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## Theorizing a Catholic Hispanic-Serving Institution (C-HSI) Identity Through Latinx Theological Lenses of Lo Cotidiano and Traditioning

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
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### Cover Page Footnote

We use the term “Latinx” as a racial-ethnic umbrella term referring to people who have historical, indigenous, cultural, and/or linguistic origins in Latin America including Mexico, Central America, South America, and Spanish-speaking Caribbean; the “x” replaces the “o” in an attempt to be gender inclusive. The image is used with permission by the artist. It is a photograph of the original station, which was produced through linoleum cut and printed by the artist for exhibition. This is a facsimile of the first edition now owned by Dominican University. <https://blockclubchicago.org/2019/04/10/pilsens-annual-via-cruces-returns-next-week/> For a full discussion of the popular religiosity of Pope Francis’ theology of the people, please see the full article by Juan Carlos Scannone, SJ. The worldviews and epistemologies of TP aligns well with the themes of lo cotidiano and traditioning that we have explored here. The research reported in the article was made possible (in part) by a grant from the Spencer Foundation (#202100066). The views expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Spencer Foundation.

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## Theorizing a Catholic Hispanic-Serving Institution (C-HSI) Identity Through Latinx Theological Lenses of *Lo Cotidiano* and Traditioning

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**Abstract:** As the students entering U.S. colleges and universities become increasingly diverse, the number of Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSI's) continues to increase. Catholic colleges and universities, similarly, are seeing an increase in student diversity on campus, with an emergence of Catholic HSIs as well. As the number of Catholic colleges and universities in the United States that are HSI-eligible increases they must grapple with what it means to be both Catholic and Hispanic-serving. The purpose of this article is to propose a U.S. Catholic HSI (C-HSI) identity that brings together the extensive literatures on Catholic identity and HSI identity through the lens of decolonial theory and Latinx theologies. We argue that in order to effectively serve students of color who have intersectional identities, Catholic HSIs must intentionally recognize the ways of knowing (epistemologies) and being of these groups, which includes a collective understanding of the theo-political, social, historical, and economic forces that have subjugated them since before the founding of the present day United States and long before the founding of the first Catholic institution in the country. Building off the Catholic Identity and Mission Models (CIMA) currently used by the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities to assess mission integration, we propose a C-HSI model.

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**Keywords:** Catholic higher education, Latinx, Latino, Hispanic, Hispanic-Serving Institutions

I transferred into Dominican University (DU) from community college. I began working on my senior thesis as a graphic design major at DU after taking theology and social justice courses at DU and being dually enrolled in the Hispanic Theology and Ministry master's program at the Catholic Theological Union. I was inspired to combine both art and theology, two passions that came from my lived experience as a Latina growing up as a devoted parishioner on Chicago's southwest side. "The Passion of the Monarca Migrante" is a series of prints I created to bring out aspects of a migration journey often dismissed and ignored. Paralleled with Jesus' passion, each station is meant to reflect on past and present immigration themes like sacrifice, struggle, life-saving faith, community, accompaniment, hope, resilience. Accompanying Jesus through the stations we acknowledge sacrifice, pain, and struggle. Similarly, the journey immigrants take on is one full of sacrifice, pain, and struggle. In the Catholic tradition I prayed in my home, the Via Crucis normally has fourteen stations. I decided to add this station to celebrate consolation: the Resurrection. In it, the monarch butterfly is bursting with rays and fully dressed in bright orange with a graduation cap above it. Knowing that the butterfly and the immigrant suffered challenges in the desert, the final station proclaims that all sacrifices made will create a fruitful future for the generations to come. For many of us, education is the American Dream our parents, who are the original dreamers, strived to provide for us. Being able to create this visual art during a time of vulnerability for me as an undocumented Latina college student was only possible because the spaces I found myself in at Dominican University were safe and supportive. I am sincerely grateful for those sanctuary spaces. The safety I encountered there provided me the intellectual and creative space I needed to tell my story and the story of so many like me.

*Jaqueline Romo, Dominican University '19, Master's Candidate, Hispanic Theology and Ministry Oscar Romero Scholar, Catholic Theological Union*

**W**hen Jaqueline Romo's station and those that accompanied it made their debut as part of Dominican University's graduating senior exhibition in Spring 2019, it became a centerpiece of the show. Jacky had tapped into something critical that resonated with a significant number of first-generation, Latinx<sup>1</sup> college students who identified as immigrants or came from a family of immigrants. Jacky's artwork (Figure 1) became a cipher for so many convergent experiences on campus at that time. At once, this art seemed to be an example of students telling their own stories while embodying the stories of their peers. At the same time,

