousness can rise to the highest stages through the struggle. Moreover, the platform and the struggle function as a way of balancing asymmetries of power based on the monopoly of the hegemonic culture to control cultural assumptions that value negatively the difference, because through individual empowerment and collective action contribute to decolonize the minds of both, the oppressed and the oppressors, and ‘educate’ hegemonic institutions to be transformed; The third finding presents the topic of ‘United by our differences.’ The NATIVE Project develops a framework of ‘social order’ and a class consciousness within the organization that bonds through differences valuing diversity, reducing asymmetries of power, struggling for a common purpose, and enhancing a sense of belonging that ends up configuring an ‘intercultural society’ among employees and patients. A focus on an ‘Emancipatory doxa/Pluri-doxa and transformation’ is the fourth finding. The critical intercultural leadership process within the Sanctuary, the Platform, and the Intercultural Organization is crystalized with a strong core of cultural assumptions, values, and beliefs regarding the emancipatory and decolonial project that act as lines in the sand and give stability to the culture of The NATIVE Project. This organizational culture is characterized by its resilience to be
flexible and adjust to external and internal challenges, and the ability to understanding change and transformation, which results in the design of fluid and flexible organizational/social structures.

**Finding One. Making Visible the ‘Invisible:’ The Sanctuary**

The first finding of my research is the need to make visible the invisible, those social groups that have been invisibilized, forgotten, or demonized with the hegemonic discourse and narrative of a global system of domination and oppression that establishes a social hierarchy based on race, class, sex, and culture, and where the dominant culture is at the top. As one of the leaders said: “We’re the forgotten…. We were put aside on our little reservations, and hopefully never seen or heard of again” (L11). Moreover, when it comes to urban Indian population, the invisibility is even more obvious because, according to the imagery of the dominant culture, Native people belong to museums and are part of the past and not the present. One of the employees of The NATIVE Project denounced that history books used at schools and colleges in the United States are written just from a White perspective: “When they do treat on topics of Native American history or more contemporary issues that we face, they are sort of glossed over and they sort of depict us as being ancient versus here today” (S14). According to Quijano (2010), through Modernity was established a lineal concept of the history of humanity that starts with a primitive stage and culminates in its most ‘sophisticated’ phase, Europe. Thus, the European culture represents ‘modern civilization,’ and the other cultures are either ‘invisibilized’ or labeled as primitive and part of the past; this is why for any project of cultural resistance and cognitive justice it is central to make visible what has been made invisible. For example, another employee described her experience studying in a big city
in the United States: “I was probably the only Native student at high school and some of the students thought I still lived in a teepee. Then, if I didn’t live in a teepee, they didn’t know I even existed” (S16). According to the Urban Indian Health Commission Report of 2007, although American Indians and Alaska Natives living at metropolitan regions in the United States represent nearly 67 percent of the nation’s 4.1 million Natives, they are invisible for most of the population of the country. This phenomenon results from eurocentrism, when western Europeans thought of themselves as the most developed culture in the history of humanity and protagonists of Modernity while the rest were living in the past (Quijano, 2010). Thus, from a Western cultural assumption, if you are Native American, you should live in a teepee in the reservation because Native American cannot be ‘modern’ and live in a city, only White people can. Using a Western mental framework to make sense of the world, a Native individual living in a city makes no sense, and this is why it is so important to be visible and raise awareness about urban Native and their social struggles.

Moreover, through eurocentrism, Western culture is the only rational one; it is the only one containing ‘subjects,’ the rest are not-rational and therefore are inferior by nature (Quijano, 2000). This ideology explains another stereotype of Native people as individuals who are not capable of adjusting to Modernity and progress, and are passive victims of substance abuse and poverty because of their lack of responsibility, hard-work, and intelligence. Thus, the dominant culture conceptualizes the world only from its own worldview and does not value other perspectives, making the achievement of cognitive and social justice almost impossible. For example, one of the founders talked about how Western culture worships the ‘God of degrees’ and diminishes any other knowledge that is not validated by the hegemonic institutions: “The most popular therapist we have does
not have a degree and the kids follow that person everywhere” (L22). The lack of valuing a different knowledge that goes beyond the Western epistemology is what Santos (2014) calls epistemicide, the extermination of knowledge and different types of knowing.

In addition, since The NATIVE Project provides holistic medicine with a Native American perspective based on the concept of Sacred Hospitality, the organization faces resistances from the hegemonic culture. As Horkheimer and Adorno (1996) argue, after the Enlightenment, humans separated themselves from Nature and became their masters establishing a connection between Enlightenment and the scientific method that situates science as the only legitimate model of explanation for reality overcoming tradition and ‘liberating’ us from myth and superstition. Thus, the dominant culture only values scientific knowledge as the legitimate one and concepts such as holistic medicine or Sacred Hospitality are considered either myths or superstitions.

Regarding the Indian Health System (IHS), most of the employees at The NATIVE Project agreed that: “It’s a real crappy substandard subhuman way to treat Natives and it starts from birth if you have to go to IHS. Their standard of care is ridiculously low and it’s caused a lot of deaths” (S18). In terms of the educational system, one of the founders stated remembering the reasons to found the organization: “Only one out of every four kids were getting to high school. And of those one in four kids that got to high school, only one was going to graduate. And those are the super-achievers that were also going to go to college. But there’s a lot of suicide, substance abuse…” (L33). These examples of institutional constraints that affect the access of Native people to health and education represent a system of oppression understood as an enclosing structure of forces and barriers that have an impact on their immobilization and reduction as a particular cultural group. For Young (2011), oppression along with domination
define injustice. The former is when institutions constrain self-development of individuals or groups of people, and the later when these institutions limit the possibilities of self-determination. From Young’s (2011) list of five dimensions that define oppression—exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence—Native people experience at least the last four. Thus, founding a health clinic made visible urban Native people and their particular struggles, and at the same time, attempted to address the different forms of oppression that urban Natives were experiencing.

As a result of this invisibility and demonization of Native people and their ways of knowing, and also because of the structural violence experienced by urban Natives like the lack of access to quality health services and education, a group of 15 urban Native Americans from different tribes living in Spokane decided to found The NATIVE Project and to make visible the invisible denouncing a situation of domination and oppression in the American postcolonial society, while debunking myths of cultural inferiority. Moreover, the organization is led mainly by Native women who experience the domination and oppression of a patriarchal and sexist system that situates them in a position of double subordination for the fact of being Native and women. As one of the young leaders said regarding the women’s leadership of The NATIVE Project: “And being that Spokane, again, is conservative, they had to fight a lot to be able to be allowed

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9 Although it can be argued, Native American people would also suffer from exploitation if we consider that a capitalist society either exploits the poor and more vulnerable groups of society or use them as a ‘reserve army labor’ to threaten other social groups that are already being exploited. However, what is more evident is that Native communities suffer the exploitation of their natural resources and the destruction of their lands and, because from a Native perspective the territory and the people are connected through history and ancestors, it could be argued that Native American communities today are suffering from exploitation, too. In other words, Native American people in the United States would be experiencing all five dimensions of oppression defined by Young (2011): Exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence.
to enter the room, to be allowed to have a voice. And they do that time and time again, even in 2017. And it just shows their passion for the work, because they could’ve easily given up” (L8). According to Jenson (1995), to be successful in occupying a space in the field of political discourse limits the possibilities of certain groups, while possibly reconfiguring the political opportunity structure for others. In essence, to struggle over making visible the invisible and ‘naming’ instead of being ‘named,’ involves understanding culture as a field for struggle and the exercise of cultural power relations.

One of the leaders of The NATIVE Project argued regarding the need to make visible the invisible: “There’s a face and The NATIVE Project plays a role of having that face and saying, ‘hello, we’re here. There’s Native Americans in your community and there are Native Americans in your medical community.’” (S25). For Bourdieu (1977), “what goes without saying and what cannot be said for lack of an available discourse, represents the dividing-line between the most radical form of misrecognition and the awakening of political consciousness” (p. 170). Thus, the first step to awake political consciousness is to make visible the invisible and to say what cannot be said contributing to broadening the space of doxa through new discourses, narratives, and frameworks. As Bourdieu (1977) argues, a group has power when it has the capacity to make public and formulate experiences that have not been formulated before to make them official and legitimate them, which will give them strength.

Native people always have been ‘there’ in the United States even before the European arrived, but needed to make themselves visible for a hegemonic culture that either thinks that they do not exist, considering that all Natives are in reservations or museums, or portrays Native people as inferior and not capable of adapting to progress. This is why it was necessary to create this ‘new reality’ with the foundation of the
organization and be ‘named’ by themselves instead of being ‘named’ by the hegemonic culture; as Bourdieu argues (1989), symbolic power “is a power of consecration or revelation, the power to consecrate or to reveal things that are already there” (p. 23).

Moreover, organization in general and political organization in particular are needed to gain recognition in the political sphere. In other words, by the end of the 80s it was not enough for urban Native people in Spokane with ‘being there,’ and that was the reason why a group of 15 urban Native decided to initiate a process to organize themselves and create The NATIVE Project. As Bourdieu (1989) states:

In fact, as a constellation which, according to Nelson Goodman (1978), begins to exist only when it is selected and designated as such, a group, a class, a gender, a region, or a nation begins to exist as such, for those who belong to it as well as for the others, only when it is distinguished, according to one principle or another, from other groups, that is, through knowledge and recognition (connaissance et reconnaissance). (p. 23)

One way of making visible the ‘invisible’ urban Native people is creating a space that gives visibility to the struggle and, at the same time, it is a safe space where Native people from Spokane can feel safe, celebrated, and valued, and also a sanctuary understood as a space for retreat where in particular young urban Natives can learn and appreciate their cultural traditions and critically reflect about the postcolonial system of oppression and domination and their particular reality. One of the leaders stated: “Just being Native in a non-diverse place, being gay in a very conservative city… it’s nice because you can be what you want here, and celebrated. This is a place of diversity to the max, and in Spokane it’s hard to find places like that” (L8). Following the same line of argument, one of the founders said: “I think that’s the thing that I want: Staff, especially
young staff, to get that it’s kind of like a sanctuary place” (L22). According to Fantasia and Hirsch (1995), subordinate groups operate in private, isolated from the control of the dominant groups of society, creating ‘havens’ or ‘free social spaces’ where the dominated can organize their challenge to the dominant narrative and ideologies, deconstruct old and create new meanings, construct emergent cultural forms, and transmit the culture.

Another strategy to give visibility and debunking myths that portray Native people as primitive or not intelligent is through symbols and artifacts. For example, one supporter said: “We want to have a very nice facility that people come in and not only do they feel welcome, but that it is clean and we don’t have crappy furniture and where you know everyone is well dressed” (S13). Symbols and artifacts like a beautiful building, nice furniture, or smart outfits, create a consensus on the meaning of the social world, “a consensus which contributes fundamentally to the reproduction of the social order” (Bourdieu, 1991a, p. 166). Thus, artifacts and symbols construct a social order by providing people with a social being that is recognized publicly. This is the reason why the leadership of The NATIVE Project is very focused on offering a good image with the building, the furniture, the outfits, but also with the behavior and actions of all the employees. One leader stated: “If you’re drinking, if you’re doing drugs, if you’re falling down, getting your name in the paper for domestic violence, then you probably shouldn’t work here” (L22). Artifacts and symbols are political and embedded in relations of power because they imply a space where general social relations can be represented and negotiated (Bourdieu, 1994). Moreover, as Wuthnow (1989) argues, since social movements are ‘communities of discourse’ centered in creating new cultural codes that challenge hegemonic perspectives, The NATIVE Project understands discourse as written in their Mission and Vision statements but also what the different members of the staff
can say, and the formal events and activities that they organize with the community but also the informal interactions when the employees are outside work in their private lives.

Moreover, to make visible the invisible, it is also central to invest in outreach and encounter hegemonic institutions that either are not aware of your existence or they view the world through cultural myths and stereotypes that need to be addressed and deconstructed. For example, one supporter said: “We have an outreach right now for postcards to our governors and senators to try to raise awareness for importance of a grant that helps subsidize some of our positions here. So, I think we’re in pretty good communication” (S6). In essence, a group or a social class only exists and has force in the political field when representatives with the “plena potentia agenda” may be and feel authorized to speak in its name like for example “the Party is the working class”, or “the Pope is the Church” (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 250), and although the leadership of The NATIVE Project insists that they do not represent Native people in the Spokane area, they get their strength in the political field ‘representing’ the Native community of Spokane.

