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LatinX Diversity Officers in Higher Education: Capacitating Cultural Values as Champions of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

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LatinX Diversity Officers in Higher Education: Capacitating Cultural Values as Champions of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

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Dissertation Committee

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Abstract

The purpose of this research study is to share scholarly data that may assist in the recognition and cultural understanding of LatinX Chief DOs in higher education institutions. This multi-phase, qualitative study critically considers the participants' sociopolitical, psychological, and, cultural situated-ness as equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) leaders in higher education institutions (HEIs). Despite the psychological stressors, the participants described how and why they are energized by their commitment to creating change as social justice *campeonas* (champions). This study explains why LatinX DOs leading EDI institutional change in the 21st century, places them in precarious sociopolitical circumstances. Cultural values are identified by the research study participants as foundational to their identity, sources of motivation, tenacity, and, strength for leading EDI, institutional change. An interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) methodology is applied to this study describing, interpreting, contextualizing, and gaining in-depth insights into specific concepts of the phenomena; of "being" LatinX DOs in HEIs leading EDI. Eight participants were identified through a purposive process. Referred to here as "co-researchers," they engaged as experts of their own interpretations, and as narrators of their own stories. This study included non-Westernized epistemological and ontological perspectives. A hermeneutic, subjective-reflective process of interpretation explored the co-researcher's social, contextual, and cultural truths—the wholeness of their experiences. The co-researchers engaged in a multi-phase, qualitative study which included individual interviews, and, two facilitated focus groups held over multiple days. The co-researchers developed a co-constructed, collective narrative highlighting the urgency to interrupt and change oppressive patterns and behaviors in themselves, in their respective institutions, and, the communities to which they belong. The findings offer higher education leaders, and members of the dominant culture, deeply insightful,

thought-provoking critiques. This study also demonstrated how leadership, social justice change, and cultural values are interrelated. Finally, this study emphasizes co-researchers' lived experience and the belief that 21st century leaders in higher education institutions must be based within and upon an EDI framework. This dissertation is available in open access at AURA: Antioch University Repository and Archive, http://aura.antioch.edu/ and OhioLINK ETD Center, https://etd.ohiolink.edu/

Keywords: Diversity Officers, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion (EDI) Leadership, Cultural Responsiveness, Relevance, and Reinforcment (C-RRR), Focus Groups, Higher Education Institutions, Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), LatinX Cultural Values, Scholarly Personal Writing

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Chapter 1: Introduction and Background

> Culture is [woman's] medium; there is not one aspect of human life that is not touched and altered by culture. This includes . . . how [she] thinks, how [she] moves, how problems are solved . . . however, it is the obvious, the most taken-for-granted and therefore the least studied aspects of culture that influence behavior in the deepest and most subtle ways. (Hall, 1976, p. 16)

The focus of this dissertation is on Latina (LatinX) DOs in higher education institutions (HEIs), with a focal point on LatinX cultural values and leadership. A key factor of consideration in this study is exploring how and if, LatinX DOs in HEIs access and capacitate their cultural core strengths as incitation for leading equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) work. The study topic is relevant due to the fact that one in five women in the United States are Latinas and one in four students in public schools across the nation are Latinas (Gándara & The White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics, 2015). In addition, Latinos are no longer the minority in the United States, we are the emerging majority (Cortez, 2003). Understanding how to relate and effectively communicate with this emerging ethnic group is critical for the 21st Century. I'm am interested in exploring LatinX core cultural strengths as applied to social justice leadership and change. As a Latina researcher, I set out to explore how LatinX (Latinas) face social injustices and lead social change through their work. Chapter one offers an introduction and background to the dissertation topic, and, provides descriptions of key terms such as Latina, LatinX, equity, diversity, inclusion, and social justice, including, definitions of LatinX key cultural strengths. Critically, Chapter I also offers a brief overview of relevant historical events which provide rich context to what may have led to the development of DO positions in higher education. An overview of the importance, timeliness, need, and challenges faced by DOs in higher education, including the demographic data that drives DO's work on campus are also included in the first chapter. I include a succinct explanation for the role of the DO in HEI, and

why demographics impact DO's work. My greatest interest was in exploring and discovering the lived experiences of LatinX DOs. I researched how LatinX DOs individually and collectively interpret their own stories of championing and capacitating their unique cultural core strengths as they lead and create EDI change. Lastly, I provide an explanation for my choosing to apply a scholarly personal writing (SPN) style.

Scholarly Personal Writing (SPN) and the Dissertation

I chose to use a scholarly personal narrative (SPN) writing style in my dissertation because it invites my own personal voice. As highlighted by Nash (2015), "SPN is a style of public-intellectual writing based in story-telling, self-disclosure" (p. 39). SPN is a scholarly writing style which maintains intellectual integrity while "communicating the spirit, personal identity, and complexities in real life" (p. 43), to generalized audiences. Nash's perspective is in alignment with Behar (1996) who asserted that scholarship "requires a keen understanding of what aspects of the self are the most important filters through which one perceives the world and, more importantly, the topic being studied" (p. 33).

The SPN style of writing is relevant to me as a Latina because my culture is one that values storytelling. Culturally, LatinX populations tend to communicate in a circular (storytelling) manner as opposed to being linear and very direct (W. A. Smith, Yosso, & Solórzano, 2011). The dissertation will capture data in the SPN style and based on a social science methodology; data which is largely communicated through stories of lived experiences. It is important for me to share the data (stories) with researches, scholars, Co-Rs (hereinafter, Co-Rs or participants), and, with the general population. In particular, with those who have experienced systemic barriers as employees and students in HEIs and with those who are *educados* (autodidactic members of society) but have or may never receive formal HEI degrees.

Latinas and LatinX—Why These Terms?

Two terms are used interchangeably throughout the dissertation: Latina(s) and LatinX. I do not use the term "Hispanics," because it was created by and for government census purposes in the 70s (Bishop & Vargas, 2014) and, it is my experience that many LatinX group members do not relate to the term. The term, Latino, can be interpreted as generally including male and females but is not indicative of others including trans, agender, queer, gender-fluid, and non-conforming populations. The term, Latina, has been used to identify females of Latin-American origin.

Although the term LatinX, is currently controversial, it is the most inclusive of populations which may identify by the pronouns, "she," "her," "hers, and "ella" (Spanish translation for he). I have also chosen to use the term LatinX because I believe it represents community voices desirous of more inclusive and diverse institutional and organizational practices in HEIs. LatinX is defined in the Oxford Dictionary as "As a person of Latin American origin or descent (used as a gender neutral or non-binary alternative to Latino or Latina)" ("Latina," n.d.). As a Latina who has actively and professionally and personally engaged with DOs for many years in a similar capacity, I have personally witnessed Latina/LatinX DOs address EDI issues with passion, courage, tenacity, and deep cultural insights. In our conversations it is common to hear expressions of EDI work being psychologically exhausting and, personally very meaningful. Descriptive terms relevant to this study are important to understand. However, more importantly to this study, is understanding how LatinX DOs (specifically from the Pacific Northwest region), working in HEIs identify, define, and interpret their individual and collective narratives or lived experiences.

Relevant Historical Events as Background to This Study

DOs in the 21st century very likely understand the historical events and actions such as the civil rights activism of the 1960s that continue to impact marginalized populations today. In 1961, and in the midst of civil rights activism, President Kennedy used the term "affirmative action" in an Executive Order directing government contractors to ensure diverse applicants were offered greater opportunities for employment and were to be treated fairly and without discrimination based on their race, color, creed, and national origin ("Affirmative Action/Overview," 2014). Garrison-Wade and Lewis (2004), reported that in 1965, President Johnson also signed an Executive Order with the intent of addressing persisting inequalities in employment and education which also included the term "affirmative action." As a result, many colleges and universities began to develop the recruitment of minority students (p. 24). The Equal Employment Act (EEOA) of 1974, a U.S. federal law which prohibits discrimination and racial segregation of students, followed AA. EEOA, requires that action be taken to overcome barriers to students having equal participation in education. "Affirmative Action legislation" took place in 1993, with the landmark Supreme Court rulings on minority student admissions and Affirmative Action challenging the University of Michigan's Race Conscious Admissions Policy in (*Grutter v. Bollinger*, 2003). A White female filed a suit in federal court, claiming racial discrimination and a violation of the 14th Amendment. She challenged the University of Michigan Law School's use of race as a criterion during the admissions process. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the university's law school admissions policy was constitutional. This case was a legal milestone and proved victorious for universities actively diversifying their student population. In its effort to diversify its student body and practice race-conscious admissions policy, the University of Michigan's social justice actions called attention to

affirmative action (AA), to its purpose and intent. AA efforts were designed, in part, to address economic disparities and promote equal employment opportunities for marginalized groups seeking to enter higher education institutions. AA programs continue to be a fiercely debated topic. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that such programs continue to be challenged in the courts. The Equal Education Act (EEOA) of 1974, a U.S. federal law which prohibits discrimination and racial segregation of students, followed AA. The EEOA, requires action to overcome barriers to students having equal participation in education. According to Williams and Wade-Golden (2013), the diversity officer, position emerged from organizational positions which began with a focus on AA, and the EEOA of 1964. The DO position can be viewed as having emerged from professional titles such as Director of Diversity, Director of Multicultural Relations/Affairs, Director of Intercultural Affairs, Cultural Coordinator, and, Director of Global Engagement and Inclusion, and the like. In their role on campus, some DOs may address AA and EEOA in their EDI roles as leaders. Vaughn (n.d.) encourages being mindful of activists whose struggles for equity, diversity and inclusion came long before what we know professionally as diversity officers; he calls these EDI advocates “diversity pioneers” (p. 1). He further noted diversity pioneers are honored and credited for having “laid the foundation for the emergence of today’s DOs and diversity leaders” (Vaughn, n.d., pp. 5–6). DOs help develop and facilitate EDI dialogue and discourses in higher education among students and faculty due to the need to continue to address historic racial inequities. Some may contend that EDI progress has been made in higher education in the aforementioned areas; whereas, others believe little has changed. What is clear is that a DO’s work will always involve EDI issues to some degree on campus.

Dissertation Purpose, Intent, and Research Questions

The dissertation seeks to explore how DOs perceive themselves as Latinas living in the world within their cultural, social, and political context (Lopez & Willis, 2004); specifically, their cultural core strengths. This study will explore how each LatinX DO accesses and capacitates their cultural core strengths in their work to lead and help institutionalize EDI in HEIs. The dissertation topic is timely because DO positions remain a fairly new position in higher education while the demographic conversion and student/staff diversity continues to increase across the United States. DOs of color face socio-political-racial issues and conflict which can challenge, dismiss, and diminish culturally meaningful aspects of their lives.

Culturally Responsive, Relevant, and Reinforcing

As a Latina researcher, I see three essential critical EDI practices: to be culturally responsive, culturally relevant, and culturally reinforcing. The meaning and the practice of all three are demonstrated in throughout the study. I am also intuitively mindful of the EDI state of mind and EDI state of being I am in throughout this dissertation and research study. I define EDI *state of mind* as the mental, emotional, and intuitive state of mind I am in when doing social justice work. *State of mind* is also defined in the Urban Dictionary as "the status of one's consciousness, as in their perception of the outside world, their perception of their own intuition, and the function of their brain" ("State of Mind," n.d.). It means applying EDI practices in all I do; in my thinking and decision-making processes and actions. An EDI state of mind brings in my intellectual and scholarly knowledge and experiences of EDI. A *state of being*, I define as my experiences, familiarity, and existence as a Latina in this world. Kaufman (2010) defines "state of being" as the "quality of your present experience" (States of Being, section, para. 3.). I define

being in relation to cultural responsiveness, cultural relevance, and being culturally reinforcing as follows:

- *Being culturally responsive* is enacting and demonstrating a unique mindfulness based in a foundation; a deep comprehensive knowledge of diverse populations and their unique cultural values. This includes a deep understanding of the historical impact of social structures which limit and create multi-layered barriers and access to wealth, education, land ownership, and economic stability. When one is culturally responsive, one recognizes and works toward building alliances with those from marginalized, generationally oppressed populations. It is a respectful recognition of diverse ways of communicating (body language, oral, ethnic, language of poverty, urban, indigenous, etc.). It is honoring and recognizing of collectivists' behaviors which may result from generational pain, grief, and loss. It is comprehending the psychological stress of having to negotiate institutional and organizational systemic oppression. Being culturally responsive is about disrupting and stopping inequities.
- *Being culturally relevant* is being mindful to invite, include, introduce, discuss, relevant topics, subjects, issues, that matter; that are pertinent to diverse populations and that fit – that are relatable. Cultural relevance invites the, creation of safe spaces to share stories; to liberate their truths, as told, shared, and experienced by the oppressed. In order to be culturally relevant, one must ask, listen, and honor the lived experiences of the marginalized; as interpreted by themselves.
- *Being culturally reinforcing* is respecting, valuing, and validating diverse cultures. It is embracing, highlighting, and honoring her heritage, language, cultural worldviews, and her lived experiences. It is celebrating her ancestry, tenacity, passion, grit, and

> cultural core strengths. It is recognition and support of her cultural knowledge, state of mind, state of being, potential and capacity to lead her own life. Being culturally reinforcing is about walking alongside, and next to her, or get out of her way as she expresses her joy and grief. It is about celebrating her voice, light; her path and her journey.

As a social scientist, my purpose is to present information that contributes to existing scholarly knowledge. One of the objectives of this study is to rigorously and curiously explore DOs' contextualized diverse realms of reality from their personal perspectives, through their cultural lens, and culturally intellectual insights. My intent is to examine, explore, and document the study's findings. However, equally important is to validate LatinX subjective realities and capture the strength of their cultural expressions; individually and as a group. Cultural validation is a key element of resistance, of remaining culturally resilient in the face of macro-aggressions and racism toward themselves as diversity champions, and toward students and staff on campus that share their stories of similar incidences. On this matter, Harrel (2000) explained, "Racism lies not only in a specific [racist] incident, but also in the resistance of others believing and validating the reality or significance of one's personal experience' (p. 45). Sue, Capodilupo, Nadal, and Torino (2008) noted that microinvalidation dismisses or questions racism as experienced by People of Color. My study may offer new insights and recommendations to higher education leaders preparing to hire a DO or Chief Diversity Officer of color. Choosing this dissertation topic is to offer data and knowledge which intellectually informs the general public—in particular, organizational, and higher education institution leaders (HEI presidents, chief executive officers, diversity officers, human services/resource experts and recruitment and hiring committees, etc.).

Interestingly, most scholarly DO research studies considered here in the literature review (Chapter II) have focused on institutional EDI deficits. In contrast, this dissertation is advanced from a strength-based approach. Discovering how DOs access their cultural core strengths as they do EDI work in HEIs, is at the heart of this study. Chapter I, therefore, introduces the dissertation questions:

- Do LatinX DOs access their core cultural strengths in their EDI work?
- How Do LatinX DOs access and use their cultural core strengths to create positive EDI change?
- How might cultural values help us maintain our resiliency during the current negative propaganda against LatinX populations?

As a social researcher and as a Latina who has held similar DO professional positions, I am interested in capturing epistemological discoveries through the application of methodologies relevant to the dissertation topic, relational experiences between the researcher and participants as co-researchers, and, the lived experiences as interpreted by the DOs in HEIs. My goal is to contribute to scholarly literature on the topic leading to new ways of knowing, thinking, working with, and supporting LatinX DOs in higher education doing EDI work. My intent is to generate and share scholarly data that may assist in the development of DOs as professionals and as equity, diversity, and inclusion practitioners working in higher education institutions.

Social Justice—The Work of DOs

According to Behr (2005), the term social justice, was first introduced in 1840 by an Italian Catholic priest and philosopher named Luigi Taparelli. Behr stated that Taparelli coined the term during a time of social, economic change and political violence. He was heeding the Catholic Church to move beyond offering charity and platitudes, neither of which brought the

oppressed members of society equitable outcomes in life. The term social justice has evolved over many decades and continues to do so (Behr, 2005; Rendón, 2009; Young, 1990, 2011) For this dissertation, I use the following operational definition of social justice:

> Social justice is a practice . . . habit, norm, and responsibility; it is a state of mind and a state of being. Social justice is an expression of the heart; a social and moral virtue; it is equitable distribution, access, and opportunity to engage in economic, social, political, cultural, and academic institutions. Social justice is the act of promoting and supporting the rights of people to express their fullest potential and pursue their own good. (Chavez-Haroldson, 2018, p. 13)

Social justice is addressed in the dissertation, primarily from an egalitarian worldview and not from a utilitarian nor a libertarian worldview. This means that every member of society should be guaranteed equitable (not the same) resources, access to goods, rights, and educational opportunities. For the purpose of this dissertation, social justice in education is the framework applied to address, challenge, deconstruct inequity, honor diversity, and promote inclusive practices. Cochran-Smith (2004) described a similar social justice framework as one that, "actively address[es] the dynamics of oppression, privilege, and isms, [and recognizes] that society is the product of historically rooted, institutionally sanctioned stratification along socially constructed group lines that include race, class, gender, sexual orientation, and ability" (as cited in Sensoy & DiAngelo, p. 350). She further opined that critical self-reflection of how we are socialized and conditioned into a "matrix of unequal relationships, implications, analysis of the mechanisms of oppression, and the ability to challenge these hierarchies is a way to demonstrate social justice in education" (as cited in Sensoy & DiAngelo, p. 350). Opinions vary among social justice advocates and promoters; however, most are likely in agreement that DOs will face resistance as they champion social justice causes in education.

Capacitating Cultural Values

Scholarly articles and research confirm cultural values are significant because they help build and maintain resiliency, perseverance, and quality of life (Bordas, 2007, 2013; Urzua, Miranda-Castillo, & Caqueo-Urizar, 2013). Morgan-Consoli and Llamas (2013) included *religiosidad* (religiosity) as one of several cultural values, specifically relevant to Latino/a cultures. Some LatinX cultures use the term *spiritualidad* (spirituality) to describe a cultural value of "walk and talk in the manner of love-for God is love" (Bordas, 2007, p. 156). Spiritually-based values may require myself as a researcher to move beyond the data—not just reading transcribed words, but rather, reading into, between, and over them what I see and hear—what I interpret and how I interpret lived experiences. Gehrke (2008), argued that a spiritual quest reflects concern for the meaning [lived experience] . . . and a search to uncover the mysteries of human life and existence" (p. 351).

As an immigrant and a Latina, I believe it is my bicultural and bilingual knowledge and experiences that empower me to address EDI issues in organizations and institutions unlike any professional from the dominant Westernized culture. I possess personal and professional cultural intelligences that offer deep insights into interpreting body language and circular ways of talking; I possess and am able to offer unique and valuable EDI contributions to HEIs. This is true even more so now in HEIs, as the demographics are rapidly shifting with LatinX generations now being the emerging majority on campuses across the United States. I identify with LatinX cultural values such as the following:

- *familismo*—the importance of developing close and external family ties (Carteret, 2011);

- *personalismo* (displaying honor)—authentic and personal connection. As Foster (2010), noted personalismo is "unconditional recognition of the essential value of each individual" (Mederos, n.d, p. 11);
- *simpatía* (personable, agreeable)—possessing pleasing qualities while seeking alignment, interpersonal harmony (Triandis, Marin, Betancourt, Lisansky, & Chang, 1982) and compatibility;
- *hospitalidad* (hospitality)—being hospitable and *respéto*—demonstrating respect (Dingfelder, 2005);
- *gracía* (charisma, grace)—pleasing, agreeable, kind/light-hearted (Erichson, 2017).
- *jerarquismo* (male dominant, hierarchy)—even in 2020, traditional Latino families are often, still considered patriarchal. Jerarquismo is the way individuals deal with one another based upon the positions they occupy within a hierarchy (Kwiat, 1993). I use *jerarquism*, to transform the male-centric term jerarquismo to include the mother's and grandmother's leadership role in transmitting cultural wisdom within the family (Garcia-Vázquez, & Marín, 2014).
- *colectivismo* (collectivism)—a cultural value which emphasizes and prioritizes the best interest of the whole family versus the individual (A. L. Schwartz, 2009).
- *compartir* (sharing)—caring communal, shared responsibility; inclusive participation, which encompasses service and benevolence (Bordas, 2013).

These cultural values, including additional values defined in Chapter II, and those identified by the study participants during the research, were during the research study. LatinX populations may demonstrate some degree of some or all of the aforementioned values within their communities. Is it possible LatinX diversity champions experience cultural dissonance

while working within Western academic cultures? If this is the case, how do LatinX diversity champions in higher education navigate, manage, and address potential cultural tensions? LatinX populations are often polychronic versus monochronic[1]; collectivists rather than individualists; trans-relational versus transactional; high-context versus low-context; informal messaging versus direct messaging (Calahan, n.d.) How do such differences impact the work and lived experiences of LatinX Diversity Officer in higher education? These topics give rise to further questions. What are the benefits to HEIs as they continue to develop their cultural intelligence (CQ)? Might a LatinX DO bring innovative ways for HEIs to grow in their cultural proficiencies in order to serve an ever-growing population of LatinXers? How do HEIs manage the changes that are required to serve "cultural others" (Wells, 2000, p. 189). The reality is that there are no cultural values superior to others; however, differences in cultural expression and values on campus may result in unexpected tensions leading to misunderstandings. The topics and questions are explored further in this study.

The Role of the DO in Higher Education Institutions (HEI)

Williams and Wade-Golden (2013) asserted the Chief Diversity Officer title is commonly used to identify the highest-ranking diversity administrator in higher education and is seen as having a significant leadership role in framing EDI policies, initiatives, and practices on campus. Aguilar, Bauer, and Lawson (2017) stated,

> The CDO's role is still relatively new and evolving. It is critical to organizational relevance in the increasingly diverse communities that we serve. CDOs are at the vanguard of cultural change, which isn't an easy role to fill. They are human, not

[1] The distinction between cultures whose members are highly task oriented preferring to focus on one one thing (or one other person) at a time (monochrnic) and those who are focused on many matters and people at any given time, was made by Hal (1989). He argued that "polychronic cultures often place completion of the job . . . below the importance of being nice, courteous, considerate, kind and sociable to other human beings" (p. 150).

> miracle-workers; there is no set portfolio to suit the task at hand, and no two institutions share the same degrees of readiness and willingness. (p. 8)

Very similar to CDOs, DOs have historically championed and honored diversity, inclusivity, and equitable outcomes for those they have served. However, how do they continue to champion EDI as DOs while experiencing an uncharted professional endeavor? In some cases, a CDO may report directly to the HEI's president and be responsible for a multi-million-dollar budget or focus primarily on student affairs, serve as a compliance auditor, lead student programs, and the like. In other institutions, a DO does the work of leading EDI programs, but does not have fiscal responsibilities and may not report directly to the president, Usually, DOs report to a unit director, provost, or executive in the HEI. One of the factors that may makes DO positions difficult are job descriptions which include a wide range of duties with no clear dotted line to fellow administrators, faculty, and staff roles. "One might infer that broad or indistinct conceptions of diversity produce indistinct roles and functions of chief diversity offices" (Krings-Kansas, 2016, para.12).

The DO is generally considered an integrative role that coordinates, leads, enhances, and in some instances supervises formal diversity capabilities of the institution in an effort to create an environment that is inclusive and excellent for all. Within this context, diversity is not merely a demographic goal, but a strategic priority that is fundamental to creating a dynamic educational and work environment that fulfills the teaching, learning, research, and service mission of postsecondary institutions. This gives rise to intellectual inquiry with questions such as the following:

- What is the purpose or intent of hiring a DO?
- What is the DO's role on campus?

- How can LatinX DOs lead EDI strategies that are culturally responsive, culturally relevant, and reinforcing (C-RRR)?
- How might cultural core strengths empower a DO to create EDI change?
- Do HEI leaders understand the DO's cultural connections to EDI on campus?
- What infrastructure is in place (or not) to support the work of a DO?
- Does the institution view social justice as a foundation for the DO's work? If this is the case, is social justice in higher education viewed as a moral issue, smart business, and/or intellectual, philosophical, and/or pedagogical academic imperative?

A DO may benefit from exploring the answers to these questions prior to accepting the position. The DO can help the organization navigate external challenges while implementing internal change. Because issues of equity, diversity, and inclusion are at the forefront of national conversations and policy, a depth of understanding of complex racialized issues and a strategic approach to solving them. High expectations of immediate EDI change and deliverables may come from well-intentioned people, including executives, president, provosts, college directors, and, senior administrators who hired the DO.

Demographic Transition and the Rise of the DO

The rapidly growing expansion of diverse student populations in higher education is highlighted by the fact that the United States is at a historic juncture of experiencing a demographic transition. Communities once considered minorities (such as Latino/Latinas/LatinX), are quickly becoming the emerging majority in many states across the United States according to research completed for the PEW Research Center, "The Latino population in the United States has reached nearly 58 million in 2016 and has been the principal driver of U.S. demographic growth, accounting for half of national population growth since

2000" (M. Flores, 2017, para.1). In addition, multiethnic populations are rapidly growing in the United States, Livingston (2016) reported,

> The rapid rise in the share of infants who are multiracial or multi-ethnic has occurred hand-in-hand with the growth in marriages among spouses of different races or ethnicities. In 1980, 7% of all newlyweds were in intermarriage, and by 2015, that share had more than doubled to 17%. Both trends are likely spurred in part by the growing racial and ethnic diversity in the U.S. (para. 3)

These trends are but a few of the reasons higher education institutions are hiring DOs. The 21st century demands intellectually understanding about what a LatinX demographic transition now indicates for academics and their pedagogical approaches, especially when higher education institutions are still served by primarily White presidents, administrators, trustees, and faculty. If higher education leaders are just in the "we're thinking about EDI" phase, they are lacking the sense of urgency to take necessary action. Demographic changes mean institutional changes are vital. But what are the institutional barriers that must be overcome for necessary change to occur? How will higher education institutions reflect the ethnic diversity of their student and staff members? How will they continue to serve African Americans, Asian Americans, Native Americans, gender non-conforming, diverse age groups, and, LGBTQI populations? What are the benefits and added value to higher education institutions who are making EDI an urgent call to action? Racial tensions, complaints, legal action, racialized conflict and even hate crimes on campus are a reality.

These are all serious issues that DOs on campus will probably address during their tenure—but they cannot do so on their own. Higher education leaders, in collaboration with the DO can proactively take part in decision-making strategies and processes to address the aforementioned issues rather than react to them after they have occurred. Racism on campus can be an intentional act or a result of implicit bias, lack of knowledge, or ignorance; it is embedded

in everyday lives. Racism can be like a poison that slowly works its way into an institution that is complacent about its impact and destruction. It is about *power over*, as opposed to *power with*—dynamics. “Racism is by definition the expression or actuation of group power” (Essed, 1991, p. 37).

The DO in collaboration with higher education leaders can lead the implementation of EDI practices which can serve as a powerful, strategic response to racism or group power. Studying EDI is a positive step towards understanding the terms, equity, diversity’ and inclusion and to generate intellectual/emotional intelligence. The call for a commitment to equitable policies, diversifying staff and identifying inclusive practices continues within higher education institutions like never before, as demonstrated by the rapid increase in the hiring of DOs on campuses across the nation (Banerji, 2005, p. 1).

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion as Social Justice

Because my professional EDI work has been rewarding and difficult, I have gained substantial understanding of the challenges which arise as complex institutions choose to implement (or not implement) EDI policies, procedures, and practices. I also understand the benefits experienced when institutional leaders fully embrace EDI. The expertise, experiences, and EDI practices over many years place me in a unique position for this LatinX DO study. I recognize that EDI initiatives in higher education institutions are not uncommon, great efforts are made to create inclusive environments on campus. However well-intentioned the efforts may be, EDI initiatives may never get beyond a technological response such as hiring consultants, gathering data, analyzing data, and then publishing executive reports. Or, there may be strategies to have committees, dialogue groups, and advisory teams explore the issues; they may hire a facilitator to offer EDI training, develop or purchase EDI modules, and take institution-wide

surveys which unfortunately do not create an EDI cultural climate change. There are also expensive marketing and media efforts institutions undertake to give public attention to their EDI strategic plans of action presented as beautifully crafted materials. Moreover, EDI efforts may include well publicized announcements by leaders and administrators of their new and improved webpage, strategic plans, and vision, mission statement enhancements.

In contrast, I have been a member of an executive team that has developed effective strategic plans for action for positive social change on campus because leaders learned to go beyond thinking of EDI as a state of mind and shifted into demonstrating that EDI is a state of being. DOs are in positions as leaders of change, EDI point persons, relational collaborators, and organizational development strategists (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2007). Through experiential learning opportunities, DOs, in collaboration with EDI allies, facilitate and promote EDI education for community members, professionals, and executives; helping raise awareness of the value diversity brings in society and at the workplace. Hewlett, Marshall, and Sherbin's (2013) findings supported this. They noted that businesses with high diversity "out-innovate and out-perform others. Employees at these companies are 45% likelier to report that their firm's market share grew over the previous year and 70% likelier to report that the firm captured a new market" (Hewlett et al., 2013, para. 4).

Researching the lived experiences of LatinX DOs in the Northwest of the USA, who work as change agents in complex organizations is a very personal matter to me: the research effort in and of itself, is an intentional act on my part to promote social justice in higher education. Serving as an EDI administrator of color for a state agency offered me an opportunity to serve as a member of a statewide advisory team (2015–2016). The team met to discuss various EDI development and strategies within organizations around the state. During our discussions,

multiple instances were noted in which stories and experiences from each DO on the advisory committee resonated with mine and others in our group. One example was our having shared a similar degree of frustration within our respective organizations when the leadership's response to developing EDI was to simply require the DO to offer cultural training to managers and line staff. We all understood, from experience, that brief and sporadic cultural awareness staff training proved to be ineffective in establishing an organization's inclusive culture and that it was essential for leaders, executive teams and mid-managers to engage, support, promote and participate in the EDI training themselves. This group also shared their thoughts about how their positions and roles were often misunderstood; the job description was too broad, expansive, and had no decision-making authority. In further discussions, it was generally agreed that the DO designation as an executive, decision-maker, along with full support of the leaders with specifically allocated resources, were needed to create an environment for EDI cultural change within our respective organizations.

No matter how great or wonderful my experiences, they have led me on a journey of enlightenment that continues to inform my work, and also leaves me hungry to search deeper and further into the ontological aspects of the LatinX DO's lived experiences of making EDI change. Equity, diversity, and inclusion are addressed in this dissertation in terms of the relevancy to the DO's role and are also used as a framework for understanding the social constructs which impact their work in higher education institutions. In addition, an EDI framework has been used to help understand the differential power dynamics in society which may be actuated, expressed, and operationalized in higher education. The EDI framework addresses racism as a social construct (Smedley & Smedley 2005). Morning (2007) argued, "The idea of race, as constructed, is widely shared across the disciplinary spectrum. In this view, both social and natural scientists have

converged on a common interpretation of race as social and not biological in nature" (p. 46). I believe professionals who want to understand EDI and to become EDI practitioners, must first, fully recognize that race is socially constructed. I am often asked to define EDI in simple terms; in light of the aforementioned discussion on the topic of social constructs of race, a simple explanation is impossible to offer. However, I have found it effective to start a conversation on the EDI topic by saying the following prior to getting deeper into the topic of race and race as a socially constructed phenomenon. I commonly begin by saying the following to EDI novices: "Equity is the why, diversity is the, who, and inclusion is the how" (Chavez-Haroldson, 2018, p. 9). "Why" is about equity in higher education and the reasons it matters—inequities in higher education—are tantamount to social injustice. The "who" are the diverse students, staff, and, faculty on campuses across the nation. "How" is the manner in which diverse populations are included, engaged, and culturally respond in higher education?

A number of important definitional concepts will now be explored briefly, to be discussed in more depth in Chapter II. *Equity* is about distribution; providing each person according to their need, adequate, fitted, adapted, and, suited distribution that liberates (Freire, 1972/2009; Rendón, 2009; Young, 1990, 2011). In contrast, *equality* is about sameness—distribution is the same for all and about the same distribution regardless of social structures. Unterhalter (2009) stated that equity is about capableness and negotiated distribution within existing social arrangements, further asserting that, in education, "somebody therefore carries the obligation . . . to put in place procedures for ensuring their delivery [equitable distribution] in diverse contexts" (p. 419). Unterhalter (2009) added that

> social arrangements . . . need to be attentive to redistribution, particularly when forms of diversity and their history entail discrimination. Just giving equal shares of time or money will not mitigate the unfairness of existing social arrangements with regard to education. (p. 421)

Interestingly, DOs often bring cultural and experiential insights, multicultural wisdom, and passion, ready to activate change—both from a personal and professional perspective. DOs may have degrees which prepare them for EDI work; however, they may also bring multigenerational knowledge as strategic activism from prior generation who understand (not learned in higher education) EDI issues unlike those from the dominant culture.

Diversity is about the distinct differences individually and as demographic groups. Moreover, it is also about who is being served; in higher education it is about those employed by the institution and who they serve—students, communities, staff, faculty, administrators, and executives. Diversity has also been used to address the marketization of human resources by diversity critical management and educational scholars (Greene & Kirton, 2015; Kandola & Fullerton, 1998; Lorbiecki & Jack, 2000). Pless and Maak (2004) asserted that diversity management in organizations was initially about compliance and avoidance of lawsuits due to the "increased participation of women and minorities in the labor market" (p. 129), whereas Mor Barak (2014) highlighted the value of diversity and the benefits of effectively managing diversity in the workplace as positive organizational change.

So, is EDI now used in hopes that there might be more attention brought to dialogue around inequity and exclusion of diverse populations in higher education? Has EDI language or the term itself been generated with expectations of cleaning up the tenaciously sticky and toxic racialized residue still in existence within higher education institutions today? Has the historical failure of HEIs to put into policy, practice and protocols helped give birth to EDI?

Inclusion in higher education may address affinity group and people with disabilities and the creation of an environment where these distinct groups or individuals feel a sense of belonging of having their voices heard. Inclusion is the opposite of exclusion. Ferdman (2014),

suggested that inclusion is about valuing and appreciating differences and that inclusion requires the creation of work environments that provide places of belonging. Inclusion is viewed as a morally driven behavior which demonstrates freedoms to engage in organizational citizenship. Wasserman (2014) emphasized inclusion as actions that engage others as "relational eloquence" (p. 128). She identified three interpersonal frameworks which support interpersonal inclusive practices: empathy, emotional and social intelligence, and mindfulness. Wasserman asserted that inclusion seeks ways to find meaning in others' stories while recognizing the differences, as a way of discovering a broader relational context. Davis (2017) argued that inclusion is about the environment in which higher education operate; it is about individuals and groups participation and value in a "majority culture" (para. 2). This view may assume all within an operationalized environment value all individuals and groups. In summary, equity, diversity, and inclusion are highly complex topics which continue to be addressed, understood, and operationalized in higher education. Each topic is distinct and looped together in the work of a DO. Understanding how these issues impact the lives of DOs as they capacitate their cultural values is at the heart of the subject for this dissertation; exploring and discovering what that means to each DO has yet to be unearthed.

Theoretical, Conceptual, and Philosophical Application

A theoretical lens or framework will serve as guideposts for critical thinking, reflecting, writing, and analytical purposes in my research study (Creswell 2014, pp. 51 & 64). Critical theory (Kincheloe, McLaren, & Steinberg, 2011), served as a theoretical guidepost because it informed the manner by which LatinX DOs transcended gender and ethnic constraints by accessing their cultural core strengths. Social justice education theory (Bell, 1997; Theoharis, 2007) was also used as a theoretical lens in this study because the dissertation topic is oriented

toward EDI issues in HEI. Social identity theory (Ashforth & Mael, 1989) also offered great utility as a relevant and applicable theory because it addresses intergroup processes (DOs), intergroup discrimination, and marginalization (LatinX DOs). According to Ashforth and Mael (1989), social identity is one's perception as existing within a group (such as LatinX) which can be categorized or classify themselves as a distinct group. This may include assumptions and stereotypes about self as part of the group. They suggested, "Stereotypical perceptions [are reinforced by the] antecedents of identification" (p. 20).

In this study, the group LatinX (Latinas) clearly denotes a specific group. I was interested in this group's sameness and differences as defined *by them* and by each participant. I was also interested in the processes and developments that arise from this particular group's interactions on the topic of DOs. Six defining elements in this study serve as the theoretical framework. Figure 1.1 serves as a visual conception of my LatinX DO theoretical framework The blue circle (1) in the middle illustrates the topic for this study: LatinX (Latina) diversity officers in higher education. The green circle (2) identifies the theoretical lenses applied to the study (critical, *conocimiento*, and leadership theories). The purple (3) circle states my motivation for this study. I view the dissertation and research as a demonstration of social justice. EDI principles are foundational to my personal and professional life. The aqua blue circle (4) captures my ontological and epistemological stance to include non-Westernized perspectives. The orange circle (5) shows my worldview point of reference: participatory, transformational, non-positivist, and constructivist epistemologies. The red circle (6) identifies this study as a qualitative research study in which I apply an interpretive phenomenological analysis methodology.

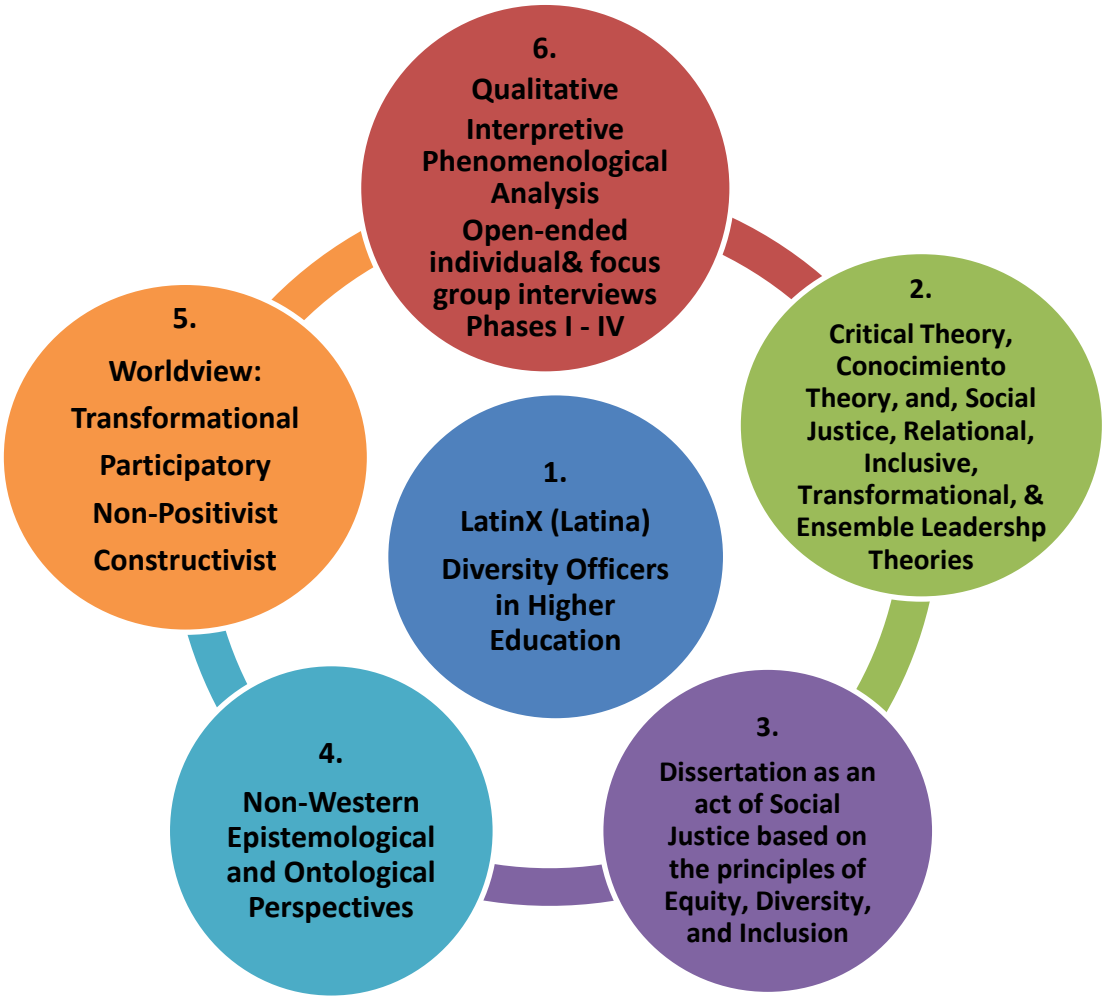

Figure 1.1. LatinX fiversity officer theoretical framework.

Multiple open-ended interviews were held, the first with each individual participant (Phase I), followed by two focus group interviews (Phases II & III). The last phase (Phase IV) is a reflective/reflexive process, which I undertook alone as the primary researcher.

Conocimiento, Disfrasismo, and Nepantla

Each element in Figure 1.1 captures the collective posture and position of this study. The theoretical framework also offers a holistic way of seeing the various components with which I approached this research. The dissertation journey awakened new ways of articulating my existence as a Latina and a social justice pathfinder. As a social justice pathfinder, I was

"creatively imagining" (Bleijenbergh, Booysen, & Mills, 2018, p. 211) ways of co-creating states to improve social conditions (Gabriel, 2015). A social justice pathfinder seeks wisdom from beyond technology, academia, and humans; she seeks wisdom from knowledge beyond her dimensions of knowing. She seeks to possess, I believe, what Anzaldúa (2000) referred to as *conocimiento*, an "overreaching theory of consciousness" (p. 177), which includes five steps of consciousness. Anzaldúa (2000) emphasized that conocimiento is "an epistemology that tries to encompass all the dimensions of life, both inner-mental, emotional, instinctive, imaginal, spiritual, bodily realms-and outer-social, political, lived experiences" (p. 177). Conocimiento cannot be categorized simply within academia. It is beyond academics and therefore, does not, perhaps should not fit into any specific academic or scholarly category; it is too big, too inclusive, and multidimensional to fit into one category. The theory itself offers me a sense of longing, seeking, discovering, learning, responding, and being (becoming) the pathway (the medium) for social change. However, I also believe conocimiento begins with one having an unquestionable sense of not-knowing and un-knowing, a struggle to arrive to a conclusion, believing there are no absolutes, certainties, and unadulterated ways of knowing; a powerful in-between space of the mind and heart that is open to a new space which gives birth to conocimiento.

Rendón (2009) described an Aztec word found in ritual speech which beautifully describes a place of conocimiento or heightened consciousness; not as a place of polarity, of right or wrong, north or south, good or bad, but one of "being in-between." The Aztec word *disfrasismo* refers to this ethereal space,

> where new understanding might emerge through the integration of polarities. Hidden within dualities [knowing/not knowing] is a dynamic, integrative center, which, once unlocked, unveils a larger reality. Unlocking polarities requires we surrender old belief

> systems and working with our growth edges as we begin to uncover a larger truth that joins two realms of reality. (Rendón, 2009, p. 68)

Nepantla in the traditional Nahuatl indigenous language is described by Anzaldúa (2002) as a space in which transformations occur, an "in-between space, an unstable, unpredictable, precarious, always-in-transition space lacking clear boundaries. Nepantla [is terra incognita] and living in this liminal zone means being in a constant state of displacement–an uncomfortable, even alarming feeling" (p. 1). Anzaldúa's concept of nepantla opens a space for experiences of existing in-between realms of language, cultures, and epistemologies. In this space, is it possible to find a balance, to effectively navigate our emic-etic worlds of self? Elenes (2013) calls for action to "expand human rights and social justice education through the notions of nepantla, spiritual activism, and new tribalism" (pp. 132–133). Elenes described nepantla as "as an intellectual, epistemological space where we can engage in profound critical analysis" (p. 132), a much needed perspective for social justice education. Nepantla, is the space in which Latina/LatinX leaders can transform education in a way that liberates (Freire, 1972/2009), and facilitates "the birth of greater awareness and shifting possibilities" (Saavedra & Perez, 2013, p. 129). In my research setting, nepantla creates a space where students, staff, and faculty can express their ethnic identities, strengths, and influences within their educational journeys with cultural resiliency. By accessing indigenous concepts of conocimiento, disfrasismo, and, nepantla, in this research I have sought both ancient and new ways of knowing how LatinX DOs capacitate their cultural strengths while leading EDI changes in HEIs.

Leadership Theories

Several leadership theories were used as a framework for critical thinking analysis. I briefly describe four specific theories which resonated with group activities and processes I have led and which have resonated with my personal traits and characteristics; leadership theories that

resonated with my cultural self: relational (Cunliffe & Erickson, 2011; Uhl-Bien, 2006); transformative (Bass, 1999; Northouse, 2010); social justice (Brazzel, 2007; Larson & Muradha, 2002; Theoharis, 2007), and inclusive leadership (Booysen, 2014; Ryan, 2006). Each theory is discussed in more detail in Chapter II. Following the brief description of the four aforementioned leadership theories, I highlight a fifth leadership theory, *ensemble leadership theory*.

Relational leadership. Relational leadership values and recognized the "inherently polyphonic and heteroglossic nature of life; and engages in relational dialogue everyday" (Cunliffe & Eriksen, 2011, p. 1425). Relational leaders view themselves as being morally accountable to those they lead. Daily interactions are valued and respected as critical elements of maintaining trusting relationships between a leader and a follower. LatinX populations are more likely to be collectivists which makes Relational Leadership culturally relevant to this study. Adding to this though, my cultural lived experience as a Latina emphasizes that we are collectivists as do the generational stories told by my parents and grandparents.

Inclusive leadership. Booysen (2014) stated that Inclusive leadership "shifts the focus from affirmative action and equity toward equality, social justice, fairness, and the leveraging of diversity effects in the system" (pp. 297–298). Inclusive leadership, therefore, helps build human capital by establishing inclusive working environments and trusting relations. Inclusive leadership theory lends itself to the LatinX DOs leading change due to its focus on bringing people together; collectively and collaboratively improving systemic barriers to success.