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it is a reflection of the University coming to understand its own story and journey *to become* a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI), interrogating its history as a predominantly White institution while responding to a series of questions about the conditions, circumstances, and spaces needed for students, as Jaqueline tells us, “to create this visual art during a time of vulnerability for me as an undocumented Latina college student.” At its core, this piece was also conversant with the historical and theological narratives that the University claims as a Catholic institution. Jacqueline’s narrative stands as a tangible example of the strengths and assets that Latinx students bring to a Catholic university and the simultaneous organizational conditions needed to flourish as a Catholic Hispanic-Serving Institution (C-HSI).<sup>2</sup>

As the students entering U.S. colleges and universities become increasingly more diverse by race and income, the number of HSIs continues to increase, with 569 institutions being HSI-eligible by fall 2019 and 362 identified as emerging HSIs in the same year (Excelencia in Education, 2021a, b). HSIs are not-for-profit U.S. colleges and universities that enroll at least 25% Latinx and 50% low-income undergraduate students, making them eligible for federal designation and access to competitive capacity-building grants (Garcia & Koren, 2020). HSIs, however, were not founded as HSIs and lack a historical mission to serve Latinx and low-income students. Instead, the HSI designation was a legislative response to the demands made by Latinx advocacy groups to provide additional funding to under-resourced colleges and universities educating the largest population of Latinxs (Valdez, 2015).

Beyond the federal legislation defining HSIs strictly by enrollment, there is no consensus on what it means to “serve” Latinxs and no overarching HSI identity (Garcia, 2017). The quest to construct an overarching HSI identity is complicated by the fact that there are many different types of HSIs, including two-year and four-year, private and public, large and small, and urban and rural, all with different missions and identities (Núñez et al., 2016). Moreover, there is an emergence of religious HSIs, including Catholic HSIs. In fall 2020, 32 (of 226, 14%) Catholic institutions were HSI-eligible based on enrollment of Latinx students, 36 (of 226, 16%) were emerging HSIs (enrolling between 15-24% Latinxs), and 29 (of 226, 13%) enrolled between 11- 14% Latinxs, which suggests they are going to emerge as HSIs in the future (see Appendix A (link) for a full list, compiled by the authors). Unlike HSIs, Catholic colleges and universities have their own unique and historical identities, emerging in the United States as early as 1789 with the founding of Georgetown University. Yet Catholic colleges and universities too have grappled with their identity over the years; this is complicated by the diversity of Catholic institutions, each in size, scope, and expression of religious or mission-based identities owing to the unique characteristics of

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<sup>2</sup> Note. Reprinted with permission by the artist. It is a photograph of the original station, which was produced through linoleum cut and printed by the artist for exhibition. This is a facsimile of the first edition now owned by Dominican University.

**Figure 1**

*Station XV: The Resurrection de Jesús by Jaqueline Romo*



the founding mission or charism of the orders that established them.

As the number of Catholic colleges and universities in the United States that are HSI-eligible increases, they must grapple with what it means to be both Catholic and Hispanic-serving. Within the idea of being Hispanic-serving, we include a need to focus on service to all Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), as HSIs predominantly enroll BIPOC students (Espinosa et al., 2019). As suggested by Jaqueline's story, HSIs also enroll a large percentage of immigrant and first-generation college students (Núñez & Bowers, 2011). The purpose of this article is to propose a

U.S. Catholic HSI (C-HSI) identity that brings together the extensive literature on Catholic and HSI identities through the lens of decolonial theory and Latinx theologies.

We argue that to serve Latinxs and BIPOC students who have intersectional identities effectively, Catholic HSIs must intentionally recognize these groups' ways of knowing (epistemologies) and being. This includes Catholic HSIs developing a pathway toward collective understanding of the theo-political, social, historical, and economic forces that have erased and pushed Latinx and BIPOC students' cultural and racial communities to the peripheries since before the founding of the present-day United States and the founding of the first Catholic university. This also requires Catholic colleges and universities to contend with their institutional connections to slavery and colonization. Stories such as the one about Georgetown University selling 272 enslaved people to address its economic downfall have emerged in recent years, forcing the university to face its history (Swarns, 2016). Dominican University has also been critically analyzing its founder's (Father Samuel Mazzuchelli) missionary work with Native Americans. We argue that C-HSIs must grapple with the past and present, acknowledging the collective oppression of groups they seek to serve while empowering them through their educational mission, identity, practices, and processes.

### **Literature Review**

We start with a brief overview of the literature on Catholic identity and HSI identity, taking note of the historical development of these two types of institutions and the current understanding of organizational identity for both types.

#### **Two Moments of Critical Self-Reflection on Catholic Identity and a Gap**

Since the founding of Georgetown University, the identity of Catholic colleges and universities has evolved, drawing from a diverse set of influences that include continental European conceptions of university study, the Roman Catholic Church itself, and the complex, and at times pragmatic, demands of surviving and thriving in a U.S. landscape and marketplace. The intellectual and faith frameworks of U.S. Catholic colleges and universities originate in the universities of Europe. Many of the religious orders that founded these institutions in the United States, such as the Jesuits, have deep roots embodied in curricular documents such as the *Ratio Studiorum*, which emphasized the arts and humanities and classical languages that later became known as the liberal arts (Dosen, 2012; Rizzi, 2018). Although a liberal arts focus shapes organizational identity, not all Catholic institutions have a liberal arts focus, with some emerging as research institutions.

