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Answering the Call: Hispanic-Serving Institutions as Leaders in the Quest for Access, Excellence, and Equity in American Higher Education

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What Does it Mean to be Latinx-serving? Testing the Utility of the Typology of HSI Organizational Identities

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Abstract

While scholars agree that enrolling a large percentage of Latinx students is not enough for postsecondary institutions to be considered "Latinx-serving," there continues to be a debate about what it means for institutions to have an organizational identity for serving this population. The *Typology of HSI Organizational Identities* is a guiding framework that suggests there are multiple ways for an institution to serve Latinx students, and thus multiple "types" of Hispanic- Serving Institutions (HSIs). The typology considers academic and non-academic outcomes for Latinx students as well as the institution's ability to provide a culture that enhances their racial/ethnic experience. In this study, I used the typology to classify four HSIs and two emerging HSIs in the Midwest, a geographic area in the United States with a growing population of Latinxs and HSIs. I drew on secondary data from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) and primary data from institutional websites. In doing so, I sought to test the utility of the typology for classifying institutions for research, practice, and policy, and found that it is a useful tool for looking at how postsecondary institutions may serve Latinx students beyond enrollment. Implications for research, practice, and policy are discussed.

Keywords: Hispanic-Serving Institutions, Latinx-serving identity, Latinx college students, organizational culture, organizational identity

Introduction

Individual identity development of college students is a concept that higher education scholars have grappled with for some time. Less effort has been spent trying to understand the organizational identity of postsecondary institutions, with Weerts, Freed, and Morphew (2014) concluding that "literature on this topic has produced a fragmented set of studies only loosely connected to the broad concept of organizational identity" (p. 230). While organizational theorists have spent over three decades conceptualizing, defining, and testing the concept of organizational identity, the extensive body of literature on the topic complicates any endeavor to understand the concept. Gonzales (2013) contends that organizational identities of postsecondary institutions are constructed along "institutionalized ways of knowing," or based on measures that the field of higher education recognizes as "legitimate." Other researchers suggest an organizational identity is embedded within the culture (Hatch & Schultz, 1997), or rooted in historical legacies and institutional sagas (MacDonald, 2013; Weerts et al., 2014).

The organizational identity of Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) is even more complex, with scholars and practitioners grappling with the question, "What does it mean to be Latinx-serving?" By definition, HSIs are accredited, degree-granting, non-profit institutions that enroll 25% of more fulltime equivalent enrollment of undergraduate Latinx[1] students (Santiago, 2006). Santiago (2012), however, points out that this is a political identity, based solely on enrollment and the federal government's desire to address the low college-going and completion rates of the Latinx population. Moreover, HSIs are newer organizational forms, first being recognized by the federal government in 1992, meaning they do not have extensive histories or organizational sagas from which to construct an organizational identity.

While few scholars have attempted to conceptualize an organizational identity for HSIs (Garcia, 2016, 2017), some argue that HSIs are not Latinx-serving, simply because they operate like traditionally white[2] institutions. Researchers have concluded that the mission statements of HSIs do not reflect a commitment to serving Latinx students (Contreras, Malcom, & Bensimon, 2008), the curricula are not ethno-centric (Cole, 2011), and HSIs embrace white normative practices that reinforce dominant ways of knowing (Ledesma & Burciaga, 2015). Furthermore,

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[1] I use the term "Latinx" as a gender inclusive term for people who self-identify as having racial and ethnic roots in Latin America, South America, Mexico, and parts of the Caribbean.
[2] I intentionally use a lower case "w" when referring to white as a race in order to decenter whiteness in my research and writing.

the faculty and administration remain predominantly white (Contreras & Contreras, 2015; Santos & Acevedo-Gil, 2013). Although these may all be indicators of a Latinx-serving identity (or lack thereof), there is a need to further operationalize this identity in a way that is useful in practice and policy. The purpose of this study was to move from theoretical propositions laid out by Garcia (2016, 2017) about the ontological construction of a Latinx-serving identity, to a more useful approach to understanding and classifying HSIs beyond enrollment. As such, I used the *Typology of HSI Organizational Identities* (Garcia, 2017) to classify six eligible HSIs and emerging HSIs (eHSIs; postsecondary institutions that enroll between 15%-24% Latinx students) in the Midwest along multiple indicators of a Latinx-serving identity, as suggested by the literature and Garcia (2017).

Literature Review

Theoretically, it has been proposed that an organizational identity may be socially constructed by organizational members based on their understanding of the central, distinct, and enduring features of the organization, or developed by organizational leaders based on their desire to gain legitimacy when compared to similar organizations in the field (Pedersen & Dobbin, 2006). While I contend that both are theoretically useful, I turned to the current research on HSIs to better understand how scholars have framed what it means to be Latinx-serving. While most have not called it a "Latinx-serving identity," I used the literature to understand what a Latinx-serving identity may look like in practice.

Some have implied that if an institution produces positive academic outcomes, it is effectively serving Latinx students (and vice versa). In reviewing persistence data (enrolling for three consecutive semesters), 30-unit completion rates, transfer rates (from community college to four-year institutions), and graduation rates (associates or bachelor's degree) at 56 HSIs in California, Contreras and Contreras (2015) found that while Latinx students persisted and completed 30-units in equitable rates compared to white students, they transferred and graduated at lower rates. As such, the authors suggested that California HSIs (both two-year and four-year) are not effectively serving Latinx students. These findings paralleled earlier work by Contreras and colleagues (2008), who provided evidence that HSIs are not producing equitable outcomes for Latinx students in comparison to white students, and therefore not effectively serving Latinx students.