Transformative leadership. Transformative leadership is charismatic and described as having intrinsic motivation. For generations, Latino/Latina populations have immigrated and taken an active role in the United States as transformative leaders of their own lives and in the lives of their communities (Bordas, 2007). Rivera (2014) asserted Latina leaders identify as

transformative/transformational leaders. A transformative leader focuses on follower development, processes that transform, and is concerned with emotions, values, standards, ethics and long-term goals (Bass & Avolio, 1993; Northouse, 2010). Transformational leaders create dynamic relationships with their teams while positively influencing their attitudes. The relationship is built on trust. They encourage and energize their team member's toward greater knowledge acquisition leading to more productive outcomes (Politis, 2002, pp. 187–188).

Social justice leadership. Brazzel (2007) defined *social justice* as "the elimination of oppression and, development of cultures and systems that provide inclusion, equity, access and opportunity for all people" (p. 16). This concept of leadership directly addresses pedagogical practices which liberate, transforms cultures and environments to be more inclusive, based in principles of equity, and promotes diversity as a value (Bogotch, 2002). Larson and Murtadha (2002) argued that social justice leadership in education seeks to create

> greater freedom, opportunity, and justice for all citizens—citizens who, through public education, are better able to participate in and sustain a free, civil, multicultural, and democratic society. Social justice leadership is critical and relevant to the dissertation topic and my work as a contribution to social change in education.

Ensemble leadership theory. Interestingly, the final leadership theory incorporates several of the previously mentioned theories. Ensemble leadership theory embodies, exemplifies, and epitomizes the first four: relational; transformative; social justice; and, inclusive leadership theories. This leadership theory is personified and described in this dissertation as an indigenous woman: She is known as, ELT (Ensemble Leadership Theory). ELT reigns because she brings an indigenous essence to traditional Euro-Western leadership theories of the 20th and 21st century. ELT has her roots in indigenous values and practices. She is a dynamic, decentered collectivist. She possesses an inclusive spirit. Her transformative powers are sustained by the relationships

she generates. She grows and nurtures each relationship from within the meaningful and authentically rich soil she was born in; grounding her are her social justice and heterarchical leadership roots. ELT as a leadership theory focuses on the community. It is "fluid, egalitarian, and rhizomatic" (Rosile, Boje, & Claw, 2018, p. 312). Chapter II will include a more in-depth exploration of ELT.

Contribution of This Work to Positive Social Change

The contribution of this research study is its focus on positive social change and, specifically, its exploration of EDI in HEIs. Because DO positions are increasing in HEIs (William & Wade-Golden, 2013), and are assigned the task of addressing EDI in complex institutions, this study may contribute the hiring, retention, and promotion of LatinX DOs of color. HEIs' human resource departments, administrators, deans, and executives may be better informed of the cultural strengths DOs possess.

Social change comes in many forms. It is my hope that the reader of the findings of this study may realize that social change can be reached by anyone desirous of change and that social change can be realized in many ways: self-empowerment, activism, cultural validation, education, leadership, community networking, professional expertise and lived experiences—to name a few. It is by exploring and identifying various elements of who we are as cultural beings that the reader of the study findings may find their own cultural core strengths as a basis and motivation to also take an active part in creating meaningful social change. This study also addresses some gaps in the existing literature and contributes to the literature on DOs and in particular, DOs of color in HEIs. In addition, because there is no existence of a DO network or professional community of practice (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002) in the Northwest United States (where I live and have undertaken this research), there is potential for this study to

help develop and establish the first of its kind. There is also potential for the LatinX DOs who agree to be research study participants to evolve as a group of social justice advocates into a community of practice that generates knowledge by learning together (Wenger & Snyder, 2000, p. 143).

Significance of the Dissertation

LatinX diversity officers merit attention as EDI leaders amidst pervasive racist divides across our nation. The topic is timely because it addresses a sociohistorical turning point in our society which demands our attention. There is little doubt that now, in the year 2019, the changing demographics in the United States is being met with socio-political resistance. The study is relevant to the LatinX population, DOs, institutional leaders, social justice practitioners, educators, and advocates desirous of engaging in 21st century social change. This research study will also contribute to the scholarly literature on social justice leadership and change. The research topic is significant because DO positions are rapidly being established nationwide as EDI leadership positions; leadership which establishes inclusive environments so students from underserved communities can reach their fullest potential.

This research is timely: there is a sense of urgency to my research topic because of the persistent negative impact on students of color, and of the existing social structures which continue to limit access to equitable education. The dissertation topic will be historically significant in offering qualitative data which can inform executives and administrators, recruiting, hiring, and potentially retaining DOs on campus. More importantly, the study is significant in that it may offer LatinX DOs cultural and intellectual validation while acknowledging their distinctly unique lived experiences and honoring their contribution to social justice leadership and change. The greatest significance is in the search for new meanings

elicited at a time of increasingly racialized sociopolitical stressors; a time where leaders of color are challenging leaders in positions of power and privilege as we seek to collaboratively co-create greater opportunities and support for all students. By identifying and understanding LatinX DOs experiences; as shared through LatinX cultural lens, cultural existence and cultural identities, the study may open new avenues for understanding the complexities that exist for LatinX DO professionals. Through greater understanding, LatinX DOs may be better equipped to address the challenges that lay ahead and offer DO recruiting, hiring and retention teams, insightful information. Lastly, this study is my social justice contribution to leadership theories and practices in HEI, and scope and nature of LatinX DO's work.

Scope and Limitations of the Dissertation

This study focused on LatinX diversity officers in higher education and not Diversity Officers in professional arenas outside of HEIs. The information and study were designed to offer insights and unique knowledge of nine LatinX diversity champions as participants – each holding or having held a professional position as a DO (titles vary) in higher education. The methodological approach chosen is interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA), a qualitative research methodology. The research design identifies qualitative, IPA approaches with open-ended interviews inviting all nine participants to engage as Co-Rs. Purposive and homogeneity sampling techniques helped identify the participants in this study. Each participant agreed to share their unique lived experiences. The participants were asked to engage in two semi-structured focus group interview processes. Therefore, the time limitations to study the lived experiences or the phenomenon were understood by all who engaged in this study. Additional limitations (or things out of my control) included how the participants expressed themselves and the behaviors they demonstrated. There was also an understanding that there may

be some unexpected outcomes. In terms of research replication, the qualitative study may or may not be replicated due to the cultural/ethnic, demographics, geographic location in which the participants reside, and their place of employment—LatinX diversity champions in HEIs, located in the Pacific Northwest.

Chapter Summary

Chapter I has introduced the dissertation topic, the aim and purpose of the study, theoretical framework, historical background, and addressed why EDI is relevant to LatinX DOs; it is implicitly, an urgent call to action. Chapter I also included a brief history of the emergence and relevance of the DO position in higher education. Complex racial challenges faced by DOs in leading EDI initiatives are also described. In addition, a brief overview of the explicit objective of higher education institutions for addressing EDI are included. This chapter has briefly explained why the topic is relevant and critical during the 21st century, based on demographic, socio-cultural and political considerations. Chapter I has also briefly explored the interrelated complexities of equity, diversity, inclusion, social justice leadership, and change, as they relate to the DO position in higher education. Finally, Chapter I highlighted a number of leadership theories and concepts I used as a framework for the dissertation.

A comprehensive review of the literature is presented in Chapter II as a foundation for this study. Chapter II presents DO models and roles in social justice change in HEIs, challenges they face, unique psychological stressors and their relevance on campus, with specific focus on LatinX DO's. Chapter focuses on relevancy of leadership theories highlighted in Chapter I. Chapter II offers a culturally contextualized basis for choosing the qualitative IPA methodology as a good fit for this study, identifies critical techniques, and research design. The research data gathering methods and data analyses are also discussed in Chapter III. Chapter IV of the

dissertation will focus on presenting the research findings and finally, Chapter V concludes the dissertation with the discussion of the findings and its leadership implications, as well as a summary and recommendations for future studies.

Chapter II: Literature Review

The purpose of this chapter is to present a review of existing scholarly literature and on topics specifically relevant to the dissertation, specifically, LatinX (Latina) culture and identity, diversity officers in higher education, and capacitating core cultural strengths as champions of equity, diversity, and inclusion. This chapter focuses on equity, diversity, and inclusion and its use as a framework for exploring Latinas serving as DOs in HEIs. The literature review "embodies the state of the field" (Webster & Watson, 2002, p. xx), as it relates to DOs in HEIs. In addition, this chapter provides an analytical overview of the significant literature published, possible research gaps and opportunities for new knowledge development. Chapter II also situates existing research literature in a way that opens and creates new pathways for further exploring the topic of DOs, EDI, Latinas as leaders of social justice change, and capacitating cultural values in a leadership role.

Literature Review Approach

Most scholarly literature on DOs identified the topic from a deficit-based perspective; that is, for example, HEI leadership as lacking, as having poorly designed EDI strategic plans, the lack of funding, amorphous DO job descriptions, racial stressors, training needed, isolation and so forth. My desire is certainly to inform and empower LatinX diversity champions in HEIs facing the aforementioned issues and to offer intellectually connected culturally-based points of consideration. However, I decided on an approach to the literature that would be from a strength-based perspective. As a former diversity champion in a complex institution I faced the challenges arising from the aforementioned deficits; however, I was reminded that it was grounding myself in core cultural strengths that served as the basic foundation for my resiliency, stamina, power, and motivation to continue EDI change. I believe cultural strengths fueled my

emotional and intellectual intelligence leading me to explore this topic from a scholarly perspective. I posit that it is our (LatinX/Latina) core cultural strengths which help advance our social justice leadership in the early 21st century, a time of heightened political attacks questioning our right to contribute and belong in society. I used the following criteria, based on Boote and Beile (2017), as a basis for analyzing and reflecting upon the literature:

- topicality—thematic matter of importance to the dissertation topic;
- relevance, connection, pertinence and application to the dissertation topic; and
- comprehensiveness—breadth and amplitude for understanding the dissertation topic further and more deeply.

By providing a broad landscape and a wide range of perspectives on the topic of this dissertation, the literature review addresses key issues relevant to LatinX (Latina) DO in HEIs. It explores why DOs in HEIs are needed, and why we are growing in numbers across the nation; primarily to address institutional issues of equity, diversity, and inclusion, and, serve to guide EDI initiatives.

For about a decade, HEIs have been defining DO roles and functions. Several DO models have been introduced in the literature. The models discussed here are commonly based upon the institution's infrastructure, EDI goals, and perspectives. The literature also presents various views on the connections between DOs and their work as social justice leaders. Also, included are unique challenges and stressors DOs encounter. Their lived experiences are considered as key elements in several studies.

Of particular interest to me, as noted earlier, is that most of the literature on DOs in HEIs approaches the topic from a deficit-based perspective. Also, there are very few research studies which focus on DOs in HEIs from marginalized populations. Studies focusing on DOs in HEIs

who identify as LatinX or Latinas were not found. However, most studies addressed equity, diversity, and/or inclusion to some degree although not necessarily together. All of the studies reviewed were undertaken from Westernized theoretical and pedagogical frameworks. Existing scholarly literature identifying or exploring LatinX DOs and cultural core strengths appear to be non-existent. In addition, interpretive phenomenological analysis methodology was not found to be applied to DOs nor LatinX DOs in any of the current literature.

In the following pages of Chapter II, DOs in HEIs are further discussed to help understand why DO positions in HEIs are on the rise, and why the position is critical to lead EDI change. LatinX (Latina) core cultural strengths and values, and, how these strengths are capacitated will be carefully examined, including equity, diversity, and inclusion topics. Therefore, EDI will be examined in the context of DOs in HEIs. To conclude, Chapter II will probe into the topic of diversity as management, inclusive workplaces, DO models and standards.

Why Diversity Officers in Higher Education?

Diversity officer professional positions in higher education are increasing across the nation as are the changes in student demographics (Pickett, Smith, & Felton, 2017). Harvey (2014) asserted the emergence of the DO position in HEIs is indicative of the need to expand diverse representation among students, faculty, administrative staff, and, curriculum nationwide. As the face of EDI, CDO and DO roles are critical to the institutional development of EDI policies, protocols, and practices. The DO promotes EDI institutional change initiatives, introduces EDI dialogue with leaders, staff, and faculty, and advances a more inclusive scholarly pedagogy (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2013). DOs in senior positions must artfully strategize EDI transformative change across the institution. EDI work is immense; DOs must build

meaningful allies in order to access the diverse areas of expertise among their executive, management, and support staff's expertise. Sustained initiatives and change can only be brought about by an expansive portfolio that reflects each HEI's EDI mission, goals, values, and culture (Stevenson, 2014).

Inaugural DO positions are a response to national trends in the social sciences which demand acknowledgement of the benefits diversity brings to academic institutions. Many DOs are hired for their unique skills, talents, and gifts in addressing EDI. They are also hired for their expertise and experience leading cultural change within complex organizations and institutions. During the late nineties, educational journals, such as the *Equity and Excellence in Education* focused on topics such as desegregation, multicultural education, improving racial climates on campus, multicultural practices, and cross-cultural communication. There was no attention during that time period on senior executive positions to lead EDI initiatives in higher education. Abdul-Alim (2016) reported, by contrast, that DOs are now in executive positions as institutional decision-makers with authority to impact matters on campus related to funding, recruitment and retention, strategic plans, academic affairs, and matters of compliance.

According to Worthington, Stanley, and Lewis (2014), DOs on campus often come with highly attuned skills and from a "variety of professional backgrounds and educational credentials (e.g., law, psychology, higher education administration, business, engineering, humanities, and, medicine)" (para. 10). In the 21st century, academic institutions are voluntarily creating DO positions to assist in diversity management strategy efforts to transform cultural and systemic barriers with the goal of alleviating inequities and exclusionary practices (Gilbert, Stead, & Ivancevich, 1999; Kersten, 2000). Williams (2013) stated, "The diversity movement in American higher education has fought long and nobly to carve out a place for rights and concerns of

diverse individuals and groups on college and university campuses" (p. 3). In agreement with Williams, Parker (2015) asserted that higher education campus climates are having to continually take action and address EDI challenges including fraternities disseminating offensive racist flyers on campus, insensitivity toward students based on race and ethnicity, harmful incidents on campus toward members of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning, and, Intersex (hereafter LGBTQQI+) community, and hostile environments toward faculty, staff, and administrators of color. In agreement, Garner (2016) emphasized the need to respond to the growing diversification of the workforce and their call for EDI, a matter he identified as "uniquely a 21st century issue for the American workforce" (para. 1). Perhaps the strength for responding to the needs for 21st century leadership stems from capacitating one's cultural values? To explore the topic further the connections between 21st century leadership, DOs and cultural values will now be considered.

Capacitating Cultural Values as Strengths

Understanding how LatinX DOs connect with their cultural values and, their strengths is central to this study. Equally important is to consider and explore if and how LatinX DOs capacitate their cultural values in their leadership roles. Byrne and Bradley (2007) argued that cultural and personal values "pervade the role of management leadership and successful firm performances" (p. 168). There must be an acknowledgement of and understanding of the role personal and cultural values play on the influence and effectiveness on leadership, "particularly in cross-cultural settings" (Byrne & Bradley, 2007, p. 168). S. H. Schwartz (1999) defined cultural values as "conceptions of the desirable" (p. 24) that serve to guide individuals to choose and explain their actions, and for assessing events and people. He further indicated how "cultural values" are applied; as "trans-situational criteria or goals ordered by importance as guiding

principles in life" (S. H. Schwartz, 1999, pp. 24–25). Byrne and Bradley (2007) reaffirmed the assertion that values are the criteria that leaders use to select and justify personal actions and decisions and to evaluate people and events. Byrne and Bradley (2007) referred to the cultural values in combination with personal values as a "bundle of values" (p. 168) which have an effect on leadership styles. Some of the important cultural values relevant in this study are conocimiento (consciousness-awareness), personalismo (formal friendliness/relational), simpatĺa (collaborative), spiritualidad (spirituality), familismo (familism), gracía (graciousness, grace), and colectivismo (collectivism).

Byrne and Bradley (2007) further argued that cultural values have "a greater influence than personal values—in the mediation process of leadership style" (p. 173). An example of how LatinX cultural values play a significant role in a leadership style is as follows. A collectivist leader lives by the LatinX value of colectivismo (collectivism), seeing the self as interrelated and interdependent—*juntos*" (together). Colectivismo may add an effective sociocentric, contextualist, and, holistic communicative approach to leadership practices, perhaps applied while seeking to identify common ground with diverse groups on campus. Moreover, LatinX community members also greatly value the ability of being bilingual and bicultural. Because English and Spanish are spoken on a global scale, being bilingual helps navigate and understand multiple cultures from oral, bicultural, bilingual, transnational, and collectivist cultures. Being a bicultural and bilingual (English/Spanish) leader offers bicultural insights and adds unique skill sets for communicating with diverse populations. This is particularly relevant due to LatinX groups being the fastest growing ethnic group in the United States. Krogstad (2017), a senior writer with the Pew Center, reported, "the Hispanic population continues to expand reaching a record 58.6 million in 2017, according to the Census Bureau's latest estimates" (para. 4). He

further noted that Hispanics (LatinX) are the second-largest racial/ethnic group in the United States. Therefore, this emerging majority will require leaders who are both Spanish and English speakers and communicators on campus. Anzaldúa (1987) referred to such insights as *borderland consciousness.*

Being bilingual offers opportunities to give voice in English to our thoughts in Spanish, and to those not heard because they are monolingual Spanish speakers. Being bilingual offers us opportunities to listen – to bridge differences, to hear marginalized voices silenced throughout history. Being bilingual Spanish/English helps understand the structural dimension of the oppressed and the oppressor, of those with power and the powerless; to lead and strategize for greater inclusion (Monzó & SooHoo, 2014). Being bilingual is more than being able to speak two languages: it offers a unique lived experience into spaces of communication only understood by and through two language. LatinX populations are becoming the emerging majority; being bilingual and bicultural in the United States is therefore empowering. Triandis et al. (1982), argued interdependency is exemplified in Latin-American cultures (p. 224). Bordas (2013) corroborated Triandis et al., noting that ancestral groups melded into the Latino culture of today, creating a we-thinking approach to life as collectivists.

A second example of a Latina cultural value is demonstrating simpatía defined by Chhokar, Brodbeck, and House (2008) as a leader's "ability to trust with a special sensitivity to their [followers] dignity and worth as individuals" (p. 20). This view of the self and the relationship between the self and others features the person not as separate from the social context but as more connected and less differentiated from others. People are motivated to find a way to fit in with relevant others, to fulfill and create obligation, and in general to become part of various interpersonal relationships. There are a fast-growing number of LatinX students enrolling

in college and universities across the nation. Therefore, bilingual (fluent in Spanish and English), and bicultural (able to negotiate Western and LatinX cultures) position Latina DO's to address students who are immigrant, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), first-generation, and Central American refugee students, and include their monolingual Spanish-speaking parents and family members into the academic journey.

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

It is common for DOs to be given the task of developing, initiating, facilitating, implementing, operationalize, and managing EDI plans (Williams, 2013). However, equity, diversity, and inclusion can only be achieved when there is an "institutional mindfulness" toward fully understanding the meaning of equity, diversity, and inclusion (Clancy & Goastellec, 2007, p. 257). In other words, EDI must be institutionalized. EDI change may appear to be slow or futile at times for DOs because upon being hired the HEI's leadership team might not have comprehensively designed, nor created a framework for EDI. The leadership may not have addressed, identified, nor envisioned how they would work in collaboration and in support of a newly hired DO. If a segmented EDI infrastructure does exist on campus, the newly hired DO may still find themselves "disconnected from the broader [EDI] campus diversity infrastructure" (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2013, p. 99). Williams and Wade-Golden (2013) emphasized the value of having HEI leadership's "united front" and "buy-in" for hiring a DO. In addition, it is important the newly hired DO is made aware of any historical events or issues that may have led to the need for a DO position to be created and hired -from a leader's perspective (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2013, p. 191). Hurtado and Ruiz-Alvarado (2015) noted some ways EDI change can become evident: culture change, shifts in values and "assumptions that underlie daily

operations," and "institutional responses to changing student enrollments that are proactive and responsive instead of reactive and resistant" (p. 31).

So how can equity, diversity and inclusion best be understood? Bolger (2017) described equity as an approach that ensures everyone is given access to the same opportunities because barriers and advantages exist; barriers for marginalized groups, and advantages for those from the dominant culture. Diversity was described as differences in identities such as race, gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, and nationality. Bolger saw inclusion as the value, leverage, and welcoming feelings toward diverse groups of people in workplaces. Diversity as ways people differ which encompasses characteristics that make individuals and/or groups different from another, and "can only exist in relation to another" (para.14). She described equity as "not an outcome. Equity refers to the process a company consistently engages in to ensure that people with marginalized identities have the opportunity to grow, contribute, and develop—regardless of their identity" (para. 23).

Sonnenschein (1999) defines diversity "simply as significant differences among people" (p. 3). Some of these differences may include race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, physical abilities, socio-economic status, religious beliefs, political beliefs, or other ideologies (p. 3). Interestingly, Roberson (2006) concluded that "there is a critical difference between merely having diversity in an organization's workforce and developing the organizational capacity to leverage diversity as a resource" (p. 234). Williams (2013) presented and compared the definitions of diversity in HEIs used by several large associations of universities and colleges including the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) and the Association of Public Land-Grant Universities (APLU) and Association of Public Land-Grant Universities (APLU) and Association of American Universities (AAU). He suggested that "although the

terminology is different, a number of the ideas at the core of both are similar (Williams, 2013, p. 118). Drawing on these similarities, Williams (2013) pointed out,

> Both the AAC&U and APLU argue that an institutional commitment to diversity must involve more than the presence of diverse individuals. Institutions of higher education must actively integrate diversity into the fabric of their academic, cultural, and social life in ways that are substantive and meaningful. (p. 120)

Ainscow, Booth, and Dyson (2004) asserted that inclusivity practices are manifestations of an organization's culture. Inclusivity practices are manifestations of an organization's culture (Angelides & Ainscow, 2000). Therefore, inclusion is an educational action which intentionally and strategically implements intellectual and empathic interruptions to address maladaptive thinking based on institutionalized marginalization by employees working within an organization. One way that inclusive intentional interruptions may be put into action is through organizational policy review and development. The "why" of EDI must be known and fully understood prior to grasping the "how" for EDI—how EDI creates equitable changes within HEIs in which DOs serve. A DO may find herself making efforts to operationalize EDI while working alongside employees who are unaware or uninterested in fully embracing the deeper meaning of equity, diversity, and inclusion. Upon being hired, the DO may recognize that, over time, she can build alliances that will take part in the co-creation of an EDI educational training strategy; beginning with her own team. She may see, hear, and notice executive-level decisions and decision-making processes that lack an EDI mindset. Because EDI topics are highly complex and require sustained dedication, time, and energy, it is critical that designated funds are specifically and liberally allocated for institutionalizing EDI change within the department or office where the DO works. She must have authority to apply the funding resources as they are needed for EDI training prior to being able to actualize EDI institutional change. I have experienced challenging responses to EDI training proposals. Some executives had taken the

suggestion for training very personally and as an attack on their culturally informed intellect. I recall presenting a training on the history of race as a foundation of EDI knowledge.

I waited a few months to present the training because I wanted to assess the organization's EDI knowledge level and build relationships with my executive team. At the conclusion of the 3-hour training, not a single executive (there were about 20 present) asked a question nor commented on the training; it was a painful experience. Similar situations may cause great frustration for the DO but might also inspire her to approach the training so that it is offered in small, incremental phases. A DO may observe the institutional "marketization" of EDI terms that purport change when in reality the status quo is supported (Ahmed 2007, p. 236). Fujimoto and Hartel (2017) reaffirmed this view, recognizing that EDI training, even under the skilled eye of a DO, is often ineffective, although valuable in developing skill-based outcomes, and it has limitations in its impact on producing behavioral changes in the staff (p. 1123). Because the DO is often given the role of managing the EDI training campus wide, there must be a comprehensive knowledge of what types of EDI training are most effective, and the authority to access funding for training. Thomas (2004) reported how a high-ranking executive, used the idea of "constructive disruption" (para. 6) as a way to enhance learning about diversity. Constructive disruption is explained as an effective approach for developing diversity councils to enhance the value of diversity in its employees and as a way to learn to build connections between diverse employees. When this is the case, the DO must roll up her sleeves, access her cultural strengths, and strategize how she, along with her allies, can begin the process of helping develop an EDI paradigm shift on campus; a task that could seem insurmountable. Equally as important is the knowledge a DO possesses on the differences between the terms diversity, and diversity management

Diversity Management

Tatli, Nicolopoulou, Özbilgin, Karatas-Ozkan, and Ozturk (2015) defined diversity management as, "a strategic tool for increasing organizational performance" (p. 1246). They placed explicit emphasis on the value and contribution of diverse employees in fulfilling organizational objective. Diversity management, as argued by Thomas (2004), is not just about marginalized groups which have been historically excluded and discriminated against, but also includes, "the mixture of differences, similarities and tensions that can exist among the elements of a pluralistic mixture" (p. 93). Cox and Blake (1991) asserted that diversity enhances organizational productivity, effectiveness, innovation, and can add to its competitiveness. They noted six specific dimensions of diversity management that are advantageous: cost, attraction of human resources, marketing success, creativity and innovation, problem-solving, quality, and organizational flexibility. Cox and Blake reported that organizations effectively managing demographic diversity experience cost-savings due to higher employee retention. In terms of recruitment, employees are especially interested in working with businesses with high employee satisfaction ratings, businesses demonstrating they value diversity attract diverse employees. Because diverse populations respond to "selling goods and services . . . facilitated by a representational workforce" (Cox & Blake, 1991, p. 49), how a business markets its value of diversity is a key element of marketing success. In addition, Cox and Blake related why creativity, innovation, and problem-solving are enhanced by effectively managing diversity.

In support of Cox and Blake (1991), Mor Barak (2014) asserted diversity management creates a business competitive advantage in resource recruitment, marketing, problem-solving, marketing, recruitment, and retention. She further noted that diversity management in the United States was generated from historical legal action and social policies, e.g., 1964 Title VII of the

Civil Rights Act which mandated Equal Employment Opportunities (EEO) and from Affirmative Action initiatives. Thomas and Ely (1996) highlighted two distinct diversity management paradigms, one of which supports Mor Barak's (2014) view of diversity management models emerging from legal mandates. The first paradigm identified by Thomas and Ely (1996) is the "discrimination-and -fairness paradigm [which]resembles the thinking behind affirmative-action efforts" (p. 80) The second is the "access-and-legitimacy" paradigm (p. 80). The discrimination-and-fairness paradigm is described as a way leaders view diversity management through the lens of meeting federal mandates, treating employees fairly, and recruiting diverse populations. Success may be measured by recruitment and retention data which indicates an increase in diverse populations hired and retained. Thomas and Ely (1996) asserted that this paradigm can create "cognitive blind spots" (p. 82) resulting in a leader's inability to identify issues and find solutions. The second paradigm—access-and-legitimacy—is based on the "acceptance and celebration of differences" (p. 83). Thomas and Ely (1996) stated that the basis of this paradigm is related to the impact on business and consumer; a diverse workforce is viewed as legitimizing its market-based approach to attract the growing population of diverse customers and clients. However, in order to establish niche-markets, organizations attempt to capitalize on the cultural differences in its workforce and fail to analyze how the diverse team affects the work being accomplished. Thomas and Ely (1996) espoused and proposed a third and new paradigm for diversity management: the "learning-and-effectiveness paradigm." This outlook on diversity management incorporates and integrates the views and perspectives of diverse employees; by their "rethinking primary tasks and redefining markets" (Thomas & Ely, 1996, p. 86), including a firm's business practices, strategies and organizational culture. Greater

benefits to employees and business, they argued, can be realized by focusing on the inclusion of diverse employee's viewpoint, context, and frame of reference.

Interestingly, Bassett-Jones (2005) argued diversity management is "risky business" (p. 173) while unavoidable in organizations. Additionally, Basset-Jones stated that managing diversity can give rise to team conflict, discontent, and turmoil if organization leaders are unprepared to implement human resource strategies that value and capitalize diversity in the workforce. Because DOs can be tasked with leading diversity management, the responsibility can be overwhelming; especially when the HEI has not established diversity as a value. DOs are responsible for diversity management and leadership in HEI which includes work on recruitment, retention, and promotions (Garner, 2016; Nixon, 2013; Williams & Wade-Golden, 2013). Moreover, DOs can introduce EDI as an advantage and a way to unlock the benefits of diversity in a way that can place an HEI as a progressive and informed national model for the future and as a globally-minded institution.

Williams (2013) stated that diversity plans may constitute a complex matrix comprised of initiatives, goals, implementation stages, and strategies. EDI plans also require the identification for a system of campus-wide EDI accountability measures; measures which should be tracked and assigned to leaders across campus by DOs. According to W. A. Smith et al. (2011), as HEIs implement EDI initiatives campus-wide, the numbers of staff, students, and faculty from diverse backgrounds, orientations, and ideologies begin to increase. However, they also asserted that the increase in diversity alone is not what creates inclusive environments. A DO must go beyond gathering data and performing tasks and duties to foster an environment where EDI is embraced and humanized (Pless & Maak, 2004). A DO may develop diversity councils as a strategy to mobilize extra-organizational resources and as an approach to understanding diversity as being a

business imperative as endorsed by Tatli et al. (2015). In alignment with Tatli et al., Stevens, Plaut, and Sanchez-Burks (2008) considered inclusive, multiculturalism and positive organizational change as social capital, innovative potential, and a competitive edge. DOs face great challenges in their work to lead the work of building, sustaining, and monitoring inclusive workplaces.

Inclusive Workplaces

Ferdman (2014) argued inclusion is related to diversity at the workplace and is considered to be at the "forefront of contemporary diversity practice" (p. 4). He further adds that inclusion involves the manner in which organizations utilize and engage diverse team members. More importantly, it is about *how* diverse employees experience the acts of inclusion. Nishi and Rich (2014) concurred with Ferdman's (2014) views, describing an inclusive workplace as one whose leadership, policies, and practices, are evidenced when all workers are valued for their skills, points of view, values, and experiences. Each employee is valued for their contribution to the organization by bringing their "uniqueness without pressure to assimilate in order to be accepted" (Nishi & Rich, 2014, p. 331). Pless and Maak (2004) asserted that inclusion is an ethical imperative for diversity management. They view inclusion as a moral act, identifying this act as mutual recognition; mutual recognition demonstrated in four distinct ways: emotional; solidarity; legal: and, political recognition. Legal recognition is considered as equality, or the liberty to be considered and treated (included) as a member of the organization's citizenry. Pless and Maak's work is consistent with Vohra and Chari (2015) who reported, "Inclusive environments have been shown to influence work-related self-esteem and employees' willingness to go beyond their job-related roles to engage in citizenship behaviors" (p. 329). Vohra and Chari (2015) further suggested that organizations must carefully scrutinize the

rhetoric of inclusion to verify the organizational efforts of inclusion actually is experiences as such by the voices of minorities in the workplace. Inclusivity must not be experienced as tokenism. Therefore, they concluded, the only way to ensure inclusive workplace strategies and actions are authentic is to check in with employees from diverse populations.

Mor Barak (2000) approached the topic of inclusive workplaces from an ecosystem (communities and their extended environments) perspective. She defined an inclusive workplace as one that values individual and intergroup differences within the work force. She included intentional acts to contribute to the surrounding community, actions to mitigate needs of the disadvantaged, and, collaborative/cooperative efforts working with culturally and nationally diverse individuals. Mor Barak argued that inclusive workplaces are "guided by a set of values which propel its [organization's] policies and practices" (p. 342).

Nishi and Rich (2014) felt that organizations are not inclusive "if only the members of select groups . . . experience social belongingness and access to the organization's resources" (p. 331). Mor Barak (2000) addressed some of the challenges working toward an inclusive workplace; barriers may come from those in power. Barriers to inclusion may be overtly or covertly experienced by prejudice and discrimination (biased behaviors and perspectives). Citing the work of Lenski (1966), Kitano (1997) suggested that

> In every society, those who belong to the dominant social classes have the greatest capacity to explain and to disseminate their views of the existing system of inequality. They are therefore apt to support the social structure [that benefit them] and rationalize their advantage. (p. 49)

Inclusion is a state of mind, and a state of being; it is a way that organizational leaders fill the spaces they occupy. If and when inclusion is viewed or used as a tool by a leader, they can decide if, when, and how, they use, demonstrate and express inclusion. Inclusion can be demonstrated, experienced, and heard from a power-over leadership position when the following

language is used to bring new diverse employees into the circle of acceptance: *allows*, *permits*, *grants*, *let*, *admits*, *authorizes*, *tolerates*, and *concedes* to diverse employees joining existing teams.

In contrast, an inclusive leader who shares their power when bringing in new diverse employees into the circle of acceptance, demonstrates, and uses language such as *consults*, *invites*, *discusses*, *engages*, *yields*, *embraces*, *accepts*, and *welcomes* diverse employees into existing teams. Inclusion can be felt and experienced from a power-over perspective as another way of being minimalized and dismissed. This is in contrast to diverse employees experiencing inclusion from a power-sharing leader who demonstrates one is honored and valued for their differences. “Inclusion is not a natural consequence of diversity” (Bolger, 2017, para. 18.). She goes on to explain that inclusion goes beyond hiring diverse populations and must include the development and creation of a working environment that offers opportunities, leverages, and honors diverse employee’s gifts, talents, thinking, and, life’s experiences. Therefore, inclusion is inextricably linked to diversity and equity, with equity being the “why” element that frames and examines the dialogue of diversity and inclusion in the workplace.

Prior to creating an EDI strategy for change, a DO would benefit from exploring current research on the topic of DOs, such as Gravley-Stack, Ray, and Peterson’s (2016) Q-method study. That study offers new insights and perspectives into unique approaches to research DOs’ work, by exploring independent variables. First, it intersects the subjective experiences of DOs working within one of three DO vertical structure models (see Table 2.2) as identified by Williams and Wade-Golden (2013): “collaborative, unit-based, and portfolio divisional” (p. 95). Gravley-Stack et al. (2016) use the construct of the inclusive excellence (IE) to explore what

CDOs have in common. The IE Model was designed by Milem, Chang, and Antonio (2005) to guide higher education campuses to accomplish the following three goals:

1. To integrate diversity and quality efforts.
2. To institutionalize diversity.
3. To feature the educational benefits for students and the institution as a result of fully integrating and sustaining diversity initiatives (Williams, Berger, & McClendon 2005, p. iii).

In Gravley-Stack et al.'s (2016) Q method, statement groupings or "Q sets" were developed. These Q sets included five organizational change dimensions: institutional stakeholder leadership; bureaucratic processes for establishing goals and priorities; symbolic (identification and articulation of values); collegial (leader/stakeholder engagement for transformative change); and systemic (social, political, legal dynamics). Another key element of Gravley-Stack et al.'s study was to capture the DOs' perspectives and experiences of applying the IE model to transformational institutional change. What is salient about this study is that it offers a very unique perspective, included many independent variables, and applied a blend of qualitative and quantitative traditional research models. The two primary findings identified in this study are similar to the aforementioned studies (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2013; Williams et al., 2005):

- lack of support from higher education president and peers
- lack of institutional authority

Arnold and Kowalski-Braun (2012) supported Williams and Wade-Golden (2013) who stated that a DO must have the institution's president and executive administration team's

support. They also noted that a strong infrastructure, personnel, and resources are needed to make the DO's EDI work effective. In addition, they opined,

> Campus, communication must clarify that this person will not *do* [emphasis added] diversity but will instead establish a vision through which all members of the community can further infuse the principles of inclusion and equity into all aspects of the institution's work. (Arnold & Kowalski-Braun, 2012, p. 5)

DO Models in HEIs

Williams and Wade-Golden (2013) comprehensively identified and examined three DO models which they called the Collaborative Officer Model, the Unit-Based Model, and the Portfolio Divisional Model. The *Collaborative Officer Model* is characterized by "limited human resources . . . as officers may only have administrative and student support in their span of control" (p. 168). Williams and Wade-Gordon noted that this a low cost approach and "is more symbolic [than actually showing] material commitment to [the] CDO role" (p. 168). The *Unit-Based Model*, they argue, "is distinguished by the presence of a central CDO staff . . . [and] establishes a dedicated role to advise on matters of diversity" (p. 168). Williams and Wade-Golden (2013) observed that with this more substantial HEI commitment there is a greater potential for conflict with other units that may have their own approach to diversity and with campus-wide units. The *Portfolio Divisional Model* differs in the presence of several direct reporting units in a vertically integrated portfolio" (p. 169). While also likely to generate organizational conflict, Williams and Wade-Golden (2013) asserted several important advantages with this level of dedication:

> [It] enhances capacity to create new . . . initiatives projects and events . . . [and to] engage in collaborative relationships with others and seed new possibilities . . . [The model] sends powerful symbolic message of commitment to the campus diversity agenda. (p. 169)

DO models are based on many factors; for example, the DO's span of authority, support staff, funding, leadership vision, community and stakeholder pressure, programming, and research capacity. Some DO offices are one-person employee offices while comprise multiunit structures with multi-million-dollar budgets and highly complex in design. There are no perfect models; each one may be adapted to suit the need of the HEI. Whatever model is used or designed; each has to face complex EDI issues facing DOs in HEIs. According to Williams and Wade-Golden (2013), before deciding which DO model is implemented, decision-makers must consider the HEI's infrastructure. EDI change initiatives will have an impact on existing supporting staff, units, existing EDI committees and teams (p. 202). Williams and Wade-Golden (2013) argued that the DO position is "notoriously difficult to fill because it requires a wide range of competencies" (p. 142). However, they did identify key competencies a DO must possess to be able to carry out their role in HEI:

- technical mastery of diversity issues;
- political acumen;
- ability to cultivate a common vision;
- in-depth perspective on organizational change;
- sophisticated relational abilities;
- understanding the culture of HEIs; and,
- an orientation toward results. (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2013, p. 143)

Each competency is interconnected with the others. A DO's role requires that she has an intellectual (scholarly) knowledge of all aspects of EDI. Because HEIs are political entities, a DO must fully understand the political landscape and be able to engage diplomatically yet artfully in high profile issues. The DO must fully understand what the HEI president's vision is

for the institution—or help co-create and transform the pre-existing vision in a manner that serves all on campus. EDI strategies and initiatives are highly complex to put into action. A DO must be able to lead, initiate, navigate, mediate, and collaboratively pick up traction toward making organizational and development EDI change. These efforts require an excellent command of relationship-building communication; meeting department leads where they are while confidently upholding a high standard for EDI values and the basis for change and progress to be made.

Every HEI has an organizational chart, a hierarchy of governance, power, and control. A DO must understand who is in each position of governance, and what their role is so that when she is "at the table" during executive, managerial, committee meetings, she can strategically communicate her collaborative proposals and actions for EDI campus-wide change. By artfully accessing all seven of the competencies enumerated by Williams and Wade-Golden (2013), the DO actively takes part in her vital role fostering equitable diverse, and inclusive cultural change.

DOs' roles have certainly broadened to working for and with diverse members of marginalized community members. Farmer (2014) concluded that the DO has historically been viewed as a compliance officer. She noted the position has expanded significantly and has evolved to a role which focuses on diversity and the recruitment efforts focusing on women and minorities. In her qualitative, exploratory case study, she captured several participant's narratives and perspectives through semi-structured interviews. Farmer concluded that, in more recent years, the DO position and role is primarily designated to sustaining diversity and inclusion efforts across the institution. She argued that diversity and inclusion leaders must understand their role in creating an EDI culture on campus. This is supported by Bryant (2015) who identified factors directly associated with building an EDI culture: learning about contextual

issues, solid knowledge of faculty and staff procedures, consensus building skills, managing resistance to ED, and being familiar with campus politics. Bryant further emphasized the importance of building alliances and leveraging relationships as a source of learning about the political dynamics on campus. Farmer's study added depth and breadth to the DO research topic and although not gender, ethnic, nor education specific; it offers relevant and transferable information on the topic of DOs in HEI. Tatli et al. (2015) suggested that DOs—or "equality and diversity officers" as they are identified in the United Kingdom—can propel equity and diversity efforts by establishing "interconnections" (p. 1243) with other organizations. The business case for equity and diversity is noted, not as a replacement for social justice perspectives, but rather as a contribution to business viability**.** They see equity and diversity in terms of both the business and the social justice case for organizational change.

Tatli et al. (2015) suggested that budget cuts in equity and diversity initiatives in higher education in the UK mean that support is needed from additional "extra-organizational" (p. 1244) resources from divisions and from units within the organization such as human resources offices. Tatli et al.'s qualitative interview study and questionnaire included 20 participants each from different higher education institutions. The questionnaire and interviews primarily sought to identify tools and structures equity and diversity officers could use to effect change. They suggested that the need for equity and diversity professionals (such as DOs) must thoughtfully and strategically gain support from various colleagues in order to see diversity initiatives to fruition; both from a business and social justice operative.

Higher education is influenced by legislation which addresses equity and diversity as a legal, business, and social justice matter. Additional considerations for managing and implementing equity and diversity initiatives in higher education institutes is their reputation and

social responsibility. The study by Tetli et al. (2015) is relevant to my research in that it identifies strategies for EDI institutional change by developing collaborative relationships with extra-organizational resources and support. This study offers a structured pathway and interview guide in a comprehensive manner adding to the scholarship on enhancing EDI initiatives by identifying and describing three key dimensions of change: situatedness, relationality, and praxis

Arnold and Kowalski-Braun (2012), both female researchers, highlighted three critical components (creation, recruitment, and fit) for successfully preparing the DO position in a four-year public institution. Their research focus was on the preparation and implementation of a DO in HEI. Vetting the position, establishing clearly articulated HEI statements on diversity, equity, and inclusion, sets the tone for bringing a DO on board. Arnold and Kowalski-Braun recommended using Bolman and Deal's (1991) four perspectives for organizational reframing: human resource, symbolic, political, and structural. They suggested that these frames could be used to assess an institution's readiness for a DO.

Arnold and Kowalski-Braun provided examples of four-year universities that have explored and evaluated how diversity work was viewed on campus both where that is largely as one person's job or where all faculty and staff on campus became involved. Some HEIs have chosen to create EDI units in support of hiring a DO. DO recruitment and retention processes are offered as guides for establishing a high degree of credibility and transparency on campus. Interestingly, and of great importance is that the work of these two female authors (Arnold & Kowalski-Braun, 2012) helped provide what was grassroots EDI work, institutional legitimacy, and support by formalizing all aspects of the DO position. Worthington et al. (2014) highlighted the DO standards as established by the National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education (NADOHE). They noted that the DO standards inform and may assist the

administrative body to work with the DO to align their EDI institutional goals. The 12 NADOHE standards for DOs were developed based on the "evolving characteristics" of the DO position specifically in HEI. The standards are designed to serve as a guide to clarify the scope of DO's work. The 12 standards are shown in Table 2.1 and serve as a pathway or guide for HEIs hiring and training DOs.

Table 2.1

NADOHE's 12 Standards of Professional Practice for DOs

Diversity Officers Standards	**EDI Skills and Practices**
Standard 1: "Has the ability to envision and conceptualize the diversity mission of an institution through a broad and inclusive definition of diversity" (Worthington et al., 2014, p. 230).	DOs give voice in diverse ways that evolve in regional, national, and international contexts – they extend beyond traditional or historical understanding of diversity and its application.
Standard 2: "Understands and is able to articulate in verbal and written form, the importance of equity, inclusion, and diversity to the broader educational mission of higher education institutions" (Worthington et al., 2014, p. 231).	Fundamental ability (written, verbal) forms of communicating on the topic of equity, diversity, and inclusion are necessary with diverse, formal, and informal constituents and stakeholders, and faculty, staff, legislators, media, alumni, trustees, in ways that fit the broader educational missions of the institutions served.
Standard 3: "Understands the contexts, cultures, and politics within institutions that impact the implementation and management of effective diversity change efforts" (Worthington et al., 2014, p. 231).	Internal contextual landscapes are influenced by transformative interactions with stakeholder. A DO must have a strategic vision to conceptualize their work to advance diversity, inclusion, and equity. They must have the administrative acumen to be responsible for a broader contextual landscape.
Standard 4: "Has knowledge and understanding of and is able to articulate in verbal and written form, the range of evidence for the educational benefits that accrue to students through diversity, inclusion, and equity in higher education (Worthington et al., 2014, p. 231).	Knowledge of current and existing research provides a critical foundation for the DO work; a wide range of evidence provides the basis for daily activities, diversity programming, leadership, and strategic planning at multiple levels of institutional operations.
Standard 5: "Has an understanding of how curriculum development efforts may be used to advance the diversity mission of higher education institutions" (Worthington et al., 2014, p. 231).	DOs partner with faculty in curriculum development efforts to facilitate inclusive teaching and learning practices.
Standard 6: "Has an understanding of how institutional programming can be used to enhance the diversity mission of higher	DOs can identify and apply multiple sources of delivery methods to reach diverse and complex audiences within campus communities, e.g., presentations, workshops,

Diversity Officers Standards	EDI Skills and Practices
education institutions for faculty, students, staff, and administrators (Worthington et al., 2014, p. 231).	restorative justice, town hall meetings, conferences, institutes, and community outreach.
Standard 7: "Has an understanding of the procedural knowledge for responding to bias incidents when they occur on college or university campuses" (Worthington et al., 2014, p. 231).	DOs lead appropriate and effective responses to hate crimes and bias offering advocacy and support to victims of crime; provide consultation to campus and community constituents about incidents.
Standard 8: "Has basic knowledge of how various forms of institutional data can be used to benchmark and promote accountability for the diversity mission of higher education institutions" (Worthington et al., 2014, p. 232).	DOs assess beyond compositional data and surveys. DOs must have basic knowledge of various methods of institutional data collection (academic achievement gaps, academic remediation, and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) participation, recruitment/retention (faculty and students) to promote accountability.
Standard 9: "Has an understanding of the application of campus climate research in the development and advancement of a positive and inclusive campus climate for diversity" (Worthington et al., 2014, p. 232).	DOs should be capable of providing oversight of periodic assessments related to campus climate and diversity, equity, and inclusion. DOs draw upon the expertise of internal/external consultants to conceptualize and conduct research – utilize findings to effect change and advance the development of institutional strategic planning efforts.
Standard 10: "Broadly understands the potential barriers that faculty face in the promotion and/or tenure process in the context of diversity-related professional activities (e.g., teaching, research, service)" (Worthington et al., 2014, p. 232).	Teaching, research, and service activities are intellectual drivers for HEIs. DOs work in collaboration with academic community to support/advocate for faculty who work to challenge the hegemony of disciplinary body of knowledge – for those historically underrepresented.
Standard 11: "Has current and historical knowledge related to issues of nondiscrimination, access, and equity in higher education institutions" (Worthington et al., 2014, p. 232).	Access and equity are central to the mission of HEI, as are nondiscriminatory laws, regulations, administrative rules, and, policies. Sexual orientation nondiscrimination can be incorporated into HEI policies although federal and state laws
Standard 12: "Has awareness and understanding of the various laws, regulations, and policies related to equity and diversity in higher education" (Worthington et al., 2014, p. 232).	HEIs operate under the authority and jurisdiction of laws, regulations, and policies related to or affecting equity and diversity. DOs must understand how laws mandate specific actions regarding issues of harassment, hate, nondiscrimination, equal access and treatment, and procurement/supplier diversity.