Initially, the NATIVE Project was focused on the urban Native population from Spokane, but when the urban Native patients started to bring their relatives and friends from the reservation, including White, Latino/a, Black, and Asian people, to the organization, the founders decided to broaden the focus and serve everyone. Thus, the organization became a safe space not just for the Native population, but a safe space for all the invisible, the forgotten, and the demonized in a more transversal way going beyond Native people and broadening their class consciousness. One of the supporters said: “If the poor got together, the way that we were founded, no matter what color, there would be a lot more movement” (S10). As Bourdieu (1998b) argues, neoliberal ideology
allowed a dehistoricized and desocialized political program “of methodical destruction of collectives” (pp. 95-96). As a consequence of the process of destroying collectives and class solidarity, policies of redistribution in the United States were abandoned by the 1980s and substituted with policies seeking to integrate minorities and women in the political system struggling against discrimination (Navarro, 2016). These policies were prolific in the 1990s but most of the people who benefited from them were people belonging to the upper-middle class and not to the majority of minority groups belonging to the working class (Navarro, 2016). Moreover, with today’s identity politics there is an essentialist approach to struggle for social justice that does not consider intersectionalities of race, class, gender, dividing social movements and hindering the possibilities of emancipatory transversal and global projects of class consciousness.

As a result of the social justice motivations that resulted in creating a safe space and a sanctuary to make visible the invisible from where organizing collective actions to struggle for decolonization and cultural resistance, The NATIVE Project can be considered much more than a business in the field of healthcare. Thus, since the foundation of The NATIVE Project, the founders decided to organize leadership camps focused on the young urban Native Americans to give meaning to their lives and to encourage them to be proud of their cultural traditions and worldviews while training them as future Native leaders who will serve the urban Native community of Spokane and struggle for social justice and cultural resistance. In essence, any struggle for cognitive and social justice requires critical reflection, organization, and the decolonization of the minds of the oppressed first, to be able to see the social order as arbitrary and not natural or inexorable. For Gramsci (1970), culture means organization, discipline, empowerment, and awareness of taking control of reality. Thus, The NATIVE Project, understood as a
SMO is seen as a reaction against a hegemonic culture and system with the aim of transforming society. According to Fine (1995), the main goals of social movements and SMOs are to influence and change the cultural order and perspectives of society in which they are embedded (Fine, 1995).

However, The NATIVE Project does not try to threaten the State or its sovereignty, they struggle to create political spaces in Spokane that allow people to their own forms of sociopolitical organization. Their goal is about balancing asymmetries of power that result from valuing negatively the difference in terms of race, class, sex, and culture, and unfolding a process of ethnogenesis that transforms the minds of both the oppressed and the oppressors, to recognize and value other worldviews, narratives, and frameworks. One of the supporters said: “There’s genocide still happening in this country. And slavery in the prison system. We’re being taught in our school system that that stuff was over with and done for and not happening because it was ancient history….There’s a lot of ownership that’s not been taken or taught about what’s still happening in our country” (S10).

Any organizational project of emancipation needs a critical intercultural process of leadership from their own cultural perspective, because “either they must organize authentically for their liberation, or they will be manipulated by the elites. Authentic organization is obviously not going to be stimulated by the dominators; it is the task of the revolutionary leaders” (Freire, 2012, p. 148). As one of the founders of the organization said: “Nobody rode in on their white horse and saved us” (L22). In other words, the urban Native community in Spokane needed to take control of their own reality and destiny as active subjects instead of waiting to be saved.
Thus, the struggle needs to be carried out by themselves in their own terms, otherwise the hegemonic system has the capacity to co-opt revolutionary projects and deactivate them as soon as they are implemented within the system. As Flacks (1995) argues, “the fate of democracy and the chances for social justice will depend on the movements’ capacity to take ongoing responsibility for the social future” (p. 263). The NATIVE Project struggles for a social future of cognitive and social justice for all, and the first step of the process was to take control of their own reality as a social group and to make visible what has been invisibilized. In essence, the power to control the ‘naming’ and the history of a social group is perhaps the ultimate form of hegemony, and any social movement that struggles for social justice and cultural resistance, needs to start their emancipatory project challenging this power.

**Finding Two. We Struggle, Therefore I Am: The Platform**

If the first step in a process of struggling for social justice and cultural resistance was to create a sanctuary for safety and critical reflection that made visible issues of social injustice in the Spokane area while debunking myths of Native people as inferior or not capable of organizing successful social, economic and political projects, the following stage is to offer a platform for implementing action. As one of the members of the staff stated: “The NATIVE Project allowed you more of a practice of interculturality and social justice…. I think it allows us to practice to that which is why I’m here” (S6).

According to Lederach (2005), platforms are useful to generate processes that may ultimately be able to transform the relationships that lie at the root of social conflicts. This platform created at The NATIVE Project to struggle for social justice and cultural resistance is essential for any process that aims to transition from a postcolonial world.
with big asymmetries of power to an intercultural society with less asymmetries because it is within the struggle (the action/praxis) where critical consciousness raises to the highest levels to decolonize the minds of the oppressed first, that will be able to start the process of decolonization of the oppressors without risk of being co-opted by them. As one employee argued: “I think getting involved is key to raise critical consciousness. I’ve never been to a pow wow before, so getting involved was really cool. Events like that….I think that’s probably helped to raise it” (S6). Or another employee said: “When you’re living it in theory is different than when you come to the particular community. And that has really changed the paradigm shift for me in terms of the lenses I see the world in” (S3). According to Freire (2012), to overcome a situation of oppression requires transforming action that creates a new situation. However, before struggling, people must recognize and identify in a critical way the causes of the oppression and design a new framework of the world and ethics. Thus, as the employee above was saying, the oppressed needs to change the ‘lenses’ through which they see the world debunking myths created in the old order to be able to develop new frameworks and social structures.

Moreover, the platform and its struggle function as a way of balancing asymmetries of power based on controlling and imposing cultural assumptions and myths that value negatively what is different regarding the dominant culture, and are embedded in minds resulting in feelings of powerlessness or hopelessness for the oppressed who end up internalizing and accepting the discourse of oppression. The domination of the minds is the most effective system of domination and violence upon the oppressed, because it is not visible and is reproduced in an unconscious way through individuals’ daily dispositions and practices. In addition, the asymmetries of power are also embedded and
reproduced through social structures and institutions created by individuals that at the same time shape their dispositions and practices. This imposition of what can be thought and perceived upon the dominated who incorporate the social order of domination in their unconscious structures and take it as natural is called symbolic power (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1996).

Therefore, to balance these asymmetries of power embedded in minds, social structures, and institutions, a platform for action is central because it is the space where the struggle is carried out raising critical consciousness to their highest levels, and also where collective frameworks of action that, on one side, empower individuals who take control of reality and seek to transform the social order, and on the other, educate hegemonic institutions to deconstruct social structures of domination and oppression, are designed and developed. As one of the supporters said: “Providing the environment for me to meet with other people and to meet with Native American community. I think that by itself is empowerment” (S3). Thus, through new frameworks, The NATIVE Project provides ways of perceiving and thinking that replace old ones while discarding old meanings, symbols, and erroneous beliefs.

If Descartes’ famous quote “I think, therefore I am” was used to differentiate Europe from the rest of the world who was considered not worthy of existence or inferior (Maldonado-Torres, 2008b), the platform at The NATIVE Project offers a counterhegemonic option that gives meaning to the oppressed through the idea of ‘We struggle, therefore I am.’ According to one young leader at the organization: “Working here I have become prouder, and feel more celebrated, and hopeful. Before I came here, there wasn’t really a place that had a bunch of professionals who were like, ‘Hey, you’re awesome as you are. Come join us.’” (L8). As Marcuse (1991) argued, all liberation
depends first on deconstructing the consciousness of servitude, and then reconstructing a consciousness of emancipation.

**Empowerment Through Frameworks of Collective Action**

Seeing other people struggling and having frameworks to make sense which are meaningful, is essential to empower individuals to take control of reality and transform it. One of the young leaders of The NATIVE Project affirmed when talking about all the sacrifices that her relatives made, that: “Growing up seeing that, I was able to volunteer as a high school student. Me and a couple of my friends from a youth leadership program got to volunteer and be youth leaders in their Indian youth programs so we volunteered a lot of our time in high school doing that” (L2). According to Freire (2012), when one sees other people struggling is when society is not perceived as natural or inexorable anymore but as a construction, something unfinished that can be transformed. It becomes a challenge rather than a frustrating limitation.

Another key element to getting empowered through collective action is class consciousness. As Freire (2012) argues, the oppressed are together by their solidarity and they need to overcome their differences to develop a class consciousness. For example, one of the employees argued: “I think it’s empowering as an employee or a patient to walk through those doors and to see a lot of different Natives specializing in a lot of different areas of medicine, social services, administration. I know when I started with them I was just like blown away” (S14). As Federici (2016) stated, to resist oppression and domination is needed to have trust in the others going to struggle with you. That is why individualism is a barrier for any social struggle because there is no trust in the collective which is the source of being empowered. It is the principle of ‘divide and you
will rule’ complemented with the development of identity politics that is hindering the possibility of unfolding transversal and emancipatory projects against a global system of domination and oppression. However, according to Freire (2012), consciousness of being an oppressed class is preceded or at least accompanied by individual consciousness which is different than individualistic consciousness. As the same employee stated when he visited The NATIVE Project for the first time: “I am like ‘Wow these tribal members from different tribes all coming here for the greater good of The NATIVE Project of Spokane community and our people!’” (S14). Thus, since the subaltern need to transition from being conscious of themselves as oppressed individuals to a consciousness of an oppressed class, the leadership of The NATIVE Project empowers individually through a framework of collective action. As one employee argued regarding the emphasis of the leadership to empower their employees and patients: “[The founder and CEO] is a great mentor and she believes in empowering her staff. She believes in mentoring the young ones to follow up” (S1).

Collective action is understood as a social construction with purpose and meaning, that is not only derived from structural constraints, and cannot be reduced either to leaders’ discourses or militants’ options, or to public behavior (Melucci, 1995b). According to Gamson (1992), there are three components of collective action frames: injustice, agency, and identity. Injustice refers to the moral indignation; agency to the consciousness that through collective action it is possible to transform society; and identity refers to the process of defining the ‘we’ versus ‘they’ with different interests or values (Gamson, 1995). These three components are described in a similar vein by Snow and Benford (1992) but identified as (1) punctuation, or bringing attention to the injustice suffered; (2) attribution, or describing the causes and solutions for the injustice; and (3)
articulation, or connecting different experiences. The NATIVE Project emphasizes on injustice/punctuation in all their meetings and events, but it is central for the emancipatory project that they also focus on agency/ attribution empowering people providing them with ways of acting collectively, and also creates identity between the employees through a common purpose, and articulates experiences in a holistic way to transform society. As one employee stated: “The NATIVE Project helps people in becoming more active….I didn’t know, when I started working here, I was [young age]. I had no idea how to contact my legislator and how to voice my concerns or whatever. So, I think not even so much being more conscious, but knowing how to make a change” (S24). Instead of remaining in the component of injustice and identity, the ‘we’ versus ‘them,’ The NATIVE project tries to empower employees and patients through collective action describing the causes and solutions for the injustice.

**Deconstructing/Reconstructing Social Structures**

The most effective way of deconstructing/reconstructing social structures is to approach this process in a holistic way including macro structures (systems of stratification, institutions, and patterned relations between groups), meso structures (social networks ties between individuals and also between organizations), and micro structures (norms that shape the behavior of individuals and groups within a society). Thus, it is a process of ethnogenesis that decolonizes minds, dispositions, and practices on one side, and reconstructs hegemonic institutions which have the capacity of reproduction of structures that shape the dispositions and practices of individuals and groups, on the other, with the aim of balancing power relationships in today’s postcolonial societies.
According to Quijano (2010), the relationship between Western culture and other cultures that began during the sixteenth century continues to be one of colonial domination whose results are a relationship that consists, in the first place, of a colonization of the imagination of the dominated. Thus, it is central to decolonize the minds of the people, and as one employee stated: “Coming as someone who’s White from essentially a privileged background, not having to worry about basic challenges like food scarcity or domestic violence or drug abuse, I think being confronted with those issues here has just developed my consciousness for others” (S4).

Through eurocentrism and its Eurocentric leadership process, intersubjectivity is dominated and the world is only conceptualized from a Western worldview, which makes the achievement of social and cognitive justice nearly impossible because the rest of cultures either do not exist or are inferior. As one leader of the organization argued, talking about the relationship of the dominant culture with subordinated ones: “I think we might not be aware of our own prejudices, and our own biases, and things like that. And when we look at viewing other cultures [it is done as if they were] inferior or less than your own” (L8). For example, one of the founders was very clear about a hegemonic system that reproduces both the invisibilization of non-dominant cultures and a feeling of superiority over them: “It’s been a challenge sometimes because I think some professions like social work, medicine, or counseling have an unhealthy part that teaches people to be codependents and take care of other people… that is not our culture” (L22). In essence, the system implements paternalist and ‘assistentialist’ approaches to control and deactivate any possibility of social revolution that could transform a system configurated with structures that privilege certain social sectors of society over others. Moreover, paternalism reinforces the Eurocentric doxa of the oppressor because it makes them feel
satisfied with their actions and creates the imaginary illusion of solidarity and social justice while the real causes of the injustice are hidden.

