DISSERTATION

DISRUPTING SYSTEMIC WHITENESS AT A HISPANIC SERVING INSTITUTION

Submitted by

Brandi L. Scott

School of Education

In partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Colorado State University

Fort Collins, Colorado

Fall 2021

Doctoral Committee

      Advisor: Susana Muñoz

      Oiyan Poon
      Thomn Bell
      Maricela DeMirjyn

ABSTRACT

DISRUPTING SYSTEMIC WHITENESS AT A HISPANIC SERVING INSTITUTION

Over 65% of all Latinx students in higher education attend a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI). HSI is a federal designation based on an institution having a minimum of 25% of the student population identifying as Hispanic. Despite the growing number of HSI designated institutions across the United States, these institutions have not always resulted in higher educational outcomes and success for Latinx students. Further exploring what contributes to an HSI's ability to support Latinx students is highly important to shifting cultural experience and outcomes for Latinx students. Specifically, this study explores how whiteness exists at HSIs and what role whiteness plays with institutional agents' ability to serve Latinx students. Critical whiteness studies, Garcia's (2017) Decolonizing Hispanic Serving Institutions organizational framework, and Ray's (2019) racialized organizations theory were used to inform this critical qualitative, exploratory case study conducted at a recently designated HSI four-year public university. Three themes were identified in this study a. "the rhetoric of all" is a tool of white supremacy, b. "taxation on the bodies" of People of Color, and c. whiteness through "good intentions." Recommendations for challenging whiteness are offered for HSI's, faculty, student affairs staff, and senior administrators.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

While I spent a lot of time alone in my thoughts, writing, and reading on this PhD journey, I could not have done it without my family and community of support. I want to begin by thanking my incredibly supportive, confidence booster, gracious critical feedback giver wife, Shelby. You have been with me every step on this journey, from applying, being accepted, and encouraging me to keep going when the research and writing was tough. We navigated so much on this journey, especially trying to balance, work, childcare, home, and my Ph.D. all during a pandemic. Thank you, Shelby my forever cheerleader, I love you.

I became a mama on this Ph.D. journey to my wonderful daughter, Shay. I will never forget how you slept on my lap as I wrote my preliminary exams and all the times you sat next to me watching your shows while mama wrote. I am grateful for these memories we shared, and I hope to always teach you to believe in yourself and to advocate against injustice. I love you, Shay.

In 2001, as a fourteen-year-old who had experienced years of trauma and was very behind in school, my aunt and uncle took me into their home. Today, I call my aunt and uncle my mom and dad. Recognizing early on that I was very behind my ninth-grade peers, my mom used second and third grade reading workbooks to teach me how to spell and read. They put me into sports to help me build discipline (and keep me out of trouble!). Most importantly, they helped me see that I was worth achievement. I could finish high school, go to college, and become someone different than the examples of my immediate family. I can never fully express how much their sacrifice of taking me into their home has forever changed my life but this PhD would not have been achievable without the investment they made in me. I love you, mom and dad. Thank you.

While no longer on this earth, my Aunt Joyce was a rare role model in my childhood and she always believed in my potential. Thank you, Aunt Joyce, for investing in me. I love you and I miss you.

My dissertation committee has been a great support throughout this process. Thank you to my advisor, Dra. Susana Muñoz who guided me through the dissertation process and pushed me to grow and learn as a critical, qualitative scholar. Thank you, Dr. Thomn Bell for reading my many dissertation drafts and coaching me through examining my own whiteness. Thank you, Dr. Oiyan Poon for helping me understand how to put organizational analysis into practice. Thank you, Dr. Maricela DeMirjyn for your feedback on whiteness theories to help inform my dissertation design and analysis. Thank you all for being a part of this journey with me.

I am grateful for the cohort design of this Ph.D. program and the relationships I built while in classes and working on my dissertation. I want to thank Ebony Ramsey for being such an awesome support, accountability partner, and roommate for all of our on-campus classes.

I am grateful to all of my family, friends, committee, and supporters on the road to achieving my Ph.D.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

As a student affairs practitioner, I have acquired many competencies to support my learning and development in the profession. Yet, most of my academic schooling failed to offer an accurate representation of racial injustice across society. Since graduating with my master's degree, I have focused my student affairs career on addressing inequities on college campuses. While my master's degree in student affairs and my ten years in the profession are a valuable part of my career, my experiences in education have not taught me about my whiteness.

In 2019, I made a career transition, and a colleague shared a concern that with my departure from the institution, even fewer white people on our campus would be challenging other white people to deconstruct systemic [1]whiteness. My colleague's concern caused me to pause and realize while I was praised and celebrated by my supervisor and senior leadership for pushing them to better understand equity (in ways my colleagues of color who do the same work were not), they never questioned or pushed me to deconstruct my own whiteness. My own neglect in recognizing this is an example of how I have internalized whiteness. Not already recognizing my colleagues' comment is an example of my own white immunity within racist systems that allows me to be unchecked and unchallenged in my understanding of how my white racial identity impacts my work. The problem was not that I was ill-equipped for requesting more development. I have sought more training about supervision, assessment, and other topics, but I failed to ask for training to expose how my white identity informs and disrupts my practice.

---

[1] A member of the research committee, Dr. Thomn Bell, complicates whiteness in his dissertation by choosing to lower-case the "w" in whiteness. As a demonstration of my commitment to decenter white people in this study, I have also chosen to lower-case whiteness and will be intentional about all opportunities to complicate the centering of whiteness in this research.

Cabrera (2010) describes whiteness as the invasive actions, thoughts, and behaviors that unjustly build societal norms and opportunities around the needs and demands of white people. Further, Bonilla-Silva (2018) asserts that whiteness is maintained because white people avoid conversations about race. Since I have been promoted in my career and positions in higher education but have never been asked to consider how my white privilege manifests in my work, I started to wonder if other white people are being asked to consider their whiteness. Due to the reality of systemic racism and the privileging of whiteness, white people still hold most of the power and influence on college campuses. While many institutions of higher education have adopted policies, mission statements, and values around diversity and inclusion, if whiteness is not disrupted, making substantial changes to the system will likely fail.

Having recognized the unquestioned immunity I have as a white social justice practitioner and my own experience with systemic barriers to achieving equity, I am interested in further understanding whiteness in higher education. Many scholars (Bonilla-Silva, 2018; Cabrera, 2019; DiAngelo, 2018; Matias, 2016), and particularly scholars of color, have exposed the current and historical manifestation of white supremacy and racism on college campuses and in society. Cabrera's (2012) research exposes systemic whiteness on college campuses and how invasive forms of white supremacy impact students' experiences on college campuses. Informed by the work of scholars before me, I sought to further expose how whiteness on college campuses prevents institutions from implementing strategies and policies that shift systemic injustice toward more equitable outcomes and experiences for students. In my research, enacting equity referred to creating institutional policies and practices that remedy historical injustices toward minoritized student populations and create access and opportunity for all students to

thrive. I am particularly interested in exposing whiteness on campuses who are engaging in strategies to serve historically minoritized students.

Problem Statement

Over the decades, institutions of higher education began to identify strategies for addressing higher education's historical injustices that have resulted in the exclusion of communities of color. Today, when history books describe the horrific treatment of communities of color, white people tend to disconnect from the harmful realities of the past that continue to impact lives today (Kendi, 2016). For instance, in a recent challenge to affirmative action policies, Fisher v. University of Texas at Austin, Fisher claimed that racial injustice no longer exists on college campuses. Garces and Bilyalov (2019) described how many institutions have implemented race-neutral policies to avoid legal challenges to admission policies. However, race-neutral practices adversely impact institutions attempts at promoting diversity and equity on their campuses (Garces & Bilyalov, 2019). Affirmative action policies continue to be necessary, as data clearly demonstrates that college attainment inequities remain among students of color (American Council on Education, 2019; National Center for Education Statistics, 2016). If white people wash our hands clean of the historical assaults on communities of color, we can falsely believe that we do not have to take responsibility. These invasive denials of racism and white immunity are embedded in Americans' consciousness and are infused in the system of higher education (Cabrera, 2018; Cabrera, Franklin, & Watson, 2016).

Many campuses have implemented strategies, policies, and initiatives trying to address inequities and remedy historical injustice. Campuses have responded to the demographic racial diversity of the student body by seeking a Minority Serving Institution (MSI) status, such as the Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) designation. HSI is a federal designation for institutions and

the main criteria is the campus has a student population of at least 25% Hispanic identified students. The HSI designation was formed in the early 1990's (Santiago, 2006). Cruz (2018) problematized the use of the word Hispanic as a government-used term to categorize a diverse community of individuals. In this paper, Latinx[2] will be used and as described by Salinas (2020) more accurately described how students in the community identify when in college. Gasman (2008) described the unique identity of an HSI campus compared to Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) or Tribal Colleges that were built with the intention of serving black and African American students and Native American student populations, respectively. This study hopes to add to the HSI literature by exposing and disrupting whiteness at HSIs. The overarching definition used in this study for whiteness is that whiteness explains the invasive forms of white dominance and privilege that have been sewn into society's consciousness and are often invisible to many, particularly white people, and reinforce systemic racism and oppression (Cabrera, 2012; DiAngelo 2018; Latino, 2010).

Garcia (2019) described how many HSIs are formed in predominantly white institutions (PWI). Bonilla-Silva (2018) complicated the term "PWI" and urges for a more accurate description, Historically White Colleges and Universities (HWCU). Bonilla-Silva explains racial grammar and how society will identify a Historically Black College/University, but not historically white colleges. HWCUs is an example of how whiteness is embedded in the fabric of institutions and societal consciousness and this terminology helps demonstrate the need to disrupt and challenge systemic whiteness. Attempting to create an HSI that has historically and

---

[2] While the word Latinx is used in this study, it is important to recognize that the Latinx community is not a homogenous group. Instead, the Latinx community is very diverse, such as in culture, race, nationality, and religion. Because of this diversity, it is important not to apply any one finding or suggestion as representative of everyone within the Latinx community.

overwhelmingly served white students requires significant shifts to the ideology and culture of the institution (Garcia, 2019).

Garcia (2019) offered whiteness and white supremacy on college campuses as a barrier to institutions creating HSIs that prioritize the needs of Latinx students. As mentioned before, because HSIs are typically formed at HWCUs, these campuses often operate from a cultural perspective that values and supports the needs of white students, which happens both consciously and unconsciously (Cabrera et al., 2016; Garcia 2019). As Bonilla-Silva (2018) asserted, racism is so deeply embedded in individuals' consciousness that it is often unchecked or dismissed. Bonilla-Silva's work aligns with my own story as an equity administrator who is not expected, by others or by myself, to understand my whiteness and how it impacts my work. Deconstructing the ways that whiteness prevents HSIs from creating policies, funding models, and offering student support services that center the needs of Latinx students is of utmost importance.