Parker (2015) highlighted the importance of HEI positioning and the structures that support the DO position in HEI. He noted that the hiring of a DO is often a result of a campus protest or an incident that creates a reactionary decision that ultimately motivated something be

done to address the high-profile issues of EDI. His research questions focus on the role, positionality, and how the HEI approach to EDI impacts the DO. The study concluded by summarizing the fact that DO positions in higher education are still evolving. The unique aspect of this study is the dialogue which captures the unique perspectives and experiences from DOs who are from diverse professional backgrounds and who have several things in common; their EDI spirit, passion, and motivation for leading and transforming HEI to become more equitable, diverse, and inclusive.

Challenges Faced by DOs in HEIs

Sturm (2006) stated, "University change agents occupy a difficult and pivotal position" (p. 249). Serving as a DO brings many challenges; their impact and potential for higher education institutional EDI change may vary depending upon organizational leadership, level of executive support and resource allocation. Additional factors that impact the DOs work is the HEI's history on addressing racialized issues, willingness to have dialogue around inequities and, the current campus culture. Public institutions and legislatures may have expectations for the DO to create a safe and inviting campus for all within a short period of time after they are hired. Williams and Wade-Golden (2013), posited that a DO "can be a lightning rod for criticism" (p. 69), due to opposition by some who actually support efforts to provide equitable services and access to diverse populations. Williams and Wade-Golden (2013) observed that opposition to and criticism about the hiring of a DO may actually come from EDI proponents because the position is, "often the symbolic face of diversity, and this ends up being the go-to person, no matter what the diversity issue" (p. 69). It can become problematic if the DO is viewed as the only go-to person for EDI issues because EDI institutional change is only possible when the

need, intention, and action are fully understood, supported, and engaged in by leadership executives, faculty, staff, and student governance.

Not only are DOs expected to bring about EDI cultural change in institutions serving thousands of students, at times their job descriptions also include their duties of tracking change, creating metrics, and equity lens tools and instruments. They may be viewed or expected to be the "EDI patrol" who develops frameworks for accountability—without being given authority to take action when the agreed upon accountability framework has been signed-off by the executive level of the institution. Another challenge may come from an oppositional stance toward the hiring of a DO from faculty and staff of color who have historically experienced inequities and have concerns that hiring a DO could be just an excuse for absolving campus leaders from leading authentic EDI change. Aguilar et al. (2017) reported on the firm Witt/Kieffer's[2] survey of 81 DOs across the United States The survey identified several key factors needed to support DO success.

- 91% stated their backgrounds helped prepare them for the challenges as a DO.
- 16% stated there were Diversity and Inclusion strategies in place when they were hired.
- 62% stated they were inaugural DO positions.
- 53% stated they were given adequate resources to do their jobs successfully.
- 16% of DOs stated the institutions had a strategic diversity plan at the time they were hired.
- 40% indicated that they report directly to the chancellor/resident/CEO.
- 60% reported their responsibilities "changed significantly" in their first year.

The data indicated that few HEIs had strategic EDI plans when the DO was hired; less than half reported directly to the HEI president; more than half are in newly established DO

[2] Witt-Kiefer is an international executive search firm headquartered in Illinois.

positions; and, a high percentage noted that their backgrounds greatly contributed to their work. Aguilar et al. (2017) argued that DO positions can be successful with the following conditions in place: EDI held as a priority: diverse staff retention and recruitment efforts evident; DO duties clearly explained; and, institutional leadership decision-making included the DO. DOs, they concluded, are considered "vanguards of cultural [EDI] change" and, therefore, can be assumed to experience a high degree of stress.

LatinX DOs—Their Role in Social Justice Change

Lyman, Strachan, and Lazaridou (2012) noted the importance of women demonstrating resiliency as leaders of EDI change in HEIs. They quote educator Joanne Chesley: "I have learned that leadership for social justice is all about resilience, about pressing on in the face of obstacles, about never feeling powerless, and remaining ever aware of the meaning behind the struggle" (as cited in Lyman et al., 2012, p. 125). Women's stories demonstrating courage, insights, and perseverance in the face of opposition while championing social justice can be validating for Latinas. Lyman et al. captured authentic women leaders' stories about living and breathing social justice work while challenging the existing, limiting socially structured gender and cultural norms.

LatinX leaders may be moved to lead social justice change based on their spiritualidad. Larson and Murtadha (2002) supported this vein of thought citing research that describes spirituality and love as the motivation for social justice change for educational leaders. Because the LatinX population possesses and values it as a core cultural strength, it can be assumed that spirituality plays a role in their commitment to social justice leadership and change. Larson and Murtadha corroborated this stating, "Spirituality is often the force that propels the activism of leaders for social justice in education" (p. 143).

Cheung and Halpern (2010) asserted that Latina leaders place *familia* (family) as a high priority in life; balancing family and work with emphasis on how they interface is viewed as a top priority. They were concerned with how current social justice movements and socioeconomic and educational issues impact their families and those within their interrelated community members, for example, student retention, graduation rates, and educational gaps. Like other DOs, LatinX DOs bring their whole selves into their work—their cultural values, family history, worldviews and lived experiences. Their whole selves and way of being are infused into their practices; their way of being transfers into their EDI organizational development strategies, initiatives and DO models for change.

Unique Stressors for Diversity Officers

DOs have unique stressors due to the uncharted equity, diversity, and inclusion work they are assigned to do in complex higher education institutions. Bryant (2015) stated that "Learning how to implement change on campus or developing strategies to approach immediate challenges are a few examples of the difficulties that DOs encounter daily" (pp. 18–19). As the point for leading institutional-wide EDI change, a DO's work is inherently complicated, often in male-dominant systems where Whiteness is held as the norm, perpetuated by Whites holding positions of authority, power, and privilege. Carter (2007) argued, "Whiteness is a hegemonic system that perpetuates certain dominant ideologies about who receives power and privilege. Whiteness maintains itself in cultures through power dynamics within language, religion, class, race relations, sexual orientation, etc." (p. 152).

Cole (2019) explained Whiteness as being directly connected to the social construction of People of Color to be seen as "other." She defined Whiteness as a set of characteristics and experiences attached to the White race and to White skin. Cole (2019) argued,

> The most important and consequential thing . . . is that whiteness is perceived as being normal. White people "belong" and are therefore entitled to certain rights, while people from other racial categories . . . are perceived and, therefore, treated as unusual, foreign, or exotic. (para. 2)

Adding to these stressors is that DOs "generally have no formal authority to command, reward, or punish individuals outside their formal span of control and leadership" (Williams & Wade-Golden 2006, p. 3). Jones (1972) said that institutional racism refers to "those established laws, customs, and practices which systematically reflect and produce racial inequities in American society" (p. 131). DOs may need to address provocative socio-political issues on campus such as students who report racial tensions, marginalization, and incidences of discrimination, bias, and hate crimes. When students from under-served demographic populations are negatively impacted, as might be seen in student retention data, this too becomes a stressor for the DO who is expected to intervene in systemic inequities, as acknowledged by Pickett et al. (2017). Another stressor for DOs may be feelings of isolation, especially if there is a lack of support from peers to "restructure institutional practices in order to increase equality of opportunity" (Levin, 2003, p. 102). In addition, DOs of Color (LatinX DOs) may have personally experienced inequities and possibly racial trauma as higher education students themselves. Therefore, DOs may be emotionally triggered by stories of racial trauma (Jernigan et al., 2015) experienced by staff and students on campus.

These types of culturally and ethnically shared connections may feel overwhelming for a DOs working tenaciously to create inclusive cultures on campus. Racial trauma is explained by Jernigan et al. (2015) as a series of physical and/or psychological symptoms People of Color experience due to being exposed to stressful experiences of racism. Jernigan et al. compared racial trauma with the symptoms experienced by survivors of other types of trauma (e.g., sexual assault survivors). Some of the symptoms noted were shame, headaches, hypervigilance, body

aches, difficulty with memory, confusion, insomnia, and guilt (Bryant-Davis & Ocampo, 2005; Carter, 2007). Jernigan et al. (2015) further noted "racism experiences never exist in isolation; racial trauma is a cumulative experience, where *every personal or vicarious encounter with racism contributes to a more insidious*, *chronic stress* [emphasis added]" (para. 4).

W. A. Smith et al. (2011) concurred with Jernigan et al. (2015) noting, "the accumulative stress from racial microaggressions produces racial battle fatigue. The stress of unavoidable front-line racial battles in historically White spaces leads to People of Color feeling mentally, emotionally, and physically drained" (pp. 300–301). This may help explain why DOs may feel a unique type of stress and become anxious for meaningful, timely, and sustainable EDI change. Interestingly, the aforementioned lived experiences may also be the basis for their passion, resiliency, and withstand the stress to lead EDI change. Harrell (2000) explained that "transgenerational transmission of group trauma" (p. 45) or the multi-generational stories of social injustices are also significant stressors for People of Color. Harrell is supported by Jernigan et al. (2015) who argued that multi-generational stories of similar painful and traumatic discriminatory events experienced by their parents, grandparents, and possibly their great-grandparents also causes emotional stressors. They pointed out that a DO may meet with many students, students who look like them, and are from similar cultural backgrounds. Although the impact of racism is a lived reality for many, "within the context of racism, there have always been abundant examples of resilience, strength of character, capacity for love and giving, joy, fulfillment, and success" (Harrell, 2000, p. 42).

Harrell (2000) further noted: "cultural values and racial identity reflect deeply rooted internal aspects of the individual which can provide racism-resistant armor" (p. 51). Due to the racial trauma and stressors, I was keenly interested in conducting a study that seeks to explore

and capture the stories of LatinX DOs from their cultural, social, and philosophical perspectives. Some of the questions which may be explored in this study are: How Latina DOs navigate, manage, and remain resilient under psychological stressors. In particular, how LatinX DOs access their cultural core strengths in building inclusive communities, on-and-off campus.

Leadership teams on campus may fail to understand that EDI is everyone's responsibility and, must be responded to collectively. When this does not happen, what then is the impact on DOs? How might the HEI executive leaders ensure that a DO does not find herself working in isolation? My hope was that this study may offer beneficial insights to supervisors, administrators, human resources department leads, executives, and stakeholders. It is imperative that higher education leaders and administrators (presidents, provost, vice-presidents, human resource directors, professors, governing student body, etc.), endorse, activate, demonstrate, and collaborate with the DO, intentionally and decisively. Collaborative leadership teams, working alongside the DO, can co-create and co-produce powerful EDI mechanisms which serve to establish institutionalized EDI plans, processes, protocols, and practices—only then can inequities that continue to plague education in the 21st century be forthrightly addressed. Moreover, by working collaboratively with a DO, a well-established and well-informed EDI team can begin to make institutional changes in its culture. By becoming culturally responsive, relevant, and reinforcing practitioners, students can be encouraged to build upon their own unique core cultural capacities and better prepare themselves to enter globally diverse working communities.

LatinX Leaders in Higher Education

LatinXers (Latinas) are greatly underrepresented in executive, administrative, and managerial positions in HEIs. Hurtado and Ruiz-Alvarado (2015) reported that across the United

States in HEIs, 3.4% are Hispanic (LatinX). In addition, Nixon (2013) noted Hispanics represent 13. 2% of the nation's DOs in HEI of which 55.6% are identify as female (p. 55). Montoya (1994), as quoted in Nixon (2013), noted that LatinX "are now represented in virtually every college and university. But, for the most part, we find ourselves isolated. [Because] rarely has another LatinX gone before us" (pp. 190–191). Although the following quote is about Latina professors, based on my own experience, the following is true of LatinX professionals in HEI: "As Latina/o professors, we are newcomers to a world defined and controlled by discourses that do not address our realities, that do not affirm our intellectual contributions, that do not seriously examine our worlds" (Martínez-Alemán, 1995, pp. 74–75).

Affirming Martínez-Alemán (1995), Turner (2002), a Latina professor, studied the many challenges faced by women of color in higher education; her study includes LatinXers. Turner offered insights into her own struggles as a LatinX faculty member in higher education. Her qualitative study demonstrates her shared positionality with her participants and her intercultural connection to them; a matter very relevant for me as a social researcher. In this study, Turner became an insider–outside researcher and, conversely, an outsider-inside researcher (Mullings, 1999). She included her own lived experiences of marginalization. Turner was interested in obtaining a master's degree in business, so she entered a university admissions office to inquire about such a program. Sadly, she was told she was not a good fit for a master's level program in business.

I had a similar experience as a LatinX. I entered a local university admissions office to inquire about enrolment and within the first 30 seconds, without any consideration beyond the initial impression of my appearance, was told "You can't afford it here." Little did the

admissions employee know I had the funds to enroll and pay full tuition. I chose to walk out of the admissions office with my dignity and enrolled elsewhere.

Interestingly, over a decade later I was hired by that particular HEI as a consultant, serving as a conflict resolution facilitator between male and female senior faculty of color faculty members. The women who engaged in the conflict resolution sessions reported they experienced acts of microaggression and marginalization by their White male counterparts. The women displayed "unambiguous empowerment" and courage by giving voice to the discriminations they experienced. Turner (2002) reflected such power in the following statement:

> By bringing ourselves [as women who lead change] through the door and supporting others in doing so as well, we can define ourselves in and claim unambiguous empowerment, creating discourses that our realities, affirm our intellectual contributions, and seriously examine our worlds. (p. 89)

Turner held semi-structured interviews with female participants working in higher education. She captured the narratives of women of color who experienced: multiple marginality, isolation, and, challenges establishing credibility in a primarily White male-led, higher education institution. Turner's study helped convey the lived realities of women of color who intentionally work to hold onto their cultural truths while working under the powerful influences of contemporary American culture.

Similar to Turner" work, Conner's (2016) qualitative study addressed the experiences of women of color in higher education. Her findings also noted that women of color in higher education experienced isolation, multiple marginalities based on gender and race, personal stress balancing career and family, and being challenged by students in the classroom. Both Connor and Turner highlighted the need for more research on the experiences of women of color in higher education. According to Conner, "their [women of color] voices and stories have been rarely heard throughout history and are often silenced today" (p. 107). Nixon's (2013) qualitative

study corroborated both Conner and Turner's research, which also shared participants' stories about navigating the complexities in HEI, also experiencing multiple marginality, isolation, and micro-aggressions. Nixon conducted semi-structured interviews with five women of color (two Latinas) DOs in higher education. She drew upon theoretical foundations of critical race theory (CRT) and critical feminism theory (CFT).

Nixon (2013) addressed the gaps in research as they relate to the topic of "personal and professional costs of isolation" (p. 33) while serving in the role as DO. In her study, Nixon noted that the commonalities between her (gender and race) and the participants in her work, brought with it a high degree of vulnerability, and an elevated degree of confidential and personal disclosure during the interviews. Nixon noted the emic versus etic (Morris, Leung, Ames, & Nickel, 1999), or insider/outsider" (emic/etic) elements which impact the interview process between the researcher and the participants. The researcher may be an outsider observing those she is studying (etic), and yet, because of her commonalities of race and ethnicity shared with the participants, she may also be considered an insider (emic).

In other words, the researcher is an outsider, yet an insider due to her shared experiences as a female (gender) of color (ethnicity) also working in higher education. Nixon (2013) recommended future research be conducted in the following areas: moving beyond examining DO structures and strategies; comparing male DO's of color with women DOs of color; and studying specific DO identity groups. Turner (2002), Conner (2016) and Nixon (2013) each elucidated the experiences of women of color who encounter tokenism and marginalization while tasked with addressing EDI issues on campus. Maraña (2016) echoed the aforementioned researchers' findings in study of the lived experiences of women of color who hold DO positions in higher education. Guinier (1997) advocated that the lived experiences of women of color must

be positioned at the center of research rather than relegated to the margins or Wing's (1997) edited volume focused on capturing the lived experiences of navigating intersections of gender race/ethnicity as a DO. It was designed as a phenomenological qualitative study which applied a semi-structured interview process. Seventeen women of color (five LatinXers) were interviewed. Maraña identified several themes:

- Previous experiences led to their professional interests for becoming a DO;
- Gender/ethnicity identity impacts their work in challenging and unique ways.
- Assumptions and stereotypes impacted their work.

Farmer's (2014) qualitative study with 12 DOs from private sector companies helped substantiate the role of a DO is to promote diversity and inclusion—a commonality with DOs in higher education. Her exploratory study focused on stories and strategies for sustaining diversity within organizations. Ten participants were interviewed; two were identified as "Hispanic" females. Farmer provided a provisional list of organizational categorical questions for the interview using Cox and Blake's (1991) framework for managing and valuing diversity and inclusion. Farmer identified and emphasized the coding categories by focusing on organizational leadership, measurement, research, change, and management. What sets my study apart from Farmer's, Maraña's (2016), Nixon's (2013), Conner's (2016), and Turner's (2002), is its focus on sustaining diversity and inclusion initiatives. Wilson (2013) conducted a grounded theory qualitative study which included one LatinX DO. Bordas (2013) asserted that Latina leaders benefit from exercising deep reflections of cultural connections to our roots, heritage, and self, as leaders. This was highlighted by Bordas as she referred to the cultural asset and practice of *conciencia*; knowing oneself through cultural awareness. She noted the cultural values we possess are what sustain us and offer resiliency as social justice leaders. Latina leaders are

encouraged to feel confident and emboldened as leaders because we possess innate culturally-based strengths some of which are conocimiento (profound awareness), simpatía (charisma), *orgullo* cultural (cultural pride), *disfrasismo* (ability to hold multiple truths), and collectivismo (collectivism). We are able to re-imagine and co-create transformative collective capacities for change. Latinas can access, or learn to access, their cultural core strengths with an inclusive community spirit that fosters contribution and service. Our core cultural strengths, the foundation for helping us stay true to our personal mission propels, activates, and sustains our social justice leadership. Key elements of LatinX culturally-based leadership are best described by Bordas (2013).

> Historically, power has been hierarchical, the domain of the influential few, and associated with control and dominance. Most often power has been found in the hands of White males. Latino [LatinX] power, on the other hand, has evolved from the community—it is the power of We [collectivism]—the power that people have to change their lives for the better. Latino power is accessible to many people. Diffused power means leadership is not concentrated in one voice or only a few. Instead, Latino power is leadership by the many—the thousands of Latino leaders working every day in communities across the country. Leaders encourage people to tap into their own power. (p. x)

Because LatinXers are collectivist and born into relationally-based cultures, we seek to build trusting relationships by demonstrating personalismo—trust-building through mutual respect (G. Flores, 2000). LatinXers understand the collaborative spirit that is necessary to build complex inter-relational leadership alliances for co-creating change. Booysen (2014) demonstrated the link between relational and inclusive leadership; they are in sync with one another and work in tandem to establish meaningful relationships based on "practicing learning in relations and in context" (p. 305).

A DO does not have to have all the answers to issues that arise. Allowing trial and error and recognizing that the learning in relations process has no absolutes and no end is important

for LatinX DOs to keep in mind. Leadership is highly complex as are EDI issues in HEIs. In an effort to call attention to LatinX DOs in HEIs and based on the fact that the literature on the topic is minimal, I believe, the present study contributes research data from a unique perspective that has yet to be well considered. My study applied a framework of social justice leadership with a focus on the following four leadership theories: social justice, relational, transformational, and inclusive. Applying a single leadership theory to bring about EDI institutional change is illogical. However, carefully considering the application and practice of accessing various leadership theories, LatinX DOs will be better equipped to address EDI issues as constructivist EDI campus consultants. Therefore, social justice, relational, transformational, and, inclusive leadership theories will be considered individually and collectively for their potential to serve as an EDI constructivist lens framework for leading change.

Leadership Theories: Social Justice, Relational, Transformational, Inclusive, and Ensemble

Social justice leadership. Jean-Marie, Normore, and Brooks (2009) opined that social justice has become a 21st century concern for educational leaders and scholars due to demographic changes, cultural shifts, achievement gaps within marginalized populations and accountability. Bell (1997) argued that social justice is both a goal and a process, the goal being equitable engagement and participation of all people in a society designed to serve all. The process Bell referred to is the active engagement and participation of all peoples in society (collective human agency) creating equitable change. Larson and Murtardha (2002) stated that social justice leadership in education places a focus on challenging systems which result in inequities. They argued that social justice leadership is the act of "creating greater freedom, opportunity, and justice for all citizens . . . better able to participate in and sustain a free, civil,

multicultural, and democratic society" (p. 136). Social justice leadership may arise from a sense of social responsibility, a responsibility to take action based on Latina moral, ethical, and philosophical principles, and values (Venegas-García, 2013). Reyes and Wagstaff (2005) described social justice leadership as intervening in injustices by taking action (p. 101). Similarly, Goldfarb and Grinberg (2002) stated that social justice leadership is about, "actively engaging in reclaiming, appropriating, sustaining, and advancing inherent human rights of equity, equality, and fairness in social, economic, educational, and personal dimensions" (p. 162). According to Furman (2012), social justice leadership requires reflection and action while Rapp (2002) earlier noted that social justice leadership is proactive, transformative, and, oppositionally imaginative, corresponding with the topic of education, Theoharis (2007) described social justice as "addressing and eliminating marginalization in schools" (p. 223).

According to Furman (2012), education leaders are concerned with social justice due to the achievement gaps, changing demographics and diversity, and deficit thinking in school policies and school programs. Other scholars work is consistent with that of Furman (2012) and Theoharis (2007), indicating that social justice in education is multi-dimensional in nature; emancipating, freeing, liberating, non-oppressive, inclusive, and empowering for marginalized groups (Brooks, Jean-Marie, Normore, & Hodgins, 2007; Freire, 1972/2009; Young, 1990). Gewirtz and Cribb (2002), identified three dimensions of social justice leadership: distributive justice—equitable distribution; cultural justice—absence of cultural domination; and, associational justice—marginalized groups having full participation in decision-making processes.

It is of utmost importance to understand how oppressive historical and sociopolitical factors continue to impact Latinas as they practice leadership within an EDI framework on

campus. DOs in HEIs are therefore active leaders based in academic environments seeking social justice change as a goal to be accomplished through multiple processes. DOs actively lead by intervening in systems and processes which are inequitable. In addition, social justice leadership, as argued by Furman (2012) spans five dimensions: "personal, interpersonal, communal, systemic, and ecological" (p. 191).

LatinX leadership in the 21st century brings an overwhelming responsibility to face inevitable changes necessary for EDI to exist in HEIs. By demonstrating *simpatía* (charisma), LatinX DO guides, inspires, and intellectually stimulates her followers to tap into their empathy for others. LatinX DOs are working during a tempestuous, politically polarized climate in our nation which places psychological and intellectual demands on her. They must access their core cultural strengths, demonstrate courage, and tenacity, as a social justice, relational, inclusive, and transformational leader. They must strategically apply the leadership skills, competencies, and leadership practices they have mastered to help guide EDI institutional change while sustaining their energy and commitment to social justice.

Relational leadership. Cunliffe and Eriksen (2011) stated that relational leadership is about "relationally-responsive dialogic" (p. 1425) leadership practices which include the co-creation of respectful, honest, and open dialogue. They argue that relational leadership is a deliberate act of engagement that seeks and is open to new possibilities, a day-to-day dialogic exchange based on meaningful engagement that includes all aspects of conversation with those the leader works with.

Relational leadership opens an exchange which recognizes and captures the realities of differences and transcend them through dialogues with a center. Based on precepts adapted from Hubbard (2004), Winters (2014) outlined a set of behaviors needed to "live inclusion" (p. 212):

- "Modify your listening skills [including listening} . . . "for value-based cultural assumptions" (p. 212).
- Inquire, "Ask necessary and appropriate questions." (p. 212).
- Demonstrate empathy as part of shifting "the frame of reference when necessary" (p. 212).
- "Manage conflict constructively [demonstrating] an understanding of different cultural assumptions about what conflict is and alternative ways of dealing with it" (p. 212).
- Recognizing "unconscious bias and stereotypes . . . [including] knowing one's own culture, why you believe what you believe" (p. 213).
- "Show respect for and interest in the other person [including learning about the cultures of those around you (geography, customs, history." (p. 213. This should include awareness that "humor is handled differently in different cultures" (p. 213).
- "Strive to interact meaningfully with those you perceive as 'different" (p. 213).
- "Strive to be nonjudgmental . . . when judging others' cultural values and norms, refrain from using only your yardstick" (p. 213).
- "Make decisions using a cultural lens [asking yourself] am I making assumptions based only on my own world view and cultural frame?" (p. 214).

LatinX DO work cannot be accomplished alone. They must build trusting relationships and alliances with diverse groups to meet EDI goals as they co-lead transformational processes on campus (Rivera, 2014; Uhl-Bien, 2011; Yukl, 2006).

Transformational leadership. Transformational leaders are intentional and deliberate about uplifting the morale of their followers through motivational argument, inspiring visions,

and by exciting the intellect. Transformational leaders meaningfully engage with their followers in a manner which empowers individuals, thereby developing highly involved teams in the co-construction of the future (Bass, 1999; Kark, Shamir, & Chen, 2003). Transformational leaders maintain professional and ethically high standards, while displaying confidence and determination in achieving her goals. The confidence and determination displayed by a transformation leader, according to Kark et al. (2003), are based on three aspects of self, as previously outlined by Lord, Brown, and Freiberg (1999): a personal self (individual attributes and preferences), a relational self (close relations with specific others), and a collective self (based on social group affiliations and social group identification).

Transformation leadership fits LatinX DO leader's cultural values of collectivism in that its motivation focuses on transforming lives and positive group outcomes. Transformation leadership believes in the human potential and is based on personal values of serving the greater good and not just for the self (Northouse, 2010). In agreement with Northouse, Paludi et al. (2011) argued that transformational women leaders empower others by creating vision, are social justice advocates, change organizational culture, including, take risks through persuasive and assertive approaches. Silva and Grabe (2011) asserted that women's transformational leadership is displayed in the way they organize the workplace making it interactive, facilitating a "participatory environment" (p. 34) where inclusive practices create strong intragroup identities. Viljoen (2015) encouraged organization leaders to maintain hope while recognizing that transformation is a journey that can bring about unplanned consequences.

Inclusive leadership. Winters (2014) aligns with Booysen (2014) who stated inclusive leadership goes beyond "assimilation strategies . . . [and] organizational demography to empowerment and participation by all" (p. 298). Inclusive leaders see situations from multiple

perspectives and invite multiple voices into decision-making processes. I submit that inclusive leaders are able to manage the uncertainties of paradoxical situations—they must be creative as they go beyond leadership formulas and models. A paradoxical mindset is used as an inclusive lens for greater understanding and a catalyst for change (Yip, 2017). Being inclusive would require a leader to invite differences of opinion, beliefs, and cultural values into a meaningful dialogue, thereby facilitating the resolution of conflicting agendas and contradictory demands. Although these points can be true of relational leadership, which invites polyphonic voices into meaningful dialogue and facilitating differing points of views, inclusive leadership is quite different in terms of understanding social structures and their impact on marginalized populations. Inclusive leadership anticipates and acknowledges the impact of intersectionality and oppression. Inclusive leaders draw upon the lived experiences and multi-generational knowledge of their followers to discuss and co-create collaborative social justice change. In practice, the inclusive leader culturally responds to diverse populations in culturally relevant and culturally reinforcing ways. She also maintains a balance of emotional and cognitive intelligence, fully understanding the dynamics and negative impact of power-over and privilege on marginalized groups (Adams, Bell, Goodman, & Joshi, 2016; Bell 2016). Power differences are also identified by Booysen (2014), supported by Adams et al. (2016). Booysen identified several distinctions between traditional entity-based leadership and inclusive relational-based leadership; two relevant examples are presented in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2

Comparison of Traditional Entity-Based Leadership with Inclusive Relational-Based Leadership

Characteristic	Traditional Entity-Based Leadership	Inclusive Relational-Based Leadership
Use of Power:	Power is seen as a commodity, a leadership tool, concentrated in certain individuals Forceful and controlling Smooth things over Hierarchical and positional	Power is seen as distributed throughout the system; focus on mutual enabling practices such as collaboration, power sharing, and empowerment Thoughtful, reflective, transparent, participating, and inclusive Set courageous expectations Networked
Decision-Making Processes:	Direct, tell, and sell Give "marching orders" Make decisions	Elicit and facilitate; create space for dialogue Set boundaries and frame the intention Create a process for engagement, decision-making, and leading as learning

According to Booysen (2014) inclusive leaders invite a co-creative approach to decisions, identify boundaries based in EDI and offer a context for intended actions, base their work in inclusive dialogue environments, are mindful of others, and, share their power. Bourke and Dillon (2016) identified six distinctly different, but equally as important "signature traits of an inclusive leader" (para. 13): cultural intelligence (understands and values cultural frame differences), cognizance (mindful of bias, both personal and organizational), courage (challenges the status quo), commitment (to diversity and inclusion), curiosity (comfortable with ambiguity and open mindedness), and collaboration (leverage diversity in groups).

Inclusive leaders are identified as such because they value culturally diverse groups and settings. They also possess the knowledge, skills, and talents to work within differences. Inclusive leadership invites difference of thought and perspective; it highlights the importance of cultural intelligence. So then, Inclusive leadership theory is in alignment with Ensemble Leadership Theory which places a high value on respecting cultural differences and being flexible and adaptive in one's leadership practice.

Ensemble leadership theory. Ensemble leadership theory (ELT) is introduced in this dissertation because of its cultural relevance, its indigenous worldview, and its heterarchical roots. ELT aligns with collectivist cultural values and cannot be categorized into militarized, linear, heroic leadership views. Rosile et al. (2018) asserted that ELT "assumes a social structure, which is decentered as well as multi-centered and nonhuman-centric" (p. 307). Fluidity and flexibility is emphasized in ELT and its highly adaptive leadership resonates with high-context and collectivist cultures due to its adaptation to both dynamic and static environments. Its structure is hierarchical and, yet, capable of morphing into heterarchical structural forms; while encompassing an egalitarian spirit. ELT is an indigenous way of identifying leadership which honors tribal traditions and values practiced within Euro-Western cultures (Cajete, 1994; Deloria, 1973; Deloria & Wildcat, 2001).

ELT is a time-tested leadership practice which highlights and focuses upon indigenous ways of knowing, conocimiento. Nurturing purposeful and consequential relationships is foundational to ELT, hence its relative position and synchronization with relational constructivism. ELT springs forth in co-created, real-time, intra-relationally shared moments and interactions (Uhl-Bien, 2006). The beauty of ELT for my study is its alignment with storytelling and lived experienced narrative, both within the scope of generally understood and expressed

cultural values commonly shared by Latina/LatinX cultures. Bordas (2013) observed that Latino leadership is one of coalition-building, working across cultures, and embracing a consciousness of partnership; leveraging the power of inclusion. How LatinX cultural values align with the five previously discussed leadership theories (Social Justice, Relational, Transformational, Inclusive and Ensemble) is outlined in Table 2.3. In this table, I examine how LatinX values relate to five distinct leadership theories and examine how the cultural values may serve to support, guide, and inform LatinX DOs in HEIs and/or explain their actions as leaders (Byrne & Bradley, 2007; S. H. Schwartz, 1999).

Table 2.3

Leadership Theories and Their Alignment with LatinX Cultural Values

LatinX Cultural Value	Leadership Theory				
	Social Justice	Relational	Transformational	Inclusive	Ensemble
Conocimiento "Awakening consciousness —potential of knowing within, an awareness and intelligence not grasped by logical thought. . . . causes one to dedicate themselves to transforming perceptions of reality, and thus the conditions of life" (Anzaldua, 2000, p. 89).	LatinX DOs have lived experiences of marginalization, oppression, and limited opportunities; they have an elevated consciousness of the need for social justice leadership.	Ability to discern and draw upon resources of a particular situation. (Cunliff & Erikson, 2011).	Leaders must develop an intent to subvert the dominant paradigm, and finally act as a committed advocate for educational change which creates meaningful change. (Jean-Marie et al., 2009).	Collective consciousness leads to person/group power. Conscious leadership effort and processes; nurturing, assertive, and, purposeful engagement (Reti & Zepeta, 2015).	Indigenous ways of knowing what and how things change; morphing from one thing to another; knowledge evolves; wisdom comes over time; flexible process-oriented.

LatinX Cultural Value	Leadership Theory				
	Social Justice	Relational	Transformational	Inclusive	Ensemble
Respéto Respect, honor, dignity, esteem, appreciation "To see a person as a whole being . . . not a passive act. . . . To look again. To bring someone more fully into existence (Isaacs, 1999, pp. 110–111).	Respect, equitable opportunities in all areas of education (Allen, Harper, & Koschoreck , 2017). LatinX DOs have lived experiences of marginalization, oppression, and limited opportunities; have an elevated consciousness of the need for social justice leadership.	Relational leaders demonstrate an understanding of the relationships built during respectful, day-to-day interactions constructed between leaders and followers (Uhl-Bien, 2006).	Leaders must develop an intent to subvert the dominant paradigm, and act as a committed advocate for educational change which creates meaningful change and demonstrates respect for diversity (Jean-Marie et al., 2009).	Inclusive group process enhances group respect, trust and bonding. Conscious leadership effort and process; nurturing, assertive, and, purposeful inclusive engagement (Reti & Zepeta, 2015).	Respect and honor of indigenous ways of respecting all life (humans, animals, and, plants; knowing what and how things change; morphing from one thing to another; knowledge evolves, therefore, respect for how time is experienced – wisdom comes over time.
Spiritualidad Spirituality—moral, concerned with human spirit, Godly responsibility, and accountability	Social, moral responsibility to take action based on moral/spiritual/philosophical values. Moral responsibility to treat all as human beings (Venegas-García , 2013; Cunliffe & Erickson, 2011; Northouse, 2013)	Ability to discern and draw upon resources (spirituality, religion, great spirit, dimensions beyond humans) of a particular situation (Cunliff & Erikson, 2011).	"Spiritualized" as a way to share leader's vision and to mobilize the psyches of followers when re-engineering or downsizing programs. It has been argued that "for transformational leadership to be "authentic," it must incorporate a central core of moral values" (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999, p. 210).	Collective consciousness and inclusive group processes which enhance group trust and bonding. Spiritually conscious responsible leadership processes; nurturing and, purposeful [inclusive engagement. Recognizing the dignity of all humans (Keyes, Hanley-Maxwell, & Capper, 1999).	Indigenous ways of seeking guidance for change (spiritual guidance); Godly wisdom—toward an orientation of spiritual guidance for leadership.

LatinX Cultural Value	Leadership Theory				
	Social Justice	Relational	Transformational	Inclusive	Ensemble
Familismo Social patterns of placing family (group's) interest as a priority over individual interests. Familismo also refers to people at work and in community groups (familia).	Social justice leaders recognize multi-generational stories of trauma, grief, and loss. Historical context is critical to understand; one must understand injustice in order to understand justice.	Ability to discern and draw upon resources of a particular situation. Family is often the primary source of energy, support, and cultural connection. The LatinX culture is a collectivist culture – social patterns are centered on the familia (Cunliff & Erikson, 2011).	Leaders must develop an intent to subvert dominant paradigm (individualistic mindset as only way to experience life), and act as a committed advocate for educational change – meaningful change for families (Jean-Marie et al., 2009).	Collective consciousness leads to person/group (familial) power.	Indigenous ways of knowing what and how things change; morphing from one thing to another; knowledge evolves—wisdom comes over time —flexible, family-oriented processes.
Personalismo Charismatic, charming, amiable, relational, personable	Marginalized, oppressed community members honor charismatic, passionate leaders who build meaningful relationships based in authentic, amiable exchanges.	Ability to discern and draw upon relational networks during stressful and chaotic situations. (Cunliff & Erikson, 2011; Hardie, 2018)	Lead by example, individuals are able to identify with the leader – motivational and inspirational – leading followers to also become a critical part of change. The relational exchange builds credibility and effects positive progress and change (Cisneros, 2008).	Collective consciousness leads to person/group power, built on inclusive group processes to enhance group trust and bonding. Personable, friendly, authentic charming, nurturing, assertive, and, purposeful engagement (Reti & Zepeta, 2015).	De-centered, relationships are sacred. Fractal-like storytelling. Courteous, authentic care and concern for community. Friendly exchanges build meaningful relationships.

LatinX Cultural Value	Leadership Theory				
	Social Justice	Relational	Transformational	Inclusive	Ensemble
Gracía Graceful, agile, poised, mannerliness	Active, democratic engagement in an agile and poised manner. Collective human agency demonstrating poised intellectual knowledge of injustice, gracefully engaging as they seek to address social welfare for all (Bell, 2013; Cisneros, 2008).	Ability to discern and draw upon resources of a particular situation (Cunliff & Erikson, 2011).	Leaders must develop an intent to subvert the dominant paradigm, and finally act as a committed advocate for educational change which create meaningful change. (Jean-Marie et al., 2009).	Collective consciousness leads to person/group power. *Conocimiento* —inclusive group process enhances group trust and bonding. Conscious leadership effort, process; nurturing, assertive, and, purposeful [inclusive] engagement (Reti & Zepeta, 2015).	Indigenous ways of knowing what and how things change; morphing from one thing to another; knowledge evolves; wisdom comes over time—flexible process-oriented.
Simpatía Harmonious and adaptive, compatible in relationships and society, positive interpersonal relationships even while navigating conflict.	Equitable engagement and participation of all in a society designed to serve all. The process is one of active engagement and participation of all peoples in society (collective human agency) creating equitable change (Bell, 2016).	Leaders possess attributes which build interpersonal relationships which invites interrelationship perspectives and world life views – processes of co-construction (Uhl-Bien, 2006).	Transformational leaders believe and highlight human potential (public will). Transformational leaders express personal values while serving the greater good and not just for self.	Participation of all people in society; polyphonic voices valued and honored (Bell, 2016).	Indigenous view of harmony, collectivism and seeking adaptive ways to serve all through interpersonal relationships

LatinX Cultural Value	Leadership Theory				
	Social Justice	Relational	Transformational	Inclusive	Ensemble
Colectivismo Collectivism (collectivist), seeing the 'self' as interrelated and interdependent	LatinX DOs have lived experiences of marginalization, oppression, and limited opportunities; they have an elevated consciousness of the need for social justice leadership.	Ability to discern and draw upon resources of a particular situation (Cunliff & Erikson, 2011).	Leaders must develop an intent to subvert the dominant paradigm, and finally act as a committed advocate for educational change which create meaningful change (Jean-Marie et al., 2009).	Collective consciousness leads to person/group power.	Indigenous ways of knowing what and how things change; morphing from one thing to another; knowledge evolves —wisdom comes over time—flexible, process-oriented.

Table 2.3 shows the ways in which LatinX DOs provide effective leadership and demonstrate emotional and intellectual intelligence in their efforts to create EDI change on campus. S. H. Schwartz (1999) asserted that values are the criteria leaders use to express and justify personal actions and decisions and to evaluate people and events. Note how LatinX leadership values are in alignment with Western leadership theories, as seen by Table 2.4.

Literature Review Summary

Many journals, articles, online websites, and books have been studied in order to demarcate the scope of this proposed study from an equity, diversity, and inclusion framework. This literature reviewed focused on DOs, their roles, models, standards, challenges, psychological stressors, leadership theories, and LatinX cultural values which may be capacitated in their leadership roles. DOs are discussed in terms of their critical role in developing policies, protocols, and procedures which advance scholarly pedagogy. LatinX core values are also examined as strengths to leadership roles and in light of the five leadership theories highlighted; Social Justice, Relational, Transformational, Inclusive, and Ensemble in Table 2.3. Most of the DO scholarly literature and research studies identify EDI deficits within HEIs and the challenges DOs encounter. Diversity management is noted as a market-based approach to the fast-growing demographic change within HEI hiring practices. Several studies explored lived experiences from a qualitative, narrative methodology and others use mixed methods. Qualitative research is the most commonly method applied; it is widely used to study DOs. A few studies focus on women of color; most explore DO models in HEIs. Several studies identify the many strengths DOs possess, their roles, HEI organizational positions, systemic challenges, HEI preparation for inaugural DO positions, and their lived stories. Although there are many scholarly EDI and DO journal articles; some specific to gender and women of color, no

currently existing studies exploring the lived experiences of LatinX DOs in HEIs with a focus on cultural strengths, or from an indigenous worldview could be found. Chapter II provided a comprehensive theoretical foundation for this study relating this to the key research questions. Chapter III presents the research design, methods, techniques, and processes, including the sampling criteria and a description of the participants invited to be Co-Rs in this study, based on their background and expertise in EDI and DO work.

Chapter III: Research Methodology

Chapter III provides an overview of the methodological assumptions, research approach, design, process, methods, and techniques I applied in this study. First, I discuss my positionality and the challenge of appropriately using my own experience and values without impeding the central purpose of illuminating those of my participants. Then a comparison is made between qualitative and quantitative research, then, the notions of intersectionality and, inter-subjectivity as a framework for conducting this qualitative was unpacked. My philosophical assumptions (Creswell, 1998), were made explicit, which underscored my presuppositions and assumptions I may held during this research process. The ethical issues in this research were highlighted, and my choice of narrative inquiry—an interpretative phenomenological analysis—was discussed. The research design and process, and critical elements of the research site, phases, logistics, and schedule were also highlighted. Lastly, data storage, coding, analysis, and research credibility and validity (trustworthiness, rigor, and quality) are discussed.

Positionality, Lived Experience, and the Research Topic

Designing a research methodology which meaningfully explores LatinX Diversity Officers in Higher Education is a key element of this research study. The aim of this study was to explore and accurately capture the lived experiences of LatinX DOs. In particular, it entailed discovering how LatinX DOs capacitate their cultural values in their role as DOs. By applying an EDI framework, this study explored the following questions:

- What are the lived experiences of LatinX DOs in HEIs?
- How do LatinX DOs in HEIs capacitate their cultural values in their role as a DO?
- Does capacitating their cultural values build resiliency as EDI change agents in HEI?

As a Latina that identifies with the pronouns—she, her, hers, *ella* (Spanish for "her"), researcher, and academic social justice advocate for over two decades—it was not possible, nor desirable, to extricate my own lived experiences and cultural lens from this study. rather, it was because of my lived experiences as a professional who promotes, designs, and actively engages in EDI organization, and institutional development, that my approach to the dissertation topic was from a transformative worldview and an inter-subjectivist position.

This research study was conducted from a social justice transformative paradigm perspective with a goal of contributing to diversity discourses and critical diversity research topics under investigation. According to Martínez-Alemán, Pusser, and Bensimon (2015), a transformative worldview research perspective, "foster[s] an ethic of inclusion to connect the research study processes and outcomes with a social justice agenda" (p. 291). In agreement, Ahonen, Tienari, Meriläinen, and Pullen (2014) stated a critical diversity research perspective explores "how context matters as a component of power relations" (p. 17). Bleijenbergh et al. (2018) concurred with Ahonen et al. (2014), noting a transformative worldview explicitly exposes the power imbalances, including the power dynamics which exist between the researcher and the participants (p. 210). An interpretivist phenomenological narrative inquiry and a transformative worldview personally and professionally resonated with me (Creswell, 2014). I participated with the participants (Co-Rs) in the co-construction and co-creation of information through my cultural lens; information was linked to prior knowledge through social negotiation, exploration, and discovery (Davis, 2017). "Inquiry is value-bound [therefore], the researcher's values influence the study and values are also inherent in the choice of context and domain of the study (Cunliffe, 2011)" (Pringle & Booysen, 2018, p. 25).

During my research, it was critical to be ever mindful, that it would be difficult for me to fully escape the contextualized basis of my own experiences leading EDI work in HEIs (Cassidy, Reynolds, Taylor, & De Souza, 2011, p. 265). Therefore, autobiographic elements are included throughout the dissertation. This required that I fully understood my own EDI values and principles which are at the heart of my culture, work and contributions to society; I was mindful to recognize these should not disrupt, interfere, nor influence this study; the focus was on the exploration of LatinX lived experiences, experiences which revealed and identified their own values and foundational principles of social justice in their work. I was careful not to assume that my cultural values were the same as the research participants. My EDI values and principles continue to be a source of strength. My cultural values have helped me remain resilient through my own lived experiences of marginalization, minimization, discrimination, and racism although, they may not be the same nor true for the research participants. As a social justice advocate, my positionality in the world is that I have a social responsibility to contribute to society from a values-added mindset and existence. However, the same may not be true of the research participants. I therefore remained open to hear, listen to, and create a safe space for each research 89participant to share their own perspectives, stories, and interpretations of their lived experiences.