Scholars using advanced statistical modeling, however, have shown that when institutional characteristics, such as selectivity, are accounted for, the significant differences in graduation outcomes for Latinx students at HSIs versus non-HSIs essentially disappear (Flores & Park, 2013, 2015; Rodríguez & Calderón Galdeano, 2015). Others have used alternative measures of academic success to complicate the notion of serving Latinx students. In a study of nine community colleges in California, Hagedorn, Chi, Cepeda, and McLain (2007) found that a critical mass of Latinx students and faculty on campus was a positive predictor of a variable they called "meta-success," inclusive of course success ratios, cumulative GPA, and course completion rates. While the authors of these studies did not make strong claims about the extent to which HSIs are serving Latinx students, they provided evidence to suggest that if academic outcomes are in fact indicators of how well institutions are serving Latinx students, HSIs may be serving Latinx students as well as comparable non-HSIs.

Non-academic outcomes could also be indicators of a Latinx-serving identity. Fosnacht and Nailos (2015) used a counterfactual decomposition technique to account for institutional differences and found that HSIs have a positive, yet modest effect on engagement outcomes for Latinx students. Similarly, González (2008) contends that Latinx students at HSIs engage in civic activities at similar rates as white students, despite the fact that numerous studies have shown that People of Color[3] are less likely to be civically engaged. Cuellar (2014) found that Latinx students at HSIs show a significant increase in their academic self-concept over four years. Latinx students may also develop racial identity salience as a result of attending an HSI or eHSI (Garcia, Patrón, Ramirez, & Hudson, 2016). Again, these authors did not discuss an HSI organizational identity, per se, but they framed their studies to suggest that non-academic outcomes may be indicators of a Latinx-serving identity.

A third way that a Latinx-identity may be understood is through the campus culture. In this regard, the argument is that if an institution has a positive, culturally engaging campus, it is effectively serving Latinx students (and vice versa). For example, the culture at HSIs may help Latinx students feel connected to faculty and staff on campus with similar racial/ethnic backgrounds (Dayton, Gonzalez-Vasquez, Martinez, & Plum, 2004) and may increase their sense of belonging (Arbelo-Marrero & Milacci, 2016; Maestas, Vaquera, & Muñoz Zehr, 2007). Staff

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[3] I intentionally capitalize "People of Color" and all its forms in order to center the experiences of racialized people within my research and writing.

and administrators at HSIs may also create campus cultures that foster success for Latinx students (Espinoza & Espinoza, 2012; Garcia & Ramirez, 2015). Some HSIs incorporate advising models that are culturally relevant (Garcia & Okhidoi, 2015) while others enact student support programs that validate Latinx students (Martinez & Gonzales, 2015). There are also numerous examples of faculty at HSIs that utilize culturally relevant pedagogy in their classrooms, recognizing the unique ways of knowing of Latinx students (Cervantes, 2015; Kiasatpour & Lasley, 2008; Lara & Lara, 2012; Núñez, Murakami-Ramalho, & Cuero, 2010). Alternatively, some studies have revealed that the way that Latinxs experience the campus culture at HSIs is complex (i.e., sometimes positive and sometimes negative) (Cuellar & Johnson-Ahorlu, 2016; Garcia, 2015), further complicating the argument about the extent to which HSIs are effectively serving Latinx students. Whether studies are framed around academic and non-academic outcomes, or campus culture, the argument (often unintentionally) is that these variables are good indicators of the extent to which institutions are serving Latinx students.

Theoretical Framework

Recognizing the need to specifically conceptualize a Latinx-serving identity, I proposed a *Typology of HSI Organizational Identities* (see Figure 1) (Garcia, 2017). Drawing on the extant literature on HSIs, incorporating two organizational theories (institutional theory and cultural theory), and using data from an in-depth case study of a four-year HSI in the Southwest, I synthesized the indicators of a Latinx-serving identity. With the typology, I proposed a comprehensive understanding of this identity based on outcomes for Latinx students (e.g., graduation, post graduate job placement, post-baccalaureate degree attainment) and a culture that ultimately produces these outcomes (e.g., positive campus climate, support services, community engagement).

I developed the typology based on how organizational members in the study constructed an *ideal* HSI identity and proposed four quadrants based on this construction. The overwhelming majority of participants said that an HSI should produce desirable outcomes typically used to measure institutional success with regard to serving students (i.e., graduation rates). Others suggested that an HSI should enact a culture that enhances the experiences of Latinx students. The typology, therefore, incorporates both outcomes and culture, complicating

		Low	High
Organizational Outcomes for Latinxs	High	Latinx-Producing	Latinx-Serving
	Low	Latinx-Enrolling	Latinx-Enhancing

<div align="center">Low   High
Organizational Culture Reflects Latinxs</div>

Figure 1. Typology of HSI organizational identities. Adapted from Garcia (2017).

the ways in which an organization may serve Latinx students. In proposing a typology, I intentionally chose not to suggest rank ordering HSIs, and instead argue that all types of HSIs are worthy and valid within an overly stratified system of higher education.