Cabrera, Watson, and Franklin (2016) offered a monograph of whiteness in higher education to help expose and disrupt systemic whiteness. Many theories describe the pervasiveness of whiteness, such as whiteness colorblindness (Bonilla-Silva, 2018) which Annamma, Jackson, and Morrison (2017) further developed to be more descriptive and inclusive as color-evasiveness, property (Bell, 1992; Harris, 1997), immunity (Cabrera, 2018), and emotionality (Matias, 2017). Each of these theories will be described in detail in chapter two, but collectively they help expose the invasive ways white supremacy exists on college campuses and how racial injustice is maintained. These theories of whiteness expose the everyday actions and decisions that reinforce the valuing, prioritizing, and benefitting of white people. Whiteness exists across society and certainly impacts higher education and the opportunity and success of students of color (Cabrera et al., 2016). While many scholars have explored racial injustice in

higher education, more research is needed to understand how systemic whiteness informs, creates, and maintains racial inequities (Cabrera et al., 2016; Garcia, 2019).

HSIs in particular need to understand and disrupt whiteness. Building a successful HSI should involve more than an institution striving for 25% of students identifying as Latinx. Institutions must also develop campus cultures that foster a sense of mattering that supports the learning and development of Latinx students. Garcia and Okhidoi (2015) and Contreras and Contreras (2015) asserted HSIs need to better serve Latinx students. Despite an institutional commitment to becoming an HSI, disparities in college completion and persistence for Latinx students continues (Garcia, 2019). Garcia (2019) suggested understanding and disrupting whiteness at emerging HSIs may be one way to better support Latinx students. Considering the deeply embedded and nuanced existence of whiteness, studying how whiteness prevents institutions from understanding how to best support Latinx students and how their current practices unintentionally (or intentionally) perpetuate inequities is important. HSI campuses could play an integral role in shifting the student attainment gap but disrupting whiteness on these campuses is vital to supporting Latinx students (Garcia, 2019).

Purpose of Study

While progress has occurred in diversifying the demographics of students attending college, inequities in college persistence and completion remain (American Council on Education, 2018). This paper aims to further expose how whiteness prevents campuses from problematizing historical inequities in access and persistence for students of color. The accumulative impact and consequences of invasive forms of whiteness on college campuses have prevented many institutions from making lasting and systemic change (Cabrera et al., 2016;

Garcia, 2019). While some scholars have exposed whiteness, more research is needed to understand how whiteness impacts resource and policy decisions (Cabrera et al., 2016).

My career in higher education has centered on resolving and identifying inequities experienced by students. While working in student affairs, I have encountered many obstacles to addressing inequities, such as funding for marginalized communities, policies that directly benefit students of color, and centering the experiences of marginalized students, and many of these systemic challenges were connected to whiteness. The purpose of this research is to further disrupt and challenge systemic whiteness at HSIs. As Garcia (2019) described, systemic whiteness prevents HSIs from creating campus cultures that center the needs and experiences of Latinx students. Gasman (1998) explained while many HWCUs have become HSIs, they continue to struggle to meet the educational needs of Latinx students. Further, as described by Cabrera et al. (2016), additional research is needed exploring the ways whiteness prevents institutions from making equitable policies and resource decisions. Institutions seeking HSI status are eligible for millions of dollars in grants from the federal government. However, if HSIs are not disrupting systemic whiteness, the resources received from grants will not likely be used to create a Latinx-serving institution (Garcia, 2017). Garcia's research illuminated two factors that contribute to a campus being Latinx-serving: outcomes and culture. Outcomes relate to persistence and graduation rates, and culture relates to the campus being a place where Latinx students feel valued and supported. These two factors are not happening separately but instead impact each other. However, policies and resources are intertwined in the creation of equitable outcomes and culture for Latinx students (Cabrera et al., 2016; Garcia, 2017). Therefore, deconstructing the role whiteness asserts in policy development and resource allocation is important for college campuses seeking HSI status.

Context for this Study

This critical qualitative exploratory case study disrupts systemic forms of whiteness at a four-year public, open-enrollment HSI. This is a critical qualitative study because the research hopes to disrupt systemic injustice with the intent of supporting efforts to make higher education more equitable. Critical whiteness studies (CwS) was the theoretical framework guiding this study. As Nayak (2017) described, CwS is a theoretical approach that interrogates embedded systemic forms of whiteness that privilege white people and oppress People of Color. CwS scholars seek to expose and disrupt the often normalized forms of white supremacy that exist in daily life. As a CwS scholar, this study interrogated whiteness at an HSI.

The case for this study is a four-year public, access-based, newly designated HSI. This study hopes to help inform HSI campuses of the ways to recognize and disrupt whiteness to better serve the needs of Latinx students. Further, as Garcia (2019) asserted, deeper analysis of the role of whiteness at HSIs is needed. HSI institutions are typically formed at HWCUs, and because HWCUs were not designed for Latinx students, HSI campuses likely face additional barriers to achieving equitable outcomes and culture for Latinx students.

A case study format was selected for this study because of the in-depth nature of the methodology and the specificity of the unit of analysis (newly designated HSI, four-year, access-based institution) (Bhattacharya, 2017; Yin, 2018). The case study model allows me to complete an in-depth analysis of a single HSI and collect multiple sources of data (multiple interviews and document analysis), which will support exposing systemic whiteness. CwS and theories of whiteness, property (Harris, 1993), emotionality (Matias, 2017), and color-evasiveness (Annamma et al., 2017; Bonilla-Silva, 2018) informed my researcher ontology and how I constructed research questions and analyze data. Further, to help inform specific aspects of the

institution, documentation review, interview interpretation, and how whiteness exists at an HSI, I used Garcia's (2018) organizational decolonizing HSIs framework and Ray's (2019) racialized organizations theory. Using these theories and frameworks, along with case study methodology, offered tools for exposing the embedded forms of systemic whiteness at an HSI that have been normalized and seen as race neutral.

The literature review provides in-depth description of whiteness and theories that help explain how whiteness manifests itself within society. In this study, CwS was used to disrupt and unpack the inherent, everyday actions, decisions, policies, and communications that continues to advantage white people and marginalize People of Color. Whiteness will be further explored in chapter two, and the methods will be discussed in detail in chapter three.

Research Questions

1. In what ways does systemic whiteness influence a four-year public HSI?

2. What role does whiteness play in how institutional agents employ strategies for serving Latinx students?

Researcher Positionality

Growing up, I shielded myself from responsibility to address racism because I believed that as a low-income person from a family with no formal education, I did not have privilege. Society reaffirmed this notion, and I was praised for "pulling myself up by my bootstraps." Today, I continue to grapple with acknowledging how my own challenging upbringing informs my work, while not using my challenges to shield me from recognizing how I benefit from and contribute to whiteness. Despite my challenging childhood, I was given extra chances, extra attention, and empathy from teachers, and I saw leaders in society who shared my story and were still successful in their professions. I certainly worked hard, but my white racial identity shielded

me from additional stereotypes and assumptions that my peers of color endured. The "extras" I received throughout my life are all examples of whiteness. I know this today, but growing up, I never considered my own race and the role it played in my journey. As a white person, identifying all the examples of my own and systemic whiteness has been and continues to be a challenge, which is in and of itself whiteness. The nuanced, invasive nature of whiteness makes identifying and deconstructing it difficult. Despite the challenge of illuminating and deconstructing whiteness, I am committed to helping to further disrupt whiteness and continuously deconstruct my own denials, gaps, shame, guilt, and internalized dominance for being white.

As a white social justice practitioner and critical scholar, I routinely receive affirmation and celebration for addressing inequities in higher education, yet I am not condemned or expected to learn when I perpetuate racial injustice. I am dedicated to researching whiteness because I personally know how easy it is for white people to never consider whiteness. My own denials of racism and perpetuations of whiteness motivate my desire to disrupt whiteness through my research. I need to name and confront my own and other white people's displays of whiteness that uphold racism and white supremacy. As a white, critical scholar who benefits from whiteness professionally, personally, and in all facets of life, disrupting my own internalized whiteness and helping deconstruct systemic whiteness in higher education is my responsibility.

As a critical researcher, I recognized because of my own whiteness, I may be unable to detect all forms of whiteness and graciously seek the advice and support of colleagues to check my research and findings. However, I also recognize teaching me is not the responsibility of

People of Color, and I dedicate time to unlearning my internalized white dominance and relearning from a more equitable and representative framework.

Significance

As a critical, qualitative scholar, I believe research should be used to disrupt systems of oppression and create greater equity across society. My research is intended to further disrupt whiteness in higher education and unpack how whiteness impacts HSIs. Whiteness can mask good intentions and inform policies and decisions that further perpetuate racial injustice and the privileging of white people (Brooks-Emmel & Murray, 2017). Therefore, while many HSIs may have good intentions to better serve Latinx students, systemic whiteness will likely prevent institutions from making significant structural shifts toward greater outcomes and cultural experiences for Latinx students (Garcia, 2019).

This study helps inform HSIs, and hopefully many institutions, about the ways whiteness exists while institutions attempt to remedy institutional inequities. Creating strategies to remedy historical injustices and current inequities, like becoming an HSI, requires more than population size or an interest in funding for the campus to support Latinx students. As Ahmed (2012) explains, if institutions are interested in creating greater diversity and inclusion, it must be ingrained throughout the entire institution. Higher education administrators cannot allow whiteness to go ignored, unchecked, or unchallenged. If institutions are committed to creating greater access and opportunity for students of color in higher education, whiteness must be identified and deconstructed.

Summary

For this study, I examined systemic whiteness at a four-year public, access-based, newly designated HSI. While many HSIs have an interest in serving Latinx students, systemic

whiteness may prevent the institution from creating policies, allocating resources, or designing support services that truly support the academic and cultural experiences of Latinx students. CwS is the theoretical framework guiding every aspect of this study, and theories of whiteness were used to construct the research questions, analysis, and approach.

In chapter two, I provide an overview of the historical racism in the United States that has led to whiteness. After offering a historical overview of racism, I will discuss whiteness and theories of whiteness. Following the overview of whiteness, previous literature analyzing whiteness on college campuses is explored and provides evidence for further analysis of whiteness at HSIs. Following whiteness in higher education, an overview of HSIs is provided with emphasis on Latinx-serving institutions. The literature review offers evidence for further research to deconstruct systemic whiteness on campuses seeking HSI and the role whiteness plays in becoming a Latinx-serving campus.

In chapter three, I provide an overview of the critical qualitative case study methodology used in the current study. Case study methodology was selected because of the specific unit of analysis and the in-depth nature of the approach. In this study, interviews of key university personnel were conducted and institutional documents were analyzed. CwS is the theoretical framework guiding all aspects of this research. CwS scholars (Cabrera, 2018; Leonardo, 2009; Nayak, 2017) intend to expose and disrupt the nuanced, invasive forms of white supremacy that permeate society and further oppress minoritized populations. CwS is used in the design and interpretation of all interviews and document analysis. Garcia's organizational decolonizing HSIs framework and Ray's (2019) racialized organizations theory are used as a tool for identifying institutional practices that uphold or disrupt whiteness.

In chapter four I provided more historical background, the institutions approach to seeking HSI, and current context for the specific case selected for this study. Giving more context for the case was intended to build understanding of decisions and priorities identified in the findings addressed in chapter five.