The Co-Researcher Participants

Ten participants were originally invited to be participants—all agreed and confirmed their participation. The nine participants who accepted the invitation to engage in this study and who had met the criteria necessary each identified themselves as serving in a professional role (titles varied) of leading EDI leaders on campus. It is extremely difficult to simply give an

overview of who these participants are as each one is an EDI champion. I was both humbled and deeply honored to have received their meaningful engagement and full participation in this study.

Co-researchers' demographic data. The demographic information for the co-researchers is presented in Table 4.1 and offers important contextual information. This is provided to assist in better understanding the phenomenological approach to capturing the co-constructed lived experience of the Co-R group. However, some key demographic details are intentionally excluded in order to protect the DO geographically located identities.

Table 3.1

Co-R (Participant) Demographics

LATINX PARTICIPANT CO-RESEARCHER #	IDENTIFIES AS	GENERATION IN UNITED STATES	AGE (YEARS)	NATURE OF CURRENT HEI	TENURE AS CDO (YEARS)
Co-R1	Mexican descent LatinX	1st	39	4-Year	5
Co-R2	Mexican LatinX	2nd	37	Community College	6
Co-R3	Mexican descent LatinX	1st	46	4-Year	1.5
Co-R4	Mexican descent Hispanic	3rd	41	4-Year	1.5
Co-R5	Multi-ethnic LatinX	>3	45	Community College	6
Co-R6	White LatinX	>3	42	Community College	1.5
Co-R7	Mexican	2nd	36	4-Year	10
Co-R8	Mexican descent mestiza, LatinX	3rd	53	4-Year	5
Co-R9	White LatinX	3rd	62	Community College	10

Brief preliminary sketches of the co-researchers. The Co-Rs agreed to engage in this study, only if they could remain anonymous. There are few LatinX DOs in HEIs in the Pacific Northwest, which makes their anonymity a challenge. The Co-Rs represent an international group. Some were born or raised in geographic locations outside of the United States. Each has completed various national and international academic degrees from HEIs. Two Co-Rs have PhDs, and seven achieved both a bachelor's and master's degree. All Co-Rs were employed full-time in HEIs in the Pacific Northwest. They range in age from mid-30's to the mid-60s and some indicated they identify with the LGBTQ+ community. Most of the Co-Rs are bilingual: some are highly skilled (first language Spanish), two are semi-bilingual Spanish, and all are bicultural, meaning they are able to shift from Western culture to Latin culture based on their levels of acculturation and time living in the United States

Co-R1. Co-R1 works in a 4-year HEI and approaches her work with passion and a sense of urgency. Her work is largely working with students; therefore, she listens to the student's personal struggles of marginalization within the university—stories of grief and loss; of discrimination and racism. She has children and helps care for her mother. She has worked at the four-year university for several years and is one of the primary contacts for students of color on campus. In her role, she helps students navigate the complex systemic barriers the students of color face. She does not shy away from challenging campus leaders to bring about additional equitable systems. She is an inclusive leader who is known for her artful way of coordinating amazing cultural events that both, staff of color and students enjoy immensely. She is an EDI champion.

Co-R2. This Co-R is a parent who manages a very busy schedule. She works full time, volunteers serving her community and is a dedicated student advocate, on-and-off campus. Her

work includes active engagement in various organizations as a board, committee, or advisory member. She trains educators in their professional EDI development. She places an emphasis on services to students and on guiding educators to understand how to become culturally responsive to the students they serve. She serves on the HEI executive team and according to her, is not afraid to speak her mind. She champions EDI.

Co-R3. Co-R3 is a vivacious, energetic, EDI professional creating her unique administrative path in an HEI. She is fairly new to her position; however, she is making great strides as she challenges the EDI status quo on campus. She courageously leads regularly scheduled EDI dialogue on campus as an element of professional development and an opportunity to enhance one's cultural intelligence and practice. She answers the call for EDI leadership.

Co-R4. This EDI leader has served as a professor at her campus. She enjoys developing EDI policies as a necessary element of institutional development. She challenges "old school" thinking by questioning the current manner in which students transfer from one HEI to another. She noted that outdated HEI systems put students in precarious situations that work as barriers for underserved student populations. Like most of the other Co-Rs, is exploring and creating the EDI path forward on campus. Her experience is an EDI educator and administrator. She is highly respected on campus for her situational leadership approach and emotional intelligence. Championing EDI is a path she has chosen with great determination and intentionality.

Co-R5. Co-R5 has served in the mental health field for many years. One of the things I noted was how she has developed her unique approach to managing the psychological stressors that come from being a LatinX EDI leader in an HEI. She appears calm and confident in her EDI expertise and yet humble in her approach to institutional change needed. She is recognized for

her many years of serving students from marginalized populations such as LatinX and LGBTQ+. She takes things in stride and has learned how to set a healthy limit by saying, “no” to the endless requests for her to share her EDI expertise, instruction, and guidance. She is a great EDI contributor to faculty, staff, and students. Championing EDI is her passion.

Co-R6. This DO has been employed at her HEI for several years. She was recruited for her work ethic and relational leadership approach. She is fairly new to her position and shared feelings of being overwhelmed. Her work includes designing, managing, tracking, and providing EDI training. She is a mother and wife. Her positive attitude is sprinkled with frustration due to staff’ unwillingness to effectively work with and alongside her to make EDI change. She stated that her “passing for White” has placed her in awkward situations where she faces stereotypical thinking and comments by her peers. She understands the politics on campus and has the courage to address inequity with courage and determination, EDI is her way of life.

Co-R7. Co-R is a quiet and very humble EDI champion. Indeed, at times, it was hard to hear her soft voice; however, her EDI work shouts her passion and dedication to the work. She works primarily with immigrant and undocumented students (all the Co-Rs do to some degree). This Co-R has been in her position for a decade. She organizes and manages the fiscal aspects of her office with precision and skill. She is one of the Co-R that reports to a highly respected and culturally informed supervisor; a great EDI ally. Students see her as a mother-like figure and hold her in high regard. Her loving support has been what has sustained many students facing systemic barriers and financial challenges. She also coordinates all the conferences the students attend ensuring they add critical educational experiences to their studies. She is a quiet but powerful EDI champion.

Co-R8. The EDI promoter/leader experiences her EDI work as a spiritual calling. She shared stories of how her EDI work often involves coaching HEI executives who face difficult dilemmas leading an HEI in the midst of sociopolitical strife. She plays a critical role in the life of her siblings' young adult children—providing financial support for their daily needs and educational costs. She has a strong voice and speaks with knowledge, expertise, and confidence. Her love of family is evident. Her professional experiences span across the United States Like her LatinX Co-Rs, she is able to artfully articulate EDI as a social justice issue. EDI is her lens and her guide; however, her primary source of energy and purpose is her spirituality. She experiences her EDI leadership as her calling in this world.

Co-R9. Co-R9 has a fascinatingly profound knowledge of EDI historical content. She is a professor who speaks from a place of historical lived experiences of inequities that resulted in the civil rights era. She is tenacious, proud, and philosophical about EDI. EDI is what she breathes each day. Her strength is evident, she has withstood many incidences of discrimination over the decades. She stands firm in her resolve to continue (alone and with others) on the path of EDI change. She does not mince words, nor does she permit microaggressions to stop her in her tracks. She is highly regarded amongst her "*comaradas*" (comrades) as the courageous EDI pioneer. She is an EDI *campeona* (champion).

Each one of the Co-Rs—whom I interviewed multiple times—have added to my EDI story—a story of never-ending efforts of collectively putting forth strategies and initiatives for greater EDI institutional change.

Having reviewed some elements of contextualize demographic data helps to understand why this study is a qualitative inquiry of interpreted stories and of a group quite different than the dominant group in the United States

Qualitative Versus Quantitative

> Qualitative inquiries often result in complex and nuanced accounts of realities and experiences that, differently from dominant or hegemonic discourses or statistical significance, acknowledge both the center and the margins. (Gemignani, Brinkmann, Benozzo, & Cisneros-Puebla, 2014, p. 112)

I applied a qualitative research model thereby creating opportunities for opening pathways for marginalized voices to have emerged. Qualitative research captured the participant's lived realities, perspectives, cultural lens, and voices. Qualitative research helped in "understanding the meaning people constructed, that is, how they made sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world" (Merriam, 2009, p. 6) As a social scientist, I was interested in generating and testing knowledge of a specific community (LatinX), and addressing social issues within an organizational (HEI and EDI) context.

Based on the elements of inquiry, I believed qualitative research was the most suitable and best fit for my study. I was interested in understanding DOs and EDI by asking "why?", "what?", and, "how"? I was interested in qualitative approaches to research because quantitative research seeks to know "how many?" and "how much?" I chose a qualitative research design because my intent and purpose for this study was not to produce standardized results or categorized solutions, but to study the lived experiences of LatinX DO's in HEI—to produce illuminating scientific data which was based on a detailed and inclusive study of a phenomenon. By approaching this study through qualitative methodology, the collection of rich meaningful data was captured. In this process, it was important to acknowledge each research participant's potential vulnerabilities, thereby opening the possibility of developing a trusting and reciprocal relationship.

I was mindful that each participant had allowed me into their worlds and perspectives. As a researcher, I was cognizant of Beuthin's (2014) maxim: "pay full honor to the voice of the

storytellers" (p. 130). My purpose for this research was not to define or explain a causal relationship of variables as is often the case for applying quantitative methods. Using a qualitative research approach, my desire was to rigorously capture data which would inform and heighten awareness to better understand the manner described and interpreted of actually being a LatinX DOs in HEIs—as individuals and as a group.

By applying qualitative research methodologies, I planned to capture the meaning each DO ascribed to their individually identified cultural core strengths and perspective. This was followed by an exploration of the group's collectively formed interpretation of cultural core strengths. What themes emerged as individuals and, as a group? My intent was not to be critical nor to assume that all LatinX DOs in HEIs have similarities or shared cultural values. I was open to capture the dissonance, contrasts, and dissimilarities.

The participant group interviews actually introduced broader thematic spectrum; these are discussed in Chapter IV, Did the individually interpreted lived experiences have an impact on the collective narrative of lived experiences? My desire was to be able to capture data which could provide me with new insights and understanding; they ultimately led me to a deeper level of consciousness related to specific ways LatinX DOs capacitated their cultural strengths (Creswell, 1998, p. 94).

> Culture hides much more than it reveals, and strangely enough what it hides, it hides most effectively from its own participants. (Hall, 1959, p. 30)

Intersectionality: Critical Inquiry and Praxis

The complexity of culture is was magnified when the dynamics of multiple intersecting cultures were introduced. This dynamic was clearly recognized as dynamics and elements of intersectionality; a tool I applied for understanding human experience complexities. Using

Collins and Bilge's (2016) definition of intersectionality helped to frame my inquiry into the lived experiences of LatinX DOs in HEI. A portion of the definition is as follows:

> Intersectionality is a way of understanding and analyzing the complexity of the world, in people, and in human experiences. The events and conditions of social and political life and the self can seldom be understood as shaped by one factor. When it comes to social inequality, people's lives, and the organization of power in a given society are better understood as being shaped not by a single axis of social division, be it race or gender or class, but by many axes working and influencing each other. (Collins & Bilge, 2016, p. 2)

A LatinX DO cannot be identified as simply belonging to a single social category or axis of social division, such as ethnicity, age, geographic location, gender, or non-gender specific, status on campus, class, and the like. As members of a marginalized group the distinctly unique ways in which oppression has been experienced based upon their ethnicity or ethnicities is of key importance in this study. I was interested in discovering how intersectionality is perceived, interpreted, and experienced by the participants; both as individuals and as a group. I applied intersectionality as both a critical thinking and praxis analytical tool to develop the interview questions and to grapple with the complex discriminations that LatinX DOs (as a social group) described in their stories—either about self or students of color attending HEIs. Because Latinas have been historically excluded and marginalized within scholarship,

I was very intentional about highlighting intersectionality in this study as an analytical tool for critical inquiry, praxis, and empowerment. Highlighting intersectionality helps expose the power distances and power dynamics which exist for Latina DOs in HEIs. Intersectionality is about oppressing marginalized groups in society and about privileged identities; about marginalized group's experiences intersecting with social groups in power. By applying intersectionality, I sought to fully understand how historical trajectories of marginalized groups (such as LatinX) is directly linked to specific ways oppression

operates at the systemic and institutional level (Adams et al., 2016). However challenging oppressive institutions may or may not be, it is the oppressive experiences that often are, the impetus, the driving force for leading and creating powerful EDI change. Pringle and Booysen (2018) argued, "This [intersectional] multi-layered understanding can help to create spaces, where individuals, can resist, disrupt, withdraw, or refuse to enact the "limited" accepted identities and create alternative discourses" (p. 33).

Group Intersubjectivity

Intersubjectivity can be simply described as the psychological relationship between people or group dynamics—the "mutual awareness, agreement, or disagreement and implicit behavioral orientations toward another . . . [and] the variety of possible relations between people's perspectives" (Gillespie & Cornish, 2009, p. 20). Similarly, Ickes (2002) described intersubjectivity as "patterns of interdependence" (p. 114). Intersubjectivity includes the group dynamics of coordinating diverse individual perspectives without a goal or an outcome of arriving at complete alignment or agreement in thought, feelings, or behaviors (Matusov, 1996).

Group intersubjectivity is relevant to this study. Phase I and II of this study were designed as focus groups. These focus groups invited individual perspectives into deep dialogues focused on listening for elements of the individual perspectives to reveal a relationship or alignment in the group's perspectives. I created a safe space in which I was able to observe and capture intersubjectivity or mutual engagement in action. By inviting the group of LatinX DOs into focus groups, a safe environment for intersubjectivity dynamics to be expressed. Stahl (2016) referred to this dynamic as, "we-awareness" (p. 355).

Duranti (2010) asserted that intersubjectivity is,

> not a product or an effect of communication but a condition for its possibility. Over time, however, especially within constructivist perspectives, intersubjectivity has come to be

> seen as something that must be achieved through particular activities including the use of language and other kinds of communicative resources. (p. 9)

As argued by Duranti (2010), intersubjectivity includes the use of language. Because language can express feelings, it is therefore, an intriguing element of the intersubjective experience that both language and feelings captured. The focus groups in this study provided an environment that shared social language or language which is "characteristic of a particular group (DOs) in a particular sociocultural context" (Wertsch, 1991, p. 94). Winter (2000) asserted "Intersubjective truth requires a common positionality of subjects from which all Initiated subjects can share a claim to *truthfulness or falsity* [emphasis added]" (p. 9).

My interest in intersubjectivity as a researcher is from a constructivist perspective, therefore, I was interested in understanding the group dynamics that ultimately led to what became a socially, and culturally shared group cognition. There was cultural consensus experienced by the Co-Rs. I had thought that I might observe cultural dissonance, however, this was not the case (Resnick, Levine, & Teasley, 1993). Intersubjectivity and socially shared cognition have similar elements: both are relationship-based; individual perspectives are shared; there are communicative exchanges; and, both are experiential.

There are also, distinctions between intersubjectivity and socially shared group cognition. Socially shared cognition opens and invites argument, critiquing, and includes specific cooperative processes of building and maintaining a shared conception of an issue through specific group activities, which may lead to new insights and advanced cognition. Socially shared cognition may also result in a person's re-centering their perspective.

In contrast, intersubjectivity coordinates the interactive processes of communicating different perspectives without having to produce a specific objective or product. "To understand how joint understanding arises . . . a cultural examination of communication and interaction must

be included in [an] analysis" (Correa-Chávez & Roberts, 2012, p. 99). Therefore, I was intrigued and interested in studying the intersubjective experiences narrated by culturally-specific, LatinX DO focus group participants.

The term, shared, is presented from two perspectives: individual DOs sharing their interpretations of their own lived experiences (as interpreted by themselves); and, a shared form of learning or enhancing each one's cognition. By designing a culturally responsive and culturally mediated space for focus group dialogue—a "condition for its possibility" (Duranti, 2010, p. 9), opportunities were provided for sharing individual cognitive experiences from a LatinX, culturally imbedded, social context. The socially situated environment was designed to provide safe space for listening, agreement and/or disagreement—an intersubjective environment for the possibility of forming and perhaps, producing collaboratively shared cognition was made possible.

Philosophical Assumptions and Application

The dissertation topic, design, and the manner in which I interacted with the participants and re-represented the data, had to be ethical and meet social science standards. As a Latina and diversity officer, I had to be cognizant of the assumptions I made e throughout the research process, based on the intersubjectivity or mutual cultural values and behaviors shared amongst the participants and myself. In Table 3.2 I sketch the philosophical assumptions with implications for practice (PAIP) as a matrix that informed and guided my research inquiry and heightened awareness by identifying five key sets of assumptions (ontological, epistemological, axiological, rhetorical, and methodological) as suggested by Creswell (1998). Each key assumption area asks a question to reflect upon, identifies characteristics within each key area, and, stimulates critical thinking on what the implications for each assumption means for

professional practices as a researcher. Table 3.2 shows how the questions I developed for this study relate to these categories of belief enunciated by Creswell.

Table 3.2

Philosophical Assumptions with Implications for Practice

Assumption	**Question**	**Characteristics**	**Implications for Practice Reflexive Notes**
ONTOLOGICAL: study of the nature of being, existence, and reality.	What is the nature of existence of being, of reality?	Reality is subjective and multiple, as seen by participants in the study. The reality of existence (of being) is linked to intersubjective identities and shaped by both the researcher and the researched.	My work as a diversity leader in higher education and lived experiences as a Latina have created my own reality of existence; of being. I must present the evidence of the participant's realities not through my eyes but through and by their distinctive and unique lens and polyphonic voices.
EPISTEMOLOGICAL: Study of human knowledge	What is the relationship between researcher and participants?	Researcher attempts to lessen [culturally negotiate emic/etic] distance between herself and participant. There is a reciprocal influence process between researchers and researched.	Maintaining a trusting relationship with the participants while capturing their true voice, albeit, native/heritage Spanish or English language is critical.
AXIOLOGICAL study of values—values judgement	What is the role of values?	Researcher acknowledges research is value laden and biases are present. Ascribe to ethical research standards and C-RRR values	Trust and authenticity are Latina cultural values; Justice, equity, dignity, honor, and truth are values researcher and participant(s) may mutually share but not to the same degree. Focus is on the participant's voices about *their* values which I must capture and document.
RHETORICAL Concerned with rhetoric (the art of speaking and writing)	What is the language of research?	Researcher writes in a literary, informal style using personal and active voice & qualitative terms & limited definitions, in line with qualitative narrative inquiry, and IAP method.	I must uphold an intellectual standard when writing and using Scholarly Personal Writing (SPN). I can maintain my own voice as an ethical researcher, yet uphold dissertation standards such as: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, as a scholar. My goal is to write in a manner and style that can inform scholars, and, the general public. In

Assumption	Question	Characteristics	Implications for Practice Reflexive Notes
			addition: capturing the lived experiences, if related in Spanish, may be "culturally responsive, culturally relevant, and culturally reinforcing" with participants (Haroldson, 2018, p. 14).
METHODOLOGICAL Related to method.	What is the process of research?	Researcher uses inductive logic, studies the topic within its context, & emerging design. Ascribe to an Interpretivist, constructivist, and transformative research paradigm.	The methodological decisions have emerged as a result of cultural values, hours of reading scholarly literature, reflective, critical thinking, and personal soul-searching on the topic of EDI. Choosing qualitative (IPA) methodology has been an inductive process that emerged over several years.

Becoming fully cognizant of my own realities and how it can impact this study is critical. Table 3.1 served as a critical thinking guide to check assumptions based on my experiences.

Narrative Research

Narrative research aims to investigate the multi-layered meanings of a participant's story (Moen, 2006; Squire, Andrews, & Tomboukou, 2008). The lived experiences, or narratives of LatinX DOs in HEIs have been collectively explored. By designing multiple interview phases in the study, complex stories become the basis for rich individual and focus group dialogues. Narrative research studies capture the way, humans see and experience the world; how they interpret their contextualized experiences, values, and worldview. Narratives are regarded as "the primary scheme by which human existence is rendered meaningful" (Polkinghorne, 1988, p. 1). Narratives are foundational to IPA in this study; narratives told by the participant's worldview and lived experience and, `conversely, narratives told about this group in society. Wagstaff and Williams (2014), asserted, "The aim of IPA is to explore the sense that participants make of their personal and social worlds, while recognizing the contribution of the researcher in interpreting

the participant's interpretations of their experiences" (p. 8). Griffin and May (2012) argued that using both, narrative and IPA research methodologies, serves researchers seeking to understand "how the context in which accounts are produced influences the telling of the story" (p. 442).

Research Ethics

For a social scientist and researcher, ethical issues are of high importance. I believe it is critical to protect one's work; but equally as important is protecting the participant's identity information in the manner they choose, so as to honor their identity in society, knowledge, and lived experiences. Doing so brings participants into a shared learning, explorative experience. It is also essential is to share the co-constructed outcomes of the study and to not exploit participants' knowledge and live experiences. I was reminded of this years ago when I was contracted to gather data from (not with) a group primarily marginalized community members. It was a study conducted in response to high profile complaints about discrimination, inequities and practices in youth development services offered by county government and non-profits. One day, one of the participants said, "What do we get in return? We, Latinos are often asked to be interviewed and then we are never informed of what the data reveals, what is captured, and, why or how the study might benefit us or others." Ethics in research is about reciprocity and sharing co-contracted meaning. Because the experience as a DO may create vulnerability during the research interview and/or audio taping session, I informed each participant of their right to privacy and confidentiality. Qualitative researchers' purpose to collect rich meaningful data needs to be balanced with not exposing the participant and breaking down the reciprocal and trusting relationship. This trust then needs to be safeguarded by responsibilities between the two parties. At times, researchers may feel that something has been taken from the participant who has become the "vulnerable person" by sharing his/her story.

I must "pay full honor to the voice of the storyteller" (Beuthin, 2014, p. 130). In preparation for my study, reflecting upon my experiences has served me well, as has careful review and completion of the comprehensive CITI Research Ethics course through Antioch University, which prepared me to apply the ethical principles and protocols in research. I was also guided by Creswell's (2014) matrix which outlined ethical issues in qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods research. This serves as a guide for a researcher in how to apply an ethics lens to all she does.

Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis

The philosophical underpinnings of IPA draw upon Heideggerian hermeneutic approaches to phenomenology, interpretation, and related concepts (Dreyfus, 1995; Polt, 1999) and Husserlian phenomenology approach focused on the question of being (Giorgi & Giorgi, 2003; McConnell-Henry, Chapman, & Francis, 2009). Both Heidegger and Husserl were phenomenological philosophers of the 20th century, Heidegger being Husserl's mentee. For Husserl, the aim of phenomenology was the rigorous and unbiased study of things as they appear in order to arrive at an essential understanding of human consciousness and—as its essence—of experience (Dowling, 2007). Van Manen (1990) interpreted Husserlian phenomenology as, "imagining, perceiving, remembering—as always thinking about something" (p. 182). Van Manen (1990) also interpreted Husserl's phenomenological approach, as "natural" indicating what is "original, I, prior to critical or theoretical reflection" (p. 182). In addition, van Manen (2017) interpreted the Heideggerian philosophy on phenomenological research as "the explication of the essential structures of phenomenon as they present themselves in consciousness . . . real or imagined, empirically measurable, or subjectively felt" (p. 3). Van Manen further argued consciousness is how we experience the world and anything outside of

consciousness is not lived experience. A fascinating key point in the literature on phenomenology, one that has deepened my thinking about facilitating interviews in a manner that captures the essence of the lived experience; is van Manen's (2017) statement: "The focus of phenomenology is on how phenomena are given to us in consciousness and pre-reflective experience. The problem of phenomenology is not how to get from text to meaning, but *how to get from meaning to text* [emphasis added]" (p. 1).

Van Manen (2017) introduced a richer, deeper, and more profound meaning of phenomenology into my consciousness. Anything that presents itself to the participant's consciousness, "whether the object is real or imagined, empirically measurable, or subjectively," is what I must capture (p. 4). It is critical I capture body language, tone of voice, all of which are critical elements of what the participant's consciousness brings forth in the form of words [and, body language]. Phenomenology is *eidetic* (multi-dimensional), meaning that it is about "constituting visual imagery, vividly experienced and readily reproducible with great accuracy and in great detail" (Eidetic, n.d.). For decades, philosophical dialogue continued to be a source of investigation and analysis of each one's respective phenomenological views. Scholarly literature explaining both scholar's perspectives has offered a rich foundation of knowledge for choosing IPA. IPA research focuses on examining how individuals make meaning of their lived experiences (Lopez & Willis, 2004; Magrini, 2012). J. A. Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2009) argued that IPA is informed by "three key areas of the philosophy of knowledge: phenomenology, hermeneutics, and idiography." Phenomenology describes the "what" and "how" of individuals' experienced phenomena but does not explain or analyze descriptions. Hermeneutics is a theory of interpretation concerning textual meaning, as in the techniques used in speaking and writing that divulge the intentions and context of the speaker/writer (Creswell,

1998, 2014; J. A. Smith et al., 2013). Finally, idiography relates to details and thorough analysis of small cases, which differs from mainstream psychological studies that are nomothetic in nature (J. A. Smith et al., 2013). Because there is no one right way to do IPA, the researcher must skillfully and artfully access, draw out, and probe the participant's mind-set or thinking, feeling, and telling (J. A. Smith & Osborn, 2008). To further explain why IPA is relevant to this study, the following key IPA elements, based on Larkin, Watts, and Clifton (2006) and Moustakas (1994), are noted to substantiate why IPA is a good fit for exploring LatinX DOs in HEI:

- Assumptions and presuppositions are avoided. A hypothesis is not identified. The researcher cannot assume to know what the lived experiences are of participants, here, LatinX DOs in HEIs.
- IPA is an indicative approach gathering data by conducting interviews and deep listening. Researchers must assiduously attend to the cognition, affect, and meaning the participants give to their interpretation (stories, accounts, narratives) of their lived experience; exploring knowledge that is rooted in meaning.
- Participants are invited to be co-researchers (Co-Rs) and identified as the experts in the phenomenon being explored. In this study, the participants engage as experts of their own interpretations and as narrators of their own interpreted stories.
- The hermeneutic circle is applied in as back-and-forth process of distilling and focusing on the whole and its detailed parts (the narrated stories in text form).
- Phenomenological reduction is applied, meaning that experiential narrative (data) is contracted and used to reduced, capturing the intrinsic details and complexities

- Systematic text condensation (STC explained later in this chapter) is applied through rigorous scientific investigations and research standards by capturing idiographic data.
- A primary question is asked, “What is it like to be a LatinX DO in HEI.” The IPA process is directed toward participant’s answers to a preformed research question(s).
- Phenomenon and hermeneutics are foundational to IPA. Analysis is interpretive and the Co-Rs’ social, contextual, and cultural truth—the wholeness of their experience—is not stated as scientific “fact” but as *their* truth, how their lived experience is perceived and described.

An intersubjective relationship between the researcher and the participants exists as the basis for how the participants become Co-Rs. Both engage in the research processes through relational and social engagement and coordination. The participants took part in identifying key themes during Phases II and III, as described in this chapter (Duranti, 2010; Stahl, 2016). Narratives involve multiple levels of interpretation. In this study, the interpretation was defined by the participants, from a particular situation (LatinX DOs in HEI), from their cultural lens and perspectives, and from a subjective/reflective process of interpretation. I then interpreted what the participants reported on what it is like to be a LatinX DO in HEIs. This process is called a *double-hermeneutic* because there is a doubling approach to interpretations; the first by the participant, the second by the primary researcher who in turn, interprets what has been interpreted by the research participants. Tuffour (2017) defined double-hermeneutics as, “the researcher making sense of the participants’ sense making. Therefore, the researcher assumes a central role in analysis and interpretation of the participants’ experiences” (p. 4). Tuffour also

addressed a critical aspect of hermeneutics—the hermeneutic circle. The hermeneutic circle is seen as

> The dynamic relationship between the "part" and the "whole" at numerous levels for a holistic analytical interpretation. In relation to IPA, the "part" corresponds to the encounter with the participant in a research project, and the "whole" the drawing of knowledge and experience of the researcher. (Tuffour, 2017, p. 4)

Longxi (2018) saw the hermeneutic circle as,

> based a strenuous effort to move back and forth between the parts and the whole . . . the repeated coming and going from words and sentences to the text, and from the text back to sentences and words . . . takes into consideration all the textual elements, from words and sentences to the text as a whole and presents a coherent interpretation in which each part is confirmed and supported by other parts. (pp. 118–119)

Back and forth enquiry is necessary to seek a deeper answer of the whole and its parts. The knowledge gained by moving from the whole narrative in text form to the finer details in the text or transcripts begins to shed light on, clarify, and bring a deeper, richer understanding back to the whole. Knowledge is thereby expanded by the hermeneutic circle. An additional, critical thinking process I applied throughout the research process to ensure there is alignment between PAIP principles and IPA is illustrated in PAIP and IPA Basic Principles Alignment (Table 3.3).

Table 3.3

Philosophical Assumptions With Implications for Practice Alignment With IPA Basic Principles

PAIP	IPA
ONTOLOGICAL Nature of being, reality and being.	IPA methodology attempts to study how participants interpret their existence, *being*, and reality. IPA explores and examines how participants perceive what is or has happened to them.
EPISTEMOLOGICAL Study of human knowledge	IPA seeks to discover how the participant comes to know cognitively and emotionally about their lived experience.
AXIOLOGICAL Study of values and values-judgement	IPA has empathic elements – the researcher seeks to understand the thoughts and worldview of the participant's values and judgements, including the meanings they attribute to them.
RHETORICAL The art of speaking and writing	IPA is concerned with what is spoken—the expression of words and their meanings as interpreted by the participant. IPA data can also be captured and analyzed in writings authored by the participant. The challenge is to accurately capture what is said and meant in text form.
METHODOLOGICAL Research Method	IPA methodology is inductive – the use of interviews, Ideographic modes of inquiry are utilized. Through purposive sampling identifies participants for whom the research question(s) is significant. Commitment to detailed interpretive accounts.

Research Design, Data Collection Techniques and Procedures

This explorative IPA analysis of nine LatinX DO's in HEI's included four distinct phases. In Phase I, I conducted one-on-one, face-to-face interviews with each participant. Phases II and III captured both the individual level and collective level exploration and discovery of the lived experience phenomenon during the two focus groups. During Phase II and III (conducted as focus groups), the greatest challenge and yet a fundamental element of IPA was the

"negotiation of the part-whole relationships and the management of the interplay between real-time discursive and post-hoc thematic sense-making" (Tomkins & Eatough, 2010, p. 244).

Data collection used a demographic questionnaire, in-depth individual interviews, and focus group discussions. By establishing a detailed interview schedule, the participants and myself, were informed of expectations including a formalized timeline for active engagement and progress (Appendix A). Data analysis was done through thematic analysis by both the researcher, and participants as Co-Rs. As a former administrator promoting equity, diversity, and inclusion statewide my network of DOs is expansive. I have had the honor and privilege of working alongside many colleagues who are in professional positions that can fall into the category of DO. I had been intentional about discussing my topic of interest for my dissertation for several years now and have had several DOs volunteer to be research study participants.

Those who volunteered were the sample population I was most interested in interviewing. Palinkas et al. (2015) elaborated on various approaches to identifying the research participants. The two approaches identified as relevant for this research are *purposive* and *homogenous* sampling. Polkinghorne (2005) argued a purposive selection needs to "select fertile exemplars" (p. 140) who have the experiences the researcher seeks to understand. In addition, a purposive sampling approach to participant selection is based on research studies which hold expectations that the participants can provide unique and rich life experiences. Homogenous sampling draws on research participants who share similar traits and specific characteristics such as culture, professional positions, ethnicity, and/or life, and work experiences. Therefore, purposive sampling in combination with homogenous sampling are both relevant for LatinX DOs, their cultural values and lived experiences.

IPA studies typically involve a highly intensive and detailed analysis of the accounts produced by a comparatively, small number of participants (Larkin et al., 2006). J. A. Smith (2004) indicated that IPA studies are conducted on small sample sizes—some are of just one participant—because they require detailed, nuanced analysis. The detailed interpretative accounts are best served when working with very small samples; depth becomes a priority over breadth. J. A. Smith and Osborn (2008) stated,

> The basic logic is that if one is interviewing, for example, six participants, it is not very helpful to think in terms of random or representative sampling. IPA therefore goes in the opposite direction and, through purposive sampling, finds a more closely defined group for whom the research question will be significant. (p. 56)

Based on the aforementioned information about IPA sample size, 10 participants were purposively identified for this study. However, one was unable to engage due to their work schedule.

Participants: Criteria, Invitation and Pre-Selection

Participants were chosen from the geographic area in the United States known as the Pacific Northwest. All the participants were confirmed as being employees of HEIs and working in the role as a diversity champions, leading and addressing equity, diversity, and inclusion issues. The participant sample consisted of nine participants. I was interested in choosing participants who were highly motivated to engage and, willing to invest their time, intellectual and emotional energies as participates in the research topic. I was also interested in knowing if the participants supported and believed the research data and outcomes would inform and benefit the general public, EDI advocates, organizational leaders and contribute to existing EDI literature.

Addressing equity, diversity and inclusion issues needed to be the critical elements of their work within HEIs. I created an initial list of potential participants and sent an introductory

invitation via email. The email provided an overview of the research study, its purpose and intent. I followed up with a phone call within a week of sending the email to confirm interest and answer questions and/or concerns. Once the invitation to be a participant was accepted and the criteria met, I sent each of the participants a letter of consent for their signatures within 48 hours (to include authorization to audio tape all the interviews). Upon receipt of the consent letter, I sent each participant a pre-interview demographic questionnaire. I also sent out a survey for the purpose of gathering the following data from each participant:

- Gender—How participants identified themselves. Gender non-conforming, and non-binary were options, as was choosing not to respond to this question.
- Geographic work location (confirming they were DOs working in HEIs in the Pacific Northwest).
- Professional position in their respective HEIs.
- Ethnicity.

The survey provided demographic information for the purpose of confirming and verifying they met this study's criteria.

Human Dignity: Respect for Participants

As a researcher, I provided all information in a manner that was clearly understood and reviewed the information for comprehension with each participant. Each participant was informed and made aware of all the information I was seeking to gather and informed of how the data would be related to the research. These study elements were explained to each participant so each could make an informed decision to participate or not participate. I avoided using what could appear to be as coercive language in the informed consent forms. As an EDI advocate, it was important that I was mindful of the time being requested for the interview processes to take

place; in particular because the study was designed with multiple phases of study. I was also mindful of the potential risks and benefits to the participants as I prepared to make a formal request to invite them to share their lived experiences; stories that may cause emotional strain or possibly trigger trauma. The participant's stories were audiotaped with their permission. However, videotaping the participants was not an option as this would or could have put their jobs in jeopardy. A consent form for each participant included the following elements:

- purpose for the study,
- description of what and how each participant is invited to engage in the research process,
- right to refuse to engage at any time during the research and withdraw without consequence,
- risks (physical and emotional),
- how confidentiality was to be protected,
- invitation to ask questions at any time,
- who to contact with any concerns about the research,
- where participants may find the study's findings, and,
- research schedule.

Multiple Phase Data Collection, Methods and Process

Data collection in this study was designed to be implemented in four distinct phases (Figure 3.1). Each phase built upon the previous phase for the purpose of diving deeper into key themes discussed in an interactive, culturally relevant group setting. The dialogues explored and discovered individual and group, co-created narrative. Each phase was designed to facilitate a rich, deeply probing, and meaningful dialogue which may result in the emergence of new

knowledge. Each phase was audio recorded. Some photos were taken during the focus groups in a manner that did not identify the participants. Each phase is illustrated in Figure 3.1. Each phase anticipated and possible outcomes are also described in the following information.

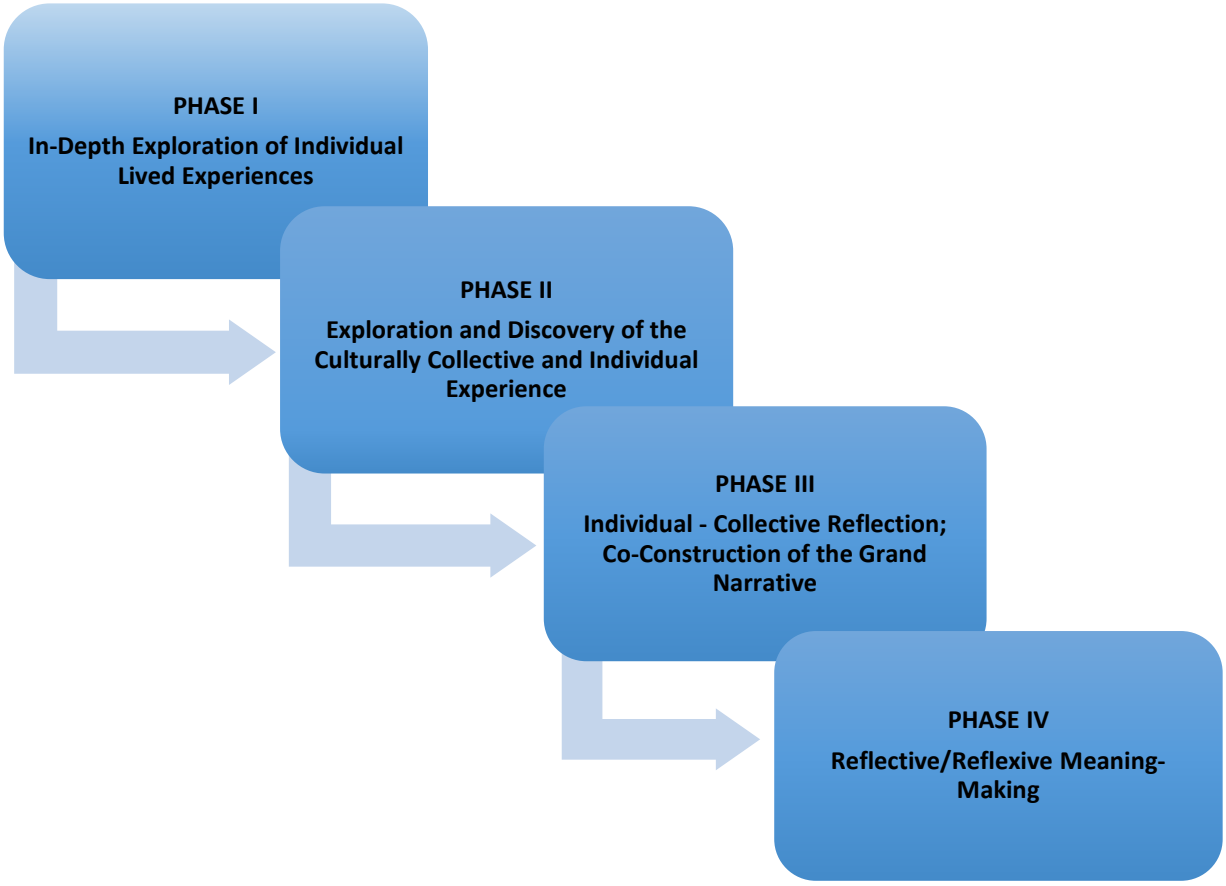

Figure 3.1. Phases of data collection.

Phase I: In-depth exploration of individual lived experiences. Phase I interviews were designed to be an-depth explorations of the essence of the lived experience as a LatinX DO in HEIs. All participants were individually interviewed face-to-face at a location they had identified as safe and confidential. By applying IPA qualitative method, the focus of the interview was on capturing the participants' lived experiences within the context of their positions as DOs, inviting their whole person, culture, ethnicity, and historical contexts (Cresswell, 2014).

Two key questions were asked during each phase. The primary research question was, "What is your lived experience as a LatinX DO in and HEI?"—in other words, "What is it like to be a LatinX DO in higher education?" One of the research study elements I was curious about but chose not to directly ask them about was on the topic of their cultural values. I wanted to know if this topic would be addressed or identified by the Co-Rs themselves, without my prompting, during their initial interviews. I did, however, want to explore this topic if possible, during the focus groups. A fluid story-telling approach to their responses was encouraged with some of the following prompts:

- Please tell me more.
- Can you please say more about that?
- How did that make you feel?
- What were you thinking (feeling) during that time, incident, etc.?
- Is there any more you wish to share on that particular topic?
- Would you please clarify?
- Would you please explain further?

Tracking Phase I Outcomes. Each participant's interview was transcribed, and subsequent member-checking completed to verify their perspectives and thoughts were correctly captured during their interview. In addition, they were invited to change or delete information regarding places, people, HEIs identified, and the like—identifiers that could potentially put them in a vulnerable situation professionally and/or personally.

Each participant was informed that after they each had confirmed their transcripts were accurate, that I would proceed by analyzing their transcript and identify key themes and sub-themes which would then be brought to the focus groups. I then prepared a large Post-It note with the themes and sub-themes identified in each transcript. Each Co-R was informed that the themes and sub-themes I identified would be reviewed during Phase II. They were also informed that the themes and sub-themes I identified would then be edited, changed, deleted, or transformed by the group as they wished to have them interpreted during Phase II.

Phase II: Exploration and discovery of the culturally collective and individual experience. During Phase II, the same participants individually interviewed in Phase I, were brought together for the first focus group dialogue. I again began by offering an overview of the study, purpose, intent, methodology, matters of confidentiality, followed by a question and answer opportunity. After the overview I placed a Post-It on the wall for all to see the themes and sub-themes I had identified from all of their individual interview transcripts. The group then spent a few minutes examining the themes and sub-themes. As they looked at the themes and sub-themes, I heard laughter, “uh-hums,” and comments like “yes” and “makes a lot of sense” Then, having asked the group’s permission, we began a reflective/reflexive process in which I asked the following probing questions:

- Which themes if any, from Phase I impact you as EDI Champions – as a LatinX DO in HEIs?
- What, if anything, validated or invalidated your lived experiences as a LatinX DO in HEI?
- What helped you understand your work and/or informed future EDI practice?

- Which sub-themes resonated in terms of future application and/or possible solutions to issues you experience in your position?

The goal was to discover and capture the complex dynamics of this meaning-making dialogue within the IPA framework and approach including both the individual and collective meaning-making narratives (Tomkins & Eatough, 2010). The first part of Phase II resulted in full agreement from the Co-Rs that the themes and subthemes identified would be the ones brought into Phase III which would occur the following day.

Upon completion of Phase II, a one-hour break was held to offer the participants some time to grab a snack and move about since they had been sitting for a two-hour period of time. The Co-Rs returned after the break for Phase II's reflective hermeneutic circle session. They were invited to ponder what they had previously discussed with the notes they took and in light of what was written on the Post-It notes on the wall. They were invited to do this in a hermeneutic, back-and-forth manner; to reflect upon what was shared, felt, and discussed with what they had before them (individual notes and notes I had captured on the Post-It notes on the wall before them). I then invited the group to engage in an iterative and culturally relevant dialogue (bilingual) to further distill and identify themes which would be the most relatable, and, which could connect with their individual and collective lived experiences as diversity champions in HEIs. Through this process, the Co-Rs began to co-construct a list of second-level, distilled themes they could culturally identify with in preparation for the second focus group (Phase III), the following day. The debriefing session ended with a member checking process.

Phase II outcomes. The Co-Rs shared their first of two, culturally-connecting, individualistic and intersubjective group experiences seeking richer, deeper knowledge—an exploration and discovery of culturally collective, co-constructivist experiences.

The dialogue had been audiotaped with their permission and I captured points on Post-It notes. The Co-Rs reflected upon the final notes taken by all during Phase II and the production of the second-level distilled themes were identified in preparation for Phase III (the final focus group, described below).

Some of the participants traveled for several hours, some with their family members. Therefore, they were provided lodging, food, and offered suggestions for places to visit and explore before and after the research study sessions were held. Phase II was held on a Saturday and Phase III was held the next day (Sunday). C-RRR conceptual elements were imbedded throughout all participant activities. Family members were invited to join the Co-Rs group during meals. Having the Co-Rs together during a 2-day period provided experiential learning exercises. What I believe was of great benefit to the Co-Rs was the shared experiences of feeling validated and understood by each other. They each commented that this was their experiences. There was evidence that the C-RRR research design and environment invited the Co-Rs to feel safe, validated, and to remain energetically, and enthusiastically engaged.

Phase III—Collective reflection; co-construction of the grand narrative. The second and final focus group dialogue (same participants who participated in Phase I) took place in the same location as Phase II. This was a rich, synergistically spiraling, in-depth dialogue which further refined and distilled the collectively identified key themes from Phase II; which ultimately resulting in the *grand collective narrative*. Phase III was designed as an intersubjective exploration of the co-experienced second-level, reflective and reflexive dialogue which led to the co-development of the most important emerging themes, as per the Co-Rs. During Phase III, new knowledge was created during the interplay between an individual and collective iterative loop, resulting in the grand narrative (Tompkins & Eatough, 2010). I would

also note that the co-constructed grand narrative invited diverse and unique stories to be shared, from each participant, as interpreted by themselves. Each story was shared by the participant's, as it was *imagined*, *perceived*, *and remembered* by them (van Manen, 1990, p. 182). Phase III's research study processes by no means homogenized the group's stories, rather each unique story; each individual's lived experiences found their way into a shared storytelling space; a place of belonging into which each participant's story could enter into—individually, yet into a polyphonic, collective voice.

Phase III outcomes. The grand narrative notes were filtered, identified, and finalized by all the participants during the final member checking process. This was accomplished by a carefully guided facilitation process using a hermeneutic circle process. For this, I would ask inquiring questions of the group in a back-and-forth method. I would also ask how a particular point made during Phase II related to a point made in Phase III, and if and how, a current thought, or a recently written note, a point of view or an experience was connecting to anything noted previously. Ultimately, co-created new knowledge (key themes and narratives) was identified and documented by the group in preparation for Phase IV—to be completed by myself and without Co-R participation.