One organizational identity, *Latinx-enrolling*, suggests that an institution enrolls the minimum 25% Latinx students needed to become federally designated as an HSI, but does not produce equitable outcomes for Latinx students. Furthermore, it may not have an organizational culture that supports Latinx students. A second organizational identity, *Latinx-producing,* suggests an institution enrolls at least 25% Latinx students and produces a significant number of outcomes for Latinx students. The institution, however, might lack a culture for supporting the success of Latinx students. A third organizational identity, *Latinx-enhancing*, is based on enrolling a minimum of 25% Latinx students and enacting a culture that enhances the educational and racial/ethnic experience of Latinx students. The institution, however, may not produce an equitable number of outcomes for Latinx students, as legitimized by the field. Finally, a *Latinx-serving* identity is one in which an institution enrolls 25% Latinx students, produces an equitable number of outcomes for Latinx students, and enacts a culture that enhances the educational and racial/ethnic experience of Latinx students. In this study, I used the typology to classify six HSIs/eHSIs in the Midwest as different *types*, not necessarily *identities*, since I theoretically conceptualize organizational identities as socially constructed. Instead, this approach is more practical and relevant to policy.

Methods

The purpose of this study was to test the extent to which the *Typology of HSI Organizational Identities* can be used to classify HSIs. I used a multiple case study approach, first looking at the single cases, comparing and contrasting them, and then seeking to understand the larger "quintain." The quintain is the "object or phenomenon or condition to be studied—a target, but not a bull's eye" (Stake, 2006, p. 6). In this study, the quintain is, "being Latinx-serving," beyond simply enrolling 25% or more Latinx students. I first looked for indicators of a Latinx-serving identity as suggested by Garcia (2017), then I began to make sense of the quintain by examining the similarities and differences across each case.

Data Collection

For this study, I used two sources of data including secondary data maintained by the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) and primary data gathered through a systematic review of each institution's website. Data collection occurred during the fall 2015 semester. As such, the IPEDS data are for the 2013-2014 academic year. Data gathered from the institutional websites are based on the most up-to-date information available on each site during the time of data collection.

From IPEDS I collected undergraduate and graduate enrollment for fall 2013, disaggregated by race. I also collected the percentage of faculty and administrators who identify as People of Color and Latinx (see Table 1). To better understand institutional characteristics, I collected SAT/ACT composite scores and data on whether or not the institution has an open admissions policy (indicators of institutional selectivity), information on the number of students who receive Pell grants (indicator of percentage low income students enrolled), and institutional expenditures on instruction, academic support, and student support services (see Table 2).

Table 1

Compositional Characteristics for Six Cases (Fall 2013)

Institution	FTE	Undergraduate Enrollment	Latinx Undergrad	SOC Undergrad	Graduate Enrollment	Latinx Graduate	SOC Graduate	Latinx Administrators	Latinx Faculty
ACU	6,635	8,950	35%	55%	1,871	14%	30%	18%	11%
MCU	1,971	2,069	40%	50%	1,401	13%	28%	4.5%	3%
APC	1,325	1,607	88%	91%	--	--	--	77%	48%
RPU	2,701	2,781	27%	59%	452	15%	55%	7.5%	2%
RRU	15,914	16,671	24%	56%	11,367	9%	30%	10%	7%
CCU	2,636	2,920	23%	42%	1,332	8%	32%	2%	1%

Note. SOC = Students of Color

Note. All data were retrieved from IPEDS except FTE; FTE obtained from *Excelencia* in Education.

Table 2

Institutional Characteristics for Six Cases (Fall 2013)

Institution	FTE	Part-time Enrollment	Percent Pell	SAT Composite	Open Admission	Instructional Expenditures/FTE	Academic Support Expenditures/FTE	Student Services Expenditures/FTE
ACU	6,635	3,882	48%	990	No	14,278	1,936	2,866
MCU	1,971	162	43%	1160	No	14,983	4,150	3,491
APC	1,325	464	70%	--	Yes	4,575	1,077	1,302
RPU	2,701	132	61%	--	No	7,633	3,636	9,642
RRU	15,914	1,269	51%	1240	No	45,852	9,948	3,403
CCU	2,636	468	50%	1115	No	11,621	2,050	3,931

Note. All data were retrieved from IPEDS except FTE; FTE obtained from *Excelencia* in Education.

For persistence and graduation data, I gathered six-year graduation rates and data on the percentage of completers, disaggregated by race. As argued by Santiago, Taylor, and Calderón Galdeano (2016), completion rates may be better indicators of how well HSIs are doing with regard to producing equitable outcomes since these rates account for students who transferred in from other institutions, whereas six-year graduation rates only account for first-time, full-time students. In order to understand equity in graduation and completion rates, I compared these outcomes for Latinx students to all races and white students. While there are numerous data points I could have drawn from IPEDS, I chose to limit my analysis to these variables as a way to focus on indicators of access and graduation, both of which have been noted as important indicators of an HSI organizational identity.

In reviewing websites of the institutions in the sample, I looked for indicators of what Museus (2014) calls a culturally engaging campus environment, including opportunities to engage in meaningful racial/ethnic and cross-racial/ethnic interactions with faculty, staff, and other peers, as well as opportunities to participate in humanizing and validating educational environments. Others have expanded and highlighted these factors within an HSI context (Garcia, 2016; Garcia & Okhidoi, 2015; Torres & Zerquera, 2012). Guided by these propositions, I reviewed mission and value statements, strategic plans, websites for programs that support minoritized students (low income, first-generation, Students of Color), and news articles about the institution's status as an HSI. I tracked the number of multicultural and/or Latinx specific cultural centers, ethnic studies programs, and/or Latinx specific curricular programs, pre-college outreach and enrollment programs, such as TRiO and Educational Opportunity Programs, and academic support programs that are specifically for minoritized students within each institution. I also tracked the number of Latinx student organizations. While there are other ways I could have determined how engaging a campus is for Latinx and other minoritized students, I limited my qualitative review to these factors based on Garcia's (2016, 2017) theoretical propositions and scholarship reviewed for this study.