In chapter five I discuss the three themes and subthemes found in the data. The data analysis and themes were informed by theories of whiteness, Ray's (2019) racialized organization theory, and Garcia's (2017) decolonizing HSI's framework. Theme one described how the *rhetoric of all is a tool of white supremacy*. Two sub-themes were identified related to theme one, upholding white supremacy and challenging white supremacy. The second theme explored the *taxation on the bodies of People of Color* working at an HSI. The sub-themes explored how People of Color take on extra emotional labor to support students of color and equity at the institution in addition to hiring inequities. The final theme described how the institution upholds *whiteness through good intentions*. Three sub-themes were unpacked connected to theme three, department reorganization, lack of accountability, and performative change. As each of the themes were described, connection to the literature was offered to further describe the theme.

In chapter six I provide a detailed analysis of the themes in relation to the existing literature was offered. Cabrera et al. (2017) helped unpack examples of whiteness and white supremacy exposed in the data. This includes that whiteness can be difficult to fully identify and disrupt, theories of whiteness and emotionality (Matias, 2017), colorevasiveness (Annamma, Jackson, and Morrison, 2017), whiteness as property (Harris, 1993), white fragility (DiAngelo, 2018), and saviorism. Chapter six also offers recommendations for HSI's on how to disrupt and

challenge systemic whiteness in support of Latinx students. Finally, in chapter six I share

reflections of my learning and growth throughout the doctoral process.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Many scholars of color have written and conducted research to illuminate and deconstruct racial injustice in the United States (Cabrera 2012; Parker, Deyhle, & Villenas, 1999; Solorzano & Yosso, 2002). This research study is informed by the work of Critical Race Scholars (Delgado, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Solorzano & Yosso, 2002) and scholars of color, who expose racial injustice and offer frameworks to analyze and complicate systems of oppression. From the tenets of Critical Race Theory arose Critical whiteness Studies (CwS). CRT illuminates the systemic nature of racism across society and the complications in addressing and eliminating racism (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Many daily, invasive forms of racism are rooted in white supremacy, a symptom of whiteness. In this study, theories of whiteness are used to expose how systemic whiteness influences the actions, decisions, and cultures of HSI campuses. Because many HSI institutions were established at Historically White Institutions (HWIs), institutions historically built to serve white students, systemic whiteness is deeply sewn into the fabric of the institution and continues to be difficult to disrupt.

The following literature review provides an in-depth overview of whiteness and offers examples of whiteness in higher education. Further, systemic whiteness on college campuses will be explored to help understand how whiteness impacts HSIs. Following whiteness, a description of HSIs will be provided and how whiteness impedes HSIs from serving Latinx students.

Historical Racism in Higher Education

Before discussing whiteness, discussing the historical context that has created whiteness is imperative. As Kendi (2016) titled his book, racism was "Stamped from the Beginning" in the United States. Laws, treatment, rights, resources, and everything from the beginning of the founding of the United States has been built to value the life and well-being of white people.

Kendi exposed how prior to colonizers stealing land from Native Americans to build a country off the backs of enslaved people, the concept of race did not exist. The white people who are credited with founding the United States stole the rights and the lives of People of Color for their own benefit. As Kendi described, Jefferson and other founding members were aware of the horrific treatment and brutal lives of people enslaved, and yet they maintained slavery for their own profit. In fact, Wilder (2013) described how white people were taught to believe People of Color were less human and were inferior to white people, thus justifying slavery. While Lincoln is credited with ending slavery, Biewen and Kumanyika (2017) described in the "Seeing White" podcast how although Lincoln opposed slavery, he still believed Black people to be inferior to whites. The only explanation for the Jim Crow era and segregation is that masses of white people believed People of Color were inferior to white people. The shameful, disgusting history of the United States lasted for hundreds of years. Many intentional laws that disproportionally negatively affect People of Color still exist today (Alexander, 2012). Take for instance, the federal government's decision to criminalize the use of crack cocaine, a drug disproportionally affecting black people, versus prioritizing treatment for individuals addicted to opioids, for which the overwhelming number of addicts are white people. Also consider recent legal cases that have acquitted white police officers for killing unarmed black people because the court found that the officer's life was threatened. Yet, Trevon Martin, Philando Castile, Alton Sterling, Sandra Bland, George Floyd, Breonna Tayler and so many more were unarmed when they were killed. Understanding whiteness requires understanding the United States was built to and continuous to benefit white people and minoritized People of Color.

The overt historical racism that fueled the United States for hundreds of years continues to impact society today (Kendi, 2016). Yet, differences are present in how injustice exists.

Previously, direct laws limited resources available to People of Color, such as buying a home. Today, color-evasive policies, as DiAngelo (2018) described, deny People of Color home loans or offer less money for home loans. While segregation in schools is illegal, students of color are more likely to be reprimanded compared to white students (Cherng & Halpin, 2016). Like racism in the past, racism today is legal, upheld, and encouraged. The tagline of Trump's 2016 campaign, "Make America Great Again" has resounding influence on white people, the majority of whom voted for him. White people benefit from overt forms of racism that privilege their lives and make them immune to racist acts (DiAngelo, 2018; Cabrera, 2018). Disrupting and changing the current system that prioritizes the lives of white people over People of Color requires recognition that history continues to influence actions, decisions, and values. The brutal realities of racism in America impacts all aspects of society, including higher education.

Although significant shifts have been made regarding who is able to access higher education, the historical injustices woven into the fabric of institutions continues to impact educational outcomes for students of color. Recognizing the long history of injustice in society and in higher education is imperative to addressing the current barriers that maintain disparities in college access and completion for historically marginalized populations. Understanding how the historical treatment and abuse endured by People of Color continues to impact our actions and behaviors today is highly important. While laws have changed, the impact of hundreds of years of legal racism have developed into unconscious or innocuous acts of racial injustice that continue to minoritize People of Color. As Squire, Williams, and Tuitt (2020) described, how higher education continues historical and current racist practices that unjustly use the bodies of students, faculty, and staff of color to advance institutional profit and gain. If institutions of

higher education are committed to supporting the educational advancement of People of Color, they must identify and address the normalized ways racism exists.

Whiteness

As scholars have described, whiteness is the invasive system of white supremacy that permeates society (Cabrera, 2012; Cabrera et al., 2017; DiAngelo, 2018). Many theoretical frameworks exist that help disentangle the systemic nature of whiteness, such as color-evasiveness, whiteness and emotionality, property, and immunity (Annamma et al., 2017; Bonilla-Silva, 2018; Cabrera, 2018; DiAngelo, 2018; Harris, 1993). In her recent book, DiAngelo (2018) offered everyday examples of whiteness and how people—particularly white people—reinforce whiteness through actions which maintain white dominance and the valuing of white people's cultural beliefs and experiences. While the United States has a brutal history of injustice and racism toward communities of color, whiteness reveals the nuanced, pervasive forms of everyday racism that maintain white dominance. These everyday forms of whiteness are often unchecked and are so insidious in cultural norms that their existence is difficult to expose and dismantle, particularly for white people (Cabrera, 2012; DiAngelo, 2018; Harris, 1993).

DiAngelo (2018) described how white people uphold white dominance by maintaining that white people who are "good people" are not racist. This notion falsely applies racism to certain people and ignores systemic racism and how the system is maintained by everyday actions and beliefs that white ideas, norms, and traditions are better. Ray (2019) suggested individuals and organizations inform each other about racism. Collectively, all individuals contribute to an organization, and more broadly to society and society then reinforces the collective conscious. Acknowledging that whiteness is rooted in society's consciousness, strategies must be employed to challenge these notions to help society achieve racial

consciousness and become active agents in the pursuit of racial justice. Revealing nuanced, systemic forms of whiteness is crucial for deconstructing whiteness in higher education. Arguably, unchecked whiteness is the source of continued inequities in the college experiences of students of color (Cabrera et al., 2016; Garcia, 2019).

As Harris (1993) described, whiteness can be understood through access to and use of property in society. Matias' (2017) scholarship demonstrated how whiteness influences whose emotions are believed as valid and given priority. Bonilla-Silva (2018) described how whiteness is maintained by denying racial difference and dismissing the existence of race. Each of these scholars illuminates the nuanced pervasiveness of whiteness across society. Yet, as DiAngelo (2018) described, while many examples of whiteness exist, little actions have been taken, particularly by white people, to deconstruct systemic forms of whiteness.

Theories of Whiteness

The impact of whiteness is vast and deeply embedded across society and is instilled in all of our consciousness. Unpacking the many nuanced examples of whiteness is difficult but necessary for society in general and for higher education to create equitable campuses. This section will explore theories of whiteness, whiteness and emotionality, color-evasiveness, and whiteness as property to help unpack the everyday examples of how whiteness upholds white supremacy and the further minoritization of People of Color. Throughout this research study, theories of whiteness were used to unpack and dismantle whiteness at HSIs.

Whiteness and Emotionality

As many researchers described (Brooks-Immel & Murray, 2017; Cabrera, 2012; DiAngelo, 2018), whiteness manifests in insidious, pervasive ways. Further research has exposed systemic whiteness as it relates to whose emotional experiences are valued and believed (Matias,

2017). Matias (2016) illuminated how the emotions of white people are prioritized over the emotions of People of Color. Examples of this include a white woman making a racially charged comment and a person of coloring responding to and bringing attention to the racism of the comment. Once confronted by the person of color for the comment, the white person begins to cry, and comforting the white person is now the responsibility of the person of color. This example identifies a form of white supremacy that allows erasure of the white woman's harmful comment while doubling the impact on the person of color who is now responsible to push their pain aside to prioritize the emotions of the white person.

Similarly, hooks (2000) identified emotionality in her description of white women's emotional experiences being prioritized during the feminist movements. During the second wave of the feminist movement, white women denounced and belittled women staying home to raise their children and instead motivated white women to work outside the home. hooks exposed how despite white women's degradation of staying home, white women employed women of color to raise their children and clean their homes. This example illuminates how white women prioritized their own emotional experiences and success over those of women of color. Also important to name, white women's erasure of the needs and experiences of women of color during the feminist movements was a gross disregard of the humanity of women of color.

Although often unseen, these examples are more obvious compared to the many ways the emotions of white people are prioritized. For example, during an institutional committee meeting I attended, the staff were having a conversation about whether to fund a multicultural center. The conversation included two main points: whether the multicultural center was being formed to create an inclusive space for communities of color or whether it was being formed to create a student lounge with the belief that it will be for "all" students. Negotiations around this

conversation included opinions like, "well, we don't want the space to be exclusive," "we are a majority white school," and "I worry how the students will respond." Each of these statements prioritized the emotional experiences of white students over students of color. For example, the statement "we don't want the space to be exclusive" ignores the fact that communities of color are expressing a need for space because campus spaces for "all" do not feel welcoming to communities of color. In addition, the people these staff are worried will feel "excluded" are white students. Prioritizing white emotions leads to decisions that further benefit white people and maintain racist systems.