One of the ideologies that results from eurocentrism during Modernity and its darker side, colonialism, is racism. According to Bonilla-Silva (1996), racism reproduces racial inequality in contemporary America in a very covert way because it is embedded in normal operations of institutions and is invisible to most Whites. For example, as one of the leaders said: “Some of my White colleagues don’t necessarily understand why the Native population has a different set of needs than the White population does” (S25). The hegemonic culture is successful to hold power over social institutions and, through them, influences the thoughts and behaviors of the rest of society establishing normative ideas, values, and beliefs that eventually will become the hegemonic worldview of the society (Strinati, 1995). Thus, since the dominant culture views the world through cultural assumptions of racism, classism, sexism, and cultural superiority/inferiority, these ideas need to be challenged and reconstructed through an emancipatory struggle.

According to Freire (2012), subaltern groups are dominated and manipulated by the force of the myths imposed by the hegemonic sectors of society who, after internalizing the opinion the oppressors hold of them, eventually become convinced of their own inferiority and seeing it as natural. A similar phenomenon of cultural domination is ‘learned helplessness’ which arises when prior learning in a situation that cannot be solved undermines motivation for future responses in a similar situation and distorts the ability to change the environment (Rabow, Berkman & Kessler, 1983).

Another element of control implemented during the last decades has consisted in embedding the minds of the oppressed with individualism and a bourgeois concept of personal success with the aim of dismantling ideas of solidarity and social class. As Freire
(2012) argues, cultural conquest leads to the cultural inauthenticity of those who are invaded who begin to respond to the values and goals of the invaders. As one of the employees stated regarding the division between subordinated social groups: “If the poor got together, the way that we were founded, no matter what color, there would be a lot more movement” (S10). At a certain level, The NATIVE Project represents a transversal and intercultural movement seeking for cognitive and social justice since the very first moment when non-Native people started to be treated at the clinic. Although the leadership of the organization could have denied providing health services to non-Native, the fact of having taken that decision implied the transformation of a Native American emancipatory project into a subordinated emancipatory endeavor.

For Freire (2012), since the oppressed are divided through an ideology of oppression, they can be emancipated with a form of cultural action which requires de-ideologizing and re-ideologizing. It is the start of a process of ethnogenesis at an individual, organizational, and societal level that goes from deconstructing social structures of domination and oppression and reconstructing new structures for liberation and emancipation. In terms of de-ideologizing/decolonizing minds, the leadership of The NATIVE Project is very concerned about decolonizing the minds of all their employees and patients as the first step for struggling for social justice. As one of the founders stated: “They need to know like oral history. They need to know the historical context of why they work here. They need to know about trauma. They need to know the truth about what happened to Native people. We’re sitting in this building today as a direct result of historical trauma. The genocide and how it shows up now. They killed almost most of us, so we better be on-board all hands-on deck to save what is rest of us” (L22).
Thus, the leadership of The NATIVE Project, understanding culture as a field for struggle, empowers staff and patients debunking myths of inferiority and offering frameworks of collective action to transform an oppressive reality. As one employee stated describing how they empower the patients to be active: “We don’t try to say that’s not fair and people shouldn’t do that to you and go and be strong. We don’t do that. We go, ‘Hey, what can you do with this barrier? How can you deal with this?’ (S30). And one of the founders stated: “To be free is to be independent. We teach people to be autonomous, healthy, independent, to live on their own, and to take care of their own health and their mental health” (L22).

Gradually, The NATIVE Project creates an organizational culture that raises critical consciousness and unfolds ethnogenesis changing the frameworks through which employees and patients view the world. One of the employees said: “I’m an enrolled [Indian tribe], but I never lived on the reservation, so I was very White. I did have to learn to navigate between cultures then and get educated” (S1). Among the main processes of cultural production, the creation of meaning, naming and constructing discourses and narratives, and rituals, are central. To create meaning in a social movement, Klandermans (1992) suggests three processes that use public discourses, persuasive communication, and consciousness-raising during episodes of collective action. At The NATIVE Project, there is a discourse outside and inside the organization centered on social justice and cultural resistance that is transmitted with the implementation of frameworks for sense-and meaning-making. Regarding naming, discourses and narratives, involves a struggle for discursive space to imagine the past, the present, and the future of the communities, that is why The NATIVE Project emphasizes that their employees need to know the history of Native people, their struggles, and their emancipatory projects. Finally, by
rituals are understood the cultural mechanisms that collective actors implement to express their emotions and which are central to mobilize and sustain the struggle (Taylor & Whittier, 1995). Emotions are ‘the glue of solidarity’ (Collins, 1990), and are expressed at The NATIVE Project through formal rituals like pow wows or graduation ceremonies, but also with informal ones such as time for sharing different types of food and jokes and laughter as mechanisms to create solidarity and make the struggle more sustainable.

When it comes to the formation of cultural assumptions that represent the core of a culture, Schein (2010) describes two basic mechanisms which are connected with positive problem solving to cope with external adaptation issues, on one hand, and anxiety avoidance to cope with internal integration issues, on the other. Thus, the critical intercultural leadership process at The NATIVE Project creates a culture for resistance, establishes norms and behaviors that when successful in navigating with external adaptation issues and avoiding anxiety while coping with internal integration challenges, deconstructs hegemonic assumptions and consolidates emancipatory ones. As one employee stated regarding the social injustices and the system of oppression and domination that is internalized and seen as natural by the oppressed: “It’s affecting our lives. Affecting our cultures. And we’re not taking ownership. There’s a lot of ownership that’s not been taken or taught about what’s still happening in our country” (S10). Thus, if assumptions are not challenged because they are taken for granted, The NATIVE Project aims to make them visible and to show that they are not natural or inexorable but a social construction, and arbitrary and unfair social order that must be challenged and transformed.

Regarding, the de-ideologizing/de-colonizing of social structures and institutions, the leadership of The NATIVE Project focuses part of their activities on establishing a
fluid communication with hegemonic institutions to raise visibility and awareness about their struggles and ‘educate’ them about Native culture and social struggles to deconstruct hegemonic discourses and narratives of superiority/inferiority. State institutions are central to deciding criteria of inclusion and exclusion and in particular for funding; this is why, besides for balancing asymmetries of power, The NATIVE Project seeks recognition by public institutions. As one employee argued: “I have watched the improvement in the relationships with the city and I think [the founder and CEO] does a wonderful job of educating people about Native culture and people of color” (S1).

The categories that make possible the order of the world are key for any political struggle, “a struggle which is inseparably theoretical and practical, over the power of preserving or transforming the social world by preserving or transforming the categories of perception of that world” (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 236). That is why it is central to make visible the invisible, and with a parallel process of critical reflection, debunking myths about non-hegemonic cultures, while empowering through collective action subordinated individuals and social groups who will be able to have a less asymmetric dialogue with hegemonic institutions. One employee said: “[The founder and CEO] has sent people to the hospital to meet our clientele and invite them over to see the clinic and see what we do, the fire department, the ambulance, the police… We’ve had people from senators and their staff come over to be introduced” (S1). For Bourdieu (1989), world-making consists “in carrying out a decomposition, an analysis, and a composition, a synthesis, often by the use of labels” (p. 22), and to carry out this process of world-making, symbolic power, the power that through naming reproduce or transforms objective principles that unite and separate, along with social classifications, is needed.
Balancing Asymmetries of Power

The processes of decolonizing the minds of both the oppressed and the oppressors and ‘educating’ and reconstructing hegemonic institutions not to reproduce colonial dispositions and practices, contributes to balance asymmetries of power because they are central to the transformation of objective principles of union and separation, and social classifications, that define power relations in postcolonial societies. According to one of the founders of The NATIVE Project talking about working in a hegemonic organization or institution: “If I were to work in those systems I would never have power. I would have to always acquiesce to the power and control of the colonizer because they own every system in this country” (L22).

Since the hegemonic culture possesses the most cultural capital, the struggle of any group for improving the position within the system and increasing power will reinforce the structure that serves the interests of the dominant class (Chopra, 2003). As one founder said: “I do see some people of color when they start working with systems they acquiesce, they change to be colonized and then they become the colonizer. So, I always tell myself ‘when I die I want to be the freest person in the room. I want to be decolonized’” (L22). Thus, when The NATIVE Project was founded, the founders understood that the struggle was not just about increasing the capital of urban Native people within the dominant system but to redefine the terms of the conversation to challenge the postcolonial system and its doxa. It was not about getting a bigger piece of the cake, it was, and still is, about changing the cake. As one of the founders stated regarding when they decided to found The NATIVE Project: “We can do this ourselves, we can make systems that maybe from the outside look like their system so if it’s palatable enough they’ll give us money or… but underneath really like nurture the spirit
or the core of it” (L22). Therefore, to dismantle the dominant hegemony, a new and alternative hegemony in the Spokane area had to arise, what Gramsci (1995) called a ‘war of position.’

According to Arendt (1970), power belongs to a group and remains with the group as long as the group keeps together. Similarly, Bourdieu (1977; 1990b) argues that today there is a struggle for social recognition as a type of power he called symbolic power “to win everything which, in the social world, is of the order of belief, credit and discredit, perception and appreciation, knowledge and recognition – name, renown, prestige, honor, glory, authority, everything which constitutes symbolic power as recognized power” (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 251). The struggle for this symbolic power was central to create The NATIVE Project because as one of the founders stated: “In our public school systems we’ve been really told a bunch of lies and so you’re deeply entrenched into really make good conscious decisions. We’re not going to do that anymore. And when you don’t do those anymore it does make the dominant society uncomfortable” (L22). Thus, The NATIVE Project tries to acquire symbolic power and increase the value of existing assets, seeking to impose its own worldview and frameworks to make sense and meaning of reality as most valuable (or at least valuable), to secure symbolic power.

The NATIVE Project understands the privilege of authenticity and they do not try to be like the oppressor. They are proud of the culture of their ancestors, and they channel the frustration from historical injustices to energy and sustainability to keep struggling for social justice and emancipation. As Freire (2013) argues, when some social groups begin to see themselves and their society from their own perspective and not from the perspective and the narratives of the oppressors, is when they become aware of their own potentialities. As one young leader said regarding the struggle for social justice at the
organization: “NATIVE Project has taught me how to have that conversation, and taught me how to really be who I am and stand my ground. And to share with others my gift” (L8). Moreover, as soon as the oppressed starts decolonizing their minds about their inferiority and powerlessness, they contribute to decolonize the minds of the oppressors because the assumptions and frameworks to make sense of the world of the oppressors start to be shaken as a consequence that the quasi-perfect correspondence between the objective order and the subjective principles of organization is not evident anymore and stops being taken for granted.

These processes taking place at The NATIVE Project of construction of different knowledges, political practices, and social power, that go beyond the Eurocentric leadership frameworks and social orders from Modernity and colonialism started shaping the emancipatory project of an intercultural society. According to Walsh (2007), the intercultural society involves a thought, a praxis, a power, and a paradigm of and from the difference that goes beyond the dominant forms while at the same time, challenging them.

**Finding Three. United by Our Differences: The Intercultural Society**

The critical intercultural leadership process that emerges at The NATIVE Project contributes to create a particular organizational culture characterized by a prominent diversity that is valued, a ‘multiple’ consciousness developed by the employees as a result of navigating between cultures on a daily basis and, which in turn, facilitates them to interact with different cultures in a more fluid and empathetic way, and a common purpose at the organization that enhances a sense of belonging among the staff. Overall, leaders, employees, and patients of The NATIVE Project are united by their differences because they are aware that what all of them have in common are the differences and the
capacity to be diverse, and it is from that cultural assumption at the core of the organizational culture from where they develop values and beliefs that allow seeing differences in a positive way while reducing asymmetries of power between cultures. Therefore, it is not about homogenizing from a dominant culture, either destroying or invisibilizing other cultures, but creating a permeable and fluid ‘culture of many cultures’ where the common characteristic is the difference and the heterogeneity. As Feldman (1991) argues, an organizational culture does not necessarily require homogeneity to hold together the members of the organization. Heterogenous and diverse members of an organization can develop a sense of belonging through the articulation of common frames of reference or the fact that everybody recognizes the same relevant issues.

As noted before, The NATIVE Project is a very diverse organization where there are people from 17 different tribes and seven nationalities corresponding to five different continents. As one of the founders stated: “We’re inclusive and we have probably the most diverse staff in all of Spokane, eastern Washington” (L33). Employees at The NATIVE Project are aware of the diversity of the organization, and also of the fact that what all of them have in common are their differences which are valued and celebrated in a particularly White area as Spokane and the east of Washington State.