As we ended Phase III, there was interest expressed in exploring the group's interest in, and potential and capacity for establishing a Dos-in-HEI community of practice in the Pacific Northwest. It was recognized that further discussion would be needed on this topic in the future. The Co-Rs shared their contact information with each other and agreed that it would be a small group that begins as a community of practice in the Pacific Northwest. An informal ceremony was held in true C-RRR fashion acknowledging and recognizing each co-participant's participation in the research study. All Co-Rs and I gathered together around the living room

space of the home we met in to celebrate our time together. I intended to bring some sage (to burn during the offering of a blessing). However, I forgot to place the sage in my box of materials so the hostess offered to bring some incense we could use instead. All in the group agreed with the use of incense and the giving of thanks (of asking and giving a blessing) for our time together. I briefly thanked each Co-R, offered them each a small token of my appreciation and gave them an embrace and a kiss on the cheek (as is often customary in LatinX culture). I also gave each Co-R a certificate which identified each one as a Co-R, their name, date, and my signature on it. Some of the participants stated they were going to frame the certificates and place them in their offices. Each Co-R was then invited to also offer a blessing or share something with the group. Each one shared sentiments of love, gratitude, appreciation, and of collectivismo (collectivism). We then collected our things, prepared take-home travel snack packs, and, thanked the hostess and her husband who helped prepare breakfast that day. We expressed gratitude for their hospitality.

Phase IV—Reflective/reflexive meaning-making. I subsequently reviewed and analyzed all interviews and focus group data (Phase I, II, and Phase III), and all additional data (audio recordings, transcripts, field, journal, margin notes, handwritten notes each participant wrote during the two-day process, Post-It group notes I had taken). I did this applying the IPA theoretical and conceptual frameworks as the final meaning-making research process. As the primary researcher, I reflected upon the interactions (individual and collective), dissonance, limitations, quality, validity, process, and personal reflections of each day and phase of this study. I carefully analyzed all the data in light of the research topic and theoretical concepts which served as foundations for this study.

Phase IV was an intentional reflective and reflexive pause in five-plus years of PhD work, a critical reflection on what emerged for me (etic and emic perspectives), and what I interpreted as the lived experience of sharing multiple phases of a research study with fellow LatinX diversity champions working in HEIs. Phase IV was not only a deep scholarly reflection of all I learned; Phase IV was a reflective/reflexive analysis of how I was informed, how the research challenged my personal perspectives, assumptions, and professional practice; an explicit self-aware meta-analysis. During this reflexive journey phase, I attempted to make my intersubjectivity and intersectionality transparent; capturing the skepticism, parody and irony experienced as one of the co-creators of knowledge (Finlay 2002).

Phase IV outcomes. I identified, among other topics, what the study offers for gaps in scholarly work and research to be explored further. I also noted the research study surprises and limitations. Lastly, I introduced and explored the research participant's interest for developing a LatinX DO in HEI (EDI champions) community of practice (Wenger et al., 2002) in the Pacific Northwest.

Overview of Data Collection Phases and Processes

All phases of this study focused on the participant's lived experiences. Each participant was assured their voice (quotations), interpretation, and that their lived experiences were to be honored by giving full attention and respect to what and how the stories were shared and fully embraced by all in the group. Qu and Dumay (2011) suggested qualitative research interviews require intensive listening skills, copious note taking, detailed planning and careful preparation; I found this to be very true. The narrated reflections were captured as "field texts" (Creswell, 2014, p. 74). All interviews required "a [C-RRR] form of respect and curiosity about what people [participants] say, and a systematic effort to really hear and understand what people [each

participant] tell you" (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, p. 17). Phase I individual interviews were transcribed, and a member check was completed. Phases II, and III, were conducted as focus groups. The interviews were free of directive, prescriptive or suggestive language in order for the process not to come across as to having to control the information shared by the participants. During the interviews I used probing questions designed to encourage the participants to identify how they access (individually and collectively) access their cultural core strengths. Being mindful the narratives provided by the participants had the potential for being a "sanitized view of experience, cleaned up for public discourse" (Charmaz, 2000, p. 525). I respectfully probed and invited deeper, at times, painful truths to surface, while honoring their choice to reveal only what they wished to during the interviews. I asked follow-up questions which helped to: weave a tapestry of the essence of the phenomenon; explore what was highlighted, what was identified as *mas o menos* (more or less) important by the participant(s), confirm what was co-constructed, and offered further descriptions of specific details. Member checking according to Cohen and Crabtree (2006), is a technique that is performed, "when data, analytic categories, interpretations and conclusions are tested with members of those groups from whom the data were originally obtained', and, for "establishing to the validity of an account" (para. 1). Member checking was a critical and effective technique for receiving the participant's approval for the interpretation of their information; a way to confirm that the researcher is correct in her interpretation (Curtin & Fossey, 2007; Doyle, 2007; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The focus dialogue group interviews (Phase II and 3) required an intentional focus on listening and capturing the polyphonic voices and perspectives of the whole group; a collective revelation. This facilitated discussion highlighted the importance of bringing their whole selves into the interview process. I provided a verbal overview of the research design, interview process, various phases, confidentiality, and

reminded them they could request to stop the interview at any time. They were also reminded that the interview would be audio recorded (as per their consent form received prior to the interview).

The use of audio recording during the interviews was needed for capturing multiple dimensions of communication (individually and collectively). During each phase, I applied Finlay's (2002) Reflexive Typology Maps which included introspection, intersubjective reflection, mutual collaboration with all Co-Rs, social critique, and a discursive deconstruction. Each phase triggered some painful memories and experiences of discrimination, especially during Phase II and III. I was mindful to "pay full honor to the voice of the storyteller" (Beuthin, 2014, p. 130). Each participant was informed of their right to privacy and confidentiality. Sequential, open-ended interview questions invited and engaged both the participants and me to actively share in dialogue. However, I was intentional about not placing any emphasis on my story as an EDI leader as much as I was listening to their stories.

Because LatinX populations have historically been marginalized and silenced, a highly structured interview process would have certainly hindered my efforts to establish trusting relationships with the Co-Rs. Interview questions were modified as needed, in real-time, to fit the situation and topic being addressed. Interview question modification created a safe space to hold meaningful dialogue that homed in on rich and deeper responses by the participants.

As the primary researcher, I adapted the interview questions when a participant introduced surprising issues or revelations outside of what I had anticipated. There were some occasions when a participant shared a very personal experience, then followed the thought by stating, "that's not to be shared."

I interwove and applied C-RRR culturally responsive, relevant, and reinforcing practices throughout each phase of this study. I experienced the open-ended questioning approach of IPA as highly effective for this particular group. An open, adaptable, and fluid interview process helped liberate and free the participant's voices; it invited a culturally fluid, storytelling path to be taken in response to my questions. By avoiding hierarchical and controlling arrangements, I strived to establish an equitable and inclusive environment throughout all phases of this study (Seidman, 2006). I was culturally responsive as I planned out the group's meals, space, haptics, and time (adaptable and fluid). LatinX populations are collectivists, and commonly from an oral culture of storytellers, therefore, focus dialogue groups were a good fit for sharing lived experiences. Relational and inclusive leadership practices were evident, e.g., leading co-creators, Co-Rs; interacting and culturally co-existing as a unit. Rosegrant Alvarez and Gutiérrez (2001) highlighted the importance of demonstrating hospitality and creating a welcoming ambience, making it more likely that participants were able to pay attention. Food was offered throughout all phases of this research, foods common in LatinX culture. This provided opportunities to interact and contribute to the development of team relationships among participants. *Mi casa*, *su casa* (my home is your home) is a generally understood cultural value showing hospitality.

The home we met in was decorated in culturally relevant themes and cultural reinforcing art. Space was intentionally created for liberating oneself; to behave, move, code switch, expressions to be made in English and Spanish, to bi-lingually/biculturally socialize, and breathe our *Latinidad*. I anticipated the research topic might generate or trigger painful experiences of institutional tokenism and marginality, I wove indigenous and spiritual elements into our dialogues; only with the whole group's agreement and permission such as smudging, prayer, burned incense, and shared generational stories and practices of indigenous ways of healing.

During Phases II and III the Co-Rs were asked permission to audio tape the social interactions they shared prior to the focus group dialogue process. I carefully observed body language; individually and collectively in order to offer additional insights into the topic being researched. Phase II and III focus group dialogues began by inviting the Co-Rs to come together for a prayer of thanks and by eating a meal. LatinX culture is high-context, so seeing each other's body language was critical. We began the first dialogue or focus group sitting around the dinner table; some were eating or snacking and drinking *cafecitos*. Culturally, Latinas place trusting relationships in high regard, building such relationships required authentic engagement, time, and a respectful approach.

> A paradigm shift occurs when a question is asked inside the current paradigm that can only be answered from outside it
>
> —Goldberg (1998, p. 225) from *The Art of the Question*

IPA Data Analysis

IPA data analysis involved asking probing questions of the participants about their narratives. An IPA data analytics approach guided the manner in which I read the transcripts and explored what the participant were attempting to relate, and what seemed was at the heart of their intentions. IPA data analysis required me as the primary researcher to check and understand my own pre-conceptions in light of what I was discovering about the participant's stories and lived experiences (J. A. Smith & Osborne, 2007).

I analyzed the data by listening to the audio recordings, making notes and then following a hermeneutic circle process, carefully listening to short clips of audio tape multiple times and comparing what I heard to what I had caught in a previously listened to audio clip. I used a set of headphones for intense listening, at times hyper-focused on each word or phrases stated by an

individual or as a group. I scheduled secure listening time in my home. This required family member cooperation for pet care and noise control.

During this study, I experienced some of the most intense listening skills I have ever practiced. I integrated the survey data, field, margin, and journal notes. IPA analysis focuses on how participants perceive their particular situations they face, how they make meaning and make sense of their personal and social world (J. A. Smith & Osborne, 2007). I captured themes (Callary, Rathwell, & Young 2015; Saldaña, 2009) which were confirmed though the Co-R member checking process. Implicit and collective themes, and dissonance occurred across and amongst the group of participants with similar and distinct experiences. These were noted and captured during the data analysis process. Thick descriptions of collective and individual themes were also captured. Although I watched for inner-group dissonance and/or disconnections, none were observed. There were moments during the focus group dialogues when topics triggered feelings of grief, pain, frustration, and/or anger amongst the Co-Rs. During these moments some participants expressed their feelings by crying, raising their tone of voice, laughing, clapping their hands, or tearing up. There was one occasion when one of the participants began crying and demonstrating body language that reflected deep pain. I interrupted the dialogue by saying, "Let's offer our fullest support and empathy." All the participants surrounded the Latina who was crying, and we offered her a group hug. We then proceeded with the dialogue when she was ready. Direct quotes from the interviews and focus group dialogues which help support my observations and analysis in Chapter IV.

Data Analysis

Systematic text condensation. After careful review of various approaches to identifying and capturing qualitative data, I chose to implement a systematic text condensation (STC)

strategy and approach to capture the data in this study. STC offered amplitude for feasibility, intersubjectivity, reflection, and reflexivity, all fundamental elements to this study. STC also helped maintain a focus on methodological rigor, all of which make this data analysis strategy a good match for this study. STC, as an analytical strategy, helped describe and explore thematic, intergroup analysis of the participant's interviews and focus group notes. Malterud (2012) suggested that STC was inspired by a phenomenological approach to research. STC is designed to analyze data, in this case text from transcripts and notes, by applying four basic procedural steps. During the first step, I gathered all the material and read over the transcripts for an overall impression, making sure to bracket preconceptions. The second step, identifying units of meaning represented by each participant, and as a group, created the thematic identity. The third step involved condensing and abstracting the meaning within each of the thematic topic groups. Finally, in the fourth step, following Aase, Nordrehaug, and Malterud (2008), "contents were summarized for each thematic group to generalized descriptions and concepts reflecting the most important experiences reported by the [participants]" (p. 767). In a similar vein, Malterud (2012) summarized each of the four key STC steps as follows: "(1) total impression—from chaos to themes; (2) identifying and sorting meaning units—from themes to codes; (3) condensation—from code to meaning; (4) synthesizing—from condensation to descriptions and concepts" (p. 795).

The units of meaning identified represented the diverse aspects of the shared stories of lived experiences by each participant. Specifically, what is meant by the term, *meaning units*, are the sections of text focused on the participant's interpretation as told by themselves, as they perceived their experiences, and as they described them. Binder, Holgersen, and Høstmark-Nielsen (2010) defined meaning units as, "context-laden constituents, like words in a

paragraph, and they represented the . . . [participants] concrete account of an experience, a thought or reflection that 'has meaning in itself' within the frame of the broader narrative" (p. 288).

STC is about condensing the meaning of each meaning unit followed by condensing the meaning and by searching for patterns or themes. STC when used as a strategy helped me compare the participants lived experiences from Phase II and 3. Binder et al. (2010) argued,

> When there is convergence between the experiences of different participants and when there is a moderate degree of divergence between them that makes the pattern thematically rich. In this way, the identification of a meaning pattern combines the hermeneutic element of interpretation and active meaning making on the researchers' part with the phenomenological element of commitment to description of lived experience. (p. 288)

STC has been established as a strategy for analysis originating in traditions of methods for analysis of qualitative data; it is the approach I used to analyze all the data.

Data Storage Sequence and Phases

All hard copies of the data were placed in my home office; in a locked drawer. All electronic and digital data were kept on my personal computer. As the researcher, I was mindful to carefully follow the process for maintaining confidentiality and data storage throughout the study and not just at the onset of the process. The computer is personally-owned. No other person, in or out of my household uses the computer. The computer also requires a password to access documents. As I obtained data, I entered it into my computer and informed the participants of the steps I took to ensure their confidentiality.

Research Trustworthiness (Validity/Credibility), Rigor and Quality

Trustworthiness, rigor, and quality were achieved by carefully examining the raw data (transcriptions), data reduction (themes identified), field and journal, and margin notes. In terms of validity in qualitative research, according to Moustakas (1994), "First person reports of life

experiences are what makes phenomenological research valid" (p. 2). Arriving at the supposed truth or the validity of a research study is key; however, validity can be viewed differently within quantitative and qualitative research (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Heale & Twycross, 2015). "For quantitative researchers [active] involvement would greatly reduce the validity of a test, yet for qualitative researchers denying one's role within research also threatens the validity of the research" (Winter, 2000, pp. 7–8). Instruments and measurements are elements of validity in quantitative research, whereas, purpose, processes and their appropriateness for the phenomenon studied, including participant representations are examined as components of validity in qualitative research (Adcock & Collier, 2001; Golafshani, 2003). Member checking (participant validation) is undertaken by the participants confirming that what has been captured through the interviews and transcripts is correct; a way researcher and participant check for errors. Lincoln and Guba (1985) asserted, "member checking . . . is the most crucial technique for establishing credibility" (p. 314). Member checking was done in all four phases of this research process. As co-analysts, the participants' reviewed and confirmed interpretations which were then incorporated into the study findings. Triangulation, or the corroboration and convergence of data was achieved through individual and focus group interview transcripts, notes (field, margin, and journal). Credibility was established through an audit trail of the research protocol, and a clearly identified use of a scholarly research design, theoretical concepts, scientific methods, methodologies, and "maintaining meticulous notes of interviews and observations, and documenting the process of analysis in detail" (Mays & Pope, 2000, p. 10). In addition, biases, assumptions, and presuppositions were made known in field, margin, and journal notes.

During this research study, the participants (Co-Rs) had the opportunity to confirm their narrated truths as experienced through their cultural lens (Winter, 2000, p. 13). Transcriptions

captured their narratives through the use of copious field, margin, and journal notes. Purposeful sampling of LatinX perspectives ensured that all participant's life experiences were relevant to the research topic. An organized and systematic data collection (audit trail) confirmed accuracy, credibility, and confidentiality.

Summary and Conclusion to Chapter III

Designing a qualitative research design is composed of several complex elements. Chapter III has identified the inquiry process in detail. The chapter also provided a comprehensive explanation of the reasons for choosing a qualitative research approach and narrative inquiry method and how it was implemented in this study. Studying LatinX DOs in HEI with a focus on the phenomenon or lived experiences, to be mindful of their cultural context required a creative, careful, and strategic approach. A comprehensive logical explanation for choosing IPA, with emphasis on the intersubjective and critical nature of this research is presented was seen as an appropriate fit to the research topic.

Various phases of the interview processes were defined, including the basis for the approach. The participant selection, criteria, demographic questionnaire, and schedule are noted and explained as critical elements to this study. The four phases of this study were described and explained to better understand the researcher's processes, goals, and outcomes for this study. Ethical research considerations were also identified. systematic text condensation and its four phases were described as were the data collection processes and procedures, management, and analysis. Lastly, the trustworthiness, rigor and quality of this study have been discussed.

Interestingly, my and the CoRs' time together was viewed as a "healing." But it was not viewed by the participants as an intervention because our time together was not designed in a manner nor with the intention of healing a problem or an issue. It was not experienced as an

organized way to identify problems within the group. However, the time together during Phase II and III, in particular were seen as “validating,” a word used by all the Co-Rs in this study during one or multiple phases of this study. Chapter IV will describe specific areas or topics in which the Co-Rs felt and expressed that they felt validated. The chapter will explain the analysis process in each distinct phase of this study and describe the facilitation process for the focus groups and the interview process. Lastly, Chapter IV will identify eight research topics which were the result of distilling data. It also describes some of the exchanges the Co-Rs shared during the focus groups; Phases II and III.

Chapter IV: Research Findings

Chapter IV reports the findings and analysis of the research. I begin this chapter by presenting a brief overview of the insights from each Co-R. Thereafter, the findings will be presented, phase-by-phase. These are the outcomes to the research question: What is the lived experience of LatinX (Latinas) DOs in higher education institutions? In other words, what is it like to be a LatinX DO in these institutions? Do LatinX DOs capacitate their cultural values as equity, diversity, and inclusion leaders? These questions and the findings in response are the foundation of this study.

Interpretive Phenomenological Findings

In the following pages, I report on what emerged during the research phases using IPA methodology. I begin with Phase I, identifying the individual Co-R themes and sub-themes. The thematic analysis findings are presented phase-by-phase. Each phase will be deconstructed and explained in a step-by-step process. The phases were identified and briefly summarized in Figure 3.1 in the previous chapter.

Phase I Process. In Phase I, face-to-face interviews were held with each individual Co-R. Interviews lasted one-and-a-half to two hours during which the participant was invited to share their lived experiences in response to the question, “What is like to be a LatinX DO in an HEI?” The primary aim in Phase I was to get as close as possible to the Co-Rs’ lived experiences. The individual interviews resulted in my interpretation of what I perceived as topics they each had highlighted, broken into key themes and sub-themes. In this phase, the thematic analysis was to be the initial step of identifying general themes—not to create an exhaustive list, as it was in subsequent phases when the Co-Rs would be the key interpreters of their own stories

and therefore, the ones lead a collective decision-making process of deciding which themes they would ultimately chose as their own.

After transcribing each interview, I highlighted key expressions for each Co-R. I then identified sub-themes from the high-level expressions. By applying IPA, I interpreted the "meanings of their interpretations . . . which, may or may not conform to what the informants have told" (Larkin et al., 2006, p. 113). Phase I was spent actively listening to story-telling narratives leading to the exploration and discovery of how each Co-R experiences themselves as LatinX DOs in HEIs. I carefully listened to the interpretations describing how the LatinX DOs identify themselves within the social contexts in which they exist.

Phase I—In-depth Exploration of Individual Lived Experiences

The results from Phase I are organized in terms of the themes and sub-themes derived from the nine interviews. Table 4.1 presents these, that I, the primary researcher identified from their interviews. Each theme and sub-theme will be further described and illustrated in subsequent discussion

Table 4.1

Co-R Identification of Themes and Sub-Themes in Interviews

Themes and Sub-Themes	Co-R1	Co-R2	Co-R3	Co-R4	Co-R5	Co-R6	Co-R7	Co-R8	Co-R9
1.1 EDI INSTITUTIONAL LEADERSHIP	X	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
1.1 Inclusive & Authentic Leadership	X	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
1.2 Cultural Intelligence and Leadership	X	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
2. SOCIAL JUSTICE	X	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
2.1 Inequity	X	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
3. LATINX (LATINA) IDENTITY	X	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
3.1 Credibility	X	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
3.2 Imposter Syndrome	X	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
3.3 Internalized Oppression	X	x	x	x	x		x	x	x
4. CULTURAL VALUES	X	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
5. PSYCHOLOGICAL STRESSORS	X	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
5.1 Marginalization & Microaggressions									
6. WHITENESS	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
7. PEDI ALLIANCES	X	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
8. STUDENT ADVOCACY	X	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
9. FUNDING	X	x		x		x			x
10. HUMAN RESOURCES	X	x			x				

Theme 1: EDI Institutional Leadership

Every Co-R viewed EDI institutional leadership as a principle role. EDI leadership is at the core of their work. As EDI practitioners, they expressed their passion, dedication, and commitment to their work. They shared stories of success and frustration. The Co-Rs referred to

EDI institutional leadership as a “calling,” “responsibility,” “purpose,” or “charge” in life. Challenges have been met courageously by these EDI leaders, at times along with a team, or, at times feeling very much alone. EDI leadership was often referred to by the Co-Rs as “lonely” work.

Co-R8 stated,

> The number one thing about the [DO] job is that it is lonely work. I don’t have any staff. If things are going well, you won’t hear about it, but if they go badly, if there is one incident, that one thing that makes the newspaper—you’ll hear about it.

Co-R1 also expressed feeling lonely:

> I am the only “go to person” at times. It is lonely work because not everyone understands the cultural nuances that are needed to work and communicate with students who experience marginalization. I don’t have anyone who truly comprehends what this work entails.

Co-R1’s comment draws attention to a unique factor about the role of a LatinX DO in HEI. In the group, she explained that many EDI concerns, issues, or grievance are hers to resolve and no one else’s. Her bicultural skills are unique in that she connects with students who express their experiences of being marginalized on campus. However, she opined that EDI institutional change is only realized when all working on campus take part in embedding EDI in all they do; collectively.

Co-R5 also referred to her EDI Leadership as “a calling” as is indicated in the following statement: “It’s [EDI Leadership] a duty, and it’s an honor. And, it’s all of those things put together, regardless of the title you’re given, or official compensation or recognition.” Co-R5 said she has dreams of championing EDI leadership in a big way—she spoke of becoming president of a college someday. Creating better access, affordability, and urgency for improved LatinX graduation rates, are but a few points of frustration expressed by the group. Add to this

the fact that very few presidents of color lead HEIs to the slow nature of meaningful EDI change on campuses, adds to their frustration. Co-R2 asserted,

> I want to be the president of a college. I feel like, if I just had my own college I would know how and what to do to create [EDI] change. Do you know how hard it is for a person of color to move into these positions?

Co-R8 reported the following as she described the areas in which she leads institutional change:

> I had to figure out how to create a pathway for immigrant Latino students—to create new pathways and change institutions so that immigrants could go to college. So that meant looking at curriculum- that meant looking at faculty and politics, and, policies, practices, and financial aid.

Each of the Co-Rs were in positions of leading complex changes in their respective HEIs; some were in positions granted them executive power to make EDI changes to policies, programs, protocols, and practice—others possessed minimal authority for executive decision-making, as per their job descriptions. Each one was actively, either proposing, creating, or challenging their HEIs to address inequities in the following areas: funding allocation, student registration, student working programs, professional talent recruitment, curriculum, and, community outreach programs.

Sub-theme 1.1. Inclusive and authentic leadership. All nine of the Co-Rs mentioned the value they place on inclusivity and authenticity; not just in their own EDI leadership, but equally in other EDI leaders on campus. This value is captured from three Co-Rs who shared their thoughts in the following quotes. Co-R3 suggested, “An EDI leader must include all voices. It requires patience and extra work; however, it is the only way to fully engage other leaders, students, staff, and community members in decision-making processes” Similarly, Co-R1 gave her perspective as follows:

> You have to go about leadership in a very strategic way. You have to really strategize on how you will include everyone in committee and advisory group work. But it can’t be all

> business; you have to do it honestly and authentically. What I mean is that you have to be true to your own EDI principles while strategically involving all in the process.

Co-R5 shared feedback that her team gave her based on a couple of situations in which she failed to include or consult with her team members prior to making a team decision:

> There were a couple of times when I made a decision without consulting my team. The feedback I got from them was, "You are here to lead by representing us and our voices." Yeah, it came back to bite me, so now I am more conscious of making sure that everyone is consulted and included and, that, I really take everyone's thoughts into consideration before making a decision.

Sub-Theme: 1.2. Cultural intelligence and leadership. The general thought amongst the co-researcher group was that there needed to be a greater emphasis placed on training for HEI staff and faculty to develop their cultural intelligence or cultural quotient in order to better work with diverse populations. Group participants also noted the fact that demographics are rapidly changing which requires new teaching and leading methods and practices in higher education.

Co-R2 stated,

> I don't think some faculty understand what it [cultural intelligence] means in leadership. They have to do their own work—it first requires reflection and understanding privilege, and how it impacts leadership styles. They need to learn and understand that how they navigate this world is very different than it is for some of us.

In agreement with Co-R2, Co-R6 shared her thoughts on this particular sub-theme.

> HEI leaders feel like they already know about EDI and so are culturally intelligent as leaders so it's really difficult to engage them in EDI professional development. I think this is one of the biggest barriers and you see their bias from people you work with and you think they should know better. They may have some cultural intelligence and EDI knowledge but those are the ones that will not go to additional EDI training – these are the people I work with, staff and faculty.

There was concern shared amongst the group of HEI executives, trustees, faculty, and staff that believed attending a few EDI trainings was enough to have offered them a workable degree of cultural intelligence. The DOs were experiencing this as a false sense of knowing, and

to a large degree, a denial to recognize the impact inequities were having on students, faculty, and staff of color. An additional perspective relevant to this sub-theme was shared by Co-R4:

> There are a lot of well-intentioned folks around here, and they could be my biggest barrier, you know. They are the kind that let you know like, "I am very opposed to racism and sexism and homophobia" and yet, they could possibly be the problem: well-intentioned but unaware leaders. The fact that you are so sure you are not the problem leads to the fact that you are unwilling to educate yourself and grow and change . . . to grow [cultural intelligence] and doing nothing to actually change themselves or the university, or actually help in a meaningful way.

Theme 2: Social Justice

All nine Co-Rs referred to social justice as a key principle of their EDI work and its connection to their cultural identity. Social justice is viewed by the Co-Rs as foundational to their worldviews and purpose in life; including, their passion as DOs.

Sub-Theme 2.1: Inequity. Inequities (experienced, observed, witnessed) are the primary cause of psychological stress the Co-Rs experience on a regular basis in their roles as DOs. There were emotionally intense moments during each phase of this study in which the Co-Rs expressed anguish, anger, disgust, and/or, became indignant as they discussed inequities in HEIs. The stressors appeared to multiply when the inequities negatively impacted students and faculty of color.

Co-R2 revealed how she perceives the impact of her work on her wellbeing. She expressed her indignation openly with the group. She, like others in the group, was adamant about the need for immediate EDI change to be made. She emphatically stated, "Injustices in HEIs are killing me!" An additional and equally emphatic statement followed by Co-R1 who claimed,

> We can do this! Does anybody see that this [HEI] is not equitable? It's institutional barrier after barrier and here we are a Hispanic Serving Institute (HIS). What are we doing to students? I am passionate about social justice . . . [HEIs] continue to perpetuate oppression in systems, systems that are not built for People of Color. And, I think it's such an injustice!

Co-R4 addressed the inequity in HEI systems in the following way: “I look at the oppression and barriers, at resource allocation and lack of equity. I work with them [students of color] as they try to navigate systems not designed for them.” Co-R6 stated, “The dance for me is how I navigate and work within a White Institution.” As will be seen below, the metaphor of The Dance[3] became a pervasive theme in the discussions and in my subsequent analysis.

Several DOs indicated that, after several years, “racial fatigue” has produced one or two characteristics in them as leaders: increased tenacity and/or skepticism. Depending on their energy level and support, they may become more assertive and direct about the need for EDI change, or, become cynical about the possibility for sustained, systemic EDI change. Co-R2 who was exhausted with all this, shared, “I cannot lead or work the same way I used to. Something happened to me [when she began working as a DO]. Oppressive systems have changed me and the way I lead EDI change.”

Theme 3: LatinX (Latina) Identity

All nine Co-Rs referred to their LatinX identity as the cultural lens by which they lead. They each spoke of their heritage and cultural beliefs and values with pride. Some of the Co-Rs shared multi-generational stories of their personal immigrant stories. Some are first-generation to the United States Others were the first in their families to receive a degree. Multi-generational stories of social injustice experienced by many in their family was what sparked their interest in becoming EDI promoters and leaders. Leadership was viewed by the group as being driven by cultural values. Leadership is viewed by the co-researchers as critical to 21st century EDI change. The growing LatinX demographics across the nation inform them of the need to

[3] In subsequent reference to this “generative metaphor” (Schön, 1979), I capitalize “The Dance,” to distinguish the phrase from other general usages.

diversity HEI leaders. As collectivists, the co-researchers thought it most appropriate to honor Latina EDI pioneers who came before them and view them as being activists who broke down HEI racial barriers for them as students in HEIs. It became evident that the group's passion and focus on social justice leadership was based on their historical knowledge and personal experiences. Co-R2 said,

> My identity informs how I address social injustice. My work doesn't define me, I define my work. This is my journey. We all started the dialogue describing how we identify ourselves and cultural values; that's how we start and who we are—it's our center.

Co-R9 strongly argued the connection between her identity and leadership:

> At my core of my EDI leadership is my identity and cultural values. This leads to relationship building, to leadership, and to who I am. That's me, my identity. Cultural values and relationships are influenced by my identity. My identity now is influenced by my age, socioeconomic status, and the locations I have lived.

Co-R3 added, "We [Latinas] cannot be who we are with things as they are. HEIs are not made for us." And Co-R8 summed up, "It's like we have to create a space for us, in a space that was not created for us. If they would just give us a college, we could show them how it's [EDI] done."

Sub-Theme 3.1: Credibility. The group pointed out commonly shared experiences of feeling they have to work twice as hard to establish credibility amongst their White colleagues to obtain their approval. In other words, dismissive behaviors, and comments toward them is another widespread form of being marginalized. During the face-to-face interviews Co-R2 stated,

> I don't believe we [HEI employees of color] get enough credit and recognition for what we do. I might say something during a meeting, and it will get completely overlooked . . . then a White male counterpart during the same meeting, will say the same thing I did, as though it was an original idea and get kudos and recognition. Has anyone else had that happen to them? Is this the phenomenon you think LatinXers experience? It can't just be me, right?

Sub-Theme 3.2: Imposter syndrome. Interestingly, every one of the co-researchers mentioned their feelings of experiencing imposter syndrome. Imposter syndrome was understood by the group as their feelings of inadequacy, feelings of not really being capable as though they are faking it. In other words, their self-doubt was a result of the imposter syndrome. They each had to work diligently to overcome the feelings by analyzing their work, successes, and accomplishments in their EDI change. Co-R8 stated that "to be an activist, to be Chicana, and to be a legitimate warrior is not somebody like me." Co-R9 indicated, "We share some commonalities of feeling that we are never enough. We are told; your English is not enough, you are not straight enough, you are not queer enough, you are not White enough."

Sub-theme: 3.3. Internalized oppression. Internalized oppression is expressed as behavior whereby we turn upon ourselves [LatinX racial or ethnic group] and our family members. The behaviors are demonstrated as "distressed patterns of behavior that result from the racism and oppression of the minority society" (Padilla, 1999, p. 769). Co-R1 opined,

> Lateral hostility . . . I've been criticized more sometimes by my own than by White people. In academia, our goal needs to be to develop cultural consciousness. If we don't learn about internalized oppression, I think that at some point, I am taking part in it. The more I learn about it, the more I reflect upon how I might be perpetuating it in my life.

Co-R6 added, "We must address our internalized fears."

Theme 4: Cultural Values

All nine Co-Rs referred to cultural values and their influential importance in their EDI leadership. Relationships, collectivism, family, and spirituality were some of the values identified. Co-R5 stated: "My cultural values lead the way I build relationships with people. Relationships are intertwined with my cultural values." Co-R6 indicated that her parents instilled in her the cultural values of building community. "Both of my parents are committed to speaking

up against oppression and on behalf of oppressed groups. They taught me to give back to our community; to serve and to be a good human." Co-R5 shared,

> Cultural values are just part of who I am. I am from a collectivist culture – we include others in decision-making processes; it's the way I work with teams. I am also comfortable with disagreement and confrontation. This is not true here [United States]. I try not to be controversial because people here are uncomfortable with disagreement. So, I have to be careful; I have to adapt. There is a way I have to *be* when I come to work; it's all about conforming, so the way I dress and the way I talk told me, "You still have some of your native country with you." I don't realize just how much I am conforming.

On the topic of collectivism and inclusion, Co-R9 opined,

> Queer, trans, People of Color needed a lead . . . students were feeling very oppressed and much marginalized, excluded and ignored. One can hear it in the tone and voice of some faculty who are reluctant to provide services for these students. I have to speak up and get the push-back.

Theme 5: Psychological Stressors

Psychological stress was described and experienced by each of the interviewees. They explained that as a result of listening to myriads of stories of inequities as told and experienced by faculty of color, and students of color, and, due to their own personal experiences of injustice (inequities and exclusion) in HEIs, they all experience psychological stress at work on a regular basis.

Co-R8 claimed:

> There's constant racial battle fatigue and the having to navigate and having to speak up for EDI change.

Co-R1 frustratingly stated:

> When a LatinX or immigrant student has an issue, rather than the White faculty helping out, they send them to me, to my office and I think, they can help them out too! It feels like it all falls on my lap. I'm very frustrated 'cause we should all be able to provide some help and guidance no matter what our identity is on campus. It is stressful work and at times I feel like I neglect my family and responsibilities at home because the work demands are so great. Add to this the political games and having to know who we [EDI leaders] can talk to and who we can't and don't care to listen. Sometimes I feel like I can't handle any more. I got sick, I developed rashes all over my body. I remember I broke down during an event. It's intense work, really intense.

Co-R2 shared:

> It [EDI leadership] gets to the point of becoming overwhelming because you want to help all those sharing their stories with you of being marginalized; you see the negative impact on students when all they should be concentrating on is their studies.

Co-R3 noted how she, at times, manages the psychological stressors.

> I have to just some things go. The stress was really taking a toll on my relationships . . . I couldn't leave it at work. It's one of those things I could not shut off because I think, I should have done this or that.

Sub-Theme: 5.1. Microaggressions and marginalization. Microaggressions and marginalization was a topic that came up for each Co-R. I share a scenario told by one of the Co-Rs, however, I will not identify her as the situation I describe may lead to her identification. She shared the following: She was dressed in what may be common executive attire (business suit). She walked into a conference room to report her research findings to a group of executives she was meeting for the first time. As she came into the conference room, she noticed there were several White males and a White female present for the meeting. One of the males looked at her and said he would like to have some coffee. The other males also looked her way and stated that they too, would like some coffee. The co-researcher ignored them and when the first male repeated the request for coffee, she remained seated and indicated that she too, would like to have some coffee. This was not the first time she was the only woman of color present in a group, and assumptions were made that she was an office aide, server, or waitress. This Co-R's adaptive response to this situation helped mitigate the situation. Several of the Co-Rs shared similar stories of socially constructed deficit-based stories. The dynamic describes incidences that are ever-constant. Each marginalization scenario a little different than others; scenarios that are experienced over-and over again. Does one respond in a manner that informs, corrects, and/or educates members of the dominant culture members lacking cultural awareness and

cultural intelligence? Co-Rs shared their response depends on many factors: who is present, what is said, the agenda, the sociopolitical climate, or, the energy they have to address the matter that day and in that moment.

Co-R3 shared the following situation:

> I was visiting with someone in a foreign language after a [state government-sponsored] meeting when one of the White male executives asked me what language I was speaking. He asked me if I knew how to speak English, to which I said that I did. He then responded by saying, “Oh, now I know why they hired you.” I was so insulted! 'Cause, I’m like, dang! No, that’s not why they hired me. That’s not all I bring to the organization (HEI).

Co-R7 emphasized her frustration:

> I am doing diversity in a conservative world. So I tell them [White males], you don’t even realize when you come into a room that you can take over when a woman of color speaks and has a new idea and two guys in the room co-opts it [idea] and takes it as his own and the other males in the space say, “good idea.”

The Co-R who shared the aforementioned story, worked to build trusting relationships with her colleagues and was open to listen, discuss, and address provocative topics on race and inequity with her colleagues. It is my opinion that DOs who have strategically established trusting, honest, and collaborative relationships with their colleagues appear to be more likely to be frank and respectfully challenge their White colleagues when they fail to demonstrate cultural intelligence. However, there are HEI leaders of color who strongly believe it is not our (People of Color) job, role, or responsibility to educate dominant culture; rather, it is upon them to educate themselves.

Co-R8 noted:

> You [dominant culture] overlook me causally because I don’t fit what you want to look at. OK, but when I see this happening to students of color, I become indignant, I couldn’t fight for myself back when but now, I become angry.

Co-R8 further explained that she encourages her students to read scholarly literature written by feminist LatinX scholars in hopes of empowering them to use their voice against social injustices.

Theme 6: Whiteness

Most of the Co-Rs reported that the respective HEIs they serve are led by White males. As a group, they related some of the challenges they face are due to working in systems where "Whiteness" is held as the norm, and where "Whiteness" is perpetuated by holding positions of authority, power, and privilege. They view "Whiteness" as hegemonic power systems maintained by what is identified as normative; sexual orientation, language, religion, and class. The Co-Rs that work in Hispanic Serving Institutes stated they are led by White males. They also shared that the HEIs work for have very few faculty, tenured professors, or administrative employees of color. These realities create various EDI leadership challenges.

Co-R9 shared her frustration with the lack of textbooks at her HEI that are written by diverse authors. She emphatically stated, "Just look at your textbooks in chemistry and physics and math. Who are the authors? How many of the textbooks are written by women, by foreign sounding authors? We discovered the zero concept!" Co-R8 argued, "We have to be strategic about how we build relationships with White males [how we do the 'dance'] who do not know, who are unaware of their privilege." on the topic of championing EDI in HEIs, Co-R4 opined,

> I don't think they [White faculty] know and understand what that means. I don't think their ready, I think in order for them to be ready they have to do their own individual growth and reflection on their privilege . . . and, how they navigate this world compared to People of Color. I don't think some are ready to do the work.

Co-R4 insisted,

> In predominantly White institutions, there is so much work to be done for minoritized student populations. We [EDI leaders] have to do the work – we are the ones speaking up for change because we don't always have many allies in this work.

Whiteness, specifically in the Pacific Northwest (the geographic location where all the Co-Rs work) where there is very little diversity, creates patently unique stressors and challenges. It is impossible to create EDI changes alone. Therefore, the Co-Rs place a strong emphasis on the strategic development of establishing EDI alliances for support.

Theme 7: EDI Alliances

Relationships were noted earlier as being one of the principal LatinX cultural values. All of the co-researchers noted and emphasized the importance of building trusting relationships with EDI allies, including those outside of their cultural communities but still on campus, working on behalf of students (such as administrators, faculty, or staff). Co-R4 felt that one of her strengths is her reputation for building relationships. She shared her thoughts on the importance of establishing good working relationships with her colleagues, describing her relationships with others as critical to developing EDI polices, programs, and protocols on campus:

> I'm very connected here, I have built strong relationships with a lot of folks . . . from the student level to mid-level, and senior leadership staff. I'm also the kind of person they wanted for this job because I'm viewed as very reasonable. I'm diplomatic, very strategic, and I choose which battles I pick and when to pick them.

Co-R2 described a situation she experienced with a White male faculty member. She said that there was tension between them because she had asked about his excluding some students from taking his class. She indicated that, initially, he would not engage her. However, now they have a good relationship. She actually views him as a friend. She went on to say that the relationship grew as the result of having open and honest communication about sensitive HEI subjects.

Theme 8: Student Advocacy

Most of the DOs' job descriptions identify their roles working directly with students. Although some of the DOs are not directly assigned to advocate for students of color, these students come to them for advice, guidance, and, often visit them in their offices. This is the case Co-R3 described. She stated that although her work is primarily administrative, her office is often visited by students of color who indicate that they feel comfortable speaking Spanish to her and feel safe doing so in her office and with her.

Co-R5 implored HEI professionals to take action by advocating and supporting queer students of color. She remarked,

> Hearing from students across the state and then seeing the same issues at different HEIs made it clear that there wasn't always space for the intersectional issues of queer People of Color in traditional LGBTQ spaces. They were feeling very marginalized. All other meetings spaces for students to meet were unlocked ahead of [meeting] time . . . yet, our group had to call security each time we met to remind them to come and unlock the room we needed.

Co-R5 then stated, "I feel like I'm the always the one that has to speak up for these students and push back as I get challenged." Co-R4 opined, "We need a new kind of [institutional] thinking for transfer students. We have this elitist thinking." She further stated, "I lead a trans student advocacy committee, and a DACA, undocumented student advocacy committee. These committees are people who want to do the work to support those students."

Theme 9: Funding

Funding and equitable funding allocation was a topic addressed by multiple co-researchers. Some of the specific funding needs were related to conferences for students of color and for specific safe spaces for them to occupy on campus. Co-R7 told her HEI executive leadership team that she needed dedicated funding for a yearly conference she coordinates:

> So, I am having to literally beg you [HEI executive leaders] for money . . . I need money and your help to find money for this student conference that you say you support. You know it's transformative and that you want to raise graduation rates for students of color, but you won't help support this conference!

Co-R9 shared her frustration in seeking funding for the development of safe spaces for affinity groups to meet during their educational years on campus. She noted that she often gets push-back and has to be tenacious about her requests; she sees the positive impact safe spaces have for marginalized student populations.

Theme 10: Human Resources (HR)

The co-researchers all agreed that HEIs need to shift into new ways of managing and establishing 21st century diversity hiring, inclusive, and retention policies and practices that Co-R1 argued, "We are still using the same interview and hiring processes as we used decades ago. Diversifying faculty and staff require new, more innovative ways of announcing new positions." Co-R8 stated: "They say faculty needs to be diversified but they [HR] continue to hire White professors with the same hiring practices designed for them."

Phase I—In Closing

Nine information-rich interviews produced substantial data regarding EDI work in HEIs. As I engaged in the face-to-face interviews with each Co-R, I listened to their concerns on various issues that impact their daily professional and personal lives. Some Co-Rs alluded to their struggles of separating their feelings of angst over socially structured inequities at work in their personal (off-the-job) lived experiences of marginalization and watching national news programs relate the same issues nation-wide. Most found the workplace and media bombardment of racial issues to be interrelated and difficult if not impossible to escape. However, the feelings of being overwhelmed by injustice also fuel their passion to take action and to lead EDI.

The themes and sub-themes emerging from Phase I are all interconnected, sequential, and loop into each other. An example is how psychological stressors arise from systemic oppression generating the struggle for credibility, which, in turn, leads to imposter syndrome, which may be experienced as internalized oppression that can lead to taking action as EDI leaders who address inequities which impact students, and so on. In turn, students of color and LGBTQQIs, also experience such behaviors, which brings us to the topic of Whiteness as a norm. I was able to see the relevance in every theme from my own experience as an EDI leader.

Ultimately, the interviews led to the themes in Table 4.1 (above). These themes created the framework for the focus group agenda dialogue in Phase II. Phase II ultimately transformed these initial themes and sub-themes into a deeper, more closely interpreted set of themes identified by the Co-Rs through a collective, decision-making group process.

Phase II—Exploration and Discovery of the Culturally Collective Experience

In Phase II, the first of two focus groups required all of the Co-Rs to engage in a thematic analysis process. The focus groups were an essential element of this research design due to their effectiveness in gathering data; they are "a way of collecting qualitative data, which essentially involves engaging a small number of people in an informal group discussion . . . focused around a particular topic or set of issues" (Wilkinson, 2004, p. 177).

Each theme revealed itself in various ways. However, all surfaced as a result of the rich dialogues the group of Co-Rs where willing to engage in. I became an active part of these revelations in the sense that I loosely facilitated and guided the group in a C-RRR safe environment conducive to inviting each Co-R to reveal her truth.

One of the surprises I experienced was the group's initial response to the topic of leadership. The Co-Rs understood the interest in their EDI leadership. As a group they were

initially disinterested in sharing their thoughts about leadership. I later realized the group did not want to discuss this topic because they were thinking about leadership in terms of how they were experiencing it in a primarily White, male dominant way. In that context, leadership was oppressive and uninformed about matters of cultural awareness. The CO-Rs were frustrated with leadership due to the lack of sustained, transformational EDI change on campus. However, when I acknowledged and honored (verbally, culturally, and, ceremonially) their critical role *as* leaders they began to interweave their EDI leadership stories openly and honestly.

The EDI leadership discussion led into the topic of social justice. There was no shortage of stories and experiences reminding the group that injustices were imbedded in HEI systems. They were each previously HEI students. They not only remembered their own stories as marginalized students, but were angry and frustrated, that HEI systems excluding them were occurring within the lives of the students they now served. Their indignation over the inequities were solidly based in their LatinX (Latina) identity. Their ethnicity, history, and appearance as LatinXers identified them as Other(s), as different, as not belonging. Their hurt was evident.