Case Selection

The cases used in this study are part of a larger project called the *Midwest HSI Study*. While there are many geographic areas in the United States worth examining in order to learn about the population of HSIs, this project is focused on the Midwest for two reasons: (1) there

is a significant number of Latinx people in the Midwest, with Illinois alone being one of five states with the largest Latinx population (2.2 million) (Stepler & Lopez, 2016), and (2) there are 19 HSIs in the Midwest and 31 eHSIs in the Midwest, with a majority situated in the greater Chicago area (*Excelencia* in Education, 2016, 2017). More empirical research should look at HSIs and eHSIs in this region, with this project being one of the first to embark on this process.

I followed Stake's (2006) suggestion about the three main criteria to consider when selecting cases: (1) relevancy of the case to the quintain, (2) diversity across the cases, and (3) opportunity to complicate overall understanding of the quintain. In order to meet these criteria, I considered all four-year postsecondary institutions in Chicago that met the eligibility requirement of 25% enrollment of Latinx students to be considered an HSI. At the time of data collection, five institutions met this enrollment criterion, while 11 were eHSIs, enrolling between 15%-24% Latinx students. Four of the five eligible HSIs were included in this multiple case study along with two eHSIs. All six sites are located in Chicago and have been affected in similar ways by the historical, educational, and political contexts of the city (Garcia & Hudson, in press). In looking to find diversity across the cases and seeking opportunity to complicate an understanding of the quintain, the chosen sites range in size and type, from small liberal arts, to mid-size and large public institutions granting associates, bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees. Using Núñez, Crisp, and Elizondo's (2016) typology of institutional diversity of HSIs, which they developed as a way to more accurately compare HSIs for research purposes, two institutions are similar to Big Systems Four-Years and four are similar to Small Communities Four-Years. The institutions also varied in their enrollment of Latinx students (24%-88% at the time of data collection).

Case Descriptions

Azul City University (ACU; a pseudonym) is a four-year, midsize, public institution classified by Carnegie as a master's college/university. It was founded in late nineteenth century as a teaching college, and is now considered an urban comprehensive university offering over 80 degree programs. The undergraduate FTE is 6,635 and compositionally diverse, with 39% identifying as white, 35% as Latinx, 10% as Black, and 9% as Asian American. The graduate enrollment is 1,871, with fewer self-identified Latinxs (14%). The institution has been recognized as one of the most diverse institutions in the Midwest and has been federally

recognized as an HSI for nearly 20 years. It has received numerous HSI grants from the federal government in order to develop its capacity for serving Latinx students.

Morado Catholic University (MCU; a pseudonym) is a four-year, small, private institution classified by Carnegie as a master's college/university. It has a strong tradition as a Catholic university, founded as an all women's college that eventually became co-educational. The undergraduate FTE is 1,971, with 40% of all students identifying as Latinx and 40% as white. Other racialized populations are represented in much smaller numbers, including 7% Black and 3% Asian American. The graduate population is also significant at 1,401 students, 13% of which identify as Latinx. The institution is officially recognized as an HSI and has received some federal funding.

Amarillo Private College (APC; a pseudonym) is a small, private institution classified as an associate's four-year college offering minimal academic programs, including three bachelor's degrees and 10 associate's degree. The undergraduate FTE is 1,325 with 88% of the population identifying as Latinx. APC was founded as one of few dual-language/bilingual institutions of higher education. The institution is officially designated as an HSI and has received funding from the federal government for this designation as well as accolades from the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) for its work as an HSI.

Rosado Private University (RPU; a pseudonym) is a small, private institution classified by Carnegie as a master's college/university. It is an urban, comprehensive university focused primarily on undergraduate education, with fewer graduate programs. The FTE is 2,701 with 27% of the population identifying as Latinx. The compositional diversity of the undergraduate population is notable, with nearly 60% of all students identifying as Students of Color. As such, it has been recognized as one of the most diverse institutions in the Midwest. RPU has received at least one Department of Education Title V grant for developing HSIs and is federally recognized as an HSI.

Roja Research University (RRU; a pseudonym) is a four-year, large, publically funded, research university (very high research activity) offering doctoral degrees. The undergraduate FTE is 16,671 and is compositionally diverse, with 24% of students self-identifying as Latinx, 38% as white, 8% as Black/African American, and 22% as Asian/Pacific Islander. As a doctoral granting university, RRU also enrolls a large graduate population of 11,367 with fewer identifying as Latinx (9%). At the time of data collection, the institution was aware of its status as an eHSI and

was undergoing the process of becoming federally designated as an HSI while simultaneously applying for a Department of Education Title V grant.

Café Catholic University (CCU; a pseudonym) is a small, private institution classified by Carnegie as a master's college/university. It has a strong tradition as a Roman Catholic institution, founded in the mid nineteenth century by the Sisters of Mercy to spread Catholic education in the city. The FTE is 2,636 with 23% of students identifying as Latinx. CCU also has a significant graduate population, just fewer than 1,400, although less than 10% of the population is Latinx. For a summary of the six cases, see Table 1 and Table 2.