To make sense of an experience, a person creates a frame that explains the world and helps her to act and behave in the world (Bruner, 1986). In terms of meaning-making, Drath & Palus (1994) argue that the most general tool in a society to make meaning is culture, which at the same time, is also the primary leadership process. Thus, through a framework of intercultural society where diversity is valued and there are less asymmetries of power, employees at The NATIVE Project start developing similar
patterns of interpretation that give them a sense of belonging and contribute to develop a ‘multiple’ consciousness to navigate comfortably between different cultures.

People need a goal, a purpose, meaning in what they do, and this is what unites employees at The NATIVE Project, a common project and purpose represented through a framework of intercultural organization that ends up creating an intercultural organization/society. Frames and framing have material consequences because it is through them that people create the realities to which they must then respond (Fairhurst, 2011), and from where social structures and institutions to produce and reproduce a specific social order are created.

**Valuing Different Cultures**

Since valuing the difference in a negative way is common to all ideologies of domination and oppression such as racism, classism, or sexism, and is also key to reproducing asymmetries of power between cultures, to value what is different in a positive fashion will contribute to processes of liberation and emancipation, along with reducing power differences. The intersectionality of social hierarchies that configurated the colonial matrix of power inherited from Modernity and colonialism could not be possible without assigning to the difference and diversity negative cultural value.

Therefore, for the political struggle carried out at The NATIVE Project to be effective, the organization struggles for the categories that make possible the order of the world, for transforming the categories of perception of that world, for recognition and appreciation, in essence, a struggle for symbolic power.

In relation to race, Memmi (1996) affirms that the first form of racism consisted of stressing the difference between accuser and victim. However, revealing a characteristic
differentiating two individuals or two groups does not, in and of itself, constitute a racist attitude. Rather, it depends in part on how difference is perceived. As a result of the asymmetries of power between cultures and valuing negatively the difference, the dominant culture is ignorant about other cultures because, as part of the privilege of belonging to the dominant culture, it is not needed to know about different traditions and worldviews to survive. For example, one of the non-Native employees recognized the lack of knowledge about Native people: “One of the things about making myself more accustomed to the Native American culture is to acknowledge that I know nothing about them” (S4).

As a part of valuing and recognizing the different cultures, The NATIVE Project fosters and promotes cultural diversity ‘inviting’ to share, to ask, to enhance curiosity for other ways of viewing the world, doing, and being. As one of the employees stated: “I think there’s a willingness to learn. There’s an open-mindedness. I mean there’s respect. There’s curiosity. There’s acceptance….There is such value to life and to culture. There’s so much to experience and learn, and to share” (S24). Thus, the organization is aware of being one of the most diverse places in the area and they are proud of it and celebrate it going beyond multiculturalism which tolerates the difference but does not value or celebrate it, and where asymmetries of power are maintained relegating the rest of the cultures just to folklore. As one employee said: “It’s not about tolerance, it needs to be like more about value. Tolerance isn’t acceptable, that’s all it is. It’s not an understanding” (S1). And following this idea another employee stated: “I think that more than anything NATIVE Project shows that just by one example these other cultures that you don’t necessarily know have a lot to offer and you want to respect them and learn more about them” (S4).
According to Bourdieu (1977), to be successful, the dominated need to have “the material and symbolic means of rejecting the definition of the real that is imposed on them through logical structures reproducing the social structures (i.e. the state of the power relations) and to lift the (institutionalized or internalized) censorships which it implies” (p. 168). Thus, valuing the difference and celebrating diversity is central to struggle against a hegemonic culture based on the power to invisibilize, homogenize, and demonize.

**Navigating Between Cultures to Develop a ‘Multiple’ Consciousness**

The NATIVE Project is one of the most diverse places in Spokane and employees and patients who enter the organization are obliged to navigate between different cultures on a daily basis. As one employee stated: “You have to be open to the different cultures because we have Vietnamese, we have Russian, we have Caucasians, we have Blacks, we have Natives, and I think you have to be open to that” (S1).

Moreover, when it comes to cultures at The NATIVE Project, it is not only about different races and ethnicities but also about class and gender. As one of the employees said: “We try to relate to their ethnic or cultural backgrounds. Different socioeconomic backgrounds. We have homelessness, we have people with mental health issues and minorities. People who are impoverished” (S6). And in terms of gender differences one of the young leaders argued regarding a social and medical field dominated by men: “In the other places it’s predominantly men, and here we have all women. And being that Spokane, again, is conservative, they had to fight a lot to be able to be allowed to enter the room, to be allowed to have a voice” (L8).
Individuals learn and carry out activities and competencies in a particular social space, which at the same time, enable them to have interactions with other people in that social space. Moreover, it is from these particular social spaces from where individuals and groups develop specific dispositions or inclinations toward certain responses. Thus, the particular social space that represents The NATIVE Project as a diverse organization where individuals encounter and navigate between cultures in a daily basis, contributes to develop among the employees a habitus that enacts the worldview of their employees through their practices. Thus, staff at the organization are characterized by their easiness to navigate between cultures and, although in a different degree depending on different groups, by developing a ‘multiple’ consciousness to navigate between cultures in a fluid and almost unconscious way. As one of the founders stated: “I think the old days in a lot of Native language mix blooded people will call the interpreter. People that could explain both sides, and a lot of times I see that as my role” (L22).

From Bourdieu’s (1993) perspective, culture is seen as “a system of schemes of perception, expression and historically constituted and socially conditioned thinking” (p. 233) that consecrates a social order and is achieved only when this system becomes ‘natural,’ a habitus, after the objective structures of society are embodied in the categories of perception of individuals and groups of people. Thus, a ‘culture of cultures’ like The NATIVE Project requires a habitus where employees feel ‘like a fish in water’ navigating between cultures and shifting from one cultural consciousness to another, while seeing this process as ‘natural.’ One of the employees said: “I feel pretty comfortable with myself between the two cultures, and I try to be very conscious about other people’s cultures. Even between people’s cultures between medicines, like a naturopath versus Western medicine, versus Eastern medicine… I think I do it naturally” (S1).
In terms of cultural assumptions, Argyris and Schön (1996), define them as ‘theories-in-use’ that guide behavior, and inform group members how to perceive, think, and feel. At The NATIVE Project, since to navigate and learn with and from other cultures is the best solution for providing a good service and fitting in the organization, this idea is eventually taken for granted and considered ‘natural,’ becoming a basic assumption for the employees and becoming part of the core of the organizational culture.

A Common Purpose Enhancing a Sense of Belonging

Regardless of race, ethnicity, class, or gender, employees at The NATIVE Project have a common goal, a common purpose that unites them to work together in a synergistic way: To help the patients. This purpose is what gives sense and is meaningful for employees at the organization, and is also central to keep them together as a group. As one of the employees stated regarding the patients “We want to make sure that we can help them to do whatever they want, but we’ll do a white, yellow, black, red, indifferent. It doesn’t matter, they all need help” (S18). According to Ladkin (2010), meaning-making enables the members of an organization to work together towards a common interpretation of reality, to provide the organizational activity with coherence and common direction.

Melucci (1995a) defines collective action in social movements and SMOs as a social construction with purpose and meaning that emerges from framing in order to legitimate the action. Framing and action are interconnected and both influence each other with the aim of creating a shared reality, a new social order. As one leader stated: “We all share the identity of the client or the patient. They’re always our main concern. Without them we have no jobs. They are our number one priority and I think we all share
that” (S1). A shared reality contributes to what Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010) describe as a “collective programming of the mind” (p. 5), an organizational culture that distinguishes the members of The NATIVE Project from others. Moreover, during the process of creating a particular organizational culture at The NATIVE Project, the “moral circles” of culture that define criteria of inclusion, and therefore, of exclusion, are broadened and become more inclusive contributing to the creation of a solidarity of class among non-hegemonic cultures that focus on shared identities of domination and oppression and their common position of subordination within the colonial matrix of power that characterizes today’s postcolonial societies.

From that solidarity of class and shared reality resulted from a common purpose and meaning, raises a sense of belonging among the employees of The NATIVE Project. For example, as one of the employees said regarding what the organization meant to her: “It’s more of like a sense of family. I like that feeling. There’s a familiar feeling” (S27). According to Bentley (1991), feelings of group membership arise with the awareness of subconscious practices that people have in common, or as Bourdieu (1990b) argues, these shared practices arise from the habitus with which people identify because of the similarity to their own practices. At The NATIVE Project, the habitus of the employees generates practices that in turn reinforce those same dispositions and, although not physically similar, they turn to each other as a result of similar conducts while avoiding those who seem to act differently.

However, as Barth (1976) argues, even if ethnic groups establish boundaries among themselves in terms of ethnicity, nationality, class, and so on, these boundaries are still permeable because ethnicity is dynamic. At The NATIVE Project, ethnicity is more understood as Poutignat (2008) argues, as a system of organization, a principle to divide
the social world which can change according to situations and historic periods. In other words, ethnic groups are not static or bearers of a culture as an essentialist approach can suggest; they are social constructions that try to organize their social life and are subjected to constant change (Luna Penna, 2014). This is why The NATIVE Project is not an essentialist project where one homogeneous culture is imposed upon the organization, but since ethnicity is dynamic and its boundaries are flexible, it represents a process of ethnogenesis that creates a system of organization, a ‘culture of cultures,’ where the common characteristics are their differences, and all employees are united by the common purpose of helping the patients.

Taylor and Whittier (1992) describe collective identity as three interrelated processes of construction of group boundaries, development of consciousness or interpretive frameworks that came up from the struggle, and politicization of everyday life using symbols and undertaking actions. At The NATIVE Project, the self-understandings around which they are organized in terms of boundaries differentiating them from the dominant culture, the interpretive frameworks identifying the interests of the organization, and the politicization of everyday life resisting and transforming the dominant system, are key to the development of a collective identity that unites them through a common purpose and their differences.

**Finding Four. Emancipatory Doxa/Pluri-Doxa and Transformation: The Lines in the Sand**

Since leadership is transformation (Burns, 1978), mobilization of people (Heifetz & Sinder, 1988), and a process by which a particular social order is created and changed (Hosking & Morley, 1988), to be able to transform the current postcolonial society of
domination and oppression, and mobilize people to create an emancipatory social order, a critical intercultural leadership process is needed. This particular approach of critical intercultural leadership is the leadership process that emerges at The NATIVE Project, and which raises critical consciousness and unfolds ethnogenesis among employees, patients, and also hegemonic institutions of Spokane, providing them with new frameworks to make sense of the world and giving meaning to their lives. According to Fairclough (1992), sense-making is political because meaning is political; and the organizational culture created at The NATIVE Project through the implementation of different frameworks such as the framework of a postcolonial society that identifies the causes for the domination and oppression, the framework of empowering through collective action, and the framework for an intercultural society united by the differences, is complemented in a transversal way by a framework of an emancipatory doxa/pluri-doxa, a space where many doxas can fit.

According to Bourdieu (1998a), each habitus is differentiated from the others because there is a different range of possibilities of dispositions and practices influencing the individual or the group in each habitus. In essence, for each habitus there are different limitations and constraints that influence the possibilities of thinking and doing of a person or group. These limitations and constraints of what can be thought or said is what Bourdieu calls doxa. However, these limitations when it comes to thinking and acting are not inexorable and when there is either ‘cultural contact’ or political and economic crisis, doxa is questioned emerging with a critique that brings what is indisputable into dispute, what is not formulated into formulation (Bourdieu, 1977).

Since the founders of The NATIVE Project occupy a position of subordinated culture that goes beyond the western canon, they have been able to keep an emancipatory
critique that disputes the indisputable and formulates what has not been formulated. Thus, the critical intercultural leadership process that emerges at the organization broadens a narrow and exclusive doxa that reproduce the current system of domination and oppression, with the aim of creating a more inclusive space for thinking, doing, and being.

Doxa is more than common belief and domination because it also has the potential to give rise to common action and liberation (Bourdieu & Eagleton, 1992). Therefore, the leadership of The NATIVE Project understands doxa as a field for struggle and seeks broadening it going beyond the hegemonic narratives and discourses to create an emancipatory doxa/pluri-doxa that will contribute to the creation of a new social order where diversity is valued and appreciated with less asymmetries of power. According to Bourdieu (1998a), doxa gives strength to the dominant discourse, and is recreated through partisan groups of academics, media, businessmen, and others who spread ideas and narratives that reinforce and contribute to the acceptance of the propositions of a system which is seen as an inexorable truth about the social world.