This leads me to connect another topic identified by the group—LatinX identity. LatinX identity cannot be separated from LatinX cultural values. As collectivists, they are concerned and work to protect marginalized and oppressed students of color; this led to identification of the topic of the student advocacy. Indeed, all of the topics were interconnected, interwoven, and required EDI leadership and change. For a few Co-Rs, it was their spirituality cultural value that adds a deep burden and responsibility upon them. A responsibility to be the EDI warriors, champions, and she-roes. This culturally-specific responsibility brings with it complex psychological stressors—another topic they identified. Responsibility for historical EDI change is a topic spoken of at the kitchen table during LatinX intergenerational stories. In these

conversations, we, as LatinXers, understand that there is an expectation that our generation will be the ones to change discriminatory practices, that we will be the change-makers. I was constantly aware and ever mindful to put energy into regulating my emotions throughout the study. I have lived stories very similar to those of the Co-Rs and have had the parallel experiences of being excluded, of being the Other, and of seeking an education in HEIs designed to serve White populations. This emotional regulation was always before me. As the primary researcher, I could not emotionally break down because I fully understood that members of the Co-R group would then seek to care for my emotions and the focus would then be on me and not remain on their stories. When it pained me to hear about the inequities in HEIs, I became more certain that the topic of this study was important.

Whiteness became the backdrop of most discussions. There were many expressions of gratitude and appreciation for trusting relationships with White alliances. However, there were not enough of them, and often, the White alliances that "got it" (were deeply culturally aware) were not in positions of authority.

Funding became an interesting topic. There was a general consensus that HEI leaders often refused to make funding decisions based on the degree of inequities that exist in their respective HEIs. As an example, 400 students needed funding (scholarships) to attend an educational summer program. Of the total, less than 10 % (38 students) were of color. Of those 38 students, 20 were low-income and, in order to attend the summer program, needed funding for transportations costs. Rather than allocating more funds for the 20 who needed transportation (matter of inequity), the decision-makers reasoned that they could not possibly give more to one group than the others; it might be viewed as being unfair. This exemplifies reasoning based on equality rather than equity.

There were many examples similar to the aforementioned based on the same misguided rationale. The Co-Rs looped all of the themes and topics as examples of stories of lived experiences. The dialogues were as anticipated. They were much like the conversations held on a regular basis and on the same topics in LatinX EDI leadership groups I have worked with. One of the topics the group discussed, and ultimately also identified as a theme, was human resources (in HEIs). Human resource (HR) professionals in HEIs were viewed as lacking cultural intelligence in their outdated recruitment and retention practices. HR professionals were primarily White decision-makers who lacked training on matters of diversity. HR workers were viewed as the gatekeepers—or gate blockers—for professionals of color. I recall when I was working as a state administrator for a statewide complex organization, my interactions with HR professionals (primarily White) was often bittersweet. HR professionals who wanted to become more culturally aware in their practices would frequently consult me. The HR team had not received any diversity training specific to their areas of expertise, so they often sought me out for 60-minute EDI crash courses. These mini EDI trainings would never be enough to create sustained EDI systems changes, which is what was desperately needed. My time was valuable, I was not their EDI supervisor, nor diversity trainer. Their need for my EDI consultation was extremely time-consuming and not a role I was hired to fill. The whole HR unit needed EDI development.

The HR unit was not designed to be inclusive of recruiting, hiring, nor retain a diverse work force. Phase II of my research offered the Co-Rs the opportunity to agree, disagree, clarify, change, or confirm, the themes I identified from their interviews. I was most interested in the Co-Rs' process and dialogue around and through the themes as they next explored what they meant or did not mean to themselves; as a group and as individuals. I was mindful to bracket my

own assumptions as much as possible, having previously served as a diversity champion in higher education this was a challenge. However, the balance with applying the IPA methodology was being able to bracket my personal assumptions, and yet, bringing my perspective as an insider into the analysis (Larkin et al., 2006).

After we had lunch and time to socialize, I introduced all of the co-researchers to each other and then started our preparation for Phase II. I began with an overview of the day's schedule and activities. Every Co-R was provided writing materials, beverages, snacks, and, various places to be seated comfortably; the space was not in any way, shape, or form like an office or institutional-like space. The space, which was in a private home, provided plenty of daylight, circulating air, and creature comforts.

After the group of Co-Rs were comfortably seated, I welcomed them and shared my appreciation for their time and effort in this study. I began by first placing several sheets of large Post-It notes on the wall with the 10 themes and sub-themes. I invited the group of Co-Rs to spend a few minutes reading what was posted on the wall. I then proceeded to facilitate the focus group by inviting the Co-Rs to spend a few minutes carefully examining the information placed before them. I explained that, as Co-Rs, they were invited to disagree, delete, create new, change, or edit any of the information brought before them. The exception was that they could not change the research study design. There were no questions, so we proceeded with the two-hour dialogue. I began by placing the list of the 10 key themes I identified from Phase I on a large Post-It note on the wall for all Co-Rs to see.

This was the first time the group had seen the themes I identified which were drawn from the one-on-one interviews. Interestingly, after the Co-Rs viewed the themes there was a bit of silence. It appeared they were pondering them carefully. I did not attempt to guide the dialogue

at this point because I was curious where and how the dialogue would proceed. I was seeking to understand the meaning of their experiences. I was curious to hear what they would share, and, what stories they would tell. Rossman and Rallis (2003) stated phenomenology research is studies through dialogue followed by reflective processes: “Through dialogue and reflection, the quintessential meaning of the experience will be revealed. Language is viewed as the primary symbol system through which meaning is both constructed and conveyed” (p. 97).

Curiously, Phase II’s dialogue did not begin as I anticipated. Initially, there were no references made to the themes or the subthemes by the Co-Rs. Instead, Co-R 6 broke the silence with a question to the whole group: “How do we express and balance ‘professionalism’ as women without disconnecting ourselves from being Latinas or LatinX; especially when culturally, we are very relational?” I was both surprised and intrigued by her question. I believe it was the first question asked directly addressing cultural tensions that Co-R5 had previously raised as an EDI champion and as a LatinX professional.

The dialogue then went into full force from there for approximately 30 minutes prior to getting to the themes previously identified by myself and noted as Phase I, Table 4.1. Below are several additional questions and statements that followed the dialogue and, that seemed to add to the momentum. The conversation is transcribed below as it actually occurred as captured by audiotape. The verbal exchange demonstrates the popcorn-like communication exchange shared by the group participants, and, the thoughts that came forth spontaneously:

Co-R6: “I was told to stop hugging so much.”

Co-R8: “How do we find our place in White dominant culture?”

Co-R1: “This work is so taxing, and very emotional.”

Co-R3: “This work is like a dance.” (This statement, in particular, received a lot of positive body language and audible sounds of agreement).

Co-R 2: “How do I not lose myself?”

Co-R 1: “Cultural taxation, that’s what is being described here.”

Co-R 8: “How do we challenge what currently exists in HEIs—there are so many barriers for People of Color?”

Co-R8: “Students tell me, ‘I don’t feel comfortable anywhere but here’—‘here,’ being my office.”

Co-R4: “Is the institution recognizing the work we are doing?”

Co-R3: “Maybe it’s part of our work to push our campuses to make space for authenticity, more human . . . so a White professor might have a connection with a student of color. A student of color told me, ‘Why don’t you tell White faculty to connect with us, to be more human to understand our barriers as students of color.’”

Co-R7: “The root of the problem is lack of accountability; they do ‘the talk’ but don’t do the walk (the work).”

Co-R8: “They say faculty needs to be diversified but they continue to hire White professors. But if a professor of color is hired, they may come into campus and into the status quo. So, if the institution does not change its culture to be more inclusive, faculty of color move on. It’s determined by a very White dominant lens – and we’re told to stop with the White supremacy culture talk—we are not talking about racism against Whites. How do we push the boundaries of what currently exists so more can feel a sense of belonging?”

Co-R1: “We’re talking about a paradigm shift. The history of education in this country was based on a White Anglo-Saxon Protestant vision and model; school was made mandatory for the ‘new’ immigrants from Europe; the Jews, Polish, Greeks, Italians . . . they all had to assimilate. This is their [White dominant] reality, especially because this is dominant culture. But there is a demographic shift happening during the last 30–40 years. But with the demographic shift, we, the minority, are now the [emerging] majority – some of us. We are at a point where the paradigm has to shift, it already is. The academic institutions is one of the last places to shift into a new paradigm. It’s certainly happening in business, community, etc. We’ve now had 100 years of this education model,”

Co-R6: “I am wondering, perhaps this is somewhat disconnected to this topic—but maybe not. Has anyone seen success? I, mean, what is it? How do we define success?”

Co-R5: “When we can get to a point when we are no longer able to predict who is going to be successful. When we can no longer predict, based on the color of one’s skin or ethnicity, who will graduate and who will not – that’s when we can say we’ve had success.”

Interestingly, after this exchange of communication ended, the group began to focus on and address the themes I had identified. The first theme was on the topic of leadership; however, the group felt strongly that the word *leadership* was not welcomed into the dialogue because they viewed it as being about power-over dynamics and White views of (single-person) leadership. To them, it was a word that symbolized White, male-led organizations. After a few minutes discussing these connotations, the dialogue eventually shifted back to leadership, but this time was focused on how the Co-Rs wanted to describe leadership for themselves. Co-R2 said, "It is important that any time we speak that we validate and acknowledge the Latin EDI pioneers, and champions that came before us." Co-R8 responded,

> We transform things; we do things *rascuache* [meaning, "however, we can with whatever we have"], and that's what we've been doing all along, so I'm just doing what my grandmother and my mom have been doing all along. We do with what we have . . . we lead from where we are.

A discussion on various forms of leadership ensued which included ELT, rhizomatic, and heterarchical leadership. It was then that the word 'leadership' was welcomed back into the conversation.

Co-Rs' meaning-making. After an hour of dialogue on leadership and other topics, I invited the group to take a 10-minute break. As we reconvened, and after agreeing to bring the word leadership back into the dialogue, the group began to discuss their circular processes as collectivists. They expressed feelings of respect for being in each other's research experience. They mentioned common LatinX cultural connections and values such as collectivism, respect, and, although not verbalized, their being very gracious (*gracía)* toward each other. *Gracía*, as outlined in Chapter II, is yet another LatinX cultural value.

It was at this point I interjected with a question I had been curious about since the inception of this study but now provided an opening to explore their cultural values. I asked them

to share how their cultural values influence their DO leadership. They agreed that they are led by their cultural values but are rarely asked to specifically identify specific values. They struggled to identify some of the cultural values by name. They were aware that culture impacts their behaviors and could more easily describe the behaviors which are based in values. Slowly, some of the Co-Rs began to name some of their cultural values. Some said it was *respeto* (respect), others mentioned *comunidad* (community) and confianza (trust); while others brought up spiritualidad (spirituality), collectivismo (collectivism), and, familía (family).

The dialogue was circular, non-linear. The Co-Rs sat in close proximity to each other, and some were touching shoulders as the conversation began in earnest. They went on to express (laughingly) that the first hour of Phase II felt as if they had spent important and much-needed time clearing the air, venting, and *desaugarse* (purging) themselves of the negativity they were experiencing at work. They also expressed gratitude for feeling validated in the group. I sensed trusting relationships were being further developed. The group eventually started to look carefully at the list of themes set before them. They began to discuss the topics amongst themselves, ask questions amongst themselves (not of me), and respond from their perspectives and lived experiences. They were expressing themselves as Co-Rs.

They shared stories of their successes in building meaningful alliances as they do their work challenging current curriculum; shared titles and authors of books they have found to be helpful in their work. They noted policies that need development and shared experiences of being racialized on campus and in the community. They talked of White rage and how they address it of differences between HEIs (private, public, Christian-based), of words that empower, and of White assumptions they have had to dispel and deal with. They spoke of being and "told what to do and how to do it." Co-R6 asked, "How do we use our power? Do we have to ask and

say 'please?'" Co-R5 said, "My husband is White and does not have to explain why he does what *he* does. I am always asked to explain why." Co-R8 responded, "I wonder if I can get away with more . . . because, of my White-passing skin tone. Sometimes people treat me as White because of what they say and how I'm treated [compared to darker, stereotypical looking Latinas]." Co-R8 then said, "My friend is Puerto Rican and is a great writer—a scholar. Her students complained they could not understand her. Administrators harassed her because of her accent." Co-R4 asserted, "Yeah, but if you are international student with an accent, like from Africa, you get 'upper class' treatment. Within our own community, our groups also make assumptions that based upon my light skin tone that I am Latina."

I listened intently as the dialogue continued. Co-R6 asserted, "We need faculty to be hired that truly understand what a marginalized student's experience is." The discussion continued on various topics: family who came to the states as *Braceros*; internalized oppression; systems of oppression; attitudes from dominant culture that question our (LatinX) success; fear based in political rhetoric, and so forth. Co-R2 commented, "Sometimes I have to pretend I am managing my [EDI change leadership frustration] and stress at work when I mentor students of color. Do I show them my vulnerability – is my pretending things are going well a good thing?" Co-R5 asked, "How do we sustain ourselves?" This was followed by a lot of laughter. Co-R2 went on, "It's a constant balance—a dance." The topic of balance, dance, managing identity, and experiences of marginalization began to build momentum. Co-R7 asked, "How do DOs balance their identity and not become a part of the issue by over-assimilating?"

There was further dialogue leading to the group's decision to edit the themes. I began to add, remove, and change words and text, based on the manner in which the dialogue was developing and in a manner directed by the co-researchers. I was moving in the direction the

Co-Rs were collectively deciding to go in. I checked in with the Co-Rs often to ensure I was capturing their thoughts and words correctly. A circular dialogue was experienced with all Co-Rs actively engaging in the dialogue. It was a noisy exchange of excitement and energetic passion. Each Co-R demonstrated respect and honor toward each other. They were mindful to make space for each other and shared the time for each to comment in an equitable manner. They listened intently to each other and often validated each other's frustrations and emotional exhaustion. I perceived there was a shared space for understanding that the work they do leading EDI was painful and required sacred spaces for healing to occur amongst themselves; they understood each other.

They remained open to new ideas and suggestions even amidst disagreement or diverse opinions. After hours of intensely passionate dialogues about the original themes identified by single words, the words were now being interpreted into multiple-word phrases. Observing this process was an incredibly fascinating opportunity to peer into the Co-Rs' lived experiences as the group dived deeper into a more descriptive form of themes. Eight themes were being realized, ultimately identified, and placed in random order on the Post-Its on the wall.

We then took a 15-minute break and re-convened for a member check process. Completion of the member checking process concluded by the Co-Rs agreeing on the following eight themes:

1. Social Justice Paradigm Shift
2. Trusting Relationships
3. Embodied Strategic Power
4. Emotional Strain
5. Identity

6. Cultural Values
7. Source of Energy
8. The Dance

The Co-Rs confirmed that they were in agreement with the eight themes captured by the end of Phase II. Co-R2 said, “I think we can tell a story based on the themes we see.” Co-R6 said, “I see them all connecting.” A brief discussion followed about how several of the Co-Rs saw a potential pattern developing from the eight themes and how the themes were aligning or seemed to be sequenced. I took this opportunity to invite the group to use their writing pads to draw out how they saw the eight themes connecting in their minds, and as related to their lived experiences. Each one took the writing pad they had been given and began to connect or sequence the themes, as they had interpreted them and in relation to each other—as they believed they experienced them. Phenomenology, according to Magrini (2012), “is more concerned with how something is in the world or the manner in which its existence unfolds” (p. 3). Our exercise helped capture what the Co-Rs were mentally unfolding, according to their interpretation of the themes and the sequence or the relationship each theme had in relation to each other. The Co-Rs remained silent as they sketched their diagrams. Each drew the eight themes with distinct and varying connectivities. I was given permission to use their information, so I chose to display four of their sketches but have not identified any of these with articular Co-Rs (Figures 4.1–4.4). The order in which these are presented is not significant.

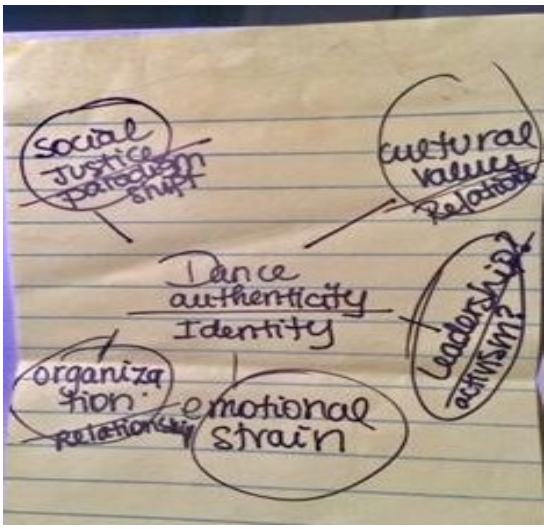

Figure 4.1. Co-R themes diagram 1. Photo taken by author at focus group session.

Interestingly, Co-R1's diagram (Figure 1) places dance in the center with authenticity and identity below it. Cultural values, leadership, and activism each have a question mark placed next to them. Emotional strain is next to organization with the word, relationship placed in-between them. Social justice is placed above paradigm shift.

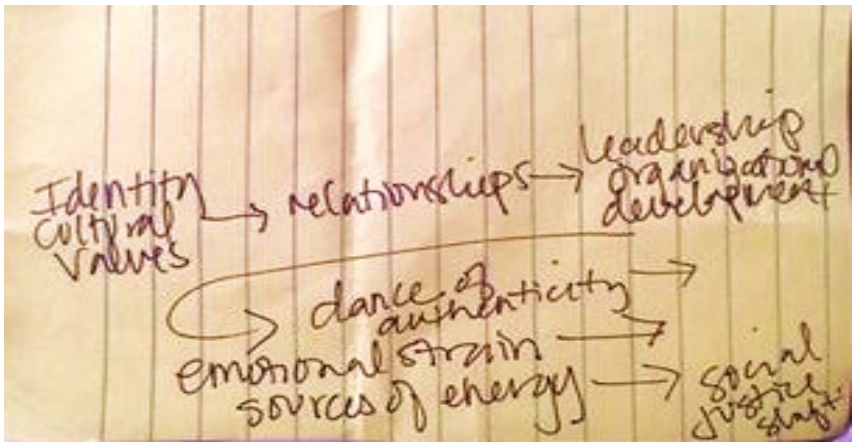

Figure 4.2. Co-R themes diagram 2. Photo taken by author at focus group session.

Figure 4.2 shows identity, and cultural values as the beginning of a sequence; with the theme of relationships then leading to leadership and organizational development. This diagram also places the theme of dance in a centered position. This Co-R identifies The Dance as a

"dance of authenticity." Emotional strain and sources of energy have arrows pointing them toward the theme social justice shift.

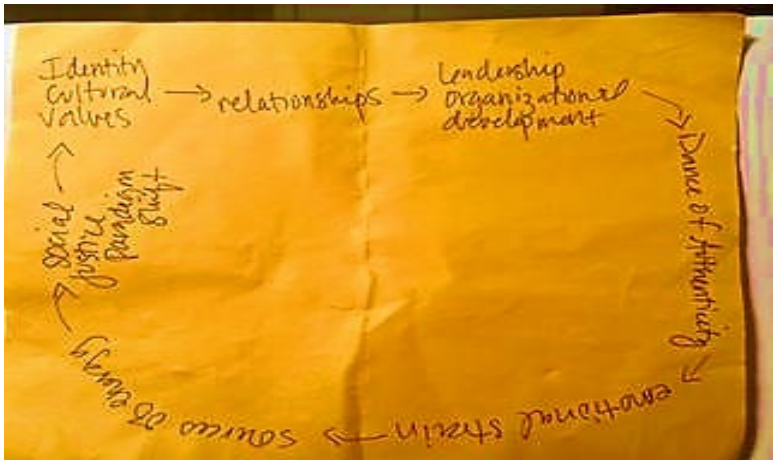

Figure 4.3. Co-R themes diagram 3. Photo taken by author at focus group session.

Figure 4.3 shows all themes as connected in a circular fashion. However, identity, and, cultural values are shown as the highlighted place to begin the circle. Identity, and, cultural values are followed by relationships, leadership organizational development, dance of authenticity, then emotional strain, sources of energy, and lastly, social justice paradigm shift are connected. All eight themes were used in this diagram.

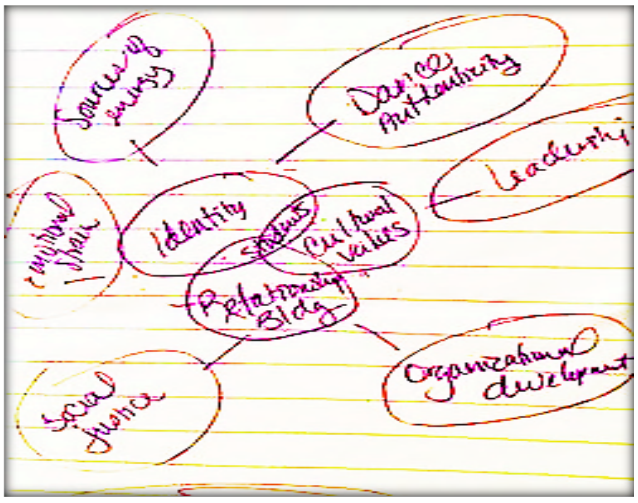

Figure 4.4. Co-R themes diagram 4. Photo taken by author at focus group session.

The fourth diagram (Figure 4.4) placed "identity," "cultural values," and "relationship building" in their respective circles (similar to a Venn diagram). In the center of this diagram; the three centered themes are interconnected with the word, "students." This Co-R placed each additional theme in circles and identified them connecting to the Venn diagram in the center of the paper. She connected each one of the themes around the Venn diagram with a line drawn from the themes on the outer edge of the paper connected to the center of the diagram.

This exercise resulted in an extended conversation in which some of the Co-Rs compared their diagrams with each other's, explaining why they sequenced the themes as they did. The discussion resulted in important elements of the hermeneutic circle. The hermeneutic circle was realized within the IPA methodological processes for gaining understanding from *multiple perspectives* as the key element for investigating the phenomenon. The Co-Rs participated in a collective act, a co-construction of their own meaning-making, within a fluid culturally situated experience of time and space. I was very mindful not to take control or direct their interpretive processes during this time. Heidegger (1962) argued that phenomenological analysis is never forceful; rather, it is fluid and iterative. At this point, the dialogue began to shift. It shifted from a discussion sharing their thoughts on the way they linked the themes in their drawings to one that began to deconstruct the themes. They began to individually identify the themes, turning their attention away from their individualized theme sequence to a collectively re-construction of the themes on a large Post-It note on the wall. I reminded them that the research study was exploring the group's lived experience – the phenomenon. The dialogue continued, however, as our time was coming to a close for Phase II, the following personally rich perspectives were shared in the group on what or if the phenomenon being studied could be named.

As the group discussed what the phenomenon is, and struggled to give the phenomenon a name, a question was asked: "Why do we need to put a name on it?" (Co-R1). Co-R2 who is a leader with research experience responded emphasizing the need to call the phenomenon something—to give it a name. She also stated the importance of articulating the phenomenon, for if it is academically articulated, then it can be taught and learned. She added that naming the phenomenon will help highlight the group's values and lived experiences, which also must be articulated. Co-R2 argued, "Except when you don't [name the phenomenon] . . . we need to use their [White academics'] tools and articulate it in order to quantify it. Like our worth, then our worth cannot be taught—it just is." Through this statement she reminded the group of the importance of this research study. She went on further to explain that the experiences of LatinX DOs in HEIs must be made known through a Westernized academic research study process.

Co-R8 clarified the reason the phenomenon must be articulated and named: "To legitimize it." Another EDI leader, Co-R9 joined in with her explanation of the importance of naming the phenomenon:

> We have to name it [the LatinX EDI leadership phenomenon]. We have to find a way to name it, to quantify it, and not just to have access to the resources to create an EDI shift but also, so that we can see ourselves reflected. There are going to be more of us, and I don't want to have Latinas coming into our positions and have to live through what we are living through, over-and-over again. I want them to say, "Oh, I see myself here, thank you, you left your EDI toolbox here—thank you."

Co-R2 re-emphasized the need to further explore the phenomenon: "They'll [White academics] try to name it for us if we don't."

I shared my gratitude for the amazingly rich dialogue, the willingness to make themselves vulnerable, to be open and honest; to be authentic and for the participants' willingness to share their lived experiences of joy, success, and pain. I then invited each Co-R to share a thought with the group, if they so desired to bring Phase II to a close. A few of the Co-Rs expressed their

gratitude for being a part of this study and for having the honor of being in each other's presence. I then invited the group to relax and prepare to gather for dinner. Dinner was scheduled to be held at a golf club restaurant close to the location where we had met. The venue offered beautiful scenery and a relaxing environment. Family members who had accompanied some the Co-Rs were invited to join in the meal. We enjoyed dinner and chatted about the day's activities. The comments shared by the Co-Rs during dinner were positive and several stated the day felt liberating and validating to them. After dinner we wished each other good night with a culturally reinforcing custom; we share an embrace and said, "*buenas noches*," good night. We would be resting in preparation for Phase III; the second and last focus group phase of this study which required full engagement from all the Co-Rs. Phase III would bring the latest version of the key themes into the dialogue for further interpretation by the group.

Phase III—Individual and Collective Reflection, Co-Construction of the Grand Narrative

Phase III was both a deeply reflective process for each Co-R, and for the group collectively. In an effort to identify the underlying meaning of the Co-R's experiences (individually and collectively), I recognized that Phase III would be my last opportunity to carefully facilitate the dialogue leading to powerfully meaningful data. All nine CO-Rs engaged in the final thematic analysis.

Phase III focus group process notes. I set out to capture the phenomenon or lived experiences of the nine Co-Rs as a grand narrative. In preparation for Phase III, I reviewed the topic of phenomenological research (Cresswell, 1998; Giorgi, 1985; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; van Manen, 1990) on the early Sunday morning. I was anxious, I wanted to facilitate a much deeper dialogue into the lived experiences as told by the Co-Rs. During Phase III, I also wanted to capture the "intentionality of consciousness where experiences contain both the outward

appearance and inward consciousness based on memory, image and meaning" (Cresswell, 1998, p. 52). However, as in Phase II, I was ready for surprises and new discoveries. On Sunday morning, the Co-Rs and I enjoyed breakfast together. I and one of the Co-Rs' spouse prepared the breakfast; it was a family affair. At the start of the session, once again, I reviewed all the steps I was going to put in place to ensure there was a C-RRR focus group environment created for the Co-Rs. I then invited everyone to take a seat if that was comfortable for them and we proceeded with Phase III.

The co-constructed collective narrative. The dialogue took place in the living room of the home we were staying at. The space was cozy, and we were physically situated much closer to each other than in a circle at the previous session (Phase II). Although there was a more open space adjacent to the living room, the group moved into the living room in a manner that lent itself to a much cozier feel. The space was full of natural light and there were several comments made about the C-RRR art and décor located in room. There was a huge painting by an artist from Mexico. It was placed on a wall above the couch; it was difficult not to notice it because it was alive with color: brilliant aqua blues, magenta, and purples. The artwork was of two hummingbirds, one in flight and the other resting on a branch. The hummingbirds were facing each other in close proximity. Between the hummingbirds was a cloud-like, circular form which appeared to be suspended between them. The cloud-like shape was almost the color of the canvas it was painted on. Making out the shape was a bit difficult as it did not have definite outlines.

The owner of the home in which we met, one of the Co-Rs, shared the story of how she obtained the painting. She was vacationing in Guadalajara, Mexico when she came upon the artwork and fell in love with the hummingbirds. We all looked at the painting admiringly and then I proceeded to facilitate Phase III's dialogue.

The group facilitation proceeded in a very free-flowing manner, without my making suggestions, nor interrupting thought processes, nor making unnecessary comments which could have altered what the Co-Rs were sharing amongst themselves. I asked permission to take notes and reminded the group that I would be asking probing questions and making interjections as needed to further understand what was being shared, such as "Please say more about . . ." "Please expound further if you'd like," "What do you mean when you say . . . ?"

I then re-introduced the eight themes the Co-R group had previously identified, and which had gone through a final member-checking process the day prior. The eight themes were displayed on the same Post-It note and in the same arrangement from the previous day. The eight themes were:

- Social Justice Paradigm Shift,
- Trusting Relationships,
- Embodied Strategic Power,
- Emotional Strain,
- Identity,
- Cultural Values,
- Source of Energy, and
- The Dance.

Interestingly, the Co-Rs began reviewing the themes by applying (I believe, unknowingly) a hermeneutic circle process. They would review the themes they agreed upon, and then go back-and-forth in their deep discussions about the specific words they chose to describe each theme. They discussed the way the themes were places in the diagrams they had drawn, and the sequenced orders they chose to place them.

At this point, they moved away from their specific drawings and began an inclusive process of arranging the themes in a pattern as a group. It was at this point that I invited the group to arrange and re-arrange the themes on the large Post-It sheet to their satisfaction. The process of arranging and re-arranging could be as interpreted through the lens of their lived experiences. This began a very deep discussion about how the themes might begin to tell a story as they were; shaped into a collectively agreed-upon, co-constructed grand narrative. There was round-the-room discussion which involved what the group referred to in the following terms I captured: "the struggle of balance and survival"; "reconstructing or deconstructing Whiteness"; "multi-dimensional struggles"; and "achievement of balance between cultural values and HEI values." Co-R3 stated: "I won't have a job if all I do is pushback." Co-R6 said, "I can't lose myself in the struggle to promote EDI on campus." Co-R4 stated, "There's a saying that goes . . . 'If you are not at the table, then you'll be on the menu.'" One of the Co-Rs was making a point about those in the group that possessed executive decision-making authority to create EDI change. She said, "We are all in positions of power, do we need to say, 'please?'" Some in the group discussed the fact that they were not given executive decision-making authority, therefore, they had to rely on EDI allies, colleagues with authority, and community partnerships to strategize innovative ways to make EDI changes on campus. Co-R7 interjected, "That reminds me of a phrase I saw: 'Underestimate me, that'll be fun!'" Laughter filled the room; it appeared the group related to the phrase and shared in similar sentiments. Co-R7 continued,

> You can't teach a White teacher to do what we do—to have this unspoken magic. When a student comes into our classroom, or into our offices we automatically make a connection – we have an unspoken connection with them. We create a space for students [of color] who can just "be." They don't have to change to match the dominant culture . . . they don't have to do the "dance" when they are with us and in spaces designed for them.

Another Co-R shared that The Dance many were referring to, was exhausting, but that she had been taught to "be patient, understanding, and tolerant." However, she added that she felt

she could no longer take that highly diplomatic approach. She explained that too many students of color are having serious and negative experiences with faculty who are untrained or disinterested in being EDI practitioners on campus. The students often fill her office with stories of racism and being marginalized.

The group also shared many stories of faculty and staff members who maintain very negative stereotypical thinking. The discussion was free-flowing and candid; it was honest and forthright. Often, there were eyes filled with tears as we listened to stories that told of injustices. At one point during the dialogue, one of the Co-Rs began to cry. She was under an incredible amount of stress and was carrying a huge workload. I paused the group and asked, "Can we offer our support?" We all got up and surrounded her with a group hug and then continued the dialogue. Each Co-R shared very personal and intimate stories of demonstrating their cultural strengths as they experienced (and continue to) racism, microaggressions, and marginalization.

Listening to and understanding each story as interpreted by each Co-R is at the core of this study. Each of the Co-Rs at some point in their respective interviews demonstrated authenticity and transparency. Listening to the pain, grief, and sorrow was difficult as the stories, at times, triggered my own experiences of marginalization and discrimination while in my professional role as a diversity champion. However, my main curiosity remained focused on capturing if, what, and, how these Co-Rs capacitate their core cultural strengths as EDI champions.

We took a short break in our dialogue and reconvened to complete Phase III; the final focus group. The group agreed where and how the eight themes were to be positioned on the large paper hanging on the wall and agreed on changes in the wording used to identify the themes. After further discussion the group also identified how the themes were to be sequenced.

Figure 4.5 presents the co-construction of the finalized themes and the order in which the Co-Rs chose to place them. The words chosen for each block, the order, and the positions the Co-Rs chose to place them are also reflected.

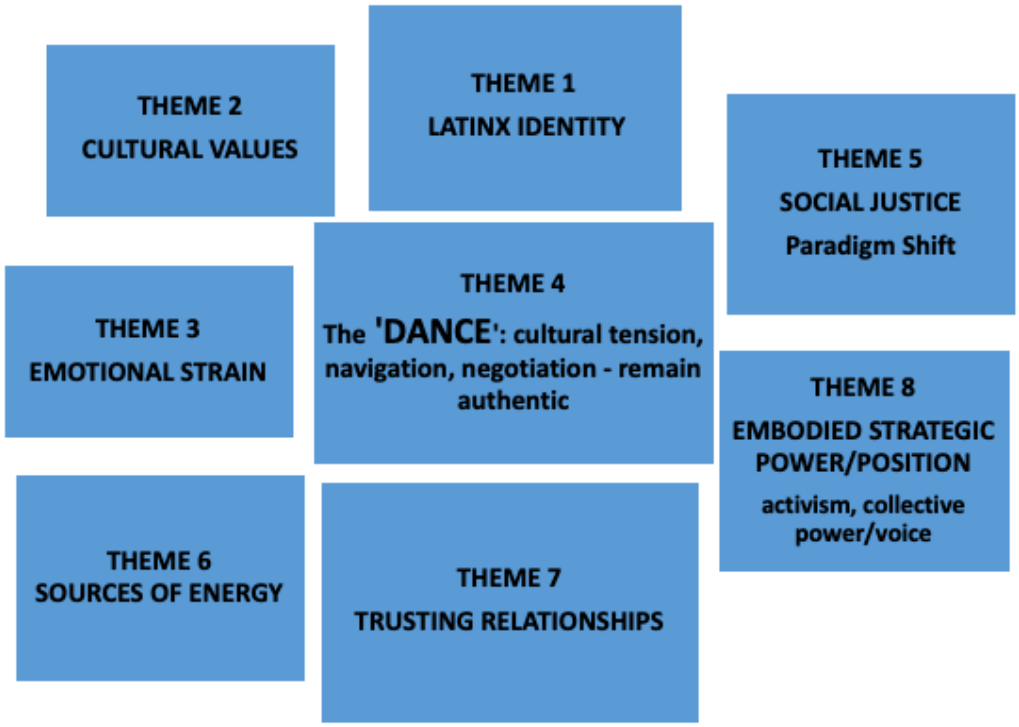

Figure 4.5. Co-constructed focus group themes and narrative.

The Colibri effect. We reconvened and re-examined the eight themes that were noted on the wall once more using a hermeneutic circle, going back-and-forth with what was stated earlier and deciding what direction to shift into based on their individual thoughts and the previous group discussion. Every step of the way, as collectivists, they ensured that all the co-constructors had ample time and opportunity to hear and listen to each other's suggestions. They made sure they all had voiced their thoughts, opinions, and feelings. They reached consensus before they moved forward.

The conversation began to slow down as I shifted the manner in which I was facilitating the group. I became more intentional about the direction we were moving. I asked open-ended

and probing questions like, “Are there themes you wish to add or remove?” “Do these themes capture what it is you wish to share with the world?” “Are there different or additional words you wish to include?” I was constantly checking in for their individual and collective approval. Also, I asked, “Is this how the group wants the eight themes to remain positioned?” The group agreed it was. At this point, I became very focused on my role as a facilitator. I began to respectfully ask the group if the eight themes could be told or explained as a collective narrative. I asked the group if the eight themes, as they were, could each individually be explained in a brief sentence. Now the group dialogue became intense, somewhat like a crescendo at the end of an operatic song. Their voices became louder and more excited. The words and descriptions began to mix together making it difficult to capture what a single Co-R was saying. However, I heard the group continue further with the co-constructed interpretation process.

By about this point, our scheduled time together was almost over. I gently pushed the group a bit further by saying, “We’ve reached the end of our time together; however, in a sentence or two, please make a final statement about each theme.” They began to collectively create a statement for each theme (some themes were combined) as they concluded their interpretive processes. There were four final conclusive interpretations, identified in Figure 4.6 and exemplified with quotes in the section below.

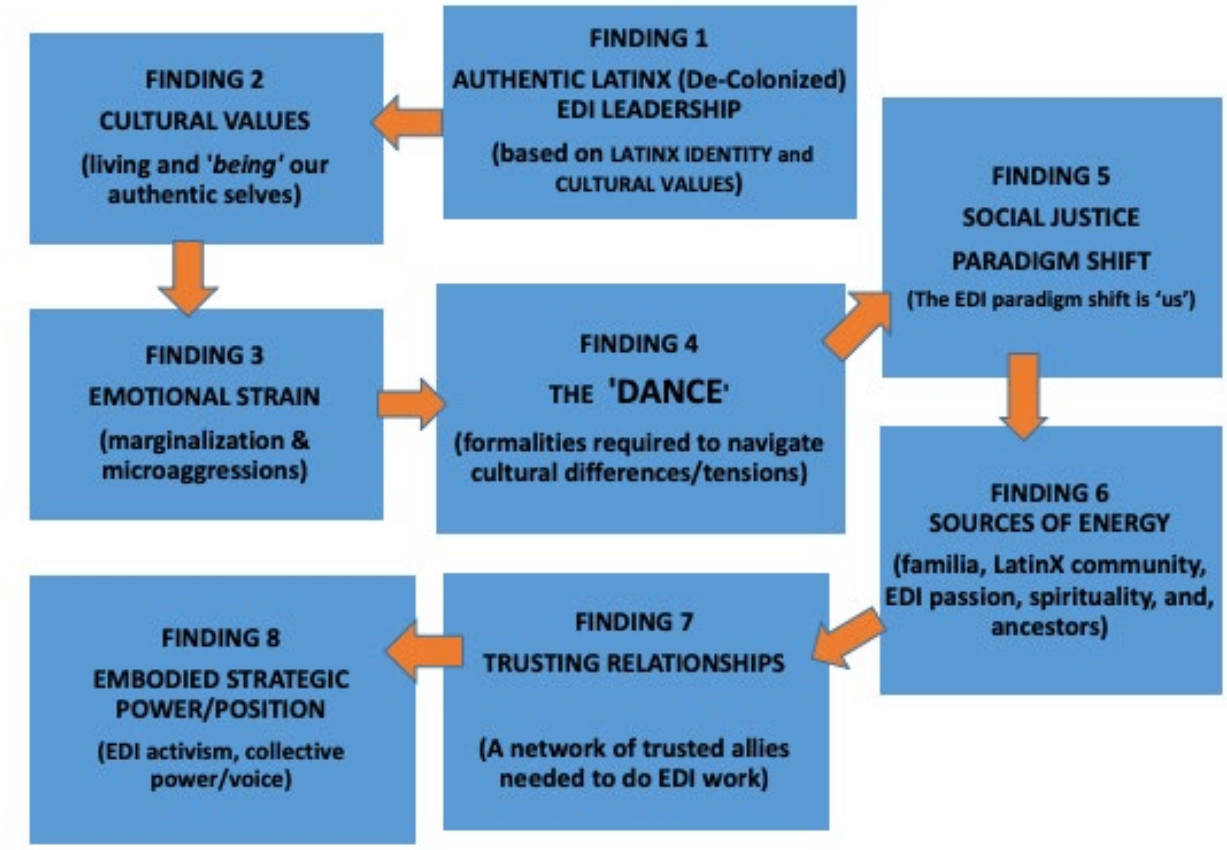

Figure 4.6. Final group interpretation of themes and their interrelationships.

Collective conclusive interpretations. The co-researchers organized the eight themes into a collectively interpreted conclusion during their last and final theme distillation dialogue process. Each theme is identified and accompanied by a few clarifications noted in Figure 4.6. The following are brief summaries with quotes on each of the findings.

Finding 1—authentic LatinX EDI leadership. Based on LatinX identity and cultural values. LatinX cultural values are the foundational motivation, purpose, and passion for being authentic EDI leaders. Co-R4 noted, "One cannot offer or share our fullest energies if bringing our authenticity as Latina leaders is not welcomed, if we are dismissed, or, worse, if we are excluded."

> HEIs must understand that when they hire us, we bring our whole selves—our cultural views and values with us; it is this type of diversity they claim to invite, and yet, what happens is that we have to challenge the systemic barriers that create the roadblocks to EDI change – all barriers placed before us too. (Co-R2)

> Leadership—it's not just a title, it's an i*n my skin*, lived experience. (Co-R7)

Finding 2—Cultural values: living and "being" our authentic selves. The Co-Rs group explored their identities, as individuals and as a collective group. They addressed the need to be, and, act White in order to be heard, and in order to become part of a leadership team. Although, they recognized the danger in putting so much energy into belonging that they put their authentic selves, their cultural identities aside**.**

> Who we are and what we believe is important—we must know who we are in order to understand others. My cultural values is intertwined with who I am as a leader and how I interact with others. Lived experience is situated in cultural values, it impacts how we see the world, how we behave, and how we exist. (Co-R7)

Co-R3 shared the tension she experiences recognizing that who she is, is at the heart of her leadership. However, she also spoke of the fatigue she experiences as an EDI leader. She noted that the emotional/psychological exhaustion was definitely taking a toll on her health, saying "Just by being who I am pulls me into this (EDI Leadership). I am in a predominantly White HEI. Something has changed in me – I cannot go back. Identity is at the center. I can't turn it off." To Co-R3's comment, Co-R5 responded, "I saw identity as one of our themes and thought, that's me! I was defining myself from the outside rather than from the inside – from my cultural self."

***Finding 3—Emotional strain: marginalization and microaggressions*.**The group each shared stories of being marginalized and of microaggressions toward them and they spoke of the psychological strain these experiences place upon them. A few of the Co-Rs became ill due to the stressors; some ending up in the emergency room or having to see their doctors for the stress symptoms they were experiencing at work. Co-R4 said, "I cannot ignore what I see and feel and what and how others view

me. I experience microaggressions on a regular basis. Racial fatigue is real." Co-R9 stated, "EDI work and leadership requires we identify and call out what microaggressions are and how marginalization is experienced." And Co-R5 said, "We spend so much time on educating HEI staff on these topics. Institutional change doesn't come about by just providing EDI training; it's just 'keep 'em busy'—work that we do and nothing meaningful comes of it."

Finding 4—The Dance: The formalities required to navigate cultural differences/tensions. Throughout all the research study phases, the Co-Rs identified and then began to refer to the manner in which they must navigate and negotiate cultural differences while doing EDI work as "The Dance." Co-R 8 emphatically stated, "HEIs are not designed for 'us' . . . for People of Color. That's why we have to 'dance' around the power used to keep us in check." The Dance was viewed as the manner in which the Co-Rs navigate or survive the White spaces and the cultural tensions they work in, such as individualism versus collectivism. monochromic versus polychromic, and high-context versus low-context (Hall 1976; Würtz, 2005). Many of the Co-Rs referred to entering White space on campus (meetings, conferences, classrooms, etc.) and having to scan the room to see who is present, then having to negotiate how or to what degree they can bring in their authentic selves into the room. It was as if they had to decide how White they must become, or adapt to, based on who is in the room, and/or the situation and environment they find themselves in. Co-R9 said, "I don't want to do 'The Dance,' so I withdraw." Co-R3 reported, "I want to do more than survive in my work [EDI leader], I want to thrive." To that, Co-R2 responded, "I want to thrive too but right now I only feel like I am barely surviving. Sometimes I have to be picked up off the floor." Co-R5 stated, "Sometimes it doesn't matter how tight the hair bun is and what type of pearls you wear—what they see is a person of color walk in."

Finding 5—Social justice paradigm shift: The EDI paradigm shift is "us." The Co-Rs collectively believe that EDI work is based within the principles of social justice. Their passion for leading EDI change is based in their values of justice. This work requires them to challenge social structures that perpetuate inequities in HEIs. They shared their viewpoints on why EDI requires a change in people's mindset. They stated that EDI requires a "growth mindset," a new way of thinking and acting—a paradigm shift. It became evident after the first dialogue group they came to the realization that EDI change cannot wait, and they cannot expect others to create the change. The Co-Rs intellectually recognize LatinX is the fastest growing demographic group across the nation. Therefore, they stated: "The social justice paradigm is *us*!"

Finding 6—Sources of energy: family, ***Latinx community***, ***EDI passion***, ***spirituality***, ***and***, ***ancestors.*** The group shared stories of indigenous, cultural, and family rituals for healing and for centering oneself. One Co-R introduced the word *bruja* into the dialogue on healing, and become re-energized; of remaining resilient during the current sociopolitical culture we are living in. Bruja, in this context was referring to healers. There were enthusiastic exchanges of stories that took us back into our childhoods. As children, we would listen to the *ancianos* and the *abuelos* (elderly and grandparents) speak of harm and hurt brought upon our communities. Our elders spoke at the kitchen table of deep philosophical topics while *compartiendo pan dulce and tomando cafecito* (sharing pastries and drinking coffee).

Finding 7—Trusting relationships. A network of trusted allies is necessary to do EDI work EDI leadership is not one person's responsibility nor role. Building and *experiencing* trusting relationships with diverse HEI professionals and allies on campus is critical to EDI change on campus. Cultural empowerment and resiliency (emotional/psychological) are sustained through trusting relationships; they can be empowering and emotionally supportive, fully understanding the unique type

of stress EDI work brings with it as LatinX leaders. Co-R1 shared, “Trust is built if I can bring my authentic self into the room; but as I enter, I have to look around the room and see who is present.” There was agreement that as LatinX EDI leaders, there must be an assessment or evaluation of just how accepting those in the room are of their being LatinX. Co-R9 said, “You can’t be authentic until the oppressor becomes authentic and can face themselves.” During this theme’s discussion there were thoughts shared about how “White” one must become if we are to be included or accepted in the dominant group

Finding 8—Embodied strategic power/positions: EDI activism, and the collective power/voice. The Co-Rs expressed their thoughts on this theme with passion. There were thoughts shared that considered that perhaps all of the themes identified as being both the phenomenon of their lived experiences, and of seeing the phenomenon of their lived experiences as what is creating and making the EDI paradigm shift; a shift in themselves and within their respective HEIs. Co-R5 argued, “I see social injustice as the main reason for needing the collective power for leading change.” Co-6 responded with, “But we can’t be strategic if all we are doing is surviving White institutions.” Co-3 responded, “That’s why we need a paradigm shift: *we are* the paradigm shift.” Co-2 emphasized; “We are looking for and struggling for a balance and a new way to be, to lead, and to create EDI change, to survive in spaces where we can be our authentic, cultural selves in order do our best EDI work!”