Two historical moments in the 20th century stand out in the intellectual history of Catholic higher education in the United States. These moments are critical to understanding American efforts (Land O'Lakes) to codify the values and commitments of Catholic colleges and universities and those made by Rome (*Ex Corde Ecclesiae*). Frustrated by the anti-intellectualism and lack of

openness to the critical inquiry of Roman curial authorities and inspired by the *ressourcement* in the Second Vatican Council era, a dialogue evolved in 1967 at the University of Notre Dame's property in Land O' Lakes, WI. Convened by Theodore M. Hesburgh, CSC, 25 men—most priests and college presidents, developed a guiding document that would shape the leadership and vision of prominent Catholic colleges and universities for the next half-century (O'Brien, 1995; Rausch, 2010). The "Land O' Lakes Statement on the Nature of the Contemporary Catholic University" situates the Catholic university as serving both Church and society as their "critical reflective intelligence" (Campbell et al., 1967, pp. 2–3). The men engaged in writing this were steeped in the thinking of the Second Vatican Council, the most important ecumenical gathering of the Roman Catholic Church in a generation, which occurred in the 1960s. They were particularly concerned with creating room for the Catholic university in the United States to be open to all forms of inquiry and value academic freedom while at the same time preserving a vital faith life.

The second moment occurred when Saint John Paul II promulgated the Apostolic Constitution *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* on Catholic higher education on August 15, 1990. The document takes its name from the bold words of the opening in Latin that translates to "from the heart of the Church" (*ECE*, 1). *Ex Corde* has had a two-decade journey of examination and implementation in Catholic higher education in the United States. The document explores the "communion" between universities and the Catholic Church as having functions in civil society in their education and research capacities and as an integral part of the local and universal Roman Catholic Church (*ECE*, 7) United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (2000). Gleason, Rizzi, and others (Gleason, 1995; O'Brien, 1994, 1995; Rizzi, 2017, 2018) have noted that the document responded to a perception that Catholic "identity" was a problem to be solved in a time of disaffiliation and secularization. This document and the dialogue within Catholic higher education that ensued focused on the tension between the Catholic mission and identity of the institution. Specifically, it asked whether such identity could be claimed if faculty at the institution, especially those teaching theology, did not profess to be Roman Catholic or faithful to magisterial teaching.

These broad and philosophical explorations of Catholic identities have predominated in the popular and academic reflective spaces. Rizzi's (2017) literature review and typology point to scholarship that considers these questions in four domains: academics and teaching, scholarship and research, student life, and administration. Yet Rizzi's typology replicates a significant gap in the surrounding literature. It is silent on the role that race, indigeneity, and culture play in pedagogies, research, student life, and student success and engagement. To date, there has been inadequate publication on the way that the race and social identities of students, faculty, and staff intersect with and influence reflection on Catholic mission and identity. In essence, the work has been race- and identity-neutral, with little conversation about how Catholic institutions can and should serve BIPOC, low-income, and first-generation college students.



### **The Evolution of a Diverse HSI Organizational Identity**

The struggle to develop a collective HSI identity dates back to 1979 when Latinx political advocacy groups formed the Hispanic Higher Education Coalition (HHEC) and began testifying before Congress about the educational needs of the Latinx population (Valdez, 2015). Members of the HHEC called for an amendment to Title III of the Higher Education Act that would recognize institutions that enroll a critical mass of Latinxs to be eligible for additional funding to support these students. The HSI legislation was solidified in 1992 with an agreement on the 25% enrollment criteria as a critical mass for HSIs (Valdez, 2015). Since 1992, the federal government has earmarked funding for HSIs through various federal agencies, including the Department of Education (under both Title III and Title V), the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the National Science Foundation (Garcia & Koren, 2020). Yet beyond competitive funding, the federal government has not articulated an HSI identity, provided guidelines for transforming the infrastructure to serve Latinxs better, or held institutions accountable for becoming Latinx-serving (Garcia & Koren, 2020).

Instead, educators are describing the HSI identity through research and practice. Garcia (2013, 2016, 2017, 2019) has consistently argued that faculty, staff, and students on the ground at HSIs must co-construct an HSI identity. In working with faculty and staff at one HSI in the Southwest, Garcia (2017) found that participants depicted an HSI identity along two axes: outcomes and organizational culture. Specifically, participants suggested that an ideal HSI should strive for equitable outcomes for Latinx students while simultaneously developing an organizational culture that centers, values, and enhances their Latinx ways of knowing and being (Garcia, 2016, 2017). Garcia (2017) then advanced the Typology of HSI Organizational Identities, proposing four types of HSIs: Latinx-enrolling, Latinx-producing, Latinx-enhancing, and Latinx-serving. To date, this is the most comprehensive conceptualization of HSI identities that has been applied in research, yet other frameworks have evolved to understand “servingness” in practice (Garcia et al., 2019).