Therefore, to initiate the struggle for cognitive and social justice, The NATIVE Project decided to develop a critical consciousness, a project that transcends itself, an emancipatory doxa/pluri-doxa that will change the rules of the game thinking what cannot be thought and formulating what cannot be formulated. It is a struggle for imposing ideas, narratives, and frameworks that reinforces and contributes to the challenge and dispute of the propositions of a system which is seen as natural and inexorable. As Hunter (1995) argues, “radical new social movements seek to change the rules of the game, ‘not just the distribution of relative advantages in a given organization.’ Indeed, only by changing those rules can their ends be achieved” (p. 331).
A broadened doxa contributes to building an intercultural society where different cultural and epistemic perspectives are valued, and asymmetries of power between cultures are reduced. An emancipatory doxa/pluri-doxa: (1) expands the limits and constraints of the hegemonic doxa with the inclusion of other ways of thinking and being; (2) designs a pluriversal world resulting from a true and efficient dialogue without big asymmetries of power between cultures and epistemologies; and (3) constantly reviews the internalization of cultural assumptions that limit and constrain the possibilities of thinking and being. In other words, an emancipatory doxa/pluri-doxa offers stability to a culture, but since this ‘doxa of many doxas’ is constantly reviewed to avoid the creation of cultural assumptions of superiority/inferiority, it is a fluid process without an end, making it better suited for embracing change and social transformation.

**Resilience: Flexibility and Capacity to Adjust**

One of the characteristics of the critical intercultural leadership process that emerges at The NATIVE Project is the capacity of resilience to adjust to both external and internal challenges. Schein (2010) defines organizational culture as a pattern of shared basic assumptions that a group learns as it efficiently solved problems of external adaptation and internal integration. Thus, to have a capacity of adjusting is central to solve problems of external adaptation and internal integration, which will contribute to configuring shared assumptions that will end up creating an organizational culture.

Although contemporary researchers, educators, and social service providers started to use the concept of cultural resilience by the end of the 1990s, the concept has been present in Native American communities for centuries (Heavy Runner & Morris, 1997). According to Heavy Runner and Morris (1997), “resilience is not new in our
people; it is a concept that has been taught for centuries. The word is new but the meaning is old” (p. 28). As one of the founders of the organization stated regarding the relation between resilience and Native people: “It’s like Native Americans or other indigenous people. It’s like, ‘we’re going to survive, we’re going to make the best of it and we’re not going to whine about it’” (L33).

For Greene and Conrad (2002), resilience is not just a static personal quality, but a continuous process developed through interaction between persons and their environment. It is a positive emotion central to upholding adjustment (Cheung & Yue, 2013). One of the founders explained regarding how she had to adjust throughout the time to different challenges while working at The NATIVE Project: “I personally worked for 11 years with no benefits, with no healthcare, no savings or 401(k)s. So now here I am [mature age]. I look at my 401(k) on my retirement and there’s this over a decade gap of no retirement. But, you know, I was willing to do that” (L22).

At the core idea of resilience theory is the ability to adjust and thrive regardless of the presence of a stressful environment and, since its foundation, The NATIVE Project has been obliged to adjust to external challenges and internal problems to be successful in providing health services, celebrating and resisting with their culture, and struggling for cognitive and social justice. According to Brownlee, Rawana, Franks, Harper, Bajwa, O’Brien and Clarkson (2013), resiliency factors can be considered as either external or internal. The external factors include peers, family, school and community, whereas the internal ones comprise personal qualities such as empowerment, self-control, self-efficacy and personal strengths. At The NATIVE Project, a strong focus on community and family on one side, and a process of empowerment to take control of reality through collective action, on the other, have been central to develop resilience among employees and
patients and improve their capacity to adjust. As one of the founders remembered regarding all the challenges and sacrifices they had to make since the foundation of the organization: “Most of the time I never felt tired and I think the other people involved did not feel tired or exhausted or burned out. It was like higher powered. It’s like energy from a spiritual source that you are supposed to do this” (L22).

One characteristic of the employees at The NATIVE project that contributes to develop their capacity of resilience and adjustment is humor. At the organization there are many jokes and laughter as a mechanism to release stress and cope with the challenges and frustrations that they face on a daily basis. As one of the young leaders said: “As a practitioner, you’re working in different capacities with these patients and these families, and you have to find an outlet to let that go and find some sort of release. And we all, collectively as a team, find ways to just laugh and have fun, because if you did that every day and didn’t laugh, your heart would be really heavy all time. You have to release that” (L8). According to Lee, Shek, and Kwong (2007), resilience prevents depression and involves beliefs, practices, and eventually conditions for problem solving and overcoming difficulties. In addition, it is a precursor to adjustment that tends to contribute to self-esteem, life satisfaction, existential well-being, mental health, and resisting distress. In other words, any long-term struggle for social justice and cultural resistance needs mechanisms that contribute to their sustainability. At The NATIVE Project, developing resilience and the capacity to adjust to different challenges, along with humor as a coping mechanism for mental health, are essential for carrying out their emancipatory project that aims to be successful at the long term.
Embracing Change and Transformation

The NATIVE Project, as an emancipatory endeavor, is about change and transformation of the current postcolonial social order, but the organization also understands reality as change, a reality that is constantly moving and being transformed instead of static and inexorable. For Marcuse (1991), there are two dimensions which represent the coexistence of the present system with its negation, what in terms of culture would be expressed in the role of culture as critique of the social order. Thus, to unfold any possibility of social change, this critique is needed because the two dimensions create a space between what can be thought and what exists where critical thinking can emerge.

As Marcuse (1991) argues, “contemporary society seems to be capable of containing social change – qualitative change which would establish essentially different institutions, a new direction of the productive process, new modes of human existence” (p. xliv). However, The NATIVE Project, through an organizational culture that raises critical consciousness and unfolds ethnogenesis, aims to enhance social change providing frameworks for sense-making and meaning-making that contribute to transform and change the current social order while navigating the uncertainty and ambiguity that any process of change implies. As one of the employees stated talking about the organization: “We never just shoot for the status quo, which I see a lot in Native culture….And our leadership will not let us be status quo. It’s like we’re always going to be a step above. That’s where we’re aiming. We’re not aiming for the bottom tier” (S10).

According to Weick, Sutcliffe, and Obstfeld (2005), a cue is an observation, what people particularly notice in an organization, and when people notice certain cues is when the process of sense-making begins. Moreover, there are two main types of cues which normally contribute to initiate sense-making in organizations: Ambiguity and uncertainty.
While the former means that experiences and situations are equivocal, the later refers to the inability to predict the consequences of the actions (Weick, 1995). Thus, when a person is faced with either ambiguity or uncertainty, the act of noticing emerges and with it initiates the process of sense-making. This process of sense-making contains three main elements, a cue, a frame, and a connection, and it is when an individual is able to make a connection between a cue and a frame, when meaning is created (Weick, 1995).

In terms of frames, Weick (1995) argues that they are useful to situate, perceive, identify, and label what is happening around a person, and enable people to make interpretations, understand, and respond to events. In other words, frames provide a structure of assumptions, rules, and boundaries that guide the process of sense-making (Luscher & Lewis, 2008). When it comes to frame transformation, this process unfolds when new concepts and values replace old ones and old meanings, symbols, and artifacts are discarded and erroneous beliefs and misframings are addressed (Taylor, 2000). In essence, frame transformation is part of the process of ethnogenesis and implies a general reframing of the main issues regarding a social movement. This process is key to the success and sustainability of social movements because without processes of rethinking and change “numerous social movements have risen and fallen partly as a result of atrophy and lack of reflexivity” (Pellow & Brehm, 2015, p. 187). At The NATIVE Project, change and transformation are experienced constantly and are part of a way of viewing the world and the necessity to adjust to different challenges before and since their foundation. This process of rethinking and change is not easy because they involve uncertainty and ambiguity, and according to one of the young leaders, arguments and discussions occur often within the organization: “This building wasn’t built in quiet
rooms. There was shouting. There was yelling.…And when you want to really impact change, affect change, and really help people, it’s not a quiet process” (L8).

For the ‘modern’ human being, ambiguity means chaos and anarchy, and the framework imposed with Modernity seeks for stability and order through binary classifications. As Bauman (1991) argues, this project of Modernity that aims to control and dominate ambiguity and heterogeneity is unachievable because ambiguity constantly emerges producing more ambiguity that cannot be classified. Conversely, the critical intercultural leadership process at The NATIVE Project, as an emancipatory endeavor, embraces change, transformation, and ambiguity because this critical approach understands leadership effectiveness with versatile and agile practices that accept uncertainty, unpredictability, and even paradox, as part of the real world. According to Storey and Salaman (2009), the essence of leadership remains in organizational systems that thrive on paradox wherein leaders need to embrace tensions and contradictions.

Moreover, The NATIVE Project is one of the most diverse and heterogenous places in Spokane with many different cultures working together with a common purpose going beyond the binary social order of Modernity, and conceptualizes the boundaries of their organizational culture as permeable and fluid instead of static, allowing intercultural exchange and cultural transformation to unfold.

**Leadership and Organization as Processes**

A leadership approach that seeks change and transformation while embracing uncertainty and ambiguity is a perspective that views leadership as a process and which, when it comes to creating an organization and a culture, designs flexible and fluid structures. Culture is a dynamic phenomenon that it is not static and flows, because
culture is constantly created, recreated and even destructed by our interactions with others. According to Schein (2010), “When we are influential in shaping the behavior and values of others, we think of that as ‘leadership’ and are creating the conditions for new culture formation” (Schein, 2010, p. 3). However, leadership is a broader phenomenon that goes beyond a conceptualization of positional leadership because “The formal scheme of an organization will always be different from the way in which the organization itself operates, that is, through a number of interpersonal relations, which are absent from a formal scheme” (De Giosa, 2009, p. 180).

Thus, leadership is about complex relationships of people and institutions toward achieving goals that influence other people, structures, institutions, cultures, and the environment, but which in turn are also shaped by all those elements that configure the deep and holistic phenomenon of leadership. As one of the young leaders stated when describing the depth and complexity of the leadership of The NATIVE Project: “There’s a lot of depth. It looks superficial on the outside, but there’s a lot of depth. It looks like a clear, clean water on top of the lake but then there’s so much movement going on under. You’re not seeing it, but it’s happening and it’s awesome” (L2).

Therefore, what leaders and supporters do at The NATIVE Project is to impulse a trend, to point out a direction articulating and implementing frameworks that aim to transform a social order of domination and that at the same time provides the organization with stability within the uncertainty and ambiguity of reality. As Elias (2000) argues, the relations between individuals with their actions, plans, and purposes, cannot be foreseen just for the reason that multiple combinations cannot be calculated. For example, one of the young leaders said regarding the consistent political changes that affect the organization: “You’re always keeping your eye on that to make sure the policy changes.
What’s plan A, B and C for the viability and sustainability of building as a whole” (L8); and another argued, in terms of fluid and flexible organizational structures: “Here there’s a structure, but it’s not as strict as corporations would like it. We take on the title like a corporation, but I feel like it’s fluid, like horizontal” (L2).

Within that context of change, uncertainty, and ambiguity, the frameworks that the leadership process that emerges at The NATIVE Project designs to make sense and give meaning to their work are fluid and flexible, same as the organizational structures developed to cope and adjust with external uncertainties and turbulences. As one of the employees argued: “There’s always things in flux, like plans. And I think in order to be successful here you definitely need to be able to adapt. That’s probably one of the key elements of success here, I think is adaptability” (S6).

Moreover, understanding leadership and organization as processes involves not only adjusting to new challenges and changes in society but also to reviewing an organizational culture that aims to liberate and emancipate. According to Freire (2012), the oppressed “must not, in seeking to regain their humanity (which is a way to create it), become in turn oppressors of the oppressors, but rather restorers of the humanity of both” (Freire, 2012, p. 44). This is the task of the oppressed, to seek their liberation and the liberation of the oppressors in a constant critical process of reflecting and questioning, because as Freire (2012) states, “only power that springs from the weakness of the oppressed will be sufficiently strong to free both” (p. 44).

**Drawing Lines in the Sand**

Although the critical intercultural leadership process that emerges at The NATIVE Project is characterized by seeking change and transformation, along with fluid and
flexible organizational structures that cope and adjust better with external challenges of adaptation and internal issues of integration, when it comes to dispute or reformulate the emancipatory doxa/pluri-doxa, the leadership of the organization draws a line in the sand and there is no possibility of change or flexibility. Like democracy that can be defined as deliberation of everything but deliberation in itself, because deliberation is the only path that guarantees democracy, an emancipatory doxa/pluri-doxa implies broadening constantly the space for thinking, doing and being, seeking to be more inclusive and valuing other cultures and epistemologies, but cannot accept any perspective resulting from Modernity and its darker side, colonialism, that could jeopardize the emancipatory project.