Color-Evasiveness

Another example of how whiteness contributes to systemic racial injustice is colorblindness. Bonilla-Silva (2018) described colorblind-racism as a strategy white people use to exculpate themselves from racial inequality. While Bonilla-Silva's work has been crucial to understanding whiteness, Annamma et al. (2017) identified the terminology of colorblindness as ableist and not fully describing the purposeful covering-up of racism and offer color-evasiveness as a more inclusive and accurate term. In this study, color-evasiveness is used. In his book, Bonilla-Silva (2014) explored the extreme racial injustice that exists in society and white people's denial of racism. Bonilla-Silva and Annamma et al. suggested that color-evasiveness is a more nuanced form of racial injustice, wherein white people deny racism by stating that they do not "see" race or treat someone differently based on race. Bonilla-Silva and Annamma et al. offered evidence that demonstrates how color-evasiveness manifests itself and how the covert tactic reinforces white supremacy.

Bonilla-Silva (2018) provided examples of color-blindness in which a realtor charged People of Color more to live in a certain neighborhood compared to whites or in which a realtor

suggested certain neighborhoods for white people and other neighborhoods for People of Color.

Further, DiAngelo (2018) provided examples of how white people talk about race without explicitly talking about race. For instance, like the housing example from Bonilla-Silva's work, DiAngelo described white people's descriptions of predominantly white neighborhoods as being "safe and clean" and neighborhoods that are mixed or have more People of Color as being urban or sketchy and dangerous. The white people in the examples offered by Bonilla-Silva (2014) and DiAngelo do not directly talk about race as the reason for the actions or comments, but race is clearly the source of the discrimination.

Further research is needed to unpack the manifestations of color-evasiveness on college campuses and how this theory impacts institutional priorities and decisions. Considering HSIs have at least 25% Latinx identified students, deconstructing the ways race is discussed or avoided on these campuses is important. As Garcia (2019) described, if HSIs seek to support Latinx students, race must be centered, and whiteness must be exposed and addressed.

Whiteness as Property

Much research has analyzed the invasive forms of white privilege and white supremacy in society (Bell, 1992; DiAngelo, 2018; Harris, 1993). Research conducted by Harris (1993) and Bell (1992) challenged society to consider how whiteness is related to property and wealth. Bell provided stories of how political leaders use the frustrations of white, low-income, uneducated people to further marginalize communities of color. However, this is done in covert, seemingly innocuous ways that make it easy for whites to disassociate their actions from racism. An example of this was clear in the 2016 presidential election. Trump's tagline for his campaign was "Make America Great Again" (MAGA). Without critical analysis, this statement appears like a fine campaign slogan, only wanting to "improve" America. However, MAGA completely

disregards the long history of the painful and horrific treatment of People of Color and all marginalized communities. Bell (1992) offered examples of Republican candidates reinforcing racial injustice through the candidate's apathy to the experiences and lawful injustice endured by communities of color. These candidates had the privilege of making the experiences of People of Color invisible in the political shaping and direction of the country. While silencing the experiences of People of Color, politicians also have the power to prioritize the concerns and values of white people. Bell (1980) coined the theory "interest convergence." Interest convergence asserts that white people only care about issues of racial injustice if there is some personal benefit to white people to care about race. Interest convergence gives understanding about why white politicians are apathetic and silence the voices of People of Color and focus on their own white, personal needs. Bell's work exposed the continued political and legal prioritization of white people. Bell described whiteness as a deeply ingrained form of white supremacy that allows the white people in control of politics and money to silence the needs and experiences of People of Color.

Similar to Bell, Harris (1993) framed whiteness within the economic and wealth benefits associated with having white skin. In her work, Harris identified how the socially constructed racial caste system maintains white dominance and the economic disenfranchisement of People of Color. Harris's analysis of whiteness as property, framed in the context of U.S. law, provides four rights of whiteness as property: the right to disposition, the right to use and enjoyment, the right to status and property, and the right to exclude. Harris also described how these rights that whites have come to expect have been affirmed and protected by the law.

In her work, Harris (1993) described the "right to disposition" as a white person's ability to exclude their racial identity as a form of property, thus making demonstrating how whiteness

serves as a form of property or wealth difficult. Harris's point about "right to use and enjoyment" refers to white people's ability to enjoy things that they own or have access to using. Because white people can easily own things, white people can enjoy those things. The third theory that Harris offered regarding whiteness, "reputation and status property," refers to capital received by white people purely for their white skin. Harris suggested that white people are regarded as having better reputations and higher statuses in society because of their white skin. With this higher reputation and status comes better treatment and access to opportunity. The final theory of whiteness as property offered by Harris is the "absolute right to exclude," which refers to white people's right to exclude anyone who whites deem as not white.

Whiteness as property as described by Harris (1993) provided a framework for understanding the daily benefits and rewards white people enjoy because of the color of their skin. Moreover, Harris demonstrated how white people are in the position of power to maintain whiteness as property, thus making whiteness difficult to expose and disrupt. For this study, understanding how Harris's four rights as property show up in higher education settings is imperative.

The three theories of whiteness discussed in this section (emotionality, color-evasiveness, and property) describe the nuanced, invasiveness ways that whiteness exists across society and further minoritizes People of Color. Considering the pervasiveness of whiteness, continuing to explore how whiteness impacts higher education is important. Much research has explored whiteness in higher education (Cabrera, 2012; Cabrera et al., 2016; Latino, 2010), but further research is needed to understand systemic whiteness at HSIs. The next section will provide an overview of research on systemic whiteness in higher education.

Whiteness in Higher Education

Many examples of whiteness exist in higher education (Brooks-Immel & Murray, 2017; Cabrera et al., 2016; Latino, 2010). Bonilla-Silva (2018), and Annamma et al. (2017) detailed examples of how white administrators perpetuate color-evasive ideology and reinforce notions that "white" is void as a racial identity. This aligns with DiAngelo's (2017) work in which white people preclude themselves and other whites from racism if they are "good people" who do not see race. These invasive acts and beliefs maintain white dominance by white people using their racial power to deny white privilege and racism. Even when institutions employ strategies for supporting students of color, as Stewart (2017) described, often these strategies are rooted in appeasement practices that are not actually intended to create change but give the appearance of change. Addressing whiteness in higher education begins with recognizing how whiteness operates and is performed to maintain unjust systems. The following sections detail literature that describes how whiteness exists across higher education.

Performative Whiteness in Higher Education

While it is common for institutions to have diversity mission statements, many of the strategies institutions employ or invest in fail to disrupt systemic whiteness and inequities (Stewart, 2017). In a recent article by Sangaramoorthy and Richardson (2020), the authors critic higher education institutions performative approach to addressing racism. In summer 2020, after the killing of George Floyd, many institutions made public statements supporting Black lives and committing to racial justice. Yet, as Sangaramoorthy and Richardson described, these statements from higher education institutions have lacked substance or follow through. Similar to performative actions, Stewart (2017) described how many institutions fail to create equitable change and instead implement programs and practices that maintain the status quo. As

Sangaramoorthy and Richardson (2020) and Stewart (2017) identified, many of the actions and behaviors of higher education institutions are not actually creating change to the ways inequities and racism impact college campuses. Addressing and understanding how whiteness exists in higher education can assist institutions in challenging higher education's performative actions and instead commit to creating systemic change.

Whiteness Among Faculty and Staff

In a 2010 study, Latino analyzed data from interviews with white administrators and identified examples of how administrators reinforce the idea that race discussions and concerns are the responsibility of People of Color. White people upholding this system perpetually place the responsibility of resolving racism on the community enduring the injustice, People of Color, which allows whites to disengage and falsely deny responsibility of racism. Whites' deflections of race from themselves to other whites who are intentionally racist again allows white people to believe that only "some" white people are responsible for racism instead of recognizing that systemic whiteness influences all of society (Cabrera, 2012; Latino, 2010).

The work of Latino (2010) aligns with a study conducted by Brooks-Immel and Murray (2017). Brooks-Immel and Murray's qualitative study examined how white administrators, faculty, and staff come to understand their own racial locations and how whiteness relates to institutional structures. In this study, Brooks-Immel and Murray used purposeful sampling and interviewed 30 faculty, staff, and administrators. The institution was a large public urban campus that was predominantly students of color at 58%. The faculty and administration on the campus were predominantly white. The researchers described the political context of the time of the study, which occurred during the same time as the killing of African-American men in Ferguson, Baltimore, Cleveland, and New York and the growth of the Black Lives Matter movement.

In their study, Brooks-Immel and Murray (2017) found white administrators overwhelmingly identified with some form of color-evasiveness (the belief that you do not see color). This color-evasiveness mentality allowed the administrators to maintain the opinion that race does not matter and holds little impact in their lives. In addition to the denial of race and racism, the researchers identified five "microconstructions" of white supremacy:

1. Whites subscribe to a view of racism as an individualized phenomenon.

2. Whites take a color-evasiveness position regarding race in their daily lives.

3. Whites claim People of Color see race while they do not.

4. Whites employ a diversity discourse of helping and caring.

5. Whites see race primarily as a black/white binary.

Each of these microconstructions helps illuminate the invasive, nuanced examples of whiteness in higher education. Further, these microconstructions assist with exposing ways that white people uphold whiteness through the denial of its existence or through false messages of support and care. Recognizing these "caring," "supporting," or color-evasiveness actions as whiteness will help people understand the deep-rooted racism and tactics that uphold white supremacy across society.

Related to the microconstructions outlined by Brooks-Immel and Murray (2017), Brunsma, Brown, and Placier (2012) described the walls of whiteness at HWCUs. The walls of whiteness refer to the layers of protection students and university staff receive from the institution that thwart them from addressing or recognizing their own whiteness and white supremacy. Brunsma et al. (2012). acknowledged while some faculty or staff address white supremacy, most of the campus can avoid ever engaging in these conversations and that higher education is designed to reinforce the walls of whiteness (grading system, campus activities,

institutional symbols, and culture). Cabrera's (2012) study of white men in higher education helped further reinforce the existence of the walls of whiteness. In Cabrera's study, he found while many white male students had interactions with people from different racial backgrounds or took an academic course on race, the students did not understand how whiteness provided them privilege. Cabrera explained while someone may be conscious of racism in society, this does not translate to the person looking inward and deconstructing their own internalized racism.

The works of Brooks-Immel and Murray (2017) and Brunsma et al. (2012) described examples of how white people maintain whiteness. While whiteness exists because of white people benefiting from whiteness, I want to be intentional about decentering white people from this research and prioritize the impact of whiteness on People of Color. Dade, Tartakov, Hargrave, and Leigh (2015) conducted a study to understand bias in faculty appointment processes. In their research, they found People of Color experience bias in the interview and selection process of faculty. Further, Lloyd-Jones (2009) conducted a study analyzing university staff leadership and found similar bias in the treatment of staff of color. Similar to Bonilla-Silva's (2018) point identifying and disrupting whiteness is difficult, in Dade et al. (2015) and Lloyd-Jones' (2009) research, the examples of whiteness related bias were often unchallenged and dismissed. Because whiteness can be so difficult to prove (having to prove whiteness being an example of how white people hold the power to define racism), dismantling it can be difficult (Bonilla-Silva, 2018). Yet, if bias that prioritizes the experiences and qualifications of white people is maintained, institutions will be unable to create equitable experiences and outcomes for students.