Scholars have since complicated the HSI identity, homing in on different aspects of intersectional HSI identities. Marin and Pereschica (2017) talked to graduate students about what a Hispanic-Serving Research Institution (HSRI) identity should entail. Participants in their study felt it was important to operationalize a mission for serving, to express a commitment and pride in the HSI designation, and to involve graduate students in the process of enacting an HSRI identity, stressing that they play a unique role in mentoring and teaching undergraduates at a research institution. Jones and Sáenz (2020) focused specifically on how Hispanic-serving community colleges (HSCC) can enact a Latino male-serving identity, proposing that they must seek equitable outcomes through data-driven decision-making and a college-wide commitment to Latino male completion. Moreover, they suggested that to create an organizational culture that serves Latino

males, there must be intentionality and administrative vision for serving them and a focus on P-20 collaborations to address the Latino male pipeline into HSIs (Jones & Sáenz, 2020). González and Cataño (2020) argued that HSCCs must also seek to include queer students in their HSI identity. They proposed that HSI grant writers pursue funds to provide services for queer students, HSIs recruit LGBT identified leaders to represent queer students, and suggested that campus and statewide initiatives to become Latinx-serving must include services for queer students. To date, no one has conceptualized a religious HSI identity.

### **Theoretical Foundations**

Next, we lay out the theoretical foundation used to propose a Catholic HSI (C-HSI) identity, drawing on decolonial theory and Latinx theologies, specifically *lo cotidiano* (or the daily) and traditioning, as a source and starting place for the C-HSI. Although HSIs enroll and must effectively serve all BIPOC students, we primarily draw on Latinx theologies since the HSI identity is more closely connected to the identity of this racial-ethnic group. Stated differently, HSIs would not exist if not for the enrollment of Latinxs; therefore, it is irresponsible to propose an organizational identity that does not center the racialized reality of being Latinx in present day United States (Garcia et al., 2019).

### **Decolonial Theory**

Decolonial theory has evolved across disciplines from ethnic studies and philosophy to theology and education, in resistance to the theories that privilege European, Western, White cisgender male knowledge and experiences. Within education, decolonial theory calls attention to the ways that settler colonialism has shaped educational research and knowledge construction (Tuck & Yang, 2012). Tuck & Yang (2012), however, remind us that it is a distinct concept from other social justice, liberatory, or anti-racist theories, as it acknowledges the triad structure of settler-native-slave in which settlers intentionally set out to make a new home on the land (inclusive of water, air, and subterranean earth) of Indigenous peoples while simultaneously converting the land to property that has monetary value and subjugating enslaved people to labor on the land for free. A result of this process is that Eurocentric, Western epistemologies (knowledge) emerged as normative within a colonial state while Indigenous epistemologies were erased.

Although Tuck & Yang (2012) call for a reclaiming of Indigenous land as part of a decolonization process, Quijano (2007) notes that the formal, political, and violent European colonialism has ceased in most parts of America, Asia, the Middle East, and Africa, yet the coloniality of power

remains intact. Therefore, a call to decolonize epistemologies must instead address the coloniality of power, inclusive of political, economic, social, and epistemic domination, as there is a direct link between Eurocentrism, coloniality, and knowledge (Quijano, 2000, 2007). The process of decolonizing theory is contextual, however, with scholars using it to reclaim Indigenous epistemologies across the globe, including Aboriginal knowledge in Canada, Māori knowledge in Aotearoa (New Zealand), Indigenous knowledge in Latin American, and African knowledge in Kenya, to name a few (e.g., Batz, 2018; Wane, 2013; Zavala, 2013; Battiste et al., 2002).

Our focus here is on reasserting the knowledge of Latinxs who have Indigenous or African origins in Mexico, Central and South America, and the Spanish-speaking Caribbean yet reside in the United States. Decolonial theory that seeks to reassert U.S. Latinx knowledge recognizes that Latinx identities, cultures, and epistemologies “have been forged in the cauldron of struggles to resist postimperialism (after Spain, Portugal, England, France) and neoimperialism (U.S.)” (Isasi-Díaz & Mendieta 2012, p. 6). Moreover, it validates that U.S. Latinxs - whether domestic born, naturalized, or undocumented, have multiple origins, languages, cultures, and connections to U.S. settler colonialism and imperialism that affect their overall experiences with oppression in present day United States. A move to decolonize epistemologies that oppress U.S. Latinxs must be guided by an understanding of their long and complicated history within the United States and across the Americas and the Caribbean.