Findings

In order to classify each of the six institutions within the *Typology of HSI Organizational Identities*, I looked at graduation and completion rates (see Table 3) and the number of programs and services that are culturally engaging for Latinx, low income, first generation, and other Students of Color (see Table 4). I categorized the institutions by comparing the graduation and completion rates of the six institutions relative to each other. At the same time, I observed the national average, finding that the six-year graduation rate for all first-time, full-time undergraduate students was 59% for the fall 2007 cohort (National Center for Education Statistics, 2015). Five out of the six institutions had six-year graduation rates below the national average. The six-year graduation rate at HSIs, however, was 39% for the fall 2007 cohort (Santiago et al., 2016). Only two of the six institutions had six-year graduation rates below the national average for HSIs.

It is also important to note that on average, private not-for-profit institutions have slightly higher six-graduation rates than public institutions, which is likely connected to the resources available at these institutions. Even further, when selectivity is accounted for, the most selective institutions that admit less than 25% of all applicants have the highest six-year graduation rates in comparison to open access institutions (all students admitted) and broad access institutions (more than 25% admitted) (National Center for Education Statistics, 2015). Four of the six institutions in the sample are private, two are selective, and one is open access (see Table 2). These indicators were carefully considered as I classified each institution within the typology. Based on the data used and considering nuances in what it means to "produce"

Table 3

Graduation and Completion Rates (Fall 2013)

Institution	6-year Graduation All	6-year Graduation Latinx	6-year Graduation White	Completers All	Completers Latinx	Completers White
ACU	20%	18%	26%	2,126	22%	48%
MCU	63%	63%	69%	1,051	16%	64%
APC	26%	24%	0%	474	88%	1%
RPU	46%	55%	58%	1,634	24%	41%
RRU	57%	49%	58%	6,910	14%	48%
CCU	47%	43%	58%	1,263	9%	64%

Note. All data were retrieved from IPEDS.

Table 4

Number of Culturally Engaging Programs & Services

Institution	Outreach & Recruitment	Student Services	Grant Funded (e.g., TRiO)	Cultural Centers	Ethnic Studies Programs	Latinx Student Organizations
ACU	2	2	5	6	3	8
MCU	0	0	0	0	2	1
APC	0	0	0	0	0	0
RPU	1	0	3	0	0	2
RRU	1	1	3	5	4	16
CCU	0	0	1	0	2	1

Note. All data were retrieved through document analysis of institutional websites.

legitimized outcomes and "to be" culturally engaging, I classified two institutions as *Latinx-enhancing*, two as *Latinx-producing*, one as *Latinx-enrolling* and one as *Latinx-serving*.

I classified Azul City University (ACU) as a *Latinx-enhancing* institution since its graduation and completion rates for all students, not just Latinx students are low. While the six-year graduation rate for all students at ACU is the lowest in the sample (20%) and lower than the national average for HSIs (39%), the graduation rate is even lower for Latinx students (18%), and higher for white students (26%), which reflects racial inequities in graduation. Even when contrasting the completion rates for Latinx students (22%) and white students (48%), there appear to be gross racial disparities. Another way to think about this disproportionality is to compare completion rates to enrollment rates for individual racial groups. With 35% of the population at ACU identifying as Latinx (compared to 22% of completers), and 39% as white (compared to 48% of completers), the inequities are even further highlighted. This is even more alarming when considering that ACU has one of the highest rates of instructional expenditures per FTE.

In comparison, ACU has one of the highest concentrations of programs and services that are culturally engaging (relative to other institutions in the sample). It has three ethnic studies programs, including Latinx and Latin American Studies, African and African American Studies, and Asian Studies. ACU also has six cultural centers for historically oppressed groups as well as a branch campus that caters to the Latinx community in the city. The campus is also home to multiple federally funded programs such as Talent Search and McNair Scholars. Moreover, the campus has multiple outreach and recruitment programs targeting Students of Color and low-income students and support programs that assist these students once they matriculate. ACU also has notable Latinx student organizations with long histories, both on campus and nationally. Based on these programs and services, I classified ACU as *Latinx-enhancing*, despite the campus having low graduation and completion rates. This is not to dismiss the institution's responsibility in graduating Latinx students, but instead to recognize that it is making an effort to support Latinx students and to enhance their racial/ethnic understanding of self.

I also classified Roja Research University (RRU) as *Latinx-enhancing* based on data collected for this study. Of the six institutions in the sample, RRU has one of the highest six-

year graduation rates for all students (57%), slightly below the national average (59%), suggesting that it might be considered *Latinx-producing*. Of course, this is likely the result of selectivity of the institution and resources available, as it is one of the most selective institutions in the sample and most highly resourced (see Table 2), meaning that is *should* be graduating students in high numbers. As such, I was more critical of the fact that there are racial inequities in graduation and completion rates. The six-year graduation rate for Latinx students is 49% while the rate for white students is 58%. Even more concerning is the fact that the percentage of Latinx completers in 2013 was 14% compared to white students at 48%. This suggests huge disparities worth considering in conjunction with other institutional variables, such as selectivity and resources. Similar to ACU, the completion rates for Latinxs do not parallel their rate of enrollment, which is also worth considering in determining the extent to which the institution is producing legitimized outcomes.

Like ACU, I considered RRU to be *Latinx-enhancing* as a result of its culturally engaging programs and services. It has four well-established ethnic studies programs, including Asian American Studies, African American Studies, American Indian Studies, and Latin American and Latino Studies, as well as cultural centers that parallel these programs. RRU is also home to an academic support program that caters to Latinx students, with the program providing outreach services and academic support. It also has grant-funded programs that serve minoritized students including Upward Bound and McNair Scholars. Finally, the campus has at least 16 student organizations that cater to Latinx students including Greek organizations, academic organizations, and political organizations. As a result of these programs that enhance the experience of Latinx students, and in many ways value their cultural ways of knowing, I classified RRU as a *Latinx-enhancing* institution.