Whiteness Among Students

Foste (2019) conducted a narrative analysis study to expose how white college students reproduce whiteness on their campuses. In the study, Foste interviewed white college students and identified three themes that demonstrate how whiteness is upheld by white students. As Bonilla-Silva (2018) described, whiteness is maintained through the denial of systemic injustice that serves to privilege white people and minoritize People of Color. In Foste's study, the white students held that their campuses were racially inclusive because diversity and inclusion were institutional priorities, because no overt bias incidents occurred, and because college campuses are inherently more liberal. Further, students in Foste's study attempted to minimize or dismiss the existence of racism by claiming "everyone just gets along" (2019, p. 246). As critical whiteness scholars have described (Bonilla-Silva, 2018; Cabrera, 2019; Harris, 1993), a way whiteness is maintained is through white people's denial of systemic racism and white supremacy. The white students in Foste's study attempted to "sugar coat" race on their campus to benefit themselves and their experience of the campus. While the students described race relations on their campus positively, the students also critiqued students of color for being over the top regarding racial protesting. As Harris (1993) described, whiteness can be understood by unpacking who has access to and control of property. The white students' objections to students of color protesting upholds whiteness by the white students seizing the power of the institution and determining "appropriate" amounts of protest.

A study conducted by Cabrera (2012) illuminated white male students' struggles with normalizing whiteness on their campuses. Many of the students in Cabrera's study claimed victimization on their campuses and denied the existence of racism. While some of the students in Cabrera's study were, as Cabrera's described as working through their whiteness, many

described maintaining and upholding whiteness. Similar to Matias' (2017) description of whiteness and emotionality, white students claiming victimization removes the emotional ramifications of racism endured by People of Color and prioritizes dismissing responsibility away from the white students. Understanding how white students contribute to embedded whiteness on college campuses is important. As many critical race scholars have explained, whiteness must be recognized, and action must be taken against the racial privileging of white people and the oppression of People of Color.

These examples of how whiteness has been studied among students on college campuses helps demonstrate the systemic nature of whiteness and how students reinforce, support, and ignore whiteness. The invasive legitimizing of whiteness contributes to what makes whiteness difficult to expose and disrupt. As Matias and Mackey (2016) illuminated in their research, there may be ways to disrupt whiteness with white students, but it takes investment from folks across the institution to make systemic shifts toward the deconstruction of whiteness and the prioritization of racial justice. Each of the studies by Foste (2019), Cabrera (2012), and Matias and Mackey (2016) were conducted with white students. As Garcia (2019) and Conrad and Gasman (2015) described, many HSIs are formed on historically white campuses. Therefore, it is important to unpack how white students at HSIs may uphold and reinforce whiteness along with the campus administration. However, while white students benefit from and reinforce whiteness, the systemic impact of whiteness has huge ramifications for students of color (Cabrera et al., 2016).

Whiteness and Labor Injustice in Higher Education

As was highlighted in the section above, whiteness influences how faculty and staff operate at an institution and students experiences on the campus. It is important to also recognize

the role whiteness plays in how labor injustice exists in higher education. Recent reports from the American Council on Education (2019) described how more students of color are attending higher education. Connected to the growing population of students of color in higher education, it is important to understand how demographic shifts in the student population has led to extra emotional labor expected of staff and faculty of color. This is particularly relevant when considering a HwCU. As DiAngelo (2018) and Brooks-Immel and Murray (2017) described, whiteness allows white people to believe that race and racism is a challenge for People of Color to address, not white people. Thus, when white people fail to recognize how race influences a college campus, and how students of color experience the campus, we as white people place the responsibility and emotional labor for addressing race on faculty and staff of color.

As Harper and Hurtado (2007) identified, there are significant gaps in representation of faculty and staff of color in higher education. Therefore, while there is a growing population of students of color pursuing higher education, there is not growth in the representation of faculty and staff of color. Further, like Nuñez, Ramalho, and Cuero (2010) identified, representation of faculty of color can create a greater sense of connection for students of color in the classroom. Yet, like in a recent report from the Southern Regional Education Board (2017) faculty of color are highly underrepresented in higher education. In addition, a recent report from Georgetown University (2019) described disparities in hiring Black and Latinx people in all professions, including higher education. Despite these recent reports and many articles written on disparities in racial representation of faculty and staff of color, institutions continue to fail to increase hiring more staff and faculty of color (Georgetown University, 2019).

In addition to institutions failures to create systemic change to hiring practices that support hiring more People of Color, as Squire et al. named, institutions systemically using the

bodies of People of Color for their own profit and gain regardless of the impact on People of Color. For example, as Harper and Hurtado (2007) and Nuñez et al. (2010) described the importance of diverse racial representation of faculty and staff to support students of color, despite growth in students of color attending higher education, the emotional labor of supporting the growing population has been expected of the few faculty and staff of color on the campuses.

In addition to emotional labor, Melaku (2019) described the invisible labor people of color have to endure in work places. Invisible labor is not specifically defined but includes the everyday ways People of Color have to adjust their existence to be accepted in white professional spaces. Invisible labor could include shifting language or behavior to appease white discomfort or taking on extra work socially defined as work expected from People of Color (i.e., diversity and inclusion initiatives). The labor injustice expected of People of Color is rooted in whiteness and white supremacy and must be addressed to achieve equitable experiences for faculty and staff of color working in higher education. The following section provides an overview of Minority Serving Institutions and as MSIs, it is important to consider the impact racial disparities in representation of faculty and staff of color creates at institutions that have a mission for serving students of color, like an HSI.

Minority Serving Institutions

While higher education has existed in the United States since the 1600's, these original campuses were only accessible to white, upper-class men. Hundreds of years after the first university formed in the United States, Minority Serving Institutions formed (MSIs). MSIs are institutions with the mission and purpose to support the educational advancement of historically minoritized populations (Conrad & Gasman, 2015). While MSIs vary in all aspects, from public, private, small, large, urban, and rural, the mission to support the educational attainment of

historically underrepresented students is shared. Conrad and Gasman (2015) described how MSIs offer a more culturally responsive and supportive campus environment compared to historically white colleges and universities for students of color.

Currently, there are four types of MSIs, Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs), Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs), and Native American, Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions (AANAPISIs). Currently, MSIs educate 20% of all students enrolled in college (Conrad & Gasman, 2015). HBCU'S first formed after the civil war, TCU's formed after the Indian Civil Rights Act in 1968, HSIs were federally designated after long advocacy from Latinx activists in 1965, and AANAPISIs were designated by the federal government in 2001 (Conrad & Gasman, 2015). Conrad and Gasman conducted a multisite case-study at several MSI's to understand how these campuses better serve students. In their study, Conrad and Gasman identified specific examples of intentional institutional practices to center the culture and experiences of the students of color served. Through their research, Conrad and Gasman identified MSIs as strong leaders in successful practices for engaging and serving minoritized student populations and suggested MSIs as leaders for all institutions.

While MSI's have led initiatives to support students of color and all underrepresented groups, not all MSI's are serving Latinx students (Garcia & Okhidoi, 2015). Garcia and Okhidoi (2015) exposed while many campuses have an HSI designation, many of these campuses have focused on Latinx enrollment without focusing on serving Latinx students. Garcia and Okhidoi argued just having an HSI designation is not enough to demonstrate that the campus is Latinx-serving and universities must take intentional actions to make cultural shifts.

Hispanic Serving Institutions

In recent decades, institutions of higher education have implemented many strategies to support the growing diverse student populations entering college. One of these strategies has been the development of Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs), and one specific type of MSI, Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs). HSIs were first formed in the early 1990s, and the federal government defines them as institutions with at least 25% Latinx students. Today, 523 HSIs are in the United States and many more institutions have the designation of emerging HSI (Excelencia in Education, 2019). HSIs institutional type and mission are very diverse (Nuñez & Elizondo, 2015). HSIs are unique compared to other MSIs because they are often formed at HWCUs. HSIs educate more that 66% of all Latinx students in higher education, and the total number of HSIs is expected to rise (Excelencia in Education, 2019).

HSIs are eligible for Title V grant funds from the federal government to help increase the number of Latinx students accessing and completing higher education. Most HSIs are at two-year and four-year public institutions. In addition to at least 25% Latinx identified students, to qualify for Title V funds, the HSI must also be 50% first-generation college students. Nuñez, Crisp, and Elizondo (2016) described HSIs as very diverse because of their Latinx student population and because a high percentage of students are first-generation college students and from low-income backgrounds. The rich diversity of HSIs creates a strong opportunity for institutions to invest in meeting the needs of Latinx students in support of greater access and completion of college.

Yet, while HSIs are intended to serve Latinx students, many scholars (Contreras & Contreras, 2015; Garcia, 2019; Garcia, 2017) have identified deficits in institutions' abilities to meet the needs of Latinx students. Contreras and Contreras (2015) found while many institutions

34

achieve HSI status, inequities in college persistence at HSIs for Latinx students is higher than other student populations on the campus. Further, Garcia (2019) explains that while institutions have recruited more Latinx students, these institutions made little change in their institutional culture and procedures to center the needs and experiences of Latinx students. Because HSIs have such a significant opportunity to support college access and completion for Latinx students, understanding what is preventing these institutions from serving Latinx students is of the utmost importance (Garcia & Okhidoi, 2015).

Garcia (2019) names whiteness as a factor thwarting HSIs' ability to meet the needs of Latinx students. While institutions are taking the initiative to apply for HSI status, institutional barriers and culture are making it challenging for these campuses to support Latinx students. Further research is needed to understand how systemic whiteness may be contributing to institutions' failures in meeting the needs of Latinx students at HSIs. Garcia (2018) offers Decolonizing Hispanic Serving Institutions as an organizational framework for disrupting practices and policies that uphold whiteness at HSIs. This study utilizes Garcia's framework to expose how whiteness is centered at HSIs and prevents HSIs from serving Latinx students.

Latinx-Serving

Understanding HSIs and how they support Latinx students is important because of the growing percentage of Latinx students attending HSIs, which is currently 66% (Excelencia in Education, 2020). While HSIs can support positive outcomes and experiences for Latinx students, current structures, policies, and practices were not designed to support Latinx students (Contreras & Contreras, 2015). Garcia (2019) described HSIs as a racialized designation and as such, Latinx service should be connected to supporting race and ethnicity. A multi-institution case study by Harper and Hurtado (2007) illuminated stark contrasts in racial climate indicators

among white students and students of color. Students of color overwhelming indicated a negative racial climate on their campuses, even if the campus was diverse. Harper and Hurtado's finding is important in the conversation about HSIs because these institutions are often formed on HWCUs whose culture may be embedded in whiteness. If an HSI is seeking to serve Latinx students, first understanding how structural forms of whiteness impede the HSI from being Latinx-serving is important.