Some of the earliest Africans who arrived in North America without choice were Spanish-speaking Caribbeans (Afro-Latinxs) who participated in various ways in the exploration and colonization of Southern Florida in the 16th century, mostly as servants and enslaved people alongside Indians (Wood, 2010). Africans also appeared in Mexico in the 16th century and participated in Spanish expeditions that penetrated the Southwest, becoming some of the earliest non-Indian settlers in New Mexico, Arizona, Texas, and Oklahoma (Forbes, 2010). Census records reveal that the Southwest by the late 18th century was composed of Hispanos, Blacks, Indians, and Mulattos/Mestizos (mixed race), with a majority able to speak Spanish (Forbes, 2010). With the rise of the rebellion against Great Britain in the 1770s, there was a simultaneous resistance against colonialism and slavery within the emerging nation led by Black, Native American, and (Mexican & Caribbean) Latinx abolitionists (Ortiz, 2018). Yet with the U.S. victories against Great Britain in 1783 and Mexico in 1848, U.S. imperialism and White supremacy were solidified and furthered in 1898 when the United States waged war against Spain, eventually gaining Puerto Rico as a territory (Ortiz, 2018).

Through the process of U.S. colonization and subsequent imperialism, the social order of race emerged, directly connected to work, wages, and wealth, with Whiteness becoming the ultimate privilege within the coloniality of power (Quijano, 2000). The racial caste system transcends all social structures, including education, currently manifested in inequitable academic outcomes

by race. Any call for racial equity within U.S. institutions of higher education must recognize the historical way in which the coloniality of power and White supremacy have come to reign and continue to influence experiences and outcomes of darker-skinned Latinxs.

As noted by Mignolo (2012), there is a two-step process of first decolonizing Western epistemologies and then building decolonial epistemologies that legitimate “living in harmony and reciprocity” (p. 25). The call to decolonize epistemologies that have subjugated U.S. Latinxs, therefore, must simultaneously call for the liberation and centering of the knowledge of these groups (Isasi-Díaz & Mendieta, 2012). We access *mujerista* discourses, which focus on Christian ethics and theology (Isasi-Díaz, 2012), and recognize that the coloniality of power (supported by pillars of racism and patriarchy) was framed by Christian theology (Mignolo, 2012). *Mujerista* discourses come from the oppressed themselves, Latinas, who are conscious of their oppression and resist it while seeking liberation *lo cotidiano*, everyday, in community with the impoverished (Isasi-Díaz, 2012) .

### ***Lo Cotidiano* and Traditioning**

*Lo cotidiano* is locus theologicus for many Latinx theologians who look to daily living from distinctive social locations. Espín (2006) and Nanko-Fernández (2010, 2015) highlight that *lo cotidiano* is a particular source of Latinx theologies and, as such, a site of God’s ongoing revelation that does not imply a singular experience of daily life. *Lo cotidiano* is also an analytical, hermeneutical, and epistemological category that provides direction for deriving meaning from the experiences of people and communities (Nanko-Fernández, 2010). Aquino (1999) notes that *lo cotidiano*, which emerged from Eastern European and Latin American feminist critical theory, “radically critiques today’s social models, which dehumanize and polarize persons” and at the same time “articulates an alternative democratic and aesthetic view of the world, of history, and of life” (p. 38). Isasi-Díaz (1996) further emphasizes that *lo cotidiano* is a way of knowing. Her epistemological understanding of *lo cotidiano* is important because she seeks, in part, “to rescue Hispanic women’s daily experience from the category of the unimportant”. From the dominant perspective, Latinas’ experiences are rendered unimportant by confining them to the private or domestic sphere. Isasi-Díaz (1996) responds to this lived reality by privileging “Hispanic women’s way of seeing reality insofar as the goal of their daily struggle is liberation” (p. 68). She cautions that maintaining an eye on the liberatory elements of *lo cotidiano* resists the temptation to romanticize it.

The means of transmitting faith and culture in Latinx communities and theologized by Latinx peoples can be particularly instructive in developing a sharp theo-political analysis and mission. Espín (2014) describes the transmission of the faith through the lived witness of the people of God as traditioning. This process occurs, for the most part, outside of the written texts

of theologians and doctrine “as real lives that are lived compassionately” (Espín, 2014, p. 120). The bulk of the transmission of Christianity comes not through confessional language or doctrine or the formal liturgies and prayers of churches. Instead, parents and abuelxs hand on their faith concretely, through lives well lived in service of others and in valiant, compassionate expressions of popular religion despite all the challenges and struggles of daily life.

There are many everyday liturgies, or examples of *lo cotidiano* and traditioning in Latinx communities such as the annual Via Crucis in Chicago’s predominantly Latinx Pilsen neighborhood<sup>3</sup>, the thousands of *descanos* constructed by family members to mark the places where loved ones have lost their lives, and the small dashboard saints that populate the sacred rides of many people from a variety of different cultures (Aponte, 2012). These public acts (from the Gr. *leitourgia* [root of liturgy] ‘public service, worship of the gods’) are Christians transmitting “a Christianity that is what they believe Christianity is” (Espín, 2014, p. xxiii). For Espín, this is not a trite turn of phrase because traditioning always happens in *lo cotidiano* in a time and a place with a person or a people that are embedded in particular cultures. The content of traditioning depends on the social location of those doing it. As a process, “there is no innocent traditioning, there is no innocent reception” (Espín, 2014, p. 10). There are only people embedded in systems of meaning, both good and bad, passing along the faith to one another. Neither the act of telling (locution) nor the act of receiving (hearing) can happen outside of the lenses that the respective positions within *lo cotidiano* confer.