I classified Morado Catholic University (MCU) and Rosado Private University (RPU) as *Latinx-producing*. Not only is MCU's six-year graduation rate well above the other five institutions in the sample (63%), it is above the national average for all institutions (59%) and all HSIs (39%). Even further, the six-year graduation rate for Latinx students (63%) is at parity with the campus's overall rate, yet still slightly lower than the rate for white students (69%). What is concerning, however, is the percentage of Latinx completers (16%) compared to white completers (64%) and compared to overall enrollment of Latinx students at the institution (40%). This, however, may be due to the fact that MCU is a small, private Catholic institution

enrolling a large majority of "traditional" students (first-time, fulltime); therefore the six-year graduation rate may capture the experience of these students more accurately than an institution enrolling a large number of "post-traditional" students (i.e., transfers students; part-time students) (Santiago et al., 2016). As such, I classified it as *Latinx-producing*, considering all data points as valid. When it comes to six-year graduation rates, MCU is doing remarkably well, although likely its success in this realm is related to its selectivity as an institution and its available resources, as noted in Table 2. Alternatively, it has limited culturally engaging programs and services, inclusive of only two ethnic studies programs and one Latinx student organization.

Rosado Private University (RPU) was the second institution I classified as *Latinx-producing* as a result of high and/or equitable graduation and completion rates, yet low numbers of culturally engaging programs and services. While the six-year graduation rate for all students (46%) is one of the lower among the six institutions, it is higher than the average for all HSIs (39%), yet a bit lower than the national average (59%); however, the rates suggest that RPU is graduating Latinx students in equitable numbers (55%), although still slightly lower than that of white students (58%). In 2013, 24% of the completers identified as Latinx, which is comparable to the enrollment of Latinx students (27%). This is an important finding, as it could be another way to think about equity in completion rates. Similar to MCU, RPU has very few programs and services specifically for Latinx students, including two organizations that are Latinx-centric, and well established federally funded programs that cater to minoritized students such as Talent Search and Upward Bound.

I considered Café Catholic University (CCU) to be a *Latinx-enrolling* institution. CCU has a similar six-year graduation rate for all students as RPU (47%), which is higher than the national average for HSIs; however, the graduation rate for Latinx students is lower (43%) than the completion rate for all (47%) and for white students (58%). Even further disparities exist when looking at the percentage of Latinx completers (9%) compared to white student completers (64%). This is concerning, as Latinx students appear to be earning degrees at rates that are inequitable compared to white students. In considering the resources of the institution, there is further concern, as it is not the most under resourced institution in the sample (see Table 2). The institution also has few culturally engaging programs, inclusive of only two ethnic studies programs, one Latinx organization, and one grant funded program for minoritized students (Student Support Services).

Finally, I classified Amarillo Private College (APC) as *Latinx-serving*. While it has a six-year graduation rate (26%) that is well below the other sites in the sample, the national average (59%), and the HSI average (39%), APC differs in its completion rates, as 88% of all completers in 2013 identified as Latinx, which is comparable to the number of enrolled students who identify as Latinx (88%). Presumably, this difference is related to the fact that a majority of APC's students are "post-traditional" (i.e., transfers students; part-time students); therefore, the six-year graduation rate is highly inaccurate, yet the completion rate is much more reflective of the ways in which this institution is graduating students. Using the completion rate, it appears that APC is producing an equitable number of Latinx degree completers in comparison to Latinx enrollers. At the same time, APC is somewhat of an anomaly in that it enrolls a majority Latinx population; therefore, the completion rates should reflect this percentage. Giving value to alternative ways of classifying an institution as successful when it comes to graduating students, I considered APC to be an equitable producer of Latinx degree holders.

Another peculiarity of APC is that it does not have any Latinx-specific programs and services; yet, APC is distinct in that it has an historical mission to serve Latinx students and was founded as a bilingual English-Spanish institution. As such, the institution may not need to establish Latinx-specific programs and services, as it is inherently within APC's mission to serve Latinx students. Even further, it offers bilingual and bicultural curricula across all disciplines, suggesting there is no need to establish ethnic and Latinx-specific programs. As such, the ways in which I operationalized culturally engaging components of a campus environment for this study are highly inaccurate for this institution. Taking its unique characteristics into consideration, I classified APC as *Latinx-serving*.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to classify HSIs/eHSIs in the Midwest within the *Typology of HSI Organizational Identities* as a way to test the utility of the typology for policy and practice. Although I have theoretically described the complexities of an HSI organizational identity (see Garcia, 2016, 2017), this study allowed me to test the practicality of these theoretical propositions by using multiple sources of data and examining them across multiple cases.

Before classifying the six institutions within the typology, I first examined the racial composition within these institutions (Table 1) as this is the first indicator of a Latinx-serving identity, and the most basic factor used to determine HSI eligibility. These data confirmed previous findings about the high concentration of undergraduate Latinx students and Students of Color in HSIs. Based on undergraduate enrollment data alone, HSIs in the Midwest are meeting the Department of Education's call for HSIs to increase educational opportunities and success for Latinx students (as suggested by the Title V grant competition) (Santiago et al., 2016).