Garcia (2017) examined the meaning of an institution being Latinx-serving. As Garcia described, just because an institution is an HSI does not mean that it is Latinx-serving. Latinx-serving could be measured by understanding outcomes and the culture of the campus for Latinx students. Contreras and Contreras (2015) conducted a study using the Postsecondary Education Data System to understand outcomes of Latinx students at two- and four-year HSIs and found that across the California University and Community College system, disparities exist in Latinx students' persistence. However, recommendations from the study suggest that institutions need to rethink the way Latinx student success is measured. For instance, most institutions measure graduation rates by four or six years. Yet, on average, Latinx students complete their degrees in nine years (Contreras & Contreras, 2015). The current graduation year measures are incorrectly demonstrating Latinx student persistence. President of Excelencia in Education, Deborah Santiago, asserted on a Lumina Foundation podcast that for institutions to serve Latinx students, transformation and Latino representation in institutional leadership is needed. Arguably, like Garcia's (2019) description, systemic whiteness in the creation of student success models may contribute to current policies and measures that inaccurately measure Latinx student success. The transformation that Santiago described could be addressed at HSIs if institutions deconstruct systemic whiteness on their campuses.

Further, some HSIs are struggling to support their Latinx students while also striving for greater prestige and research tier status. Doran (2015) described the University of Texas San Antonio's (UTSA), a longtime HSI, challenge with seeking "tier one" research status and upholding the institution's access mission and serving Latinx students. Since seeking tier one status and creating more rigorous admissions standards, UTSA has experienced declines in Latinx student enrollment. Doran described the opportunity UTSA could foster by achieving the balance of attaining greater prestige, serving Latinx students, diversifying STEM majors, and increasing students of color seeking graduate degrees. However, as Harper (2017) described in a speech at the Association for the Study of Higher Education, the academy is designed by, and continues to benefit, white people. If HSIs seek tier one status or more rigorous academic standards, this may be a form of upholding whiteness and privileging the "white way" of being a successful institution.

Harris (1993) described whiteness in terms of access to owning and using property. As aforementioned, one of Harris's theories of property relates to status and reputation. Harris's description of whiteness as status and reputation may make it challenging for UTSA to balance its access mission and support of Latinx students because tier one status is deeply embedded in Harper's critique of the academy being designed for and in support of white people. If UTSA achieves Tier One status without considering embedded whiteness, white students and faculty will likely be the greatest beneficiaries of the new ranking.

In addition to success measures, diverse leadership, and institutional mission, Garcia and Okhidoi (2015) and Conrad and Gasman (2015) described the need for HSIs to embed culturally affirming pedagogical and student support practices across the institution. Course content, campus programming, and student services should center the strengths, needs, and cultural

backgrounds of Latinx students. As Malcom and Bensimon (2008) described, embedding the experiences and cultural backgrounds of Latinx students at HSIs fosters a campus community that not only enrolls Latinx students but values who the students are and what the students bring to the campus. Further, in a study by Nuñez et al. (2010) they explored equitable pedagogical teaching at an HSI. Related to servingness at an HSI, Nuñez et al. identified the importance of creating community and cultural understanding in the classroom to foster deeper learning and self-reflection. In addition, the three Latina faculty who conducted the study also explored how their own identities and cultural practices supported students at an HSI and fostering deeper connection with students. In their study, Nuñez et. al found their Latina identities help foster greater connection with the students at the HSI.

Summary

As Ahmed (2012) described, to achieve a campus that centers equity and inclusion, equity and inclusion must be embedded within everything the institution does. The insidious nature of whiteness makes exposing and disrupting how whiteness exists and is upheld challenging, particularly for white people. Yet, if institutions are seeking to create greater access, opportunity, and equitable outcomes, whiteness must be addressed.

While institutions have adopted many strategies for supporting the growing number of students of color attending college, HSIs have made a significant impact on Latinx student enrollment. Despite HSIs educating more than 66% of Latinx students enrolled in college, disparities in college persistence remains for Latinx students attending HSIs (Contreras & Contreras, 2015; Garcia, 2017). Garcia (2017) described both culture and outcomes as factors in Latinx student success at HSIs. In addition, Garcia (2019) also identified whiteness as a barrier preventing institutions from creating outcomes and cultures that supports Latinx students.

Because most HSIs are formed on HWCUs, these institutions must understand how their

policies, practices, and support systems value and center the needs of white students over those

of students of color. Deconstructing systemic whiteness at HSIs may push institutions to consider

the deep-rooted racial prioritization of white people that is ingrained in policy decisions, resource

allocations, and student support services. Until significant changes are made to the institutional

fabric of HSIs, disparities in outcomes and success of Latinx students will remain. This study

hopes to add to the literature about HSIs and disrupt systemic whiteness at HSIs to better support

Latinx students.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

As a critical qualitative scholar, I seek to understand and disrupt systems that perpetuate inequities and as such, this research study is intended to illuminate and deconstruct systemic whiteness at an HSI. Using CwS and Garcia's (2018) decolonizing HSIs framework, an exploratory case study approach is used to understand systemic whiteness at an HSI and how whiteness is centered when attempting to serve Latinx students. This study focuses on two specific research questions. The first question is: In what ways does systemic whiteness influence a four-year public HSI? The second is: What role does whiteness play in how institutional agents employ strategies for serving Latinx students? After approval of my topic by my committee I received approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Colorado State University (CSU). The following paragraphs provide a detailed overview of my methodology and research design used to explore the research questions.

Critical Qualitative Research Methodology

This study used a critical qualitative case study methodology. Jones, Torres, and Arminio (2014) described critical research as research with the goal of disrupting oppressive systems and promoting societal transformation. Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2018) described qualitative research as a methodological approach that emphasizes knowledge through observations, stories, symbols, and other forms of non-numerical data collection. Further, Werts, Charmaz, McMullen, Anderson, and McSpadden (2011) explained qualitative research as the process of understanding what something is and how that something relates to and is connected to the context surrounding it. Critical qualitative research was selected for this study because the intended goal of this research is to disrupt whiteness at an HSI and help transform how HSIs serve students, build policies, and change culture in support of students of color. The in-depth nature and purpose of

qualitative research is helpful in deconstructing the pervasive examples of systemic whiteness. Further, Jones et al. (2014) described the importance of critical scholars recognizing their own biases and their impact on the research. As a white critical whiteness scholar, I recognize my own lens and perpetuations of whiteness impact all aspects of this study, and throughout the study I was intentional at unpacking my whiteness throughout the research design, data collection, and data analysis.

Theoretical Perspective

As a critical qualitative scholar, it is important to name the theoretical perspectives that guide my research approach. Both critical whiteness studies and Garcia's (2018) decolonizing HSIs framework informed every aspect of this study. Further, Ray's (2019) racialized organizations theoretical framework was used to unpack how individual institutional agents either uphold or resist whiteness and white supremacy. In addition to these three theoretical frameworks, my own lens as a white, queer, first-generation college graduate, woman will inform how I understand, interpret, and summarize the data and findings. The following paragraphs offer greater guidance about CwS, decolonizing HSI's framework, and racialized organizations as they relate to this study.

Critical Whiteness Studies

Nayak (2007) outlined three Critical whiteness Studies (CwS) approaches used by scholars to abolish, deconstruct, and rethink whiteness. Abolitionists have centered scholarship on whiteness within the context of capital and the workplace (Nayak, 2007). The goal of abolitionists is to eliminate whiteness. However, Cabrera (2018) complicated this framework by asserting that whiteness does not "go away" if people no longer hold white privilege. Structural racism is deeper than white people "giving away" privilege. Nayak notes the deconstructionist

41

framework originated in feminist scholarship and sought to deconstruct whiteness as it relates to gender. A value of the deconstructionist approach is it addresses Crenshaw's (1989) work on intersectionality within whiteness and that even women, an oppressed identity, who are white benefit from white privilege. Rethinkers of whiteness seek to expose the nuanced actions and behaviors of whiteness in all facets of society (Nayak, 2007). In my study, the rethinking whiteness theory of CwS is used to uncover how the institution is upholding and reinforcing whiteness at an HSI. As Cabrera et al. (2016) described, whiteness in higher education is pervasive and is often normalized through everyday actions and decisions. Within my research, CwS is used to complicate these normalized behaviors and expose how ideology, decisions, and actions are rooted in whiteness. As Leonardo (2009) stated, "in whiteness studies, whiteness becomes the center of critique and transformation" (p. 91). Exposing whiteness on a campus seeking HSI will help identify deep, embedded ways that the experiences, traditions, and success of white people are prioritized over People of Color. Exposing whiteness can help an institution not only achieve HSI status, but also better serve Latinx-students. The following section describes Garcia's decolonizing HSIs framework and how her framework was used to situate the examination of whiteness at the case study site.

Decolonizing Hispanic Serving Institutions Framework

Garcia (2018) created a framework that HSI campuses can use to disrupt how colonization, the historical brutality of European Americans ripping land, life, and justice from People of Color during the founding of the country and for hundreds of years following, impacts higher education. Like Critical whiteness Studies, decolonizing HSIs seeks to disrupt white normative culture on college campuses and push for representation, leadership, and decisions that center Latinx people. In her framework, Garcia outlined a nine-dimensional organizational

framework for decolonizing HSIs. Garcia described the decolonization of HSI's through purpose, mission, membership, technology, governance, community standards, justice and accountability, incentive structure, and external boundary management.

Purpose relates to how the cultural background and experiences of Latinx people are centered at HSI's. Mission relates to HSI's existing as intentionally anti-racist and anti-oppressive. Membership describes the HSI's intention of upholding racial and cultural mixing that respects all ways of knowing and being. Technology refers to HSI's decolonizing curriculums and student support practices so that racial and cultural backgrounds of Latinx people are centered. Governance centers concepts from indigenous governance that focus on pluralism and integrity. Community standards refers to HSIs developing shared, fluid standards that are intended to protect the community, including students, faculty, and staff. Justice and accountability follows restorative justice practices for resolving conflict and discipline and centers the value of all members of the community in finding solutions. The eighth dimension of the framework, incentive structure, refers to rewarding people for upholding the other dimensions of the framework and with the goal of retaining People of Color on the campus. The final dimension, external boundary management, describes how HSIs need to uphold community and relationships with supporters of HSIs, like the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) and other HSIs (Garcia, 2019).

Garcia's (2018) organizational framework was used in this study to understand how whiteness impacts the system or the whole organization. Garcia's framework informed the creation of questions for interviews with campus officials across all levels of the institution, from senior administrators to faculty and student affairs staff. Interview questions asked participants what guides their institutional decision making and how they consider race in their institutional

actions. Further, Garcia's dimensions helped frame the direction of questions and understanding how university staff and faculty center the needs and experiences of Latinx people at the HSI. The decolonizing HSIs framework was a helpful tool in identifying specific examples of how HSIs can center race and culture while disrupting systemic whiteness on the campus. In addition to data collection, Garcia's framework was used in the data analysis, which is described in more detail below.

Racialized Organizations

Ray (2019) offered racialized organizations theoretical framework to describe how race is constituted within an organization. Ray argued individuals play a significant role in the making and reinforcing of an organization's behaviors and values. Furthermore, organizations contribute to how individuals think and behave within an organization. Thus, individuals and organizations are interconnected. Ray's racialized organization theoretical framework includes four tenets for understanding how racism exists within organizations:

1. Racialized organizations enhance or diminishes the agency of racial groups
2. Racialized organizations legitimate the unequal distribution of resources
3. Whiteness is a credential
4. Decoupling is racialized

Ray's (2019) four tenets were used to develop questions to understand how systemic whiteness impacts the HSI. Further, the tenets were used to guide the development of research questions for the study and guide the data analysis and interpretation process.