Espín (2014) is very clear that traditioning is a way of knowing that always happens in the daily and is a source of meaning for those who are oppressed, stating, “From these locations, the “unimportant” and “disposable” peoples of the Earth construct knowledge and understand their (experienced) reality in manners meaningful to them. For this, they do not wait for the approval of the dominant, the educated, or the pious” (p. 118). Jaqueline’s “The Passion of the Monarca Migrante” is an artifact of this traditioning in her particular experience of *lo cotidiano*. It is, at once, an example of a first-generation immigrant college student constructing knowledge about her own experiences and making meaning for others (including the university itself). Scannone (2016) in an article that explores the Argentinean and Latin American roots of Pope Francis’ theology of the people — calls for “attend[ing] to the existential attitude and spiritual mettle, to the affective tone and the lived experience (*vivencia*) that accompanies the text”(p. 134).<sup>4</sup> Just as Scannone underscores what is deeply at work in Francis’ pontificate, the same could be said of Jaqueline’s art. It is in these dynamic and fluid spaces that the encounter with the divine occurs readily and

<sup>3</sup> <https://blockclubchicago.org/2019/04/10/pilsens-annual-via-cruces-returns-next-week/>

<sup>4</sup> For a full discussion of the popular religiosity of Pope Francis’ theology of the people, please see the full article by Juan Carlos Scannone, SJ. The worldviews and epistemologies of TP aligns well with the themes of *lo cotidiano* and traditioning that we have explored here.

a new understanding of being Catholic and Latinx-serving can emerge. Latinx communities are already naming the sacred and theologizing about their experiences with God without the help of intellectual rigor of the academy.

### **Toward a C-HSI Identity**

The call to center the knowledge and ways of being of Latinxs and BIPOC within Catholic HSIs should drive efforts to decolonize dominant Western ways of knowing and being. The material and religious purpose of the Catholic university has always been the betterment of the students that they have served and, at Catholic HSIs, the race and identity of those in the seats is different than it was in the past. Whether these institutions are consciously aware of it or not, the theo-political, social, historical, and economic liberation of Latinxs and BIPOC within these institutions is a priority because the futures of Latinx and BIPOC students and these institutions are *already integrally connected*. We assert that Catholic HSIs must develop a sharp theo-political, social, historical and economic analysis that leads to the deconstruction of dominant, traditional, and normative ways of enrolling and serving some of the most oppressed students to enter the university, including Latinx, BIPOC, low-income, and immigrant or undocumented students, or those whom the educational institution was never intended to serve but instead assimilate and acculturate through both education and religion (Garcia, 2018). Liberation of Latinxs and BIPOC must occur in *lo cotidiano* in its particularity at the university. We contend that the daily is not just a source for theologizing and ministering, but the contextual frame in which all the activities of the university must come to life.

As we propose a C-HSI, we ask, “How can attention to the lived Latinx and BIPOC reality of a Catholic HSI transform the ways that it serves its Latinx and BIPOC students, represents itself, lives its mission, and traditions knowledge and faith in and through myriad educational practices and processes?” First and foremost, the institution must recognize the unique characteristics of its students. Most importantly, that they are people of color who are racialized and raced daily. That is, race is a process whereby theo-political, social, historical, and economic hierarchies are preserved and maintained based solely on the physical characteristics of the person, and the resulting inequities in outcomes and experiences of racialized people are justified because of their race (Moya & Markus, 2010). Under this assumption, the institution must recognize and acknowledge the racial-ethnic identities of Latinx and BIPOC students and seek to disrupt the daily inequities in outcomes and experiences of these students. The C-HSI must center race in all educational and spiritual practices and processes and resist any attempt to do race-neutral work. Moreover, the institution must recognize the multiple ways in which Latinx and BIPOC students are minoritized, many of which are intertwined with race, including their greater likelihood of being low-income, undocumented, multilingual, and first generation to college. These, however, must be

seen as assets, or as community cultural wealth that they bring to the institution, rather than deficits that hinder them from excelling (Yosso, 2005).

It is also important to consider that Latinx and BIPOC students are embedded within their families, local communities, and churches. When they step onto campus, they do not leave these important aspects of their identities at the door. The C-HSI, then, must embrace and invite in all aspects of the student's core ways of being. They are also highly resourceful and resilient, having lived their entire lives resisting the oppressive systems of education, law, policing, and labor forces. They will resist an oppressive C-HSI, too, but why should they have to, when the C-HSI can and should become a liberating space? Although they are resilient and resistant, Latinx and BIPOC students in many ways have also become committed to the ideas of meritocracy and the American dream, as the educational system has taught them to assimilate and acculturate to survive (Salazar, 2013). The C-HSI must commit to enhancing their critical consciousness and social justice orientation (Garcia, 2018).