In a complex and uncertain world, although leaders cannot control events or the whole process of leadership, they can control through framing the context under which events are seen. For example, one of the founders said regarding employees who arrive to The NATIVE Project bringing Western perspectives of organization and medicine: “I don’t care what you do at Spokane Mental Health. I don’t care what you did at Sacred Heart Hospital. You’re at The NATIVE Project now. But that’s part of the colonization too” (L22). To successfully challenge doxa, subordinated cultures need to have material and symbolic means of rejecting the hegemonic definition of what is real. When it comes to reproducing an emancipatory doxa/pluri-doxa at The NATIVE Project, what is needed is to reject that definition of the real imposed through the hegemonic doxa, and at the same time consolidate stable objective structures and reproduce them in the employees’ dispositions until they internalize them and take the new social order as a self-evident and natural. For example, answering employees at The NATIVE Project who try to implement external structures and practices different than the ones that characterize the
organization, one of the young leaders stated: “That’s a Western model, can we have this conversation again?’ Honestly, I feel like I have the Western concept model or White privilege model or the White male privileged discussion one to five times a week” (L2)

Thus, when it comes to certain concepts, ideas, or philosophies at the core of the organizational culture there is no discussion, they cannot be disputed or reformulated and the leadership of the organization draws a line in the sand to preserve the emancipatory project from being co-opted or (re)colonized. According to one of the leaders regarding these lines in the sand that cannot be trespassed: “I think she’s [founder and CEO] very relationally based. If she gets along with you, life is good. If she doesn’t get along with you, life is not good. Some of the people that have worked here haven’t gotten alone with her and they disappear” (S25).

According to Bourdieu (1991), delegates or leaders base universal value on themselves and “monopolize the notions of God, Truth, Wisdom, People, Message, Freedom, etc. They make them synonyms. What of? Of themselves. ‘I am the Truth.’” (p. 210). Thus, they become sacred and establish a division between them and ordinary people that can create tensions when other leaders struggle for power or disagree with certain aspects of the project. Moreover, with organizations where the leadership is very personalized, if the environment changes and those assumptions that used to work start to fail, the organization will need to change part of its culture which will be extremely difficult due to how founders and leaders have been embedding and transmitting their assumptions to the different members of the organization (Schein, 2010). As one of the leaders argued, “I look at this organization and say it’s really built on one person’s vision and one person having the strength to be able to make things happen and surrounding herself with other people that makes it happen and controlling that entirely and there’s
pros and cons to that” (S25). Notwithstanding, the lines in the sand, the emancipatory doxa/pluri-doxa, is what give strength to the project, and for almost 30 years, the frameworks, narratives, and values of the habitus suggested by the leaders at The NATIVE Project have been successful and, although with some resistances, have made sense for most of the employees of the organization who have supported their leaders for the last three decades.

Today, while for certain leaders and supporters at The NATIVE Project the emancipatory doxa/pluri-doxa is embedded and internalized in their mental structures and have an effect in their dispositions and practices, other members of the organization are still navigating between the hegemonic and emancipatory doxas and cultural frameworks. However, ambiguity, paradox, and in particular heterogeneity of thinking, doing, and being is what characterizes culture in general and the organizational culture of The NATIVE Project in particular, and above all, what unites all employees of the organization in a common purpose: To help the patients, the invisibilized, the impoverished, the demonized.

Therefore, The NATIVE Project is a health clinic that provides high quality services for the most vulnerable sectors of society in the Spokane area, but beyond the agency and the business, The NATIVE Project can be considered an emancipatory endeavor that aims to struggle for social justice and cultural resistance while uniting different subordinated cultures to establish a dialogue with less asymmetries of power with the hegemonic culture and institutions that will end up in the construction of a better world for all. As one young leader summarized: “I think the future will be a lot better. I just think any time something like that happens there’s a cultural bonding between different communities where they kind of come together and bridge together. Because if
they don’t, then the oppressor wins, and we’re just not going to let that happen” (L8). The challenge is immense, but building an intercultural world of cognitive and social justice where different worlds can coexist and the different ways of thinking and being are valued cannot wait anymore.
CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND LESSONS LEARNED

The purpose of my mini-ethnographic case study was to understand how a critical intercultural leadership process contributes to create an organizational culture that raises critical consciousness and unfolds ethnogenesis within The NATIVE Project. In this chapter, I discuss the major findings and conclusions drawn from my research, and suggest some recommendations to apply these conclusions for policy and practice from a perspective of critical intercultural leadership process theory. Finally, I culminate with a reflection on my study with lessons learned at both professional and personal levels.

Conclusions

The conclusions of my study follow the findings from chapter five and therefore address four areas: (1) Making visible the ‘invisible:’ The sanctuary; (2) We struggle, therefore I am: The platform; (3) United by our differences: The intercultural society; and (4) Emancipatory doxa/Pluri-doxa and transformation: The lines in the sand. For each finding I provide at least one conclusion that connects with the guiding questions and with broader issues that contribute to expand on the significance of my findings.

Making Visible the ‘Invisible:’ The Sanctuary

The first finding of this mini-ethnographic case study is the necessity of ‘Making visible the invisible.’ Within a context of postcolonial world, The NATIVE Project makes visible the invisible denouncing a situation of domination and oppression while debunking myths and stereotypes of the hegemonic culture that portrays Native people as primitive or inferior. Moreover, when the health clinic was founded, it also created a
space for safety and a ‘sanctuary’ for critical reflection for Native people and other subordinated cultures in the Spokane area.

A conclusion to be drawn from this finding is the need to deconstruct dominant cultural assumptions and frameworks that represent the world either making invisible other perspectives or demonizing what is different. Therefore, it is only in broadening what can be thought by reflecting about and challenging hegemonic cultural assumptions resulting from Modernity and its darker side, colonialism, and bringing the attention to make visible other projects, perspectives, and epistemologies, that a society with cognitive and social justice can be created. In this regard, it also may be concluded that any struggle for social justice that is not thought from the decolonization of the minds and the deconstruction of hegemonic cultural assumptions and frameworks will not be effective or complete, because eventually the struggle will end up reproducing the same mechanisms of domination and oppression embedded in our minds by the colonial narrative of Modernity.

A further and related conclusion that can be drawn is that the challenge of the dominant system cannot be carried out within the system and with the tools that this system provides to be ‘challenged.’ This challenge would represent a position of ‘heterodoxy’ that the system is able to accept because it does not contribute to its transformation and all these ‘heterodox’ processes will be eventually co-opted by the system and either neutralized or deactivated contributing to reinforce the status quo. Thus, it is essential to create alternative spaces that, although still within the system, can preserve enough autonomy and different logics to challenge the hegemonic cultural assumptions and imaginaries, and to create new emancipatory mental frameworks and social structures.
We Struggle, Therefore I am: The Platform

The second finding suggests that ‘We struggle, therefore I am.’ The NATIVE Project represents a ‘platform’ for action and it is at this platform where critical consciousness raises to its highest stages through the struggle. Moreover, the platform and the struggle are central to balance asymmetries of power based on the monopoly of the hegemonic culture to control and impose cultural assumptions that value negatively the difference. It is within the struggle when the oppressed decolonize their minds about the superior/inferior divide and contribute to decolonize the minds of the oppressors because their assumptions and frameworks to make sense of the world start to be shaken as a consequence that the quasi-perfect correspondence between the objective order and the subjective principles of organization is not evident anymore and stops being taken for granted. From there, the oppressed will start to ‘educate’ hegemonic institutions with the aim of transforming the social structures that reproduce the system and beginning to create emancipatory ones.

A conclusion that can be drawn from this finding is that the phenomenon of critical consciousness has different stages and it is only through the struggle and praxis, that the highest stages can be reached. In other words, theory is needed to contribute to raise critical consciousness because it allows one to understand the interconnection of the different elements of a system of domination and oppression that hinders the potential and capabilities of millions of human beings on a daily basis. However, without praxis, the critical consciousness will not raise to its highest levels and when it comes to critical consciousness, it needs to be toward something and requires a practical application, otherwise it is useless.
A related conclusion is that there is a correspondence between the lack of critical consciousness and perceptions and feelings of powerlessness and learned helplessness which facilitates manipulation and exploitation, perpetuating a paternalist system that avoids real change and transformation. Conversely, there is a connection with raising critical consciousness and empowerment through collective action because the oppressed does not feel inferior anymore and contributes to liberate the oppressor challenging cultural assumptions and mental frameworks. In today’s postcolonial societies with big asymmetries of power between cultures, a balance of the relations of power is needed to build communities of cognitive and social justice. However, the accumulation of power in itself as the hegemonic culture perpetuates it is not the solution because contributes to develop a fetishism for power that reproduces the same system of domination and oppression with the only difference that the subjects at the top of the social hierarchy have changed. A critical intercultural struggle for emancipation sees power as a means for an end which is balancing asymmetries of power to have an intercultural dialogue with horizontal conditions, and not an end in itself that seeks to be in control, impose another monologue, and become a new dominant hegemony.

**United by Our Differences: The Intercultural Society**

The third finding presents the topic of ‘United by our differences.’ The NATIVE Project provides a framework of ‘social order’ that contributes to unfold a class consciousness within the organization that unites employees and patients through differences, valuing diversity, reducing asymmetries of power, struggling for a common purpose, and enhancing a sense of belonging that eventually configurates an ‘intercultural society.’
A conclusion to be drawn from this finding is that what is inherent to all human beings is the diversity and the capacity of every individual and social group to be diverse. This diversity and these differences can be understood as what we all have in common instead of viewing culture as what is the same and identical for a group of people. The ‘integrative’ view of culture that looks for similarities contributes to homogenization and minimization of differences, and does not understand that culture is a fluid and fragmented phenomenon that tends toward heterogeneity and diversity same as Nature. Thus, an organization, society, or country can be united by their differences, and culture and ethnicity can be seen as a system of organization where every person has the right to be different while sharing the same rights and common purposes.

**Emancipatory Doxa/Pluri-Doxa and Transformation: The Lines in the Sand**

The fourth finding focuses on an ‘Emancipatory doxa/Pluri-doxa.’ The critical intercultural leadership process within the Sanctuary, the Platform, and the Intercultural Organization establishes a strong core of cultural assumptions, values, and beliefs regarding the emancipatory and decolonial project that are like lines in the sand that shape and give stability to the culture of the organization. Among the main characteristics of the organizational culture of The NATIVE Project there is resilience to be flexible and adjust to external and internal challenges, and the ability to understand change and transformation, which results in the design of fluid and flexible organizational/social structures.

The primary conclusion that can be drawn from this finding is that doxa is more than homogenization, passivity, and domination because it can also be understood as heterogeneity, action, and liberation. Although doxa represents a limit and constraint to
what can be disputed or formulated, at the same time it is necessary to provide stability and sustainability to any culture, framework, or project. More specifically, in a context of domination and oppression, any emancipatory project needs a doxa that establishes limits that protect the project from the co-option and neutralization by the hegemonic system.

A related conclusion is that in a context of globalization where the world is getting smaller, changes and uncertainty are more visible than ever, new technologic advances appear and disappear faster than a human’s capacity to assimilate and manage them, and where trying to control every element of a process seems almost impossible, to understand the phenomenon of leadership as a process that points out a direction and controls the context but not the outcome, embracing change and complexity is needed. A further and related conclusion connected with the idea of leadership as a process is the concept of organization as a process, understood as organizations that develop fluid and flexible organizational structures (physical and relational), that configure more horizontal designs distributing power for decision-making while at the same time are able to maintain certain hierarchy to better adjust to a world that is rapidly changing.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, analysis, and conclusions of my study I offer the following recommendations from a theoretical perspective of critical intercultural leadership process for (1) Social movement organizations (SMOs), (2) educational institutions, (3) political administrations, (4) organizations and corporations, and (5) for further research. These recommendations are intended to be applied as both policy and practice for these SMOs, institutions, administrations, and corporations.
Social Movement Organizations

Among possibilities for implementing a critical intercultural leadership process, social movement organizations (SMOs) could:

1. Develop strategies and campaigns to make visible the invisible bringing attention to their cause, and gaining recognition in the field of political struggle to be able to participate in the design of political agendas;

2. Implement a process of challenging the hegemonic culture and its assumptions and imaginaries as a system of domination and control regardless the cause of every particular SMO struggling for social justice. In essence, without cognitive justice there is not social justice;

3. Consider their processes of struggle from a perspective of decolonizing mental and social structures of both the oppressed and the oppressors as essential for any struggle for cognitive and social justice. Only focusing on decolonizing outside will not be effective because the process also needs to be implemented at an internal level;

4. Rethink the struggle within the system and use the tools provided by the system. Only an alternative and autonomous project carried out ‘outside’ the system (at least at a mental level implementing other logics) and thought from the difference can be truly emancipatory;

5. Review paternalistic approaches that are not addressing the real causes of the system of domination and oppression that needs to be transformed. Although paternalism and ‘assistentialism’ can be useful in a temporal way and as complementary of a parallel process of deep transformation, on their own will
never be able to transform any single structure of society and will reinforce the status quo of domination and oppression;