<div align="center">

Case Study Methodology

</div>

As many scholars have expressed (Bonilla-Silva, 2018; Cabrera, 2012; Leonardo, 2009; Matias, 2017), because of the nature of whiteness, whiteness can be difficult to identify and

disrupt. However, as Cabrera et al. (2016) name, whiteness must be disrupted and eliminated to achieve equitable student outcomes in higher education. I chose an exploratory case study for my research methodology because of the in-depth nature of the data collection process and specificity of the unit of analysis (Bhatcharya, 2017; Yin, 2018). Yin (2018) explained case study methodology as useful for studies interested in understanding "why" or "how" a phenomenon exists in a specific case. Recognizing that structural whiteness is embedded in all institutional practices, an in-depth approach with multiple forms of data collection is necessary to better explore how individuals collectively contribute to how systemic whiteness exists at an HSI. Further, Gonzales, Kanhai, & Hall (2018) argued for institutions to challenge systemic injustices that oppress minoritized communities in higher education, radical transformation is needed at the organizational level.

Using exploratory case study methodology, interviews with institutional senior administrators, faculty, and student affairs staff were completed and document analysis of relevant institutional documents were reviewed. CwS is the theoretical framework guiding this study, and within case study methods, CwS will help uncover the pervasive ways that whiteness exists and impacts the institution. Further, Garcia's (2018) decolonizing Hispanic Serving Institutions framework and Ray's (2019) racialized organization theory were used to situate whiteness within the research to explore how systemic whiteness exists through the development of research questions and data analysis.

Site Selection

As Yin (2018) described, being thoughtful about why a particular site is selected for a single site exploratory case study is important. Over 500 HSIs exist in the United States, and as Garcia (2017) described, each HSI is unique and has its own identity. For this study, new HSI

status, diversity and access mission of the institution, public, four-year institution characteristics were prioritized. Completing a single site exploratory case-study is helpful for this research because it allowed for a thorough investigation into how systemic whiteness exists at the institution. Understanding how whiteness exists at a single HSI, may help inform other HSI's about addressing barriers to serving Latinx students. As Garcia (2017) described, all HSIs have their own identity, therefore what is discovered in this study may not apply to all HSIs. It will be important for each HSI to examine whiteness on their campus and how whiteness impacts the institution's ability to serve Latinx students. More detail is offered about the case study site in chapter four.

Participants

During the summer 2020 semester, I solicited interview participants for this study. Having prior relationships with individuals at the institution, I first asked former colleagues in executive and mid-level leadership roles in student affairs, the administration, and academic departments for interviews. In addition, snowball sampling was used, and initial interviewees were asked to suggest additional staff and faculty. Criteria for the faculty, staff, and administrators interviewed were individuals with experience building programs and services to meet student needs, institutional policy making authority, and/or power over institutional budget allocations. A total of 14 people participated in zoom interviews: five administrators, five student affairs staff, and four faculty. Using email, I sent a description of my study with the interview request. A copy of this email is in Appendix A. Once interviewees accepted, a consent form was emailed to the participants requesting a signature authorizing their participation in audio recorded, zoom interviews.

Data Collection

As aforementioned, this critical qualitative case study utilized multiple forms of data collection to help deconstruct how systemic whiteness exists at an HSI. Data collection strategies included interviews with administrators, faculty, and student affairs staff and document analysis of key institutional documents. Further specificity of each method is described in detail in the following paragraphs.

Interviews

As a means of unpacking systemic whiteness, individuals from all levels of the institution were asked to participate in interviews. As Ray (2019) described in his racialized organizations theory, individual institutional agents contribute to the overall mission and culture of an organization and therefore will support in understanding and disrupting systemic whiteness. Purposeful sampling was completed for all interviews to identify staff and faculty with relevant knowledge related to the nine principles in Garcia's (2018) decolonizing HSI framework. Interviews were used to explore what the institution considers when creating policies, programming, budget decisions, and student support as an HSI. As Gioia and Thomas (1996) recognized, university administrators play a key role in institutional culture and mission. Recognizing that whiteness is embedded in institutional culture and mission, members of the senior leadership team and mid-level student affairs staff were asked to participate in interviews. Further, faculty play a significant role in students' college experience. Heads of academic departments and faculty across multiple disciplines were asked to participate in interviews to offer perspective on how HSI status is incorporated in the classroom and how whiteness influences the academic departments.

In addition to interviewing individuals from all levels and positions at the institution, racial diversity of participants was also considered. Recognizing that interview responses may be different between People of Color and white individuals on the campus, being thoughtful about including voices from multiple racial backgrounds was necessary. Further, as Merriam et al. (2001) described, researchers must also consider their positionality as an interviewer. I recognized my previous relationships with colleagues and social identities will influence interview interactions and results. For example, as Merriam et al. described insider and outsider perspectives and how they inform researchers work, as a white person who will be interviewing People of Color, I recognized my identities may influence trust, the relationship, and what information is shared. It is a challenge for me to fully unpack all aspects of systemic whiteness because of my positionality with interviewees.

As Garcia (2019) asserted, HSIs are inherently connected to race, and therefore race should be centered in the institution's approach to serving Latinx students. While interview questions began broadly, specific questions about how the institution centers race and Latinx culture across institutional practices were asked. A semi-structured interview approach was used with faculty, administrators, and student affairs staff. A semi-structured approach allows for some structure in the interview process while also leaving room for additional questions or conversations based on what is discussed during each interview (Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, 2014). Examples of interview questions asked in the various interviews included (see Appendix B):

1. Please describe how race is considered in the development of your course materials? (faculty question)

2. In what ways does race influence how you build policies at the institution? (administrator question)

3. How is Latinx culture prioritized in the development of institutional practices? (administrator, student affairs staff, and faculty question)

4. What factors are considered when limited resources are available with multiple priorities? (administrator and student affairs staff question)

All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed. Transcriptions and all transcription analysis were conducted by me, the researcher. Following transcribing, the transcripts were sent to the interviewee to confirm validity and accuracy of the conversations. While reviewing transcriptions, I kept a detailed journal to support reflection and analysis of the data.

Interview Sample

Senior administrators play a significant role in the shaping of the culture and priorities of the institution. Because whiteness is embedded in institutional culture and mission, multiple individuals from the senior administration were interviewed. Using Garcia's (2018) Decolonizing HSI's as a framework, individuals who contribute to institutional decisions, policy making, budget allocations were considered for interviews. Members of the president's senior cabinet were recruited through email to participate. While racial diversity of interviewers was a priority, an overwhelming majority of the senior leaders were white. Table 1 provides a breakdown of the individuals interviewed.

Table 1

Administration Interviews

Pseudonym	Position	Race	Gender
Adrian	Senior Administrator	Latinx	Male
Mike	Senior Administrator	White	Male
Sally	Senior Administrator	White	Female
John	Senior Administrator	White	Male
Greg	Senior Administrator	White	Male

In addition to the key administrators interviewed, members of the student affairs staff were also asked to participate. Students often build meaningful relationships with student affairs members, and as such they typically have an in-depth knowledge of student experiences on the campus. Because of the role student affairs plays in students' experiences of the campus, learning from student affairs members about how whiteness exists and is maintained in the student experience is important. Student Affairs at CCU is a large part of the institution and identifying folks who represent the multiple parts of student affairs was intentional. Those interviewed were a part of the multicultural center, admissions, financial aid office, orientation, and the career center. An overview of those who participated in the interview is in Table 2.

Table 2

Student Affairs Interviews

Pseudonym	Position	Race	Gender
Angela	Student Affairs	White	Female
Eric	Student Affairs	Latinx	Male
Marco	Student Affairs	Latinx	Male
Monica	Student Affairs	Black	Female
Brian	Student Affairs	White	Male

One of the main functions of a university is students in classrooms. It was important to include faculty interviews in this study because of the key role faculty play at a university. Systemic whiteness exists at all levels of an institution, and it is particularly important to understand how whiteness exists in the classroom. Some of the questions explored with faculty included, how faculty consider race in the construction of their classes and how the institutions HSI designation influenced their course designs. Table 3 provides an overview of the faculty interviewed.

Table 3

Faculty Interviews

Pseudonym	Position	Race	Gender
Karen	Faculty	White	Female
Stephanie	Faculty	Latinx	Female
Kim	Faculty	White	Female

Finally, one additional interview was included with the institutions lead on HSI initiatives at the institution. This interview was important in understanding how HSI programs and initiatives were created and implemented at the institution.

Table 4

HSI Lead Interview

Pseudonym	Position	Race	Gender
Anthony	HSI Leader	Latinx	Male

Document Analysis

Institutional documents, such as the university strategic plan, mission statement, HSI website, and other relevant institutional documents, were reviewed. Reviewing documents is important to corroborate the other data collected to understand how policies, resources, and services are implemented and communicated on the campus (Yin, 2018). CwS and Garcia's (2017) decolonizing HSI's framework were used to understand how power exists and is distributed across campus. Understanding who holds power and how power is maintained is critical to understanding systemic whiteness. Because documents will be used to deconstruct power dynamics on the campus, critical discourse analysis strategies will be used to deconstruct institutional documents. Dijk (1993) described critical discourse analysis as a methodological approach that recognizes words and language are connected to society and systems of power. Critical discourse analysis is helpful in this study because it helps further demonstrate institutional priorities, where power is held, and where power is distributed across the campus. Further, Garcia's (2018) Decolonizing HSI's nine-dimensional framework is used to identify which documents to review and what content to consider in the documents. Documents that convey the institutions strategic plan, resource allocations, priorities, mission, and culture were reviewed.

Table 5

Data Collection Process

Data Method	Purpose	Means	Completed
Administrator Interviews	Mission and Priorities	Audio recorded	September 2020
Student Affairs Interviews	Priorities and Resources	Audio Recorded	September 2020
Faculty Interviews	Course Priorities	Audio Recorded	September 2020
Document Analysis	Identify key individuals for interviews, Mission, Priorities	Read	July 2020

Data Analysis

As Jones, Torres, and Arminio (2014) described, the research design, from theoretical perspective to data collection to analysis, is not necessarily a step-by-step process but instead is interconnected throughout the design. As such, in this research design, CwS, Garcia's (2018) decolonizing HSIs framework, and Ray's (2019) racialized organizations theory informed the theoretical perspective and methodological case study approach as well as the data analysis process. Jones et al. (2014) described critical qualitative inquiry as research that recognizes societal influences on the experiences of oppressed people and functions to disrupt systemic injustice. Throughout my review of the data, I sought to understand how systemic whiteness existed on the campus, how it was maintained, and how whiteness was challenged. Garcia's (2018) nine dimensions in her decolonizing HSIs framework were used to understand how institutions either center or challenge whiteness in relation to institutional practice and student support. Ray's (2019) racialized organizations theory was used to analyze interviews and

understand how individuals contribute to the racial fabric of the institution and how the institution informs the individuals about race.