While *lo cotidiano* helps to ground essential university practices such as financial aid, student success structures, and campus ministry in the lived experience of plurality of its student body, it does not encourage the institution to examine its role in exercising power over those students in and through the very activities that are intended to serve those students. The Catholic HSI must resist the temptation to reinscribe race- and identity-neutral notions of service to a reified student body. Very quickly and quite subtly, the university's good intentions to meet students in their daily-lived experience can become wrong-headed notions of saving or service to "the poor." From this perspective, one challenge (like poverty) of the students' social location becomes the focus of frequently told deficit narratives that the Catholic HSI uses in nearly every aspect of its *cotidiano* (fundraising and governance to name two critical ones). This marginalizes (at best), erases, or does violence (at worst) to the assets of the very BIPOC students, families and communities that have been historically disenfranchised from higher education. If the C-HSI is to be attentive to *lo cotidiano* of its Latinx and BIPOC communities, then it must retain a mission-imperative grounded and affirmed in Catholic social teachings to bring the racial, ethnic, and cultural wealth of those communities to bear on the university's everyday life. Only in doing so can the C-HSI engage in liberatory praxis with historically minoritized communities in areas such as advocacy with and for immigrant communities and building anti-racist coalitions in broader community-based organizations.

The sacred act of traditioning has also been used to determine who teaches and ministers and helps to sustain the mission of the institution, as well as the popular re-fashioning and re-theologizing of the university's curricular content and mission. According to Aponte (2012), "in this creation and re-creation of sacred space there is a type of sacred geography at work (p. 131–132). This recreation, however, must challenge race and identity neutral ways that the university

represents itself in terms of the daily lived experience of all its students, including Latinx and BIPOC students. To shift practices *latinamente* is to tradition for university as a whole. The search for belonging is, in the words of Espín (2014), “the subversive hope that has led them demonstrably to bet their lives together for a world built on compassion, justice, and the dignity for all. This is the Church” (p. 132). This is also the vision of Catholic higher education – a world built on compassion, justice, and dignity for all. Such a vision extends precisely (if one takes the ethical mandate of Catholic social teaching’s preferential option seriously) to those that have experienced historic marginalization by the very institutions to which they now belong, and to which claim to serve them. The more thoroughly an institution can take seriously its responsibility to tradition with and through the communities that belong to it, the closer it will be to amplifying the voices of those communities, rather than speaking for them, and working in coalition and companionship to empower and liberate them.

### **C-HSI Model**

The Catholic HSI should be a place where Latinxs and all BIPOC extend their struggle to tradition subversive hope into life together, on- and off- campus. Through our understanding of decolonial theories and Latinx theologies, we propose the following model for a C-HSI identity, grounded in the Latinx theological ideals of *lo cotidiano* and traditioning. This model builds off the Catholic Identity and Mission Models (CIMA) currently used by the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities to assess mission integration (Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities [ACCU], 2018). As such, we provide a comparison of our proposed C-HSI model to the CIMA model.

### **Conclusions**

As the C-HSI seeks to become a liberatory space, it must recognize the histories and identities of its students and, at the same time, grapple with its colonial histories and the legacies of embedded Whiteness. There are two dynamics to which C-HSIs must attend. First, the institution must create spaces where Latinx and BIPOC students can exercise power and voice in naming and claiming their own experiences. Jaqueline’s narrative was one of discovery of two interests that she found could converge — her faith and her art. Her senior art thesis explored her daily life in a way that was concrete, compelling, and emerged from the experiences that she and her family had and that so many others in her community shared. When institutions create the conditions for liberatory practices to happen, students like Jaqueline seize the opportunity. These successful moments of encounter have the potential to tradition the university into new ways of educating. This is what we mean when we suggest that C-HSIs must decolonize the historical practices of the institution. Second, there will be tensions, both in recognizing the institution’s commitment to Whiteness and White normative ways of being as well as the postsecondary landscape’s commitment to these



values (Garcia et al., 2019). There have been many students like Jaqueline who never had the opportunity to tell the story of faith, family, and immigration through art. The moral and ethical imperative of combining Catholic and HSI identities into one strong, liberatory C-HSI identity is to ensure that more students have that opportunity. There will also be tensions, in that HSIs are historically under resourced institutions that must serve low-income students, who often need more support than students with greater economic means (Ortega et al., 2015). These tensions, however, are not excuses. We believe that the creativity and resilience of students like Jaqueline, of their families and their communities, can be a catalyst for liberatory work that can be the hallmark of C-HSIs creating a shared future for the transformation of all.