The Phenomenon Receives Its Identity

Our scheduled time together was coming to an end although I felt a need to explore this moment further. I sensed a surge of energy, excitement, and joy from the group arising. Every Co-R had a smile on her face and was feeling proud of the exhausting but complex work they had completed as a team collectively within a trusting C-RRR environment. We had finally reached the end of our session and I sensed there was still energy in the room to continue the

dialogue. I had to ask one more question: “If you gave this phenomenon you have described, a name—as diversity champions promoting EDI in HEIs—what would you name it?”

They sat quietly and began pondering the question but there were no comments nor responses from anyone for what seemed an eternity. I then became curious that if they could not name the phenomenon, might they be able to or want to describe it as in a symbol, a graphic, a drawing? Just then, one of the Co-Rs was once again, admiringly looking at the large painting on the living room of the two hummingbirds, she then loudly said pointing at the artwork: “The *Colibri* (hummingbird) effect?” As she pointed at the artwork, she said, “That’s it!” The Latinas who were sitting below the artwork got up and turned to look at it—some began to laugh while nodding in agreement. There were responses of agreement such as “yes,” “that’s it,” “it makes perfect sense,” “oh my gosh, I agree,” and “it was right in our midst all this time.” Some in the group smiled and others got closer to inspect the artwork and laughed excitedly. The group agreed that the artwork symbolized or depicted “The Dance”—LatinX bi-cultural existence! There it was!

As I continued listening, the group went on to explain that the hummingbird in flight (frantically flapping its wings) represented the energy, the emotional strain and the exhaustion that is experienced while leading EDI work in HEIs not designed to serve diverse communities. The hummingbird sitting restfully on a twig and directly facing the hummingbird in flight, symbolized the need to re-energize themselves within their circles of family, trusting relationships, spirituality, and, ancestors. They noticed that the hummingbirds were seeing themselves in each other, as if seeing each other as a mirror, seeing both sides of their bi-cultural existence. One of the Co-Rs observed that the cloud-like shape, difficult to see as a distinct shape situated between the two colibri, symbolized the space in which one does “The

Dance," a space of knowing and un-knowing, a space of conocimiento as described by Anzaldúa (2000). The cloud-like presence represented the strategic steps required to navigate and negotiate their biculturalism and their unique cultures in a White world of HEIs. The red fluffs attached to the hummingbird wings by a string were described as "sources of energy" such as family, spirituality, and, ancestral stories.

The group, in unison, audibly agreed with the interpretation of the artwork and gave it the name: the Colibri (hummingbird) Effect**.** Because I was unable to locate the artist who created the beautiful painting for permission to include it in this dissertation, I described the experience and the artwork to Kim Evans, a family member; she created her own beautiful rendition of the Colibri Effect (Figure 4.7).

Figure 4.7. "The Colibri Effect" as rendered for this study by Kim Evans. Used with permission.

When the group actually identified the phenomenon of LatinX Diversity Officers in Higher Education and gave it a name, was when I felt a huge sense of success for us all and of

deep gratitude for having taken part in an incredibly beautiful, co-constructed experience. We ended Phase III, exhausted in a good way, with a brief ceremony of appreciation. I was disappointed that I forgot to bring the sage I intended to use during the ceremony. Sage is used as a holy herb for cleansing a meeting space or environment of negative energies. It is also used to clarify the mind and to access wisdom; to promote holistic healing. Alas, I had forgotten to pack it in my bag; so, we burned incense. We then took turns holding the incense while sharing our closing remarks of gratitude for the activities of the day and for all we had experienced and accomplishments. In gratitude, Co-R9 stated,

> This space is really unique and special for me, we attend a lot of conferences, but this is different. I felt it as soon as I walked into this space. I felt commonality, connection, there is so much that we don't have to explain to each other.

Co-R1 expressed how liberated and free she felt to share her lived experiences without having to do The Dance. She explained,

> We get each other without having do The Dance, we don't have to work to break down "isms." Listening to you, here we do not have to explain what we experience and share as LatinX EDI leaders to each other; it's known. How can we explain water if one has never been a fish? How can we explain ourselves . . . it's about trying to articulate this experience we share with their tools [language]?

I bought our time together to a close with a bit of formality by offering each Co-R a token, a gift of appreciation and a certificate identifying them as Co-Rs of my PhD research study; LatinX Diversity Officers in Higher Education; Capacitating Cultural values as Champions of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion.

Concluding Reflections on the Three Collaborative Phases

By deeply examining the details of each one of the sequenced phases of this study, including what each of the Co-R shared, presented, and described, we truly can come in much closer to the lived experiences of LatinX DOs in HEIs.

Reflections on Phase I (in-depth exploration of individual lived experiences). I did not want to interview the Co-Rs for this study by phone, nor video. In my opinion, and based on my culturally informed experience, that would not have been a culturally sensitive or responsive way to interview People of Color. I spent many hours and days carefully considering how I would develop the foundational C-RRR concept and approach for this study. Based on previous experiences as an EDI professional working in a homogeneous culture, I understood how important it was to communicate with the Co-Rs face-to-face, and in a culturally specific manner. Phase I offered me the opportunity to hear very personal stories and the lived experiences as told and interpreted by each Co-R.

I was able to relate to each and every story told, and yet bracket my own stories, although tempted to share them during the individual interviews. I knew as a Latina, that building trust with other Latinas would require some sharing and exchanging personal experiences. And I understood that building trusting relationships with the Co-Rs was critical to the outcomes of this study. Therefore, I came to appreciate that rigid bracketing was a culturally uncomfortable process to adhere to throughout this study. I felt that it could eliminate some needed elements of my shared cultural humanness from the interview processes. As the Co-Rs shared their stories, it seemed they were telling *my* story. Yet, I worked hard not to assume or presume anything. I aimed to be authentic, honest, transparent, and open-minded throughout the study—and this was true of each Co-R. The circular, storytelling manner in which their lived experiences were shared was familiar to me as a Latina.

Reflections on Phase II (exploration and discovery of the individual/collective experience). Phase II required months of preparation and coordination. The focus groups were at the heart of this study. I carefully thought out and planned every detail needed to create a safe

and oppression-free environment for the co-researches to engage in the group dialogue. This was a priority.

Phase II was a very powerful experience for me and for the Co-Rs, as they clearly conveyed throughout the study. The Co-Rs used the words like the following to describe their focus group dialogue experiences: “validating,” “empowering,” “healing,” “blessing,” and “therapeutic.” We all shared in an experience of studying a phenomenon that was in itself, an experiential learning process. Intimate stories were shared; we laughed, cried, and expressed frustration and anger toward social injustices that continue in HEIs. These feelings were based in the sense of urgency we felt for equitable changes to be made, as well as frustration with the status quo and systems that continue to perpetuate exclusive memberships in dominant culture institutions. We cried over the sociopolitical state of our nation and wept for those who continue to be marginalized by a lack of interest among executive leaders who fail to develop their cultural intelligence. However, the group did not persist in a negative space; rather, they focused on their resiliency, their tenacity to lead EDI in HEIs, and on celebrating each successful EDI change they had led; recognized or not.

I came to realize that we, as Latinas, do not intentionally discuss our cultural values. We express them, demonstrate them, and are guided by them, but do not name them, call them out, or identify them in conversation. Our cultural values are an intricate element of who we are, but we are not fully conscious of them. Because of this awareness I have begun to include the topic of LatinX cultural values in all my presentations and dialogues with professionals and students. My goal is to bring cultural values to our conscious minds so we can honor them, be proud of them, and understand that they are critical to our EDI leadership.

Reflections on Phase III (individual/collective reflection: co-construction of the grand narrative). All of the Co-Rs, knowingly or unknowingly revealed their cultural values in every phase of this study. Although, cultural values were not necessarily clearly identified or named by each Co-R, cultural values surfaced in every interview. Cultural values could be identified in their storytelling and narratives, values such as personalismo (personable, relational), *gracía* (grace, diplomacy), spiritualidad (spirituality), *familia* (family), *simpatĺa* (charisma), and respeto (respect). Each of the Co-Rs described and demonstrated these values in the way they believed, acted, built relationships, and socialized. This was exciting to me because I wanted to know if cultural values were capacitated in their work as sources of strength or resiliency, and whether this led to the very reasons they chose to be EDI leaders in HEIs. Every one of the Co-Rs were fully engaged and supportive of this study.

Interestingly, there was just a *knowing* that it was unusual for a Latina to be a PhD candidate. So, they wanted to support and assist me in any way possible. I felt we were all on a journey together to advance our community and EDI educational change, on a collective path to new EDI leadership discoveries. I was honored to have engaged in this IPA study with amazing LatinX DOs from HEIs. As I intently listened to the co-researches co-create their collective narrative, I was pleasantly surprised at just how much cultural values drive, guide, and influence what we do and who we are.

As noted before, the Co-Rs described the phenomenon they had collectively experienced as the Colibri Effect. A few weeks after the conclusion of Phase II and III, I went to Portland's Saturday Market and saw some artwork that reminded me of the dialogue groups with the Co-Rs. Those works also had hummingbirds in them with women of color. Interestingly, there was one that showed a woman sitting underground with a cactus above and the words, "They tried to bury

us but did not know we were seeds." The Co-Rs had spoken of their lived experiences often marginalization, of being dismissed, ignored, silenced, disrespected, and of painful racial expressions made toward them. Yet they never stopped speaking up, showing up, and rising up to the EDI challenges that exist within their respective HEIs. Each Co-R passionately and powerfully capacitate their cultural values in the work they do; their social justice principles and cultural values are why they chose to lead EDI work in HEIs. We are all just much more aware of that reality now; individually and collectively. The picture I had seen in the Portland market reflected all of this. The piece, *We Are Seeds of Change*, *shown in Figure 4.8* illustrates the power we have as LatinX leaders once we give birth to our cultural strengths by growing in leadership knowledge and experiences.

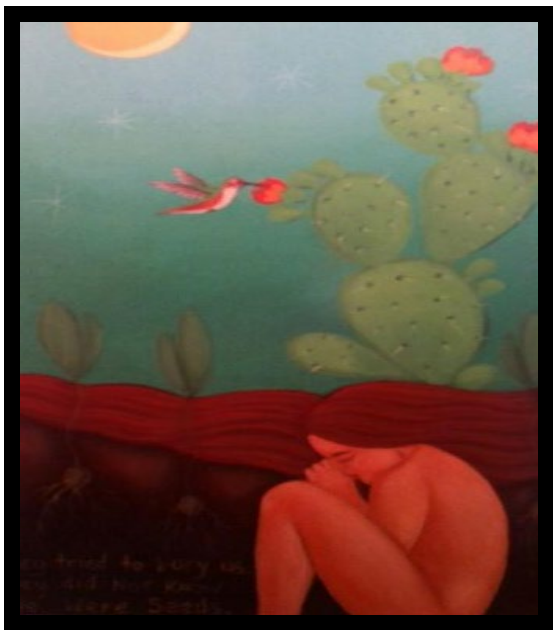

Figure 4.8. "Mexican Proverb" by Tamara Adams. Used with permission.

Phase IV—Reflective/Reflexive Meaning Making (The Primary Researcher's Exercise)

Phase IV was designed as the final reflective and reflexive, meaning-making stage in which only the primary researcher (myself) engaged in. Phase IV was the phase designed for making meaning of the truths of the LatinX DOs in HEIs lived experience. My goal was to

understand and reflect on what it is quintessentially like to be a LatinX diversity champion in HEIs, as interpreted by the Co-Rs. I sought to study Latinas as the "persons-in-context" or the persons culturally located in the world as such. Larkin et al. (2006) endorsed Dreyfus (1995) statement that "what is real is not dependent on us, but the exact meaning and nature of reality is" (p. 107). Phase IV was purposefully designed as a reflective and reflexive time to ponder all that was experienced, discovered, and learned by myself, without Co-R engagement.

The 4-phased design had provided me a way to rigorously and curiously explore DOs' contextualized diverse realms of reality from their personal perspectives, through their cultural lens, and culturally intellectual insights. The cognitive framework for this study is based upon my own lived experiences as a LatinX EDI leader. My experiences of creating equitable change in very complex organizations and institutions was and continues to be challenging. The challenges are due to the social structures of inequity which permeate into HEIs. As a Latina, cultural values are of utmost importance to me. However, interestingly, I was largely unaware of this until I actually studied LatinX cultural values. It was not until I began to research my culture's values that I became more cognizant of just how much they guide and influence my professional work. I am certain, now, that my cultural values and identity are what have sustained me under very tenuous challenges as an EDI leader.

I was curious if this was true of other Latinas leading EDI change. I wondered if they had had similar experiences and if they also accessed cultural values as a form of resiliency. As a social scientist studying a group of LatinX individuals, one of my goals was to contribute to existing scholarly knowledge about LatinX diversity champions. Prior research studies with this cultural group in the HEI context and on the above-discussed topics is minimal.

The focal points in this study were LatinX cultural values and EDI leadership. I had wondered if LatinX DOs in HEIs access and capacitate their pan-ethnic, cultural core strengths as the motivation for leading EDI work. Additionally, I sought to explore how LatinXers (Latinas) lead social change through their work, while facing social injustices themselves. The study topic is relevant due to the fact that one in five women in the United States are Latinas and one in four students across the nation are Latinas (Gándara & The White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics, 2015). In addition, LatinXers are no longer the minority in the United States; we are the emerging majority. Even by the 1990s, LatinXers, and especially Latinas, were making enormous gains in college populations, essentially higher than other hitherto underrepresented cultural groups (González, Jovel, & Stoner, 2004).

An additional relevant, yet troubling fact is that LatinX populations are currently experiencing a very hostile and toxic, U.S. sociopolitical climate (Kaleem, 2019). Because the Co-Rs in this study are members of an emerging majority in the United States, effectively communicating with this ethnic group is critical for the 21st century workplaces, especially in higher education contexts. The Co-Rs, shared in their stories of lived experiences that holding EDI leadership positions in HEIs, places a special responsibility upon them; they describe their role as heir "purpose," "charge," "calling," and a responsibility to contribute to their *gente* (people). They see their EDI leadership as an act of social justice. The painting, "Gypsy Summer" (Figure 4.9), illustrates the power of knowing who we are and how we can be seen as EDI leaders of social justice change. The most powerful statement on this was when the co-researchers emphatically reached an epiphany as a group: "We are the phenomenon (the EDI leadership of the 21st century!"

Figure 4.9. “Gypsy Summer” by Tamara Adams. Used with permission.

Conclusion to Chapter IV

Chapter IV presented a brief overview of the Co-Rs who actively and, honestly, engaged in this study. I reported what emerged in this study through the use of IPA methodology. The analysis and findings were presented in detail. Chapter IV laid the groundwork and set the context for the following chapter. In Chapter V, the findings will be comprehensively examined and discussed. Consideration will be given to the previous research on LatinX EDI leadership comparing the data and findings noted in Chapter IV with the literature identified in Chapter II. Finally, in Chapter V, careful consideration will be given to future areas of research and study as discovered by effectuating this study.

Chapter V: Discussion of the Findings

As noted in Chapter I, EDI leadership positions are increasing across the nation. HEIs are recognizing the value of hiring DOs as EDI institutional change and leaders. However, LatinX (Latina) DO contributions and capacity to create and establish EDI institutional change have yet to be fully understood and recognized in scholarly literature. HEIs are understanding the need to establish and institutionalize EDI in order to serve a fast-growing diverse population of students, LatinX being the emerging majority in the United States.

Jean-Marie et al. (2009) argued that in the 21st century, social justice must be a priority concern for educational leaders and scholars due to demographic changes, cultural shifts, achievement gaps within marginalized populations, and accountability for addressing these issues. This helps explain the relevance of this study and its interrelatedness to 21st century EDI leadership in HEIs. The purpose and design of this research was to portray the lived experiences of LatinX DOs in HEIs, what is it really like to be a LatinX DO in HEIs. Chapter V discusses the findings.

The findings of this study are, I believe, a valuable, culturally relevant, culturally responsive, and, more importantly, a culturally rich and reinforcing contribution to existing literature. This study presents information which can inform various professional fields of study especially EDI leadership, EDI organizational development, EDI change management, HEI human resource (EDI) development, DO positions in HEIs, Latina's phenomenon (lived experience), and, cultural values based leadership. In this Chapter I will make recommendations for future research and practice. In addition, Chapter V includes a discussion of the contributions and limitations of this study, followed by a summary.

Overview of the Sociopolitical Context of the Research

As a starting point for the discussion of the findings of this research, it is necessary to first look at the sociopolitical context of the study because of its impact on my purpose and findings. This study was conducted during the summer of 2019. This was a tumultuous time in our history because of the current administration's targeted efforts toward immigrants (Hirschfield-Davis & Shear, 2019) which had an intensified focus on the LatinX population and, specifically, Mexican and Central American immigrants. The sociopolitical events of this time period resulted in a heightened sense of fear and vulnerability for Deferred Action for Child Arrivals (DACA) students in higher educational institutions and their families. The sociopolitical dynamics added an urgency for the Co-Rs to courageously lead social justice change—EDI change in HEIs.

The EDI co-researchers (study participants), each shared powerful stories about the challenges they face in HEIs during this time of sociopolitical conflict in our nation. This is why I highlighted four key contextual points that had an impact on the findings in this study. In fact, the sociopolitical state in the United States was a topic that permeated every phase of this study; it is therefore brought to the foreground as important sociopolitical contextual information. There was a constant sense of urgency expressed by the Co-Rs for HEIs to institutionalize EDI. This was clearly related to the current context of conflict during which this study has been conducted. Every Latina in this study (including myself) became hypervigilant about our safety due to the upsurge in politically-driven rhetoric against Mexicans and other non-White refugees. This reality placed us as Latinas in vulnerable positions as EDI leaders.

We certainly recognized the anxiety LatinX students were experiencing too. As determined by the FBI and widely reported in the national news (Kaleem, 2019, Valencia et al., 2019) that we are targets of hate crimes by racists in *our* nation. We are told to "speak English"

while in public. We are also called “criminals,” including, notoriously, by the Republican candidate who became president in 2016 (Reilly, 2016).

This harsh reality had a significant impact on this study due to the degree of uncertainty, fear, and anger that entered into the spaces filled by the Co-Rs throughout this study. Several factors were involved. First, all of the Co-Rs, including myself, reside in the Pacific Northwest. Living in the region is significant in that it is generally considered a primarily White area of the United States It is historically a home for White Supremacists (Berger, 2018). Second, it is important to understand that the Co-Rs are often the only LatinX (Latina) of color in executive meetings, board meetings, advisory boards, and task forces, etc., who are promoting EDI change. Lastly, the Co-Rs, all women of color, each shared stories of being marginalized within primarily White male-led HEI institutions.

To reiterate, the Co-Rs truly understand the urgency for EDI change in HEIs. While each LatinX DO expressed their own unique stories, together they constructed and distilled their own thick data resulting in the identification of eight key findings that describe elements of their own lived experience as EDI champions in HEIs. These are now summarized.

Theme 1. Authentic LatinX (de-colonized) EDI leadership—This is based upon their identity and cultural values- LatinX cultural values were described as being an intricate part of their identity. The DOs described their cultural values as being the most important factor influencing their EDI leadership in HEIs. The Co-Rs (DOs) placed a strong emphasis, particularly on non-Westernized ways of leading change. The group of Co-Rs placed great honor, value, and respect on indigenous, de-colonized ways of knowing and leading changes in HEIs. They

viewed their EDI leadership as an extension of their cultural values of fairness and social justice for all.

Theme 2. LatinX cultural values—LatinX cultural values are the foundation for their EDI leadership

Theme 3. Emotional strain—Psychological stressors, unique to LatinX DOs in HEIs are evidenced.

Theme 4. The Dance—Identified also as the Colibri Effect, this describes the energy and effort it takes to successfully navigate the cultural dissonance they experience as EDI leaders in HEIs led by, primarily White leaders and designed to serve members of the dominant culture. In other words, the Co-Rs identified their experiences of managing cultural tensions that exist as they serve as DOs in HEIs.

Theme 5. Social Justice Paradigm Shift—LatinX understand the urgency for EDI change and choose not to wait for dominant cultures to create equitable change. LatinX DOs courageously position themselves to create EDI change; thereby becoming the EDI paradigm shift.

Theme 6. Sources of energy—Energy is renewed through culture, indigenous ways of knowing, spirituality, and cultural connections.

Theme 7. Trusting relationships—Trusting relationships among EDI champions of color and, alongside White EDI-informed allies help strengthen and support EDI institutional change efforts.

Theme 8. Embodied strategic power—This power is demonstrated and acted upon by and through EDI activism, collectivism, emotional and cultural intelligence, based in and through their lived experiences.

Research Study Findings and Literature Comparison

The findings revealed an unbroken chain of intricately linked lived experiences which resulted in powerfully validating experiences—as related by the participants in this study, and ultimately named, the Colibri (hummingbird) effect. The findings are now compared with key relevant scholarly literature that was presented in Chapter II.

Authentic LatinX (decolonized) EDI leadership (Theme 1), based on LatinX identity and cultural values. Leadership stories shared by each Co-R were structurally based in who they were as cultural beings, not from a dominant (colonized) worldview but from a vantage of liberating self from such views. The struggle to remain grounded in their cultural selves is a large part of their lived experience, their stories. Polkinghorne's (1988) study supports this finding, noting that narratives are captured from lived experiences. Bordas's (2013) study noted ancestral groups melded into the Latino culture of today, creating a "we-thinking" approach to life as collectivists; therefore, influencing the manner in which they lead.

The Co-Rs related strongly with the following supporting leadership theories: EDI, Relational, Transformative, Social Justice, Inclusive, and Ensemble leadership. During the focus group phases of this study, dialogue was often on the topic of leadership. These dialogues led into discussion about specific leadership theories—adaptive, inclusive, transformational, social justice, and ensemble leadership theories came up in discussion. Three leadership approaches in particular, figure in the Co-Rs' discussions: ensemble, relational, and collective/inclusive theories; these are now briefly highlighted in terms of the relationship to my findings.

Ensemble leadership. The group collectively connected most with Ensemble Leadership Theory because of its leadership principles: wisdom from ancestors and the natural world; all humans possess knowledge to share; relationships are co-created; harmony and balance; shared power (heterarchical leadership); and, spiral and organic knowledge emergence (Rosile et al., 2018, p. 321). The Co-Rs in this study indicated these principles are very uniquely relevant to their cultural values based on its indigenous worldview, heterarchical roots framework and approach promoting distributive power in leadership. These principles were perceived as non-Westernized—as inclusive and reinforcing to collectivist cultures such as LatinXers. Because these principles align with collectivists cultural values it cannot be categorized as a linear or heroic leadership views. This finding shows that the Co-Rs fully embraced the power of ELT and that it also aligns with the LatinX cultural values of respect and inclusivity. ELT is a leadership theory that the DOs grasped and encircled; one that offered hope for transformational leadership to occur in HEIs. The DOs share their hope that ELT, as a leadership theory is urgently practiced in HEIs. Some of the Co-Rs also noted that they connect with spirit animals as sources of energy. Spirit animals are viewed in some cultures as guides. A spirit animal may also reflect and possess some of the characteristics of the person it is guiding.

Relational leadership. Relational leadership is relevant to LatinX leaders due to the importance placed in meaningful relationships. Studies by Cunliffe and Eriksen (2011) confirmed this finding noting relational leadership is one of co-creation and of respectful, honest, and open dialogue. They argued relational leadership is a deliberate act of engagement; a day-to-day dialogic exchange based in meaningful engagement which includes all aspects of conversation with, between, alongside self, and with others. EDI change is viewed as being accomplished through trusting relationships. This study noted that relational leadership is viewed

as a moral concept of being in relation with others. Relational leadership resonates with LatinX DOs because they are culturally grounded through relationships. They are concerned with the details and elements in social exchanges. They viewed leadership from their cultural-relational ontological lens. The study by Kark et al. (2003), which referred to Lord et al. (1999), confirmed this finding. They described three "self-aspects" relevant to LatinX leadership: a personal [cultural] self—individual attributes and preferences; a relational self—close relations with specific others, and, a collective self, based on social group affiliations and social group identification.

Collective and inclusive leadership. The Co-R leaders placed a strong emphasis on the cultural value of collectivism. Collectivism is about the power to motivate and transform lives leading to positive group outcomes. LatinX DOS are collectivists, seeking the best interests of all by acknowledging each person's potential. LatinX DOs believe that each person's lived experience brings valued knowledge in group interactions. The Co-Rs placed a high value on being inclusive leaders because they saw it as a powerful way to address systemic inequities and to serve marginalized students.

These findings are consistent with Mor Barak (2000) who suggested that inclusive leadership includes intentional acts that contribute to the surrounding community by helping to mitigate the needs of the disadvantaged. The Co-Rs believe that their collaborative/cooperative efforts working with culturally and nationally diverse individuals benefit all on campus. The study by Bolger (2017) argued, "Inclusion is not a natural consequence of diversity" (para. 18).

The DOs agreed with this view. To further explain, the Co-Rs emphatically argued from their cultural point of view, and, as EDI leaders, that inclusion must be inextricably linked to diversity and equity. However, one must understand how these concepts are distinctively

different from tone another. Just because an HEI diversifies their student population, it does not automatically mean that they are or have become practitioners of inclusivity. The Co-Rs explained that equity, or inequities, is the *why* element that frames and examines the connection for diversity and inclusion in the workplace. Ainscow (2005), presented a deep description of inclusivity that also supports this finding by identifying four key elements: a [learning] process; a process that captures data to identify systemic barriers; inviting participation that embraces diverse views; and caring about the quality of engagement; finally, inclusion places an emphasis on monitoring the participation and achievement of historically underrepresented groups. Later, Ainscow (2015), asserted, consistent with Schein (1985) and Angelides and Ainscow (2000), that inclusivity practices are manifestations of an organization's culture,

Enacting Cultural Values (Living and "Being" Our Authentic Selves)

The Co-Rs in this study viewed many of their cultural values as an expression of their authentic selves. This finding is supported by Byrne and Bradley (2007) who found cultural and personal values are foundational in the role of management leadership. There must be an acknowledgement \and understanding of the role that personal and cultural values play on the influence and effectiveness on leadership, more specifically in cross-cultural settings. S. H. Schwartz's (1999) results also align with this finding in concluding that cultural values are "conceptions of the desirable" (p. 24) that serve to guide individuals to choose and explain their actions. S. H. Schwartz indicated that culturally-based values are applied as guiding principles The LatinX DOs in this study viewed their cultural values as meaningful ways to access multi-generational stories which bring them ancestral power. They viewed the cultural value of family (familismo) as the ability to discern and draw upon family resources, a perspective in line with Cunliffe and Erikson (2011). Cheung and Halpern's (2010) study, asserted that Latina

leaders place familia (family) as a high priority in life, balancing family and workplaces; how they interface with both elements of their lives is viewed as a top priority.

This study's participants were concerned with the manner in which the current social justice movements, socioeconomic, and educational issues impact their families and those within their interrelated community members, in terms of student retention, graduation rates, and educational gaps. These were issues that impact the DOs immediate and extended family members. This finding is supported by Cheung and Halpern (2010). DOs honored their families and those within their close family circle, demonstrating personalismo (displaying honor)and showing care and concern for the importance of nurturing and maintaining their personal connections not only with their immediate family, but also with their family of work colleagues. G. Flores (2000) supported this cultural view seeing personalismo as unconditional recognition of every person and respectful view and value of each individual and explained that LatinX populations are born into relationally based cultures seeking to establish trusting relationships through personalism, mutual respect.

This also clearly emerged in my study. I observed personal exchanges of honor, courtesy, and respect expressed toward each other throughout this study. This created a safe space to share their truths. An additional cultural value conveyed and observed in this study was simpatía (being personable, agreeable). Although each Co-R shared individualized lived experiences, they intentionally and deliberately sought to align with others in the group. This is supported by Triandis, Marin, Lisansky, and Betancourt (1984) who saw simpatía as a Hispanic "cultural script" (p. 1363) leading to interpersonal harmony and compatibility.

Hospitalidad (hospitality), a cultural value that sets the tone for being together in the same space, was evident throughout this study. Hospitalidad was a critical element for

establishing trusting relationships throughout this study. The participants viewed these relationships as a safety net, a source of knowledge, and as a collective effort to institutionalize EDI change. Dingfelder (2005) identified additional LatinX cultural values: hospitalidad—being hospitable—and respeto—demonstrating respect.

Conocimiento, an indigenous awakening consciousness and capacity of knowing from within; an awareness and intelligence not grasped by logical thought. Reti and Zepeta's (2015) oral history with the long-term director of UC Santa Cruz's Chicano/Latina Resource Center, reinforced the concept of conocimiento as a collective consciousness leading to person/group power and as an inclusive group process that enhances group trust and bonding. Conscious leadership effort and processes; nurturing, assertive, and purposeful [inclusive] engagement. Erichson's (2017) work validates this study by identifying *gracía* (charisma, grace)—as the cultural value of being pleasing, agreeable, kind/light-hearted.

Very traditional LatinX families of first or second-generation immigrants still consider family leadership through jeraquismo (patriarchy) as an important cultural value. Often, the head of the house—usually the eldest male or the father—makes the final decisions and some things must be approved by the male head in the home.

The Co-Rs gin this study demonstrated and expressed their contrasting views to Blair's study. They viewed themselves as equals to male family members and as independent thinkers; some identifying themselves as LatinX feminists. A. L. Schwartz (2009) identified colectivismo (collectivism) as a cultural value which emphasizes and prioritizes the best interest of the whole family versus the individual. This cultural value was certainly demonstrated by the LatinX Co-Rs in each phase of this study. Bordas (2013) identified compartir (sharing) as a caring communal cultural value of shared responsibility linked to inclusive participation which encompasses

service and benevolence. Bordas found, as in my study, that what was shared by the Co-Rs were personally stories of courageously accessing their cultural values of social justice and spirituality—both considered as cultural strengths.

As noted, in this study cultural values motivate LatinX DOs to lead EDI change. Larson and Murtadha (2002) supported this vein of thought by stating that a body of research exists which describes spirituality and love as the motivation for social justice change for educational leaders. In addition, Larson and Murtadha argued that spirituality is the motivation and force that generates activism of leaders for social justice in education.

Emotional Strain (Marginalization and Microaggressions)

The Co-Rs each shared distressing stories of being marginalized and of experiencing microaggressions at their respective HEIs. Some examples were as follows:

- dismissive behaviors experienced as they proposed or presented information at meetings;
- being ignored, or unrecognized for ideas then restated by White counterparts;
- being disrespected or demeaned by words or body language;
- supposedly forgetting to include them in critical discussions or decision-making processes;
- excluding them from communication important to their work;
- withholding information; and
- assuming ill intent and causing divisions within the teams they supervise are other ways mentioned by the group.

These experiences brought feelings of pain and anger that was reinforced each time they listened at work to students of color recounting having experienced similar emotional strain. This

finding is aligned with numerous research studies on micro-aggression (Solórzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000; Sue, 2010; Sue et al., 2008) and secondary reinforcements of microaggressions (Pérez-Huber & Solórzano, 2015; Solórzano, Allen, & Carroll, 2002).

The DOs in this study spoke of their role in HEIs as championing EDI. They expressed their commitment to disrupting microaggressions and macroaggressions as a form of social justice in action. Theoharis's (2007) study reached a similar conclusion, describing social justice leadership as "addressing and eliminating marginalization in schools" (p. 223), a critical and constant effort made by the LatinX DOs. The DOs view their professional positions as a response to their calling to social justice. Some of the Co-Rs actively engage in leadership forums, conferences, and lectures. They see these particular efforts as a way to help inform, educate, guide, and encourage students to also engage in social justice work on-and-off campus. The Co-Rs unique stressors were described by the DOs as being due to the uncharted equity, diversity and inclusion work they are assigned to address within their respective, complex higher education institutions.

The research findings here are consistent with Bryant (2015) who reported on how DOs experience daily challenges in their efforts developing EDI strategies to address immediate needs for change. The Co-Rs facilitate EDI training which helps to raise cultural intelligence on campus. The participants in this study described the existence of multiple stressful elements in leading EDI in HEIs because, in effect, they are challenging Whiteness. The DOs also shared thoughts of being seen as other, yet another way of experiencing marginalization. The social construction of Whiteness was what defined who they should be and how they should act. The experience of being seen as the other, as described by the DOs, was yet, another way of being marginalized. Cole's (2019) essay supports these experiences. The Co-Rs described their

struggles and experiences of seeking to belong and to be viewed as credible. They connected being the other as directly with being viewed, “not quite credible enough—never meeting the White standard “because you are never White enough, so you can’t be credible enough” (CoR 6). Cole’s (2019) observations were consistent with this; she argued that Whiteness is considered normative in its language, values, and objects. Whiteness may also establish its rituals, ceremonies and way of viewing time and communication as normative. This view creates the others.

Most of the DOs in this study pointed out that their positions do not include formal authority to address accountability; therefore, their span of EDI control and EDI leadership are limited, akin to what Williams and Wade-Golden (2007) found. The DOs stated that not being given authority to set EDI accountability measures makes institutionalizing EDI impossible. Some Co-Rs viewed this limitation as yet another way for Whiteness to remain in control of how much EDI change actually occurs or can occur.

Co-Rs believe their respective HEIs continue to uphold and serve Whiteness which results in inequities for marginalized faculty, staff, and students of color. They agree with the view of Hytten and Adkins (2001) that HEI curriculum is foundationally based in Whiteness and that “Whiteness excludes People of Color, marginalizing their self-interest, and concerns for a pluralistic democracy and self-determination” (p. 434). The commitment made by the DOs is to raise awareness on the impact of the social structure of Whiteness which exists in HEI campuses which continue to reinforce its dominance. Therefore, they continue to address provocative racial issues on campus such as responding to students who report racial tensions, marginalization, and incidences of discrimination, bias, and even hate crimes. When students from under-served demographic populations are negatively impacted, as might be known from student retention

data, this too becomes a stressor for the DOs who are expected to intervene in systemic inequities, as acknowledged by Pickett et al. (2017). Harrell (2000) confirmed the experiences of DOs with "transgenerational transmission of group traumas" (p. 45).

The Co-Rs shared multi-generational stories of social injustices as significant stressors. However, they also noted that the multi-generational stories of injustices are their motivation for bringing about EDI change. This finding is reinforced by Jernigan et al. (2015) who argued that multi-generational stories of similar painful and traumatic discriminatory events experienced by parents, grandparents, and possibly their great-grandparents, causes emotional stress. Although some of the DO job descriptions did not include the role of being a student advocate, all of the DOs have found it a necessary part of the EDI work. As an example, several told of how they may schedule meetings with students of color who request to see them. The meetings are typically about the students' requesting guidance on how to manage a racialized incident on campus. Often, the students seek them out and stop in to their offices hoping to chat about such incidences in a spontaneous manner. Although the impact of racism is a lived reality for the DOs and the students they serve, "within the context of racism, there have always been abundant examples of resilience, strength of character, capacity for love and giving, joy, fulfillment, and success" (Harrell, 2000, p. 42).

Another stressor identified by the DO group were feelings of isolation, especially if there was a lack of support from White peers to actively work to disrupt the institutional structures, systems, and practices that limit opportunity and access to communities of color (Levin, 2003). In addition, DOs of Color (LatinX DOs) may have personally experienced inequities and possibly "racial trauma" as higher education students themselves. Therefore, DOs may be emotionally triggered by shared stories of racial trauma experienced by staff and students on

campus. These types of culturally and ethnically shared connections bring about feelings of being overwhelmed, as noted by the DOs who continue working tenaciously to create inclusive cultures on campus.

Feelings of racial trauma are in alignment with Jernigan et al. (2015) who described racial trauma as "the physical and psychological symptoms that people of Color often experience after exposure to particularly stressful experiences of racism . . . racism never exist in isolation; racial trauma is a cumulative experience" (para. 4). Jernigan et al. compared racial trauma with the symptoms experienced by survivors of other types of trauma (e.g., sexual assault). The stress symptoms, as reported by the Co-Rs in my study, were headaches, hypervigilance, feeling sick, body aches, insomnia, and guilt. Some DOs shared stories of being of seeking medical care and even of being hospitalized. This is in agreement with Jernigan et al. who argued that racial trauma symptoms include shame, headaches, hypervigilance, body aches, difficulty with memory, confusion, insomnia, and guilt. Similar symptoms have been described by Bryant-Davis and Ocampo (2005) and Carter (2007). Not only do the DOs experience racism, they also are made aware of these experiences by others on campus. Jernigan et al. (2015) noted that experiences of racism do not occur in isolation and chronic stress is a symptom which results due to the cumulative effect of group or personal racism. Similar observations were made by also W. A. Smith et al. (2011).

The aforementioned racialized symptoms of stress appear to be unavoidable as DOs stand in the front lines of racial battles in historically White spaces. These realities as experienced by the DOs in this study may help explain why they are so eager for meaningful, timely, and sustainable EDI change. Interestingly, these stressful lived experiences may also be the basis for

their passion, resiliency, and for withstanding the stress to lead EDI change. All of these stressors contribute to what the Co-Rs identified as “The Dance.”

The Dance: Formalities Required to Navigate Cultural Differences and Tensions, Referred to as the “Colibri Effect”

The power in the outcome of this study was the manner by which the Co-Rs collectively, co-constructed and identified their reality and lived experiences. A colibri is depicted in Figure 5.1. The Colibri Effect was identified as the complex process of navigating HEIs in order to make EDI change. The colibri, or hummingbird were seen and described by the Co-Rs as being in almost constant flight, pivoting in midair, quickly pausing to assess their next rapid move; furiously flapping their wings to shift, adapt, and to land in a safe place, while gaining energy to take flight in a moment’s notice once again. The colibri is viewed as a small but mighty bird that can withstand the changing climate it lives in.

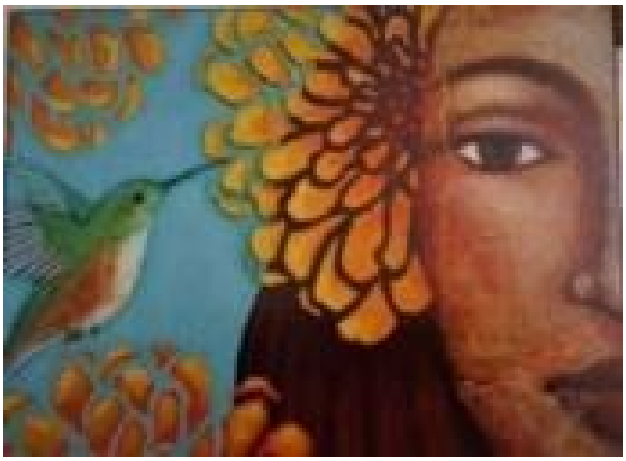

Figure 5.1. “Gypsy Summer,” painted by Tamara Adams. Used with permission.

The Co-Rs clearly identified a unique type of HEI navigation they experience as LatinX DOs in HEIs. The navigation was experienced as resulting from cultural differences and tensions or cultural dissonance. This navigation was described as a manner of withholding, filtering, or suspending the expression of one’s authentic, cultural self within a context of LatinX social

norms. Navigation, as described by the Co-Rs, requires that they modify their normative cultural behaviors. This form of navigation entails bicultural critical thinking processes and the application of formal and strategic actions which translate LatinX cultural norms into White cultural norms. This is done in a way that will not dismiss one's own cultural self. As expressed by the Co-Rs, the energy it takes to do this can be exhausting in the sense that it feels like one is compromising one's own authentic self. Studies about this phenomenon of self-concealment with this kind of participant group are non-existent. Calahan (n.d.) and Wells (2000) described cultural differences that may relate to some of the elements identified here in The Dance and which produce cultural tensions because of distinctions of LatinX populations: they are commonly polychronic versus monochronic, collectivist rather than individualist trans-relational versus transactional, high-context versus low-context, and widely use informal messaging versus direct messaging. Cultural tensions may arise as a result of the existing cultural differences (Thomas, 2004). LatinX DOs in higher education navigate, manage, and address potential cultural tensions by walking in between Whiteness and their LatinX-ness. Reconciling such cultural tensions is a dynamic Du Bois (1903/2007) referred to as double consciousness. Du Bois eloquently described how disenfranchised populations encounter a unique type of cultural displacement living and working—doing The Dance as referred to by the Co-Rs—among and within dominant cultures. Double consciousness describes the dynamic People of Color experience when they have to be conscious of how they are viewed by the dominant culture. Du Bois (1903/2007) described this lived experience as a "peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his twoness (p. xiii).

The Co-Rs said they have learned to consider the EDI leadership steps carefully, strategically, watchful of who is at the table in meetings, and who is not. They said they are mindful of what they say and do in navigating Whiteness. The strategies, communication, and behaviors they chose to remain in the EDI network of change; how they navigate the cultural dissonance is The Dance. Remaining culturally authentic while moving to-and-fro in White spaces must be strategic and diplomatic, respectful, yet tenacious and courageous—this is the "dance" as described by the Co-Rs.

Social Justice Paradigm Shift (The EDI Paradigm Shift is Us)

In the dialogues, Co-Rs often raised the subject of social justice. Several shared stories of being discriminated; one recounted having two male professors walk out on her while she was reading an assignment which was focused on research led by feminist women. Another story was about White supremacists distributing flyers with derogatory and graphic and offensive drawings of People of Color. Many painful student stories of racism, exclusion, and discrimination were retold. As a group, there was notable emphasis placed on this topic throughout the dialogues, accompanied with expressions of pain, anger, and a strong sense of urgency for sustained EDI institutionalized change.

The Co-Rs are EDI subject matter experts, therefore, they fully understand the harmful impact of social injustices in education. Their lived experiences, personal educational journeys, and EDI expertise inform them of the imperative for People of Color to have educational rights, equitable access, participation, and fair resource allocation. The Co-Rs are committed to dismantling HEI systems that produce inequities. They shared a culturally-based responsibility to seek social justice and view EDI change in HEIs as a manifestation of seeking social justice for previous and currently living generations.

It comes as no surprise that this finding is supported by Venegas-García (2013) who argued that social justice work is considered to be a calling and to be viewed as a social responsibility. The Latinas in this study clearly indicated that their cultural values are what motivate them even under the most difficult days at work. This responsibility was evident in their dialogues; each DO was motivated by strongly held cultural values situated within social justice principles. Their leadership is intentionally and strategically designed to subvert the dominant paradigm, thereby, creating a new paradigm (Jean-Marie et al., 2009). Kitano (1997) also emphasized and supported the views held by the Co-Rs, arguing that members of the dominant cultures are the ones who step up and champion EDI by declaring, educating, and confirming that Whiteness produces inequities. He reasoned that the dominant social classes help to maintain and support the social structure that promote them (Lenski, 1966).

The focus that the Co-Rs placed on social justice leadership is consistent with Lyman et al. (2012) who acknowledged that women of color demonstrate resilience as leaders of EDI change in HEIs. LatinX women press on although they themselves are oppressed and discriminated against—they are dismissed and overlooked, silenced, and are viewed as not credible (as related by the Co-Rs). Moreover, Williams and Wade-Golden (2013) stated as DOs promote and creatively push for EDI institutional change that they are creating a paradigm shift, their work is actually advancing inclusive scholarly pedagogy. Lyman et al.'s study surfaced authentic women leaders' stories about living and breathing social justice work while challenging the existing and limiting socially structured and systemic gender and cultural norms. Lyman et al. reached conclusions akin to those that the Co-Rs related in this study about experiences of challenging the social structures that limit real systemic EDI change and perpetuate systems that maintain gender and cultural norms.

Goldfarb and Grinberg (2002) stressed the theme of social justice leadership as "actively engaging in reclaiming, appropriating, sustaining, and advancing inherent human rights of equity, equality, and fairness in social, economic, educational, and personal dimensions" (p. 158). The DOs in my study realized EDI social justice change is a long, arduous process that can lead to burnout; that can require one work much more than forty hours a week. They work hard to manage their personal and professional lives understanding that EDI change occurs very slowly in HEIs. Thus, they are in agreement with Bell (1997) that social justice may be realized as long and short-term goals and multiple complex processes. The process is active engagement and participation of all people in society (collective human agency) creating equitable change. Gewirtz and Cribb (2002) identified three dimensions of social justice leadership which support the leadership the Co-Rs demonstrate: distributive justice (equitable distribution), cultural justice (absence of cultural domination), and associational justice meaning that marginalized groups have full participation in decision-making processes.

LatinX DOs are passionate about EDI change as a form of liberating marginalized populations from dominance and power-over dynamics. They educate and guide human resource professionals on campus to become more inclusive in hiring and retention practices. They can also offer subject matter expertise in the area of diversity management practices as noted earlier. As subject matter experts, they are consulted in terms of improving human resource practices which may involve ongoing meetings with HEI human resource administrators, deans, and HEI executives. The Co-Rs also serve as EDI trainers and help improve EDI organizational performances across campus. In accord with the social justice paradigm emphasis of the participants in this study, both Gilbert et al. (1999) and Kersten (2000) argued that 21st century, academic institutions must create DO positions to assist in diversity management strategy efforts

that help transform cultural and systemic barriers with the goal of alleviating inequities and exclusionary practices. Along the same lines, Tatli et al. (2015) argued diversity management is a tool which Is strategically used for developing and increasing institutional performance. They placed an explicit emphasis on the contribution of diverse employees in fulfilling organizational objectives. Because DOs can be tasked with leading diversity management, campus-wide, the responsibility can be overwhelming. This may be the case when the HEI has not established diversity as a value. Williams and Wade-Golden (2013) and Nixon (2016) conducted studies that support the finding of the emphasis participants put on a social justice paradigm in how carrying out their responsibility for diversity management and leadership in HEIs.