6. Design frameworks of collective action that make sense and are meaningful to mobilize people while empowering them seeking to transform society. In a postcolonial world where human beings are used as means and not ends in themselves, people need frameworks that make sense and give meaning to their lives;

7. Consider balancing asymmetries of power between cultures as central for any struggle otherwise there is no possibility of intercultural dialogue and just a monologue of the hegemonic culture. However, it is essential to understand power as a means for social justice and not an end in itself, because the accumulation of power can result in changing the subjects at the top of the social hierarchy but not the hierarchy which is the root of the system of domination and oppression;

8. Reflect about developing transversal social movements that go beyond identity politics based on differences that divide the subordinated social groups ‘diluting’ their power and real capacity to challenge the system as a whole oppressed class;

9. Be aware that in a context of domination and oppression, to design a framework that, although inclusive and horizontal, establishes limits that protect the struggle from being co-opted and neutralized by the system, is essential.
Educational Institutions

Educational institutions could:

1. Review academic programs, courses, and syllabi with the aim of broadening the perspectives offered including other worldviews and epistemologies that go beyond the Western world canon;

2. Acknowledge the need to decolonize minds and structures in the field of education designed from a perspective resulting from Modernity and colonialism that is embedded in dispositions and reproduced through practices on a daily basis;

3. Consider culture as fragmentation and diversity when it comes to design and shape the organizational culture of an institution to be more inclusive and appreciative of the difference. Moreover, it is essential to value diversity at every level of leadership positions of decision-making, and not limit diversity to folklore. In other words, culture is more than food, dances, and costumes; culture is also politics and economics, a social order and a field for struggle;

4. Develop projects for action and praxis that complement philosophy and theory to both raise the critical consciousness of the students to their highest levels and empower them through frameworks of collective action to take control of reality and believe in the transformation of an unfair system. According to the Nasa tribe in Colombia, all action without word is blind, and all word without action is empty;

5. Rethink the policy of creating multicultural centers as safe spaces for diversity that eventually can result in ghettos of marginalization and isolation. In essence, safe spaces and sanctuaries for diverse students are needed but complemented
with the promotion of diversity in a more holistic way that permeates all the
spaces of the educational institution and leadership positions of decision-making.

**Political Administrations**

Political administrations could:

1. Implement more inclusive processes of decision-making when different views and
cultures are represented at all leadership levels;

2. Design more inclusive social and public policies including different perspectives
that go beyond Western world approaches;

3. Review vertical processes of analysis and decision-making and implement more
horizontal structures from bottom-up distributing power in a more horizontal way;

4. Consider more decentralized political systems, instruments, and mechanisms that
provide autonomous spaces where alternative perspectives can emerge and
contribute to the political agendas;

5. Empower the citizenship to be active and well informed as part of their rights and
duties as citizens in a democratic society. Democracy can be understood as a
culture, a system of values where citizens are involved and engaged instead of a
procedural and mechanic system emptied of content that configures most of
today’s pseudo-democracies;

6. Establish the limits of what would represent a ‘healthy’ democracy and be vigilant
of not violating any of those basic principles. Democracy means deliberation and
the possibility of deliberating about everything but the limit is deliberation in itself
and the respect for the minority who is not in power;
7. Rethink the concept of Nation-State, nationality, and citizenship to create a broader and more inclusive concept where people can be united by their differences while sharing the same rights and a common purpose reflected, for example, in legal instruments like a constitution, or crystalized in the concept of a pluri-national State;

8. Consider understanding political administrations as social movements to struggle for social justice which are more flexible to better adjust to a context of globalization where, although politics still remained at a national level, power fled to a global sphere.

**Organizations and Corporations**

Organizations and corporations could:

1. Design frameworks that make sense and give meaning to their employees and at the same time are inclusive and value the difference;

2. Implement mechanisms of intercultural decision-making where different perspectives can be acknowledged and recognized;

3. Provide spaces for intercultural communication and hermeneutic translation of meanings;

4. Acknowledge the culture of the organization as fluid and fragmented and as a system of organization where every person has the right to be different while sharing the same rights and one or more specific purposes;

5. Empower employees through frameworks of collective action that are meaningful for them and which gives them a purpose that unites them and eventually creates a particular organizational culture where everybody can thrive;
6. Embrace the concept of organization as a process, understood as organizations that develop fluid and flexible organizational structures (physical and relational) to better adjust to an uncertain and complex world that is rapidly changing;

7. Provide a framework that gives stability and sustainability to the organization at the long term while understanding and embracing change and complexity;

8. Rethink leadership as a process to point out a direction and control the context but not the outcome as a consequence of the infinite elements involved in the process.

**Further Research**

It is my recommendation that further studies be conducted to gain a more holistic understanding of how a leadership process creates a culture that raises critical consciousness and unfolds ethnogenesis within an ethnic SMO. Therefore, the following could be considered:

1. Since my research is focused on a Native American organization that is part of the category of subordinated cultures, it should be important to conduct similar studies with other ethnic groups in a position of subordination such as African American, Asian American, Latinos/as, or Women and LGTBQ organizations, for example.

2. A comparison and analysis of research should be undertaken in different geographical areas in the United States and also abroad, with the aim of comparing how subordinated groups organize their processes of cultural resistance and their struggles for social justice from different regions and countries.
3. A second phase of my research within five or seven years at The NATIVE Project could offer the opportunity of comparing the evolution of the leadership process and the fluid and flexible structures of the organization to better understand the concept of both leadership and organization as processes.

4. It is important to better understand and learn from other perspectives of viewing and practicing leadership, and in particular those approaches that are more horizontal, collective, and communitarian and go beyond the vertical, heroic, and individualistic Euro-American mainstream.

5. Within the current context where algorithms and big data are becoming extremely important, it is central to better understand how the social control and domination of people and social groups can be enhanced using these ‘weapons of math destruction’ managed by a few dominant groups, and more importantly, to shed light on how society can organize movements of resistance.

**Lessons Learned from Research**

Before finishing my study, I want to reflect on some lessons learned from this research at both personal and professional levels that I consider can be useful for other researchers who are interested in conducting similar works and/or in similar topics. Personally, I do not think any organization, unless they ask, wants a stranger conducting a research about them in general, and in particular regarding their process of leadership and organizational culture. Moreover, when it comes to conducting research in a Native American organization for a White person like me, to have a gatekeeper who can give you access is central. Notwithstanding, although I am White, the fact of being Spanish
facilitated my work because conversely to (Southern) Europe where I am considered White, in the United States I can be sometimes identified as a man of color because of my Spanish accent. In addition, at a given time, a Native member of the organization told me that he was keen with my research because I was not American and then I could think ‘outside the box.’ In other words, I had a different perspective, different doxa, and different biases and cultural assumptions that went beyond the biases and assumptions that American people have regarding Native communities which was well accepted in the organization because this could add a new perspective and enrich the dialogue.

When I met the leadership of The NATIVE Project with my gatekeeper for the first time, they invited us to have lunch; we had a nice conversation and we said good-bye hugging to each other. However, when I contacted them again to start conducting the research and I told them that I wanted to observe different meetings, events, processes and so on, they did not give me too much attention. I had to insist several times and to send many emails to different people until I got an answer, and they also changed two times the person who was going to be my liaison. In other words, I felt that I was ‘bothering’ them and, although I understood that they were very busy and nobody wants to have a person at work observing and asking questions, it was not a good feeling for me.

In addition, the ‘saddest’ day for me was when I went to the graduation camp and I tried to talk and mingle with certain people and groups and I felt that they did not give me much attention and had not tried to include me in the group. Maybe that was an assumption about Native people because my experience with indigenous communities in Latin America had been completely different in terms of inclusion and a strong interest about me and my work. The point of inflection occurred when by the end of the event they all got new t-shirts with the logo of the organization but nobody thought about
giving me one. Maybe I was too entitled? Maybe I was too colonized and I thought they had to do it because I was the ‘researcher’? Maybe they considered they do not have to serve a foreigner they barely know and who is not part of their group? Maybe it was just that we did not have enough confidence and trust to each other and I had to earn it? I do not have the answer, but during the development of the research the relationship with the leadership and the employees of the organization got more fluid and closer and made me realize how sometimes researchers can take for granted one of the most basic issues when it comes to conduct research like trust building which, in reality, requires much work, patience, and time.

After several weeks observing, when the time came to conduct the interviews the relationship had improved and it was very easy to schedule all the 13 interviews. My liaison went with me to every department and office, and we could schedule all the interviews in less than one hour. Moreover, normally when one schedules an interview for a research there are changes and it can happen that one goes to the organization and that person is not there because she had an urgency or simply forgot. That was not the case at The NATIVE project and, after having more difficulties and not feeling very accepted during the observations, I was really amazed how committed and excited everybody was with the interviews and my research.

**Humility and the Process of Trust-Building**

While doing research in an organization where I had asked permission to conduct my study, it was important to remind myself that they were making me a favor, that I was a privileged person carrying out my research in an organization where there are people working everyday with patients who are really suffering personal dramas, and that
basically I was going there to ‘have fun’ and get my PhD. I believe that my dissertation can be useful for the organization because if they know better how their leadership and organizational culture are, they can learn from their strengths and weaknesses and decide to reinforce or change some practices. Moreover, it can contribute to the process of gaining visibility for the organization and the cause that they represent. However, overall, they were helping me to get my PhD and learn with them, so a lot of humility and appreciation were needed.

At the beginning, it was hard because I felt as a stranger, particularly with the observations that were crucial because they allowed me to know deeper the organization and the people and to prepare the protocol for the interview/guided conversations to come later. Thus, when I started knowing the people, interviewing them, running into them at the organization or at different events, making jokes, and so on, it was very rewarding. Building trust takes time and it is not easy, and I think the interviews/guided conversations were an inflection point for developing this trust and confidence because although observing for several months also contributed in a certain way, it was definitely not enough. Maybe, instead of trying to be discreet and invisible while observing, I should have to look for more conversation and interaction.

**Observations**

Observing within an organization is complicated. Even if one has a gatekeeper who knows everyone in the organization and is trusted, you have been introduced to everybody in your ‘first’ day, and you introduce yourself again and again in every single event or meeting where you are taking notes. Overall people look at you in a ‘funny’ way and you do not feel comfortable. At the end of the day, it is understandable because from
the perspective of the participants, what you are doing is to observe them working which, in a certain way, can make them think of a violation of their privacy, and from a researcher point of view, you can experience at some degree a feeling of guiltiness. Moreover, although you try to be ‘invisible,’ it is obvious that for most of the people being observed you are affecting more or less their behavior. For example, one day I was observing at the Summer camp and most of the kids in one class were behaving badly and were not following the instructions of the young leaders. Then, all of a sudden, one of the young leaders who never had talked to me before during the previous observations came along and said: “You know, they normally behave, but today is a special day and they are nervous.” What he was doing was to justify or apologize to me as if I were controlling or evaluating him with my notebook, when in reality he should not have to be worried about it because that was not my business. Another similar situation happened in the same Summer camp when by the end of a class a professor who could not accomplish an exercise with the students because it was a bit complicated and the students were not very interested, came to me to apologize. In essence, to have somebody in your class, your office, your gym, and so on, who is conducting research and taking notes with a notebook, can be very intimidating.

**Interviews**

I was concerned with the interviews because when I met the leadership of the organization with my gatekeeper they told me that interviewing was not a good idea because of the history of oppression that Native people had suffered and they associated interviews with interrogatories. From that conversation, we came up with the idea of creating group interviews but I told them that if they were keen with it, I also wanted to
interview at least the leadership of the organization in an individual way. They answered that individual interviews with the leadership were fine because positional leaders of the organization were more used to this type of interviews, but with the rest of the staff group conversations would be more appropriate.

Thus, when I prepared my interview protocol, the final question was regarding how to improve the interviews/guided conversations from their own cultural perspective because I wanted to have their insights to modify my method during the research and also for future studies. Moreover, during the interview I was asking if they felt comfortable, if they wanted to stop the interview and so on, and my surprise was that they were very happy and excited with the interview/guided conversation format and none of them gave me suggestions beyond buying “some pastries and coffee.” In addition, there was a department that seemed so excited about the interview/guided conversation they even clapped at the end of the interview. In summary, I tried to be very respectful and took a lot of care considering the initial conversation that we had in our first meeting regarding interviewing but when the time for conducting interviews came, everything was really good and smooth. To be honest, although I was very satisfied with the group interviews/guided conversations, I was expecting more input and feedback about the methodology to have more elements to create a less ‘colonial’ and more ‘decolonial’ method that takes into consideration the point of view of different cultures in general and particularly Native American culture. Notwithstanding, it seems that the general pattern is the need to create an environment of trust where the participants feel comfortable, open-ended questions, a conversational style that, although guided, it is very flexible to go with the flow of the conversation and even circular if necessary, and certain ability for hermeneutics and translating meanings to make sure that the people involved in the
interview/guided conversation are talking about the same idea or understanding the concept in a similar way.