**Table 1***Catholic HSI Model*

Domain	Catholic Colleges & Universities	Catholic Hispanic-Serving Institutions
Catholic Mission & Identity	Catholic mission and identity are conveyed clearly, both internally and externally (i.e., website, formal documents, social media, physical structures); reviewed by the board of trustees, and integrated into the strategic planning process.	Catholic mission and identity are conveyed clearly, both internally and externally (i.e., website, formal documents, social media, physical structures); reviewed by the board of trustees, and integrated into the strategic planning process.
Mission Integration	Catholic mission, history, heritage, and spirituality are found in all aspects of the institution, including academic spaces, student life, ministry, and the overall campus culture and community.	Catholic mission, history, heritage, and spirituality are found in all aspects of the institution, including academic spaces, student life, ministry, and the overall campus culture and community.

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*Table 1 continued*

Leadership & Governance	The administrative leadership is informed by the Catholic mission and guided by Catholic ethos in decision-making and governance.	The administrative leadership is informed by the Catholic HSI mission and guided by ethos of equity, justice, and liberation for Latinxs and all BIPOCs in decision-making and governance; the leadership shall match the identities of the student population, with intentional efforts to change the racial composition of decision-makers.
Curriculum & Courses	The curriculum encourages interdisciplinary pursuit of truth, meaning, and order within the context of Catholic Social Teaching and Catholic Intellectual Tradition; includes experiential and service-learning as a basis for spiritual reflection and personal development.	The curriculum encourages interdisciplinary pursuit of truth, justice, and liberation within the context of critical theory, decolonial theory, and ethnic studies, alongside and conversant with a focus on Catholic Social Teaching and a wide-understanding of the Catholic intellectual traditions (including sources and methods not historically included in that canonical framework); includes experiential and service-learning as a basis for critical consciousness development, racial/ethnic identity development, personal growth, and social justice orientation.
Faculty & Scholarship	Faculty are not required to be active Catholics but are expected to support the Catholic mission and identity and pursue research and teaching that advances common good and human dignity; the institution may provide faculty with training and development to enhance their understanding of the Catholic approach to education.	Faculty ideally should match the identities of the students, racially, but it is not required, nor is it a requirement to be an active Catholic; however, they are expected to support the Catholic HSI mission and identity and pursue research and teaching that advances equity, justice, and liberation for Latinxs and BIPOC communities; the institution must provide faculty with training and development to enhance their understanding of a social justice, anti-racist approach to education.

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Co-curricular Student Learning & Engagement	Co-curricular experiences must enable students to understand and develop religious tradition and spirituality while practicing service to the greater good; focus on holistic student development across all functional areas on campus.	Co-curricular experiences must enable students to understand and develop religious tradition and spirituality while practicing service to Latinx and BIPOC communities; Staff ideally should match the identities of students, with intentional efforts to change the racial composition; staff are expected to support the Catholic HSI mission and identity and focus on holistic student development across all functional areas on campus with an emphasis on anti-racist and liberatory practices.
Student Access, Support, & Success	There is a commitment to providing access to education for students from diverse backgrounds, including race, class, and gender diversity; the institution must support the intellectual, emotional, spiritual, cultural, and social development of all students.	There is a commitment to providing access to education for students from minoritized backgrounds, including Latinxs and BIPOCs as well as low income, undocumented, non-Catholic, queer, transgender, and gender-nonconforming people; the institution must support the intellectual, emotional, spiritual, cultural, and social development of all students while centering their identities and ways of knowing and being.
Service to the Church & the World	Institutions are to provide programs, education, and research that promotes service to local and national communities; encourage discussions around faith, culture, and issues of justice.	Institutions are to provide programs, education, and research that promotes service to local and national communities, with an emphasis on local Latinx and BIPOC communities, or those communities and neighborhoods from which students come from; encourage discussions around faith and culture, as well as issues of anti-racism, equity, justice, and liberation.

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*Table 1 continued*

Role & Importance of Staff	Staff across all functional areas are to represent and embody the Catholic mission and identity as evidenced through programs, practices, and interactions with students.	Staff across all functional areas are to represent and embody the Catholic HSI mission and identity as evidenced through programs, practices, and interactions with students; this includes a commitment by all staff and support services to promote equitable outcomes and disrupt racialized and discriminatory experiences that often happen in curricular and cocurricular paces.
Institutional Practices in Management & Finance	Leaders must make decisions that are socially just and environmentally responsible and direct institutional resources towards efforts that advance the Catholic mission and culture; decisions about development, advancement, endowment, human resources, facility operations, labor relations, and risk management must be moral and just.	Leaders must make decisions that are socially just and environmentally responsible and direct institutional resources towards efforts that advance the Catholic HSI mission and culture; decisions about development, advancement, endowment, human resources, facility operations, labor relations, and risk management must be moral and just and center the identity and lived experiences of Latinxs and BIPOC communities.

## Appendix A

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