Williams (2013) supported the fact that DOs promote diversity plans, initiatives, and EDI goals, implement EDI stages, and strategies. EDI plans also require the identification for a system of campus-wide EDI accountability measures. Some of the DOs have a major role in tracking and reporting EDI accountability measures and outcomes. However, the DOs in this study explained that they must go beyond gathering data and performing tasks and duties to foster an environment where EDI is embraced and humanized. At times, they must persuade HEI executive leaders that EDI leadership is not just a social justice matter, but a critical part of leadership if the HEI wants to remain competitive and invite diverse student populations to enroll. The DOs organized EDI task force, committees, strategic plans for institutional change, and proposed policy changes and enhancements to be more inclusive. Pless and Maak (2004) found LatinX DOs in their study also developed and facilitated diversity councils, committees, and advisory groups to help develop and organize action-based group as EDI resources to support EDI institutional change.

Finally, the importance of social justice for DOs is also highlighted by Stevens et al. (2008) who considered inclusive, multiculturalism and positive organizational change as social capital, innovative potential, and a competitive edge.

Sources of Energy (Familia, LatinX Community, EDI Passion, Spirituality, and Ancestors)

LatinX EDI leaders in this study seek their sources of energy from within their cultural circles, heritage, and identity from their extended families and from their spirituality. They also gain energy through scholarly research and literature, and, I have found, even from leadership theories!

Because LatinX DOs are from high-context and collectivist cultures, they embrace an egalitarian spirit. As discussed earlier, implicitly, scholarship on indigenous ways of knowing (e.g. Cajete 1994; Deloria, 1973; Deloria & Wildcat, 2001) intersect with the principles and practice of ensemble leadership theory, and, therefore coincide with the cultural views and values of LatinX DOs' ways of knowing—conocimiento. Uhl-Bien (2006) also confirmed this study's finding of the importance participants place on leadership that nurtures purposeful and consequential relationships in their communities and in their extended families. Uhl-Bien's findings further reinforces this study by describing the intra-relationally shared moments and interactions the Co-Rs described as being their energy sources. The DOs are constantly vigilant, as individuals, about the need to access as many culturally valued sources of energy in order to lead equity, diversity, and inclusion in HEIs. They continued to express the importance of giving voice to the marginalized on campus.

This study is merely one way of offering and inviting the voices of LatinX marginalized DOs. The DOs can follow the path Vohra and Chari (2015) suggested, namely that organizations carefully scrutinize the rhetoric of inclusion to verify the organizational efforts of inclusion

actually invite the stories and experiences of minorities in the workplace. Vohra and Chari (2015) emphasized that the only way to ensure that inclusive workplace strategies and actions are authentic is to check in with employees from diverse populations. Vohra and Chari (2015) reported, “Inclusive environments have been shown to influence work-related self-esteem and employees’ willingness to go beyond their job-related roles to engage in citizenship behaviors” (p. 329). This is consistent with Pless and Maak’s (2004) work on “Building an Inclusive Diversity Culture” as well as subsequent studies by Nishi and Rich (2014) and Ferdman (2014) describing inclusive workplaces as ones whose leadership, policies, and practices, are evidenced.

The Co-Rs in this study viewed inclusion as a state of mind, and a state of being, and a way for organizational leaders to fill the spaces they occupy. They noted an exemplar they actively advocate for related to inclusive practices in the classroom: It is that educators make a commitment to address social justice issues with students of color in their classes, and not to instruct in ways that does not invite courageous dialogue on the topic. Although, educating diverse students on the topic of EDI challenges intellectual and personal beliefs, the Co-Rs invite dialogue on this topic and view it as an essential and critical way to put inclusion into practice. The Co-Rs are informed EDI experts; they can be a resource and an ally in these situations. The participants discussed ways in which exclusive language can be heard as power-over leadership language, such as, *allow*, *permits grant*, *let*, *admit*, *authorize*, *tolerate*, and *concede* to diverse employees joining existing teams.

In contrast, the findings in this study show that Co-Rs’ leadership demonstrated their inclusive practices by sharing their power. Sharing power was viewed as an inclusive practice. The DOs in this study help bring employees of color into the circle of acceptance, demonstrates,

and uses the following power-with language: *consults*, *invites*, *discusses*, *engages*, *yields*, *embraces*, *accepts*, and *welcomes* diverse employees into existing teams.

Trusting Relationships: Network of Trusted Allies Needed to Do EDI Work

Trusting relationships are valued and viewed as allies in creating EDI institutional change. Bordas's (2013) work validated this finding by presenting information that noted historical power has been hierarchical, the domain of the influential few, and associated with control and dominance. Most often, power has been found in the hands of White males. LatinX power, on the other hand, has evolved from the community—it is the power of We [collectivism], the power that people have to change their lives for the better. LatinX power is accessible to many people. Diffused power means leadership is not concentrated in one voice or only a few. Instead, LatinX power is leadership by the many—the thousands of LatinX leaders working every day in communities across the country. Leaders encourage people to tap into their own power. Because LatinXers are collectivist and born into relationally-based cultures, they seek to build trusting relationships by demonstrating personalismo—trust-building through mutual respect (G. Flores, 2000).

The collaborative spirit that is necessary to build complex inter-relational leadership alliances for co-creating change was well understood by the Co-Rs. What the participants discussed aligns with Booysen's (2014) description of the link between relational and inclusive leadership; they are in sync with one another and work in tandem to establish meaningful relationships based on practicing learning in relations and in context. The degree of autonomy each DO had was considered a beneficial factor in the sense that they could more fully embody their strategic power for change. On the other hand, too much autonomy could result in a high degree of disconnection with existing EDI allies on campus. If the HEI failed to develop and

establish a comprehensive institutional plan for EDI change across campus with diverse allies, the she could become submerged in busy EDI work, such as coordinating, managing, organizing multiple, statewide task forces, committees, and EDI advisory groups.

Another challenge that was identified was addressing complex issues that arise with many students; each issue requires many hours of assessing and facilitating solutions. Yet another is developing EDI curriculum and EDI training. She may be exhausted in her attempts to create change on her own by virtue of being the EDI go-to person who is kept incredibly busy. Unfortunately, she could also find herself without the support of a collective effort from HEI leadership teams for institutionalizing meaningful EDI change. DOs must be able and invited to access the diverse areas of expertise among executives, management, and support staff's expertise. As suggested by Stevenson (2014), only then can sustained EDI initiatives and change be brought about by, and in conjunction with an expansive EDI portfolio including the HEI's mission, goals, values, and culture.

As a visual learner, I will seek to grasp a thought, or concept with something that represents what I am learning or attempting to convey. In this dissertation, I have included visuals for this purpose. I was envisioning an indigenous woman holding or embracing the DOs and embracing or capturing EDI leadership. For this reason, I went to visit one of my artist friends and explained this. She immediately said she thought she had a painting that would match what I was searching for and presented me with her print "Mayan Madonna," shown in Figure 5.2. The Mayan Madonna represents what LatinX DOs possess; an inclusive spirit, open heart, and transformative powers they sustain through each relationship they nurture, as courageous EDI leaders. The Mayan Madonna is also representative of the intellectually empowered LatinX leaders who hold justice in their bosom to honor those that came before them.

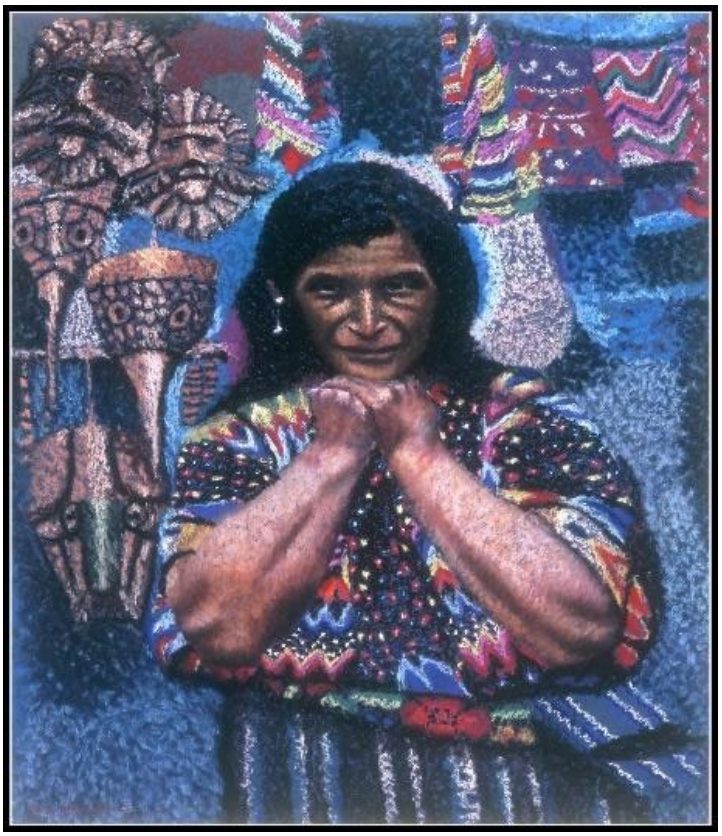

Figure 5.2. "Mayan Madonna" by Jan Maitland. Used with permission.

Embodied Strategic Power and Position: EDI Activism, Collective Power and Voice

The work of the Co-Rs involved activism, and critical-thinking action which intentionally and strategically interrupt maladaptive thinking about EDI. They actively engage in courageous dialogue about EDI; what equity, diversity, and inclusion mean, individually, and how they are connected, and how they benefit HEIs. The Co-Rs courageously address racial hierarchies; challenging colleagues and students to become aware, to learn, reflect, and revise their thinking about race. They believe it is their responsibility to bring attention to the dehumanizing impact biased social structures (which exist in HEIs) have on faculty, staff and students of color. This topic is one the DOs indicated that they address with HEI leaders from a social justice, moral, psychological, spiritual, and business perspective. They tenaciously approach the topic of race from any perspective in which White leaders may begin to pay attention to this critical topic.

One example was from Co-6 who explained that executive-level leaders are often absent from campus-wide EDI training, conferences, workshops, or strategic planning sessions that she organizes. However, leaders became engaged in an EDI topic when it was about revenues brought to the HEI from international students.

In another example, a DO described her ability to have meaningful EDI dialogue with high-ranking executive-level HEI leaders when the topic was based in spiritual or moral responsibilities to address inequities on campus. A third example was shared by Co-3 who noted that EDI discussions are heightened (focus attention) when legal issues result on campus, such as when hate crimes or discrimination complaints are formally filed. Some DOs expressed that they may be listened to if, perhaps, they begin an EDI discussion on diversity from a business perspective—-a "diversity management" perspective. The basis for such a conversation is often based in Mor Barak (2014) assertion, that diversity management creates a business-competitive advantage in resource recruitment, marketing, problem-solving, marketing, recruitment, and retention by HEI leadership, staff, and faculty.

An additional way the Co-Rs apply EDI practices was by comprehensively reviewing and developing HEI policies, practices, protocols. Strategic EDI efforts are necessary to shift the frameworks in which HEIs function, however, coaching, guiding, and empowering students to also do EDI work has greater personal EDI impact. The way the Co-Rs discussed their leadership is aligned with Booysen's (2014) proposition that inclusive leadership goes beyond efforts to include and engage diverse populations; inclusive leadership must explore and practice inclusive strategies that are implemented in ways that result in empowerment and full participation by all.

Figure 5.4 shows a more expansive way to perceive what and how the co-constructed narratives evolved into what they defined as “The Colibri Effect.” The group’s lived experiences revealed alignment with Anzaldúa’s (1987), “Mestiza Consciousness” (p. 25). These Latina women revealed to themselves and to the world, a LatinX co-constructed consciousness—a collective culturally aligned chronicle of EDI leadership and a culture of resistance that embodies the power of their “set of values, beliefs, and practices [cultural values] that mitigate the effects of oppression” (Mitchell & Feagin, 1995, p. 68).

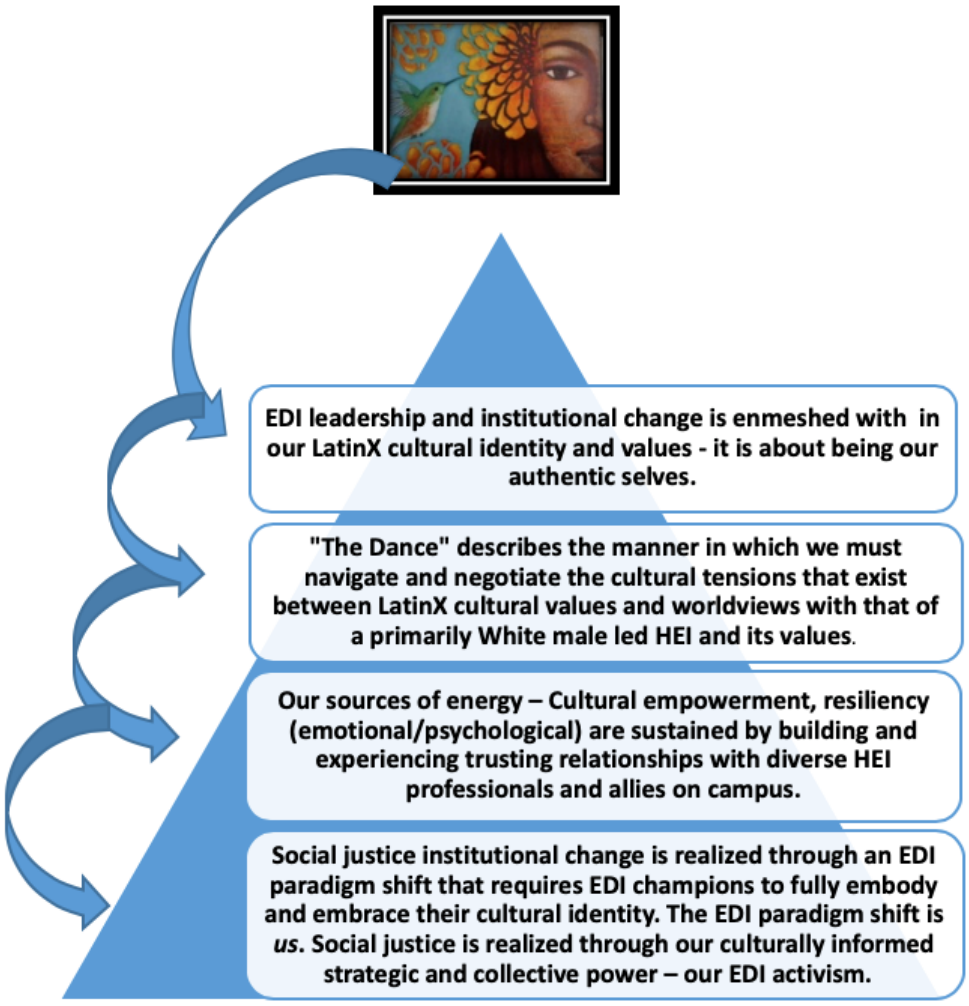

Figure 5.3. The Colibri Effect: Whispering colibri engaging in The Dance. Image at top is “Gypsy Summer,” painted by Tamara Adams. Used with permission.

The dialogues fluidly led from one tier to the following tier; ultimately into what the Co-Rs defined as The Dance. One might think of each tier as a step in learning to do The Dance. Asking each Co-R, "What is it like to be a LatinX DO in HEI?" began to peel away the multiple symptoms the group was feeling and experiencing meant. This study helped the Co-Rs articulate why they are experiencing cultural tensions. As a result of this study, they gained a deeper appreciation for each other's work and became aware of the combined empowering knowledge they shared. The study helped to create a culturally meaningful bond; a sisterhood. The sisterhood helped to lessen the loneliness they described that they feel as EDI LatinX leaders in predominantly White institutions This study resulted in a poetic meaning-making group process, a poiesis in which they could articulate retrospective thinking. The study facilitated dialogic processes which led to self-interpretation, self-articulation, and self-discovery. As shared by the Co-Rs, this study enhanced their views of who and what they are; individually and collectively. The study led the Co-Rs' reconfiguration of self: they moved through and beyond what existed before, and shared their truths, stories, and their lived experience. They became dialectically intertwined. They became mindfully, and spiritually aware of their collective power. They honored and celebrated their bicultural fluency, capacity, and currency. This study guided the Co-R through a process in which they could see each other as a reflection of themselves.

Significance and Contributions of This Study

The value of applying IPA as an effective and culturally relevant research methodology was confirmed by the Co-Rs. They shared feelings of gratitude and appreciation for having had the opportunity to take part as a Co-R in this study. They stated they were empowered and validated by the experience, and, developed trusting relationships. In addition, they began to

develop a strong network of LatinX colleagues in the Pacific Northwest. The Co-Rs variously described this study as “validating,” “healing,” “liberating,” “oppression-less,” and “freeing.”

Co-R1 commented,

> The focus group was validating for me. It reminded me that I am worthy, that I do have the knowledge to do my work well, and this experience reminded me how much I still need to learn. It felt good not be alone in this challenging work.

Co-R7 said, “It was wonderful getting to know all and I will often reflect back on our short, and amazing experience together” Co-R5 observed, “I feel more clarity and energized about the work” Many of the Co-Rs described their experience as “insightful,” “enlightening,” and “informative.”

Significance of This Study

This research study focused on positive social change, specifically, for the EDI in HEIs. The scholarly significance to the topics of LatinX cultural values, EDI leadership, DO positions, Latinos as an emerging majority, and IPA as a qualitative methodology, is valuable and adds unique elements to currently existing scholarly literature. LatinX Diversity Officers merit our attention as EDI leaders. This dissertation topic is historically timely because it comes at a sociohistorical turning point in our society where LatinX proportion of the overall population continues to rise while, sadly predictably, pervasive racism endures and even expands to divide the United States. This reality places LatinX populations in precarious circumstances. What does this mean for LatinX EDI leaders in HEIs? It means we invite, encourage, and admonish White HEI leaders, deans, executive, and staff members to become aware of the very unique psychological stressors placed upon EDI change agents on campus. The Co-Rs voiced their concern that, given the harm inflicted on marginalized populations, it is imperative for HEI top leaders, faculty, staff, and, also for White allies to learn why and how to personally commit to take action to disrupt, disarm, dismantle, and disrupt microaggressions and macroaggressions.

These actions must be demonstrated by top executive-level leaders in HEIs who need to model and publicly announce a strong stance against microaggressions and macroaggressions by actively engaging in anti-racism and anti-discriminatory actions. They cannot institutionalize EDI only by hiring a DO and leave it up to them, their EDI teams, or, EDI committees to manage these issues and, then, to expect institution-wide change to take place and be sustained long-term.

The greatest significance of my dissertation is in the search for new meanings elicited during a time in our history of considerable racialized sociopolitical stressors, a time when leaders of color are challenging leaders in positions of power and privilege to collaboratively create greater opportunities and support for all students. A unique factor in the design of this study is the C-RRR concept and framework applied to the multi-phase study. An additional strength is the role of Co-Rs (participants) who interpreted their own lived experiences in this IPA study. A meaningful element that led to the success of this study was to create a safe space, an environment where all could give voice to their lived experiences in an anti-oppression zone.

The Co-Rs expressed themselves as cultural beings; love, humor, and optimism permeated their stories. These Latinas are hopeful, tenacious, and dedicated to improving the level of cultural intelligence that exist in HEIs. More importantly, my goal, hope, and expectation is for the findings to provide a reason for LatinX community members to not allow cultural amnesia to set in but to embrace their cultural values. Lastly, the findings may serve to encourage and validate DOs, confirming and affirming that the tensions they experience are real and are based in the reality that we must continue to disrupt inequity in HEIs.

Contribution of This Study

I sought to explore, discover, and identify key findings that contribute to the development of empirical knowledge on the topic of LatinX, DOs, lived experiences based on IPA qualitative research design. DO positions are increasing in HEIs (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2013), this study may contribute to the development of more comprehensive and clearly identified roles for DO job descriptions, hiring, retention, and promotion practices of LatinX DOs, and help to identify ways for HEI leaders to offer support. More importantly, I hope that the readers of the research findings may gain in EDI knowledge, cultural intelligence, feel inspired, validated, and consider Indigenous ways of knowing. I hope this study inspires social justice activism. Additional studies explored may be in the areas of cultural values and their impact on leadership, recruitment, and retention of LatinX professionals, EDI training design, HEI leadership, and qualitative studies of People of Color. My message to Latinas, is that my hope is that by exploring and identifying various elements of our cultural values, that we strengthen or reconnect who we are as powerful cultural beings; we carry our ancestors DNA. The Co-Rs are remaining in contact and encouraging the exploration of the creation of a Pacific Northwest DO network (Wenger & Snyder, 2000). A DO network or professional community of practice (Wenger et al., 2002) now exists in the Northwest, there is potential for this study to further explore and study their group as LatinX DOs.

The findings in this study offer existing scholarly literature an in-depth, phenomenological knowledge about LatinX DOs in HEI. The findings will inform White HEI leaders and professionals of the tensions and cultural dissonance that exist in many cultures of color working or enrolled in HEIs. My hope is that the findings provide provocative insights into a dynamic that may help explain why EDI change is so complex for DOs and for LatinX EDI

leaders. The findings may serve as a basis for courageous conversations and for deeper understanding of biculturalism. The findings may provide a foundation for empathetic exchanges and for sustained collaborative alliances to develop. In addition, the findings may inform White allies of the subject matter expertise DOs possess, such as leadership, human resource development, and student advocacy. The findings may also help DO allies to understand how cultural values contribute, inform, and motivate DO's work. The findings may serve as topics for classroom discussion, lectures, workshops, and group dialogue.

Recommendations for Future Research

Research related to LatinX EDI leaders in HEIs is very limited and scholarly literature identifying or exploring LatinX DOs and cultural core strengths appeared to be non-existent. A recommendation would be for researchers interested in LatinX populations to also conduct studies which include this population. IPA methodology was not found to be applied to DOs nor LatinX DOs in any of the current literature. In this regard, my recommendation is to apply this method of research to diverse, marginalized populations in research studies. Studies on the topics of 21st century leadership, and its interrelatedness to cultural differences and emerging majority populations, would provide HEI professionals information that could help manage diversity. Additional studies on culture, race, leadership, and change are needed for the 21st century's globalized world. LatinX leadership leans toward heterarchical leadership within HEIs that have been historically hierarchical. This topic can be further explored within diverse cultural contexts.

An additional recommendation for a study is the investigation of psychological stressors and its impact on an EDI leaders' health. Indigenous leadership theories would contribute to the literature; in particular, ensemble leadership theory and practice in HEIs. A study of cultural

intelligence and 21st century leadership is another area I would recommend for future research due to the impact of globalization. Lastly, EDI leadership and its psychological impact throughout HEIs would be an important contribution to future scholarly literature.

Various forms of research designs may be applicable in future studies on the topic of DOs. Qualitative, mixed methods, and participatory action research designs may be applied. Studies may focus on multi-ethnic DO group representations and address various geographical areas. DOs work may be contrasted on an international level. A focus on male LatinX DOs in HEIs would provide comparison studies on the topic. Studies may also focus on DOs in corporate environments. In addition, DO-focused studies may explore the differences between working in Hispanic Serving Institutions and those that do not have this specific designation. In other words, the topic of DOs has yet to be explored further by applying diverse research designs and approaches; each of which would add to the existing literature.

Recommendations for Future Practice

In the following brief subsections, I will offer some recommendations for changing and strengthening future practice in the field of EDI, based on the findings of the research.

Recruiting, appointing, and valuing DOs. Prior to hiring an EDI officer, a clearly identified network of support which includes top-level HEI executives must be clearly outlined and documented. HEI leaders must understand and honor her cultural values. DOs are instrumental in the distribution and development of EDI knowledge and practice on campus. Therefore, it is important for HEI executive-level leaders— the HEI president, provosts, and deans—to acknowledge their work. DOs can unlock the benefits of diversity in a way that can place the HEI as a progressive and informed national model for the future.

DO job descriptions must have clarity; it must clearly detail the scope of work, tasks, and role. If the DO job description is in generic language or, the role so expansive that it is confusing, it may lead to EDI failure.

Retaining, supporting, and building alliances with the DO. I suggest that DOs must be hired only after HEI executive-level leaders have become culturally informed, possess a high degree of cultural intelligence, show evidence of being EDI practitioners, allocate funds for an EDI fully staffed office, ensure the DO position is at the executive level, and has authority to lead and make institution-wide decisions.

The literature clearly shows that attending EDI training is not enough to change behaviors; to become EDI practitioners. Hiring a DO to create an EDI strategic plan, and EDI initiatives alone, does not lead to institutional EDI change. If EDI initiatives have been identified, executive leaders on campus must be fully engaged in the work until the change sought is sustained. The HEI president, provosts, counsel, administrators, deans, faculty, and staff must all be promoting and practicing EDI.

Mainstream DO practices and EDI systemic development. HEI leaders, faculty, and staff must be evaluated on their EDI efforts in regularly scheduled evaluations and recognition and promotions made based on EDI-based evidence and active engagement in EDI institutional change. EDI practices must be institutionalized, in other words, EDI must go beyond creative marketing campaigns, strategic plans, and initiatives; it must be mainstreamed.

All EDI systems must be evaluated by applying an EDI lens. An EDI data dashboard must be regularly scheduled at HEI board of trustee meetings, executive leadership meetings, including college, unit, and department meetings. Human resource leaders must help lead all EDI strategies and initiatives. EDI data must be tracked, and technical accountability measures

imbedded in the HEI. In addition, an educational campaign, cross-campus, on the topic of race, racism, microaggressions, and marginalization will inform, address, and challenge social structures that exist on campus.

Personal responsibility to lead EDI. LatinX professionals carry a multi-generational responsibility to address social injustices. In education, we are often sought out by students, staff, and faculty of color for guidance, advice, counsel, and validation. Students of color seek them out, sometimes daily to share their stories of navigating existing HEI social structures which continue to create educational barriers and limit access to equitable resources. This connection is critical to the cultural reinforcement needed by students to complete their studies. Can more be done to rally around and support LatinX DOs?

Are HEI leaders sufficiently aware of how current sociopolitical stressors impact the work of an EDI leader? Do human resource units fully understand the complex demands on DO's expertise and time? Does the DO job description address this critical role and the time needed to serve as cultural communicators and counselors? We are strong, intelligent, and tenacious LatinX EDI professionals moving EDI structural inequities within HEIs. It behooves HEI leaders who seek to employ a DO or HEI leaders of institutions with high numbers of LatinXers, to educate themselves on the topics addressed in this dissertation. More importantly, my desire and hope are that this study offer LatinX professionals cultural and intellectual validation and acknowledgment of their unique distinct and lived experiences while honoring their contribution to social justice leadership and change.

By identifying and understanding LatinX DOs experiences, as shared here through a LatinX cultural lens, the study may open new avenues for understanding the complexities that exist for LatinX DO professionals. Interestingly, although the findings reveal the Co-Rs lived

experiences of marginalization and microaggressions are largely due to executive, faculty, and staff member's lack of professional and personal cultural intelligence (as described by the Co-Rs); LatinX DO's turn inward, into their identities, cultural values, and their sense of authentic selves for continued strength, power, and voice for EDI change.

An Act of Social Justice

This study consummated in the collective idea of "The Colibri Effect" as an act of social justice. Social justice challenges the status quo and its institutional inequities. This study has confirmed the urgency for EDI change in HEIs. It is my heartfelt desire that LatinX DOs in HEIs, and all LatinX EDI leaders, continue to access their core cultural capacities which are proven to supply the needed energy, passion, purpose, and responsibility to co-construct EDI change. This is not work that can be done alone. Building powerful alliances with EDI advocates, activists, and community members from diverse cultures is critical. *We* are the EDI paradigm shift and must continue to lead EDI change based upon the foundational cultural value of *justicia* (justice), a LatinX cultural value that continues to guide and strengthen us, just as it did our ancestors.

Research Study Limitations

The significant findings of this study contribute to scholarly literature on the topic of LatinX DO in HIEs. Be that as it may, it is important to note this study's limitations as a guide to future studies.

General limitations of qualitative research. Qualitative studies require researchers to be skillful in interviewing and, if in the research design includes, focus group facilitation. Qualitative data can vary based on the degree of skill researchers possess. Qualitative study interviews, focus groups, and categorizing data, are labor-intensive processes, therefore,

qualitative studies are typically time consuming. Qualitative studies are also subjective, and interpretations are limited (Yauch & Steudel, 2003). Mono-method research does not meet the demand for interdisciplinary approaches, nor is it able to fully probe highly complex issues and interactions (Mayring, 2007).

Limitations of IPA. Some scholars argue that a researcher's dialogue facilitation skills can be a limitation (e.g., Jayasekera, 2012). A compensating factor in my work was the special degree and quality of rapport that was established because of the occupational and cultural similarities between the participants and me. IPA's lack of standardization processes can be viewed as another limitation. Additionally, a limitation can be research inquiries rely on subjective perceptions.

Sample size. For quantitative researchers the inevitably small number of the sample is always an issue. Here, the number fell within the most typical ranges of qualitative research involving interviews and focus groups (Robinson, 2014). While the sample size was relatively small (nine), the low number of Co-Rs in this study was actually critical. A larger number of Co-Rs may not have offered the same degree of time to build strong trusting bonds, to become vulnerable with each other, and share stories of their successes, joy, and pain.

Data and collection. Confidentiality was a key factor in this study. One of the limitations was that all shared data (e.g., demographics) could not be revealed. Revealing all of the demographic would have placed the Co-Rs at risk for being identified. Especially since there are so few LatinX DOs in HEIs. After completing my qualitative interpretation of the findings, I discovered that perhaps, the way in which data was gathered could have been enhanced if a word analysis or word study element of this study was applied. Future researchers may revise the specific method used for this study for gathering data.

Self-reporting. As primary researcher of this qualitative research study, I gathered the data myself. Therefore, the data is limited by the fact it cannot be independently verified. The interviews and focus group data is taken at face-value. However, the data collected was designed to include a member-checking process for accuracy.

No longitudinal measurement. Due to limited time frames for completing this study, longitudinal effects were not investigated. However, longitudinal effects may choose to investigate the impact of psychological stressors, and/or cultural values and leadership identified in this study.

Cultural bias. As a LatinX community member, and former EDL leader in an HEI, my bias could be problematic. Because of this potential, I bracketed my assumptions and was careful not to omit critical information. Additionally, I paid close attention to details by carefully situating people, events, places, or things as they were interpreted by the Co-Rs as they identified the "Colibri Effect" phenomenon.

Language and cultural fluency. There may be a significant limitation in replicating this study if future primary researchers were not fully bilingual (Spanish and English) nor highly informed of LatinX culture.

Conclusion

As a Latina, I set my scholarly goals on completing this research study as a social justice act for myself, and to offer this study as a contribution to establish equitable, and inclusive, social justice education. LatinX demographic groups are rapidly increasing in the United States. I believe this places a great responsibility on us as Latinas for leading EDI change in HEIs. Interestingly, I was very curious to what degree cultural values influence the Co-Rs in their EDI leadership. What was confirmed by this study is that cultural values really do profoundly drive,

guide, and influence how the Co-Rs lead EDI change. Cultural values were demonstrated, expressed, and, symbolized during all phases of this study. During Phase III, the Co-Rs co-created a collective narrative about their cultural values: collectivism, respect, family, work ethic, heritage (cultural roots), social justice, spirituality, etc. One of the revelations was seeing how the group's cultural values permeated their dialogue and ultimately, their EDI leadership: in the end, it is their cultural values that sustain them under the most difficult circumstances.

The Co-Rs experienced their EDI work, individually and collectively, as acts of social justice. They each take an active role in identifying, and, transforming systems in HEIs that produce inequitable outcomes for students from marginalized populations. The LatinX leaders view EDI systemic inequities as causing social harm (Young, 2011, p. 96). Their stories were centered on the cultural tensions —The Dance—they experience as they lead EDI change in White institutions. In other words, while the HEIs are hiring LatinX EDI DOs (EDI change agents), to help create cultural EDI changes on campus and within their institutions, what became very concerning, as shared from their lived experiences, was that HEI leaders, faculty, and staff, for the most part, are not becoming EDI practitioners themselves.

The DOs indicated they are often viewed as *the one* hired to address EDI issues on campus. This in turn, works against HEI EDI initiatives, the EDI efforts these diversity champions are so passionately promoting and leading. A huge concern is that when they individually cannot make institutional change they may be viewed as not meeting their tasks successfully. Nevertheless, they each find great meaning in their work. This is despite the psychological stressors they experience. This study helps understand the cultural tensions that exist between the co-researcher DO's cultural values and those that predominate in their respective institutions—The Dance.

Latinx DOs culture switch according to the circumstances in their day-to-day work as EDI leaders. Suppressing, withholding, or suspending their authentic cultural selves weakens their sense of being. On the other hand, their ability to develop a high degree of bicultural intelligence enhances their communication. The co-researchers know their best energy requires being their authentic cultural selves. They continue to help institutional leaders understand the power of inclusivity in order to invite and enable the best cultural selves of everyone; each co-researcher aspires to reach this goal. Interestingly, one of the most powerful cultural values that came forth throughout the study is justicia (justice). Justicia is at the heart of why the EDI leaders do what they do. It is the key cultural value that drives their EDI work. It is by embracing and honoring their cultural values that they keep their dignity and authentic selves, and their autonomy. For it is by their lived experiences as LatinX DOs that they continue to invite strong alliances with members of the dominant culture as they share their insightful critiques as 21st century EDI leaders in HEIs. It is my hope that this dissertation may raise larger questions among HEI leaders about the value of examining and broadening the values reflected in our institutions so that they become more equitable.

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Appendix

Appendix A: Research Schedule

The LatinX Diversity Officers in Higher Education Research Schedule serves the purpose of maintaining a transparent, organized research schedule which tracks and captures critical time frames for multiple phases of this IPA study. The schedule also informs co-participants of the phases which require their active participation.

LATINX DO IN HEI RESEARCH SCHEDULE

TASK 2019	TARGET DATES TBD	COMPLETION DATE	CONCERNS	JOURNAL/MARGIN NOTES COMPLETED-DATE
Participants Identified	April 01	April 01	April 01	June 30, 2019
Letter of Research Introduction: Research Overview, Letter of Consent, and Pre-Interview Questionnaire (Emailed)	"	"	"	"
Participant Confirmation (Phone call and email confirmation)	"	"	May 2019	June 01, 2019
Letter of Consent emailed and returned	"	"	N/A	"
Evaluate Next Steps (Pause)	May 3th0	"	Participants Confirmed and Agree with Schedule	May 30th

TASK 2019	TARGET DATES TBD	COMPLETION DATE	CONCERNS	JOURNAL/MARGIN NOTES COMPLETED-DATE
Research Schedule to all Participants	April - May	May	May	May
Emailed and returned	April - May	May	May 30th	June 30th
Phase I				
In Depth Exploration				
Of Individual Lived Experiences				
Transcription	May 30th	May 30th	May 30th	May 30th
Member Checking	June 01	June 01	June 01	June 01
Phase II	June 21	June 21	June 21	June 21
Exploration and Discovery of the Culturally Collective Experience				
Member Checking	June 21			
Phase III	June 22	June 22	June 22	June 22
Collective Reflection:				
Co-Construction of the Grand Narrative				
Member Checking	June 22			

TASK 2019	TARGET DATES TBD	COMPLETION DATE	CONCERNS	JOURNAL/MARGIN NOTES COMPLETED-DATE
Phase IV	July – August	August 30	August 30	August 30
Reflective/Reflective **Meaning-Making Phase**				
IPA Analysis	Sept 15 Sept 20	Sept 15 Sept 20	Sept 15 Sept 20	Sept 15 Sept 20
Final Analysis	Sept 30	Sept 30	Sept 30	Sept 30
Summary and Findings:				
Dissertation Chapter 4 & 5 completed				

Appendix B: Consent Form

Research Study Participant Consent Form

You are invited to be a research study participant conducted by Maria Chavez-Haroldson aka Maria T. Haroldson, a doctoral candidate in the Leadership and Change program at Antioch University. Please carefully read and review the following information; take time to reflect on your decision to participant (or not),I honor your decision. This research involves the study or phenomenon of lived experiences, in particular, the experiences of LatinX (Latina) Diversity Officers (professional positions and titles may vary) in Higher Education. Although professional titles may vary, the professional role is one which primarily leads, promotes, and addresses equity, diversity, and inclusion in Higher Education Institutions from the Pacific Northwest region of the U.S.

The study involves four phases; Phases I – III includes all participants, Phase IV is completed by myself and does not require participation. Phase I involves an individual, face-to-face interview with each participant at a location agreed upon by both the participant and the researcher. Phase II is a focus group dialogue session with all participants, and Phase III, is the second and final focus group dialogue session with all participants; to be held in Corvallis, Oregon. Each phase is approximately two hours in duration. All phases will be audiotaped and transcribed. Please note: This qualitative research study includes a *member checking* process for Phases I–III. Member checking is a technique used to receive your feedback, to improve the credibility and accuracy of this study. Each request for member checking may require approximately six to eight hours (total) of your time. Member checking time is included in the approximation noted earlier of twenty hours for active research study engagement. Member checking in Phases I–III offers each participant the opportunity to identify and/or exclude information noted in any of the transcriptions. Phase I - Each participant may decide what is to be shared, and what is not to be shared with all other participants in this study as it is an individual, face-to-face interview. Phases II and III – All participants engaged in the focus group dialogues listen and hear all the participant's comments, statements, and lived experiences shared within the group. *A formal request is made for all participants to maintain confidentiality.* All are required to sign a Confidentiality Form. Some of your quotations may be used in the finalized dissertation, *only with your permission and consent*.

Transcriptions – Phase I – III transcriptions (exclusions made), will be analyzed by myself during Phase IV.

Personal Information - Your personal identification will be kept confidential in a locked desk file and will be de-identified as an act of maintaining your right to privacy. Anonymity is not possible, however, as a participant, you may choose to have a pseudonym assigned to you.

Higher Education Institution – Each participant' respective higher education institutions name will be assigned a pseudonym for additional confidentiality.

+Audiotape - I voluntarily agree to give permission for the researcher to audiotape me for the purpose of this study; <u>in a one-on-one interview and in two group dialogues.</u> I give my consent for the audio tapes to be used for the purpose of this study – with the exception of

information I identify to be excluded, in Phases I - III. I understand that all audio tapes, notes, transcriptions, and forms I have signed, and personal identification will all be kept in a secure location inaccessible to anyone but the primary researcher.

***Photographs** – I voluntarily agree to give my permission for the researcher to take photographs ONLY during Phase II and Phase III of the research. Identification of the participants will not be revealed in the photographs as they will be taking in a manner which will not capture the faces of the participants. The photographs will be produced only in black and White so as to not identify skin tone, hair color, etc. All photographs and personal identification will be kept in a secure location inaccessible to anyone but the primary researcher. I understand the primary researcher's computer will only be accessible to her (not for public use) with the use of a privacy code. I understand photographs will be used in the dissertation defense presentation and in presentations as they relate to this study.

Emotional Stress - The purpose and intent of the research study is to explore and discover what it's like to be a LatinX (Latina) DO in HEIs. This study may trigger emotional discomfort and distress. Sharing your lived experiences of working with and promoting equity, diversity, and, inclusion on campus may cause emotional stress. Local resources and contact information in your area will be provided should you wish to access them for assistance in managing the risks and stress this study may cause.

Financial Compensation - Financial compensation will not be provided for participating in any phase of this study. Reminder: There will be two focus group dialogues sessions; each approximately two hours in length to be held in Corvallis, Oregon. This may require travel and possible overnight lodging, depending on your location. Cost-free meals and lodging options will be provided.

Benefits - There are no guaranteed benefits, however, one of the potential outcomes may be the development of a DO community of practice, and, the potential for networking with DOs in the northwest. Another benefit is the contribution this study may offer current LatinX population research studies.

Future Publication - The primary researcher, Maria Chavez-Haroldson, reserves the right to include any results of this study in future scholarly presentations and/or publications. All information will be de-identified prior to publication.

International Review Board (IRB)
The Antioch International Review Board (IRB), is a committee authorized to ensure research participant and research ethical criteria are met. The IRB also review the proposed participants and dissertation proposal are approved. Please contact Dr. Lisa Kreeger, IRB Chairperson, for any IRB questions you may have:

Antioch University
Ph.D. in Leadership and Change
150 E. South College Road
Yellow Springs, OH 45387
[redacted]
lkreeger@antioch.edu

Participant

I agree ( ), disagree ( ) to be a research study participant

I have carefully read the foregoing information. I have had the opportunity to ask any questions about expectations (including time and travel) for participating in this study. I voluntarily consent to be a participant in this study. I understand that what I share about my personal lived experience as a DO in HEIs will be shared with a group of participants in this study. I have not been coerced to participant in the LatinX (Latina) DO in HEIs. I confirm I was invited to ask questions about the study. The questions I've asked have been responded to accordingly and to my satisfaction. I have not been coerced, nor negatively influenced into giving consent. My consent and agreement to become a research study participant has been given freely and voluntarily.

Participant's Name: _____

Participant's Signature: _____

_____

Date

Day/month/year

DO YOU CONSENT TO BE AUDIOTAPED IN THIS STUDY?

Yes____ No____

I voluntarily agree to let the researcher audiotape me for this study. + I agree to allow the use of my audiotape me as described in this form. I also agree that what I share during this study will be shared with the group of participants.

_____

Printed Name of Participant

_____

Signature of Participant

_____

Date (day/month/year)

DO YOU AGREE TO BE PHOTOGRAPHED IN THIS STUDY?

Yes_____ No_____

I voluntarily agree to let the researcher photograph me for this study. * I agree to allow the use of my photographs as described in this form.

_____

Printed Name of Participant

_____

Signature of Participant

_____

Date (month/day/year):

A copy of this Informed Consent Form has been provided to the participant and has been signed and received by the researcher.
Researcher Contact Information:
Email: [redacted]
Cell: [redacted]

Researcher (print): _____

Researcher Signature: _____

Date (month/day/year):

Thank you

Appendix C: Permissions from Artists for Use of Paintings

From: **artful_bliss** <[redacted]>
Date: Thu, Feb 13, 2020 at 10:32 AM
Subject: RE: Request for Including Your Artwork in My Dissertation
To: Maria Chavez-Haroldson Ph.D. <[redacted]>

Yes, you have my permission
Tamara Adams

Sent from my T-Mobile 4G LTE Device

-------- Original message --------
From: "Maria Chavez-Haroldson Ph.D." <[redacted]>
Date: 2/13/20 9:54 AM (GMT-08:00)
To: [redacted]
Subject: Request for Including Your Artwork in My Dissertation

Thank you Tamara. 🙏🏻🌺
Be Well,

Sent from my iPhone

Hello Tamara:
I apologize I am making a second request for your permission as I failed to include the pictures of the artwork in the previous email I sent you via Messernger.

May I have your permission to include your artwork in my Ph.D. dissertation?

When the dissertation is fully approved it will be shared without charge to any reader using the following open access archives.
OhioLINK Electronic Thesis and Dissertation [ETD] Center, Ohio's open access Dissertation repository http://etd.ohiolink.edu/
AURA: Antioch University Repository

From: Kimberly Evans <[redacted]>
Date: February 11, 2020 at 6:06:45 PM PST
To: "Maria Chavez-Haroldson Ph.D." <[redacted]>
Subject: Re: Permission

Thank you so much! It was a great time.
I, Kimberly Evans give full permission to use my art work in the dissertation written by Maria Chavez-Haroldson in any way she sees fit.

On Mon, Feb 10, 2020 at 5:58 PM Maria Chavez-Haroldson Ph.D. <[redacted]> wrote:

Hi Kim!
So good to hear you and Caleb got to go to Hawaii.

I am requesting your permission to use the following artwork - see attached photo of Colibri Effect created by you, the artist in my Ph.D. dissertation which will be published.
I am unsure if I included the picture in my prior request so I am sending another request for permisson once again - sorry for the inconvenience.
Thank you for gifting me this work of art.

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AURA: Antioch University Repository

Thank you,

Maria Chavez-Haroldson,Ph.D.
EDI CONSULTING, LLC
Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion
She/Her/Ella
[redacted]
PO BOX 66
Corvallis, Oregon 97339

From: "Jan Maitland" <[redacted]>
Date: January 28, 2020 at 10:50:23 PM PST
To: "'Maria Chavez-Haroldson Ph.D.'" <[redacted]>
Subject: RE: Permission to use your beautiful artwork

Dear Maria,

Thank you for your email, and feliz año nuevo!

It is with my gratitude and delight that I give permission to Dr. Maria Chavez-Haroldson to use my painting, *Mayan Madonna* for the completion of her dissertation, **"LatinX Diversity Officers in Higher Education: Capacitating Cultural Values as Champions of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion."**

Thank you so much, Maria, for the honor of having my painting represented in your dissertation.

My very best,

Jan
Cell: [redacted]

From: Maria Chavez-Haroldson Ph.D. [mailto:[redacted]]
Sent: Monday, January 27, 2020 2:56 PM
To: Jan Maitland
Subject: Permission to use your beautiful artwork

Hello Jan:
I hope you are well.

As a required step for the completion of my dissertation, "LatinX Diversity Officers in Higher Education: Capacitating Cultural Values as Champions of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion" I need to have your emailed permission use of your painting(s) which I've identified with the attached thumbnail picture.

When the dissertation is fully approved it will be shared without charge to any reader using the following open access archives.
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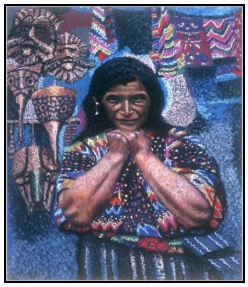
AURA: Antioch University Repository



Thank you!

Maria Chavez-Haroldson,Ph.D.
EDI CONSULTING, LLC
Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion
She/Her/Ella
[redacted]
Corvallis, Oregon 97339