What the compositional data show (Table 1) is that there is a lower percentage of faculty and administrators who identify as Latinx and People of Color as well as a lower concentration of Latinx graduate students and graduate Students of Color within HSIs. Although others have noted a lower concentration of Faculty of Color in HSIs (i.e., Contreras & Contreras, 2015; Santos & Acevedo-Gil, 2013), the compositional diversity of the graduate population within HSIs is a relatively unexplored topic. While the federal government does not consider these variables to be essential to the mission of HSIs as currently defined by the Title V grant competition, research has noted that faculty and administrators have the ability to make Latinx students feel a sense of belonging at HSIs (e.g., Arbelo-Marrero & Milacci, 2016), which may ultimately contribute to their academic success. As a political construct, perhaps an HSI identity is oversimplified, as it does not consider these dimensions. Moreover, these factors do not fit neatly within the typology used in this study, yet these descriptive findings further justify the need to consider the compositional diversity of faculty, staff, and graduate students in a Latinx-serving identity.

I next considered graduation and completion rates (Table 3) as a way to classify institutions within the typology, not because these rates are the best indicators of "serving" a population, but simply because organizational members believe they are important indicators (Garcia, 2017), as do researchers studying HSIs (e.g. Contreras et al., 2008; Flores & Park, 2013, 2015; Santiago et al., 2016). Using academic outcomes to classify institutions, therefore, aligned with the current research on HSIs, which sometimes frames the extent to which an institution is serving Latinx students as determined by persistence and graduation. Yet, comparing the six institutions and using both six-year graduation rates and completion rates

complicated this seemingly simply endeavor, likely as a result of other institutional characteristics (Table 2).

Based on six-year graduation rates alone, three institutions (MCU, RPU, & RRU) appeared to be doing well with regard to graduating all students (although likely the result of factors such as institutional resources and/or selectivity); however, there were racial disparities in these rates when comparing white students to Latinx students at all institutions except APC. Even further, when looking at completion rates by race, there appeared to be inequities in the number of Latinx completers at all five institutions except APC. Which rate, then, should researchers use to determine how well HSIs are doing with regard to academic outcomes for Latinx students? Santiago et al. (2016) argue that completion rates are better indicators for HSIs; however, the legitimized outcome that is most highly regarded by higher education scholars and practitioners is the six-year graduation rate. In this analysis, I placed value on both rates and took equity into consideration, which complicated the ways in which I classified institutions. This highlights the importance of looking at these rates from multiple angles before drawing conclusions about how well an institution in serving a particular population. Arguably, an institution that appears to have a low six-year graduation rate could still be considered *Latinx-serving*, as was determined through this analysis (APC).

Looking next at culturally engaging aspects of the campus, some institutions do not appear to enact a culture that enhances the educational, racial, and ethnic experience of its students (Table 4). While some appear to be doing well with regard to producing an equitable number of Latinx degree holders, they are operating from a, "Latinx-neutral" perspective, meaning they are not centering the experiences of Latinx students or being intentional in their efforts to create a culture that enhances the experience of Latinx students. Although there is no guarantee that creating a culture that values and embraces *Latinidad* will ultimately increase graduation and completion rates, research has shown that students' perceptions of the campus climate affect their persistence (Museus, Nichols, & Lambert, 2008; Rhee, 2008). Even further, Garcia (2016) suggests that HSIs should enhance college students' racial/ethnic identity and development, regardless of its effects on persistence and graduation. In other words, enhancing students' racial/ethnic ways of knowing should be considered an important outcome of HSIs.

Two institutions in the sample that I classified as *Latinx-enhancing* are ACU and RRU, as they have longstanding, historical programs and services that are relevant to the racial, ethnic,

and cultural ways of knowing of Latinx students (see Doran & Medina, 2017, this issue). While ACU has very low six-year graduation and completion rates for all students (not just Latinxs), and RRU has inequitable outcomes for Latinx when compared to white students, both are doing well with regard to providing a culture that enhances the experience of Latinx students. Again, this is not to say that graduation outcomes are unimportant or that these institutions should not work towards producing equitable outcomes, but rather to suggest that there are multiple ways for an institution to serve Latinx students. While I classified institutions along this dimension based on previous research (Garcia & Okhidoi, 2015; Torres & Zerquera, 2012), I was unable to determine the extent to which these institutions are actually enacting a Latinx-enhancing identity, since this concept is better explored through interviews with organizational members and/or through direct observations of the culture (see Garcia, 2016).

Finally, it is worth noting that APC, the only institution I classified as *Latinx-serving*, is a unique case. While it does not appear to have culturally engaging programs as I operationalized them in this study, it does appear to have a culturally engaging campus environment as defined by Museus (2014) and other higher education scholars. By this I mean that it does not have any programs and services specifically for minoritized students and does not have any ethnic studies programs; however, it was historically founded to serve the Latinx population and therefore engages Latinx students within and beyond the classroom. There are numerous opportunities for students to have meaningful within-group racial interactions, as the campus enrolls mostly Latinx students as well as the highest concentration of faculty and administrators who identify as Latinx or People of Color. The educational environment is also humanizing and culturally validating, as classes are offered in English and Spanish. For APC, there is no need to establish specific programs for minoritized groups, as serving these populations has been normalized.

Implications

With the number of institutions reaching the eligibility requirement for HSI status increasing each year, researchers, administrators, and legislators will continue to grapple with what it means to be Latinx-serving. As I have proposed in other research (Garcia, 2016, 2017), an organizational identity for serving Latinx students is complicated and should not be reified and validated as a one-dimensional construct. Instead, there must be intentional efforts to

expand what it means for institutions to serve Latinx student, beyond simply enrolling them. With the findings of this study, I offer several implications for research, practice, and policy.