Among some of the remarks that the participants made:

“I feel comfortable with it” (S20);

“I like the open-ended questions because in Native cultures there’s a lot of narrative story explaining. So, they’re open enough for the interviewee to answer more open-ended questions. The more open-ended questions were good because gave room for me to express and explain more in depth. So, you did good” (L2);

“I really like the format of it and stuff. It’s easy, and it’s conversation-based. It might be different if I got a packet and I had to circle one through five. That kind of thing. That’s not fun. I like the one on one conversation-based, and it’s nice because you get to share the expression really rather than having that conversation in your mind and writing it down piece of paper by circling a number. It’s definitely better this way” (L8);

“I think they are good questions. I think you kind of hit some spots that maybe we didn’t want to talk about, um, so… I think they’re good questions, and they meet the purpose of what you’re doing” (S9);

“Yeah it was comfortable and you did a good job of interpreting it for me and you gave good examples” (S1).

Final Note of Intentionality

Today we are living in an historic period of turbulences and complexity that seems to navigate between a late Modernity/Postmodernity that is still very embedded in our minds and practices, and a new paradigm that is starting to emerge but that is not clear enough to be understood and analyzed without a holistic approach. Within this scenario of uncertainty and ambiguity, many political and social projects thought from a Western perspective try to look for answers going back to idealized societies from the past or simply building ‘walls’ and isolating themselves from a reality that they fear and are incapable of understanding. Thus, different perspectives that go beyond the Western canon can shed light on the complexity and the main challenges that we are experiencing
in our current postcolonial societies, and particularly a critical approach thought from an interdisciplinary and intercultural perspective can become a possibility for the reconstruction and legitimation of a freer and fairer society.

Leadership studies, as an interdisciplinary and holistic field, can be central to promoting a dialogue between disciplines and cultures to interpret all different processes of resistance to colonialism, capitalism and patriarchy, in a more comprehensive way. However, an epistemological project would be needed that goes beyond the Euro-American interpretation of the world, and that will complement a critical theory centered on the Global North, contributing to social justice because only with cognitive justice and less asymmetric relations of power between cultures will there be social justice. To better understand the leadership of different emancipatory projects in the Global South (including subaltern cultures within the Global North) means to go beyond academic conventions that contribute to the isolation between disciplines, and make visible the wide space of economic, social, cultural and political innovation and diversity existing all around the world. For example, The NATIVE Project implies a different political and epistemic perspective that comes from the oppressed, those who suffer the injustice of a system of domination and oppression resulting from Modernity and colonialism. Their knowledge and projects have been invisibilized and demonized for hundreds of years, but the time has come when what was invisible has become visible and what used to be a doxa for domination has turned into a doxa of emancipation/pluri-doxa.

The time for an intercultural dialogue between cultures with horizontal relations and where different views and epistemologies will be valued cannot wait anymore. This intercultural dialogue of knowledges and struggles will make visible subordinated groups and peoples from all around the world who will develop other narratives and discourses,
will think using different logics, and will bring new perspectives and solutions to address the main challenges of our turbulent times. Critical interculturality is about re-conceptualizing and re-founding social and epistemic structures where different worlds can fit with a broader canon of thought than simply the Western canon, valuing the difference, and designing permeable and fluid frameworks for sense and meaning making resulting from the critical dialogue between diverse cultures, epistemologies, ethics, and political emancipatory projects. The endeavor of building a critical intercultural society will be neither easy nor fast, but as Mariátegui (1925) stated with the quote in Spanish that opened this study and that I now translate into English: “Living dangerously means to experience risks that sometimes can be big. However, the alternative is too mediocre: Living waiting and without hope.” The moment is now.
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APPENDIX A

Timeline of the Study

Timeline of the study: Preliminary stages, data collection and data analysis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stages &amp; Tasks</th>
<th>Months</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identifying the case</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gaining access</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establishing rapport</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Data Collection</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participant Observations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Artifacts Gathering</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interviews/Guided conversations</td>
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<td>Data Analysis</td>
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<td>Patterns</td>
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<td>NVivo Software</td>
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<td>Open &amp; Axial Coding</td>
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Note: X indicates the month(s) the task was completed.
APPENDIX B

Interview/Guided Conversation Guide

1. How would you describe the relations between different cultures in American society? And regarding Native culture?

2. Do you feel sometimes you navigate between different cultures? How do you do it?

3. Have you felt that the NATIVE Project has helped you to navigate between different cultures? Why?

4. How have you evolved or changed as a person working at the NATIVE Project?

5. Do you consider that the NATIVE Project has empowered/enlightened you? How?

6. What do you like from the NATIVE Project?

7. As an organization, tell me three characteristics of the NATIVE Project?

8. What is the most rewarding thing of working at the NATIVE Project?

9. What would you like the Spokane community to know about the NATIVE Project?

10. When new employees arrive to the NATIVE Project what do they need to know and learn to fit in the organization?

11. Are there hierarchies or structures at the NATIVE Project different than in other organizations?
12. How are the relationships of the NATIVE Project with governmental institutions like the SPD, City Council and so on?

13. What are the strengths of the different departments of the NATIVE Project? What value do they add to the whole organization?

14. How has the NATIVE Project evolved and changed since you joined the organization?

15. Since you arrived, what do you see have been the main internal and external challenges? How have you cope with them?

16. What is needed or helps to cope with these internal and external challenges? Are there any particular conditions (economic, political, social) that allowed/facilitated to cope with those internal and external challenges?

17. Is there a common characteristic or identity that members of the NATIVE Project share? Can you describe it? How was created?

18. How the vision and mission statement of the NATIVE Project is transmitted?

19. Do you participate in projects of collective action and mobilization? Which ones?

20. You have a lot of different cultures… How do you make it work?

21. Are there specific spaces to interact and dialogue?

SHIFT – SOCIAL JUSTICE: I understand the concept of Critical Consciousness as being aware of your reality and to decide to transform it, to take control of reality instead of being controlled by it. This is what the NATIVE Project decided to do in 1989 and keeps doing it until now.
22. Since you arrive here, do you think your critical consciousness has raised? And do you think different about concepts like ‘cultural resistance,’ or ‘social justice,’?

23. Have certain people or events organized by the NATIVE Project helped you to raise your critical consciousness? Who? What events?

INTERCULTURALITY: I understand interculturality as one step further than multiculturality because it is no enough about tolerating the different cultures but to value them and to transform social structures inherited from Modernity and colonialism that reproduce huge asymmetries of power between cultures.

24. Do you think the NATIVE Project contributes to create an intercultural society? Why?

25. Is there anything else you would like to share?

26. Something that you would change or add to this format of interview/guided conversation?
# APPENDIX C

## Interviews Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviews/Guided conversations</th>
<th>Services</th>
<th># Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Individual Interviews/Guided conversations</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Interview/Guided conversation - 1</td>
<td>CEO (Positional leader)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Interview/Guided conversation - 2</td>
<td>COO (Positional leader)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Interview/Guided conversation - 3</td>
<td>CFO (Positional leader)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Interview/Guided conversation – 4</td>
<td>Clinic Director (Positional leader)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Interview/Guided conversation - 5</td>
<td>Human Resources Director (Positional leader)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Interview/Guided conversation – 6</td>
<td>Medical Services (Positional leader)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Interview/Guided conversation – 7</td>
<td>Medical Services (Supporter)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Interview/Guided conversation – 8</td>
<td>Provider Nurse (Supporter)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group Interviews/Guided conversations</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Interview/Guided conversation - 1</td>
<td>Pharmacy Services (Positional leader and supporter)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Interview/Guided conversation - 2</td>
<td>Dental Services (Positional leader and supporter)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Interview/Guided conversation - 3</td>
<td>Behavioral Health Services (Positional leaders and supporters)</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Interview/Guided conversation - 4</td>
<td>Children &amp; Youth Services (Positional leaders and supporters)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Interview/Guided conversation - 5</td>
<td>Patient Services (Positional leaders and supporters)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Interviews/Guided Conversations: 13</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Services Covered: 6 out of 6</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Participants in total: 34 employees out of 57</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX D

Informed Consent Form

INFORMED CONSENT FORM TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Title of Project: Social Movements and Cultural Resistance: An Intercultural Leadership Process from Critical Consciousness to Ethnogenesis Shaping the Culture of an Ethnic Organization

Principal Investigator: Toni Jiménez-Luque, PhD Candidate, Gonzaga University.
Email: jimenez@gonzaga.edu, Cell Phone: 509-263-4292.

Dissertation Advisor: Dr. JoAnn Danelo Barbour, Gonzaga University.
Email: barbourj@gonzaga.edu, Phone: 509-313-3630.

PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH
I invite you to take part in an interview/guided conversation for a research study on ‘Leadership and Organizational Culture’ at The NATIVE Project that will be conducted during the months of August and September 2017. Please ask any questions about this study with the researcher.

The purpose of this research is to understand how a leadership process contributes to shape an organizational culture that raises critical consciousness and creates sustainable structures to struggle for social justice within The NATIVE Project.

About 30-36 people will take part in this research.

PROCEDURES
A member of The NATIVE Project has already contacted you about scheduling a time and place for the interview/guided conversation. The questions would be about the leadership process you are involved with, your thoughts and beliefs about how you contribute to shape the culture of the organization, and what you value about the organizational culture of the organization. You are free not to answer any questions that you might find personal and/or sensitive and to withdraw from the interview/guided conversation at any time without penalty. In addition, Washington State law provides that private conversations may not be recorded, intercepted, or divulged without permission of the individual(s) involved. Thus, I ask your permission to audio-record the interview/guided conversation session, which will be transcribed so that I can better analyze the data.

TIME TO PARTICIPATE
If you agree to be in this study, the interviews/guided conversations will last around 60-80 minutes (individual conversation) or 100-120 minutes (group conversation).

DISCOMFORTS AND RISKS
There are no risks or discomforts associated with this research. However, if you want confidentiality, I will keep you anonymous by using numerical codes. Moreover, after the interviews/guided conversations, the audio-recordings will be kept in a safe place and I will be the only person to have access to them. Then, I will send the recordings to a transcriptionist and when the transcription is returned to me, I will redact any names in the transcription. Once redacted, the transcriptions will be coded and analyzed by me. The information in the audio transcription will be kept confidential, and the participant will remain a ‘coded number’ throughout the research.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS
Although you will not benefit from being in this research study, I hope to add to the knowledge of the leadership and organizational culture of The NATIVE Project, so that in conversations between members of the
organization, clients, and the community, participants can speak to aspects of the leadership process and the organizational culture they want to keep or they may want to change.

**COSTS FOR PARTICIPATION**
None.

**COMPENSATION FOR PARTICIPATION**
You will not be paid for being in this research study.

**STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY**
Your research records that are reviewed, stored, and analyzed at Gonzaga University will be kept in a secured area and will be stored using a USB driver to which I will be the only person with access. If I publish or present research findings, I will keep your confidentiality and no personally identifiable information will be shared.

I will keep your participation in this research study confidential to the extent I am able. However, it is possible that the Gonzaga Institutional Review Board (a committee that reviews and approves research studies) may inspect and copy research records.

**STUDY WITHDRAWAL**
If you choose to participate, you are free to withdraw your permission for the use and sharing of your information at any time. You must do this in writing. Write me and let me know that you are withdrawing from the research study. My email is jimenez@gonzaga.com

**VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION**
You do not have to participate in this research. If you choose to take part, you have the right to stop at any time. If you decide not to participate or if you decide to stop taking part in the research at a later date, there will be no penalty to you.

**CONTACT INFORMATION FOR QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS**
You have the right to ask any questions you may have about this research. If you have questions, complaints or concerns or believe you may have developed an injury related to this research, contact Toni Jiménez-Luque at 509-263-4292.

For more information about participation in a research study and about the Institutional Review Board (IRB), a group of people who review the research to protect your rights, please contact the Gonzaga IRB at IRB@gonzaga.edu.

**SIGNATURE AND CONSENT/PERMISSION TO BE IN THE RESEARCH**
Your signature below means that you have received this information, have asked the questions you currently have about the research and those questions have been answered. You will receive a copy of the signed and dated form to keep for future reference.

By signing this consent form, you indicate that you are voluntarily choosing to take part in this research.

___________________________  ______________________  ______________________
Signature of Subject          Date          Printed Name

Your signature below means that you have explained the research to the subject and have answered any questions he/she has about the research.

___________________________  ______________________  ______________________
Signature of Principal Investigator  Date          Printed Name