First, the typology proposed by Garcia (2017) proved to be useful for classifying HSIs and eHSIs along multiple dimensions. This typology, along with the typology proposed by Núñez et al. (2016), should be used in future research as a way to compare HSI and eHSIs. This is essential, as HSIs/eHSIs are not monolithic and should not be studied as such. Researchers must recognize the diversity of these institutions when asking empirical questions about them, including diversity by type, (two-year vs. four-year), control (public vs. private), location (Puerto Rico vs. mainland; rural vs. urban), and Carnegie classification (e.g., research, masters-granting, religious, liberal arts). Yet researchers must continue to test the usefulness of these typologies, as the typology proposed by Núñez et al. (2016) was somewhat limiting in this study. For example, while I classified two institutions as Big Systems Four-Years, they are not part of big systems, although they have similar characteristics.

The *Typology of HSI Organizational Identities* may also have limited usefulness across institutions. For example, HSIs in Puerto Rico may culturally engage students in very different ways than mainland institutions. This was evident with APC, as it did not have cultural indicators such as special programs and services for Latinx students, yet it has an historical mission to serve Latinx students, making it unique in comparison to the other institutions in the sample. This site alone is worth further exploration in order to test the utility of the typology, as the typology may not apply to historical HSIs.

The proposed typology can also be used for policy purposes. As legislators' grapple with the difficult question about how to evaluate postsecondary institutions for the purpose of funding, they have largely focused on affordability, quality, and accountability (Espinosa, Crandall, & Tukibayeva, 2014). While HSIs should meet these criteria, the typology extends the meaning attached to institutional effectiveness. Looking at the various graduation and completion rates of the six institutions in this study showed how these rates can tell different stories, depending on the way they are used and evaluated. While these rates are important, they must be considered from different angles as policy decisions are made. The six-year graduation rates, for example, proved to be less useful for institutions that enroll more "post-traditional" students, which is the case for many HSIs. Also, six-year graduation rates do not capture the

complexities of available academic outcomes at HSIs, as many are community colleges and/or offer limited baccalaureate programs (Núñez & Elizondo, 2012).

I suggest that the federal government also consider its role in shaping the identity of HSIs. As institutions apply for federal funding, they are driven by the priorities of the funding agencies. For example, if the Department of Education's Title V grant competition only places value on two things: (1) expanding educational opportunities to Latinx students and (2) enhancing academic offerings (Santiago et al., 2016), institutions will not address other aspects of a Latinx-serving identity. There must be more emphasis placed on multiple indicators of a Latinx-serving identity, including the academic and cultural outcomes suggested by Garcia (2017) and tested here. For example, requests for proposals (RFPs) from federal agencies should require institutions to show how they will implement grant activities in ways that *enhance and utilize* the racial and cultural experience and knowledge of all students, rather than focusing solely on providing academic and co-curricular experiences *for* racialized students. Moreover, the racial composition of the faculty, staff, and graduate population should be considered, and could easily be incorporated into federal grant RFPs.

The typology may also be useful in practice, as this study showed the importance of considering the campus culture for serving Latinx students. Rather than operating from a "Latinx-neutral" perspective, I argue that HSIs should use what Santiago (2013) calls a "Latinx lens," or one that considers that the growing Latinx college student population has unique characteristics and needs. Even for those institutions that are seemingly doing well with regard to graduating Latinx students, it is important to recognize that colleges should provide an opportunity to earn more than a degree. Latinx students attending an institution that recognizes their unique characteristics and ways of knowing are likely to graduate students who are more socially and critically conscious, who become engaged civically, who vote in elections, who volunteer in their communities, and who ultimately give back to their alma mater in monetary and non-monetary ways, all of which are outcomes that most postsecondary institutions desire. HSIs must be more intentional about providing curricula, programs, and services that center the experiences, histories, and ways of knowing of Latinx students (Garcia & Okhidoi, 2015).

The data in this study showed that the percentage of graduate Students of Color in HSIs is much lower than that of undergraduates. Even further, the data revealed that the

compositional diversity of faculty and staff is not keeping pace with that of the undergraduate population. These are important considerations for administrators. Institutions should consider their role in increasing access to post-baccalaureate programs for Latinx and other Students of Color, making intentional efforts to evaluate the recruitment efforts and admissions policies for graduate programs. Providing post-baccalaureate opportunities could ultimately alleviate the struggle that HSIs have diversifying their administration and faculty. One of the best ways to increase the compositional diversity of administrators and faculty on campus is to "grow your own," meaning institutions should develop programs that train future faculty and staff who can lead the institution through a Latinx lens. Institutions such as Adams State University have begun such efforts with the development of their Higher Education and Leadership Program (HEAL) (Freeman, 2015), as well as Northeastern Illinois University with their ENLACE (ENgaging LAtino Communities for Education) program.

Conclusion

Researchers, practitioners, and legislators would be remiss to classify HSIs as monolithic or to conceptualize a Latinx-serving identity as one-dimensional. Rather than basing what it means for an organization to have a Latinx-serving identity on one or two variables, this study shows that it is essential for multiple factors to be considered. Future research should continue to explore what it means for organizations to be Latinx-serving beyond the compositional diversity of the undergraduate students. This includes a look at the compositional diversity of faculty, staff, and graduate students, as well as the cultural indicators of a Latinx-serving identity, and academic and non-academic outcomes for all members.

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