All zoom interviews were audio recorded and transcribed by me, the researcher and completed transcriptions were sent to interviewees to confirm validity and accuracy of the conversation. I analyzed all transcriptions and maintained a reflection journal to process thoughts, questions, and realizations while analyzing. The qualitative program, Dedoose, was used to create codes and organize themes from the transcriptions. While reviewing each transcript, I started to create codes that were related to theories of whiteness, Ray's (2019) racialized organization theory, and Garcia's Decolonizing HSIs framework. Using these theories and frameworks to create codes helped me to understand and interpret the data from a critical lens. Many of the codes had sub-codes to help uncover nuance in how participants responded to questions.

Thematic analysis of all interviews and document analysis was conducted. Thematic analysis is a useful approach because it helps identify themes in the data and how the themes may be connected across data collection methods (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). Recognizing I am a white woman studying whiteness, there will be gaps in my ability to recognize all forms of whiteness. While collecting data and analyzing the data, I maintained a personal journal of learnings and reflections from the research. When there were moments that caused me pause, made me uncomfortable, or made me feel defensive, I took these as signs of my own internalized whiteness and reflected on what was coming up for me in the research. Also, I sought support from colleagues to help check my data and offer feedback while recognizing that this burden cannot be placed on People of Color, and I needed to commit to my

own unlearning of internalized whiteness. My committee chair Dr. Susana Muñoz and committee member Dr. Thomn Bell have been critical to my learning and growth as a CwS scholar.

Institutional documents were analyzed using a critical discourse analysis (CDA) perspective to illuminate power structures at the institution. Dijk (1993) described CDA as a framework for recognizing how power systems influence people and organizations. Recognizing the connection between systemic whiteness and power, CDA is helpful in deconstructing how whiteness influences power structures at the institution. Document analysis was used to find supporting evidence to the themes discovered in the participant interviews and further inform findings.

Limitations

While case study methodology offers an in-depth approach with multiple forms of data collection, limitations still exist within the methodology. A single site case study design gives depth and breadth to a single institution. While what is explored at the single site may be useful to other institutions, individuals should use caution regarding applying what is learned from one campus to all institutions. As Garcia (2017) describes, each HSI is unique and has its own identity. Therefore, if a case study is conducted at each HSI, differences will likely emerge in data findings. The findings from this study should be used to inform additional studies interested in understanding whiteness at HSIs but should not be used to describe HSIs in general.

As a critical qualitative scholar, I recognize my own lens and biases influence how I design, collect, and interpret my data. Therefore, there may be limitations in what I was able to uncover and understand throughout my study. Additional studies are needed to further explore whiteness at HSIs to add perspective and additional learning from deeper research.

Summary

Like all Minority Serving Institutions, HSIs can increase access and opportunity for Latinx students. However, many HSIs have struggled with meeting the needs of and truly serving Latinx students (Garcia, 2019). This critical qualitative exploratory case study intended to explore how whiteness exists at an HSI and how the HSI serves Latinx students. Case study research fits with the intent of this research because of the in-depth nature of the approach and multiple forms of data collection. As Bonilla-Silva (2018) and Cabrera et al. (2017) described, whiteness is deeply embedded in society and on college campuses. An in-depth data collection process with interviews across all campus levels and document analysis was completed. As with all parts of the study, data analysis was informed by CwS, Garcia's (2017) decolonizing HSIs framework, and Ray's (2019) racialized organizations theory. Thematic analysis was used to review all data collected, and critical discourse analysis was used to review institutional documents. The following chapter will give greater context and detail about the case study site selected for this study.

CHAPTER 4: THE CASE

Summary of the Case

A single university was selected and given the pseudonym "Center City University" (CCU) and this chapter offers deeper explanation and context for why CCU was selected for this case study. Information from document analysis and interviews were used to help further explain and provide context about the case selected for this study. CCU was selected because it became an HSI in 2018 and is continuing to build its HSI identity. Further, CCU is a large, public, access-based institution with a mission of serving students historically underrepresented in college. CCU is defined as an access-based institution because it has a modified open-enrollment policy—meaning students who are twenty-one and older do not have to submit high school transcripts or test scores to be admitted into the institution. In addition, CCU has one of the most affordable tuition rates in the state in which it resides.

CCU's student population is forty-nine percent students of color and over fifty percent of the students identify as the first in their family to attend college. Further, CCU is centrally located in a large city with almost three-million people. As many interviewers described, CCU identifies itself as an institution connected to the community around the campus and strives to serve the surrounding communities. While the campus has a mission of serving historically underrepresented student populations, CCU is a Historically white College and University (HwCU) and it is important to understand how historic and current systemic whiteness may impact the institution's efforts to serve Latinx students as an HSI.

Historical Background

CCU was built during the 1960s in what was a predominantly Latinx neighborhood. As Bryson (2018) described in a local paper, the Latinx community living in the neighborhood was

pushed out for the institution to be built. Today, as a few people in my interviews described, CCU grapples with reconciling the harm the institutions foundation placed on Latinx communities, and being an HSI. For example, in my interview with a faculty member, Kim, she shared "So, the very fact of our physical presence on this campus and you see the [Catholic Church] at my back. This is a marker of the history of the city. A history of the Hispanic diaspora here. Both a symbol of pride and of a wound and of a healing…" Connected to how Kim described the history as both a wound and a pride, in an article written by Allen (2019) she described one example of how the institution tried to remedy its past treatment of the Latinx community by establishing a scholarship in the 1990's to support any student who was a descendant of the families who were displaced by the institution when it was established. Yet, as Bryson (2018) described, whether paying families for the loss of their homes in the 1960's or the scholarship for descendants, none of these efforts fully address the damaging community impact of displacement. More importantly, despite residual impact of displacing families to build CCU, Allen (2019) described how current recipients of the scholarship are the last generation to benefit from the funds.

The institutions challenging history, rooted in racist practices, makes CCU an important case to explore because many institutions of higher education have racist and white supremist roots (Wilder, 2010). While institutions may have good intentions for seeking HSI to support Latinx students, it is important to understand how histories of racist practices influence how the institution carries out programs, services, and policies as an HSI.

Seeking HSI

Reviewing content on the institutions HSI website demonstrated that CCU began seeking HSI in 2007 and at the time CCU started seeking HSI status, the Latinx student population at

CCU was thirteen percent. As will be described in more detail in chapter five, one senior administrator, Sally, described the institution's decision to deliberately seek HSI as "pretty revolutionary" and how no other campuses were making the same intentional decisions. To achieve HSI, CCU had to implement strategies to increase the institutions Latinx student population from thirteen percent to twenty-five percent. At the time CCU announced seeking HSI status, the institution boasted in a press release about being recognized nationally as a leader in its state for having the most diverse faculty. In 2007, when CCU first sought HSI, 20% of the faculty were People of Color. Additionally, in an institutional press release from 2008, the institution celebrated increases in enrollment attributed in large part to more students of color enrolling at the institution. In the same 2008 press release, CCU was recognized as the most racially diverse institution in the state. CCU was seen as a leader in the state for supporting students of color. An article in the city's paper described CCU as a leader in supporting students of color and assisting the state with its systemic challenge of being 44th in the nation for educating students of color (Jordan, 2007).

Based on institutional documents and local newspaper findings, CCU was already beginning to see an increase in students of color enrolling before seeking HSI. As John, a senior administrator described, much of the work of increasing the Latinx student population at CCU "fell on the enrollment branch" of the institution. CCU's focus on enrollment contrasts with Garcia's 2018 recommendations for campuses seeking HSI. Garcia's (2018) challenge to institutions seeking HSI status is to focus beyond enrollment and instead on how the institution is striving to be anti-racist and anti-oppressive for Latinx students and students of color. Understanding that CCU prioritized enrollment when seeking HSI, is important context for this

case study in understanding how systemic whiteness might have influenced the institutions early decisions and future actions as an HSI.

Included on CCU's HSI website is a description of the task force that was built in 2007 to carry out the plan for achieving HSI. Two Latinx leaders at CCU were charged with carrying out HSI efforts and a task force was built with six working groups focused on institutional infrastructure, pre-k-12 education, transfer and general enrollment, financial aid, curriculum, and staff development. As will be described in chapter five and six, it is important to note that two Latinx individuals were charged with leading HSI efforts. In chapter five, I share testimony from many staff and faculty of color about how CCU places extra emotional labor for supporting HSI efforts and equity initiatives on People of Color.

As was described in interviews, CCU's decision to seek HSI is understood as a way the institution was maintaining its mission to serve underrepresented students. A leader on HSI efforts at CCU, Anthony, shared that CCU has a "history of advocating for students". An example described in interviews and on the institution's website for CCU's leadership in student advocacy was CCU's history of creating greater access and opportunity for Dreamer students at CCU and across the state. In 2016, CCU advocated to the state legislature to offer instate tuition for Dreamer/undocumented students in the state. In part to the institution's advocacy efforts, in 2016 the legislature passed a bill creating in-state tuition for Dreamers. As is evident in this example of advocacy for Dreamers, the institution has demonstrated commitment to supporting historically underrepresented groups. CCU has strong intentions of creating access and opportunity for students historically underrepresented in college. However, without understanding how systemic whiteness influences institutions like CCU, these good intention

efforts may not be systemically supporting the Latinx students and students of color the HSI

designation is designed to support.

Similar to the institutions past decisions around displacing Latinx communities for

institutional reward and gain, it is also important to unpack the institutions decision to seek HSI

status. A few of the individuals I interviewed described how seeking HSI was an effort the

institution made in trying to reconcile its harmful past. One student affairs staff member,

Monica, shared,

> We exist on land that was taken from the Latinx community. There was a neighborhood
>
> there on the campus and it was a Hispanic neighborhood for many years and then when
>
> the decision was made to create a university…folks who were living there had to find
>
> other places to live. And unfortunately, the state didn't do a good job of ensuring that
>
> neighborhoods would stay together. So people got dispersed around Denver. I think [HSI]
>
> is an attempt to try and honor the land that was taken and who that was taken from.

While it is important to implement retributions for past harm of institutionalized racism, it is also

important to consider how whiteness influences how HwCU seek HSI and design programs for

supporting the Latinx students the designation is intended to support.

CCU Today

Despite current intentions with supporting the Latinx community, CCU's historical

reality of displacing members of the Latinx community will always be a part of the institution's

fabric. In 2007 when CCU first started seeking HSI status, 20% of the institution's faculty

identified as People of Color. In a report released by the faculty Senate at CCU, based on

institutional data from 2018-2019 the institution only increased faculty representation by 2%

since starting to seek HSI. As Harper and Hurtado (2007) urge, it is important for students of

color to have representation of faculty and staff of color on campus. It is concerning that in the time CCU started seeking HSI status, and twelve years later, they have only made incremental shifts in faculty diversity.

Today, CCU is the most diverse institution in the state it resides. Yet, a recent report from the Urban Displacement Project (2021) indicated that the city the institution is in is experiencing significant gentrification and communities of color that once surrounded the institution, are being pushed out, again. CCU pushed members of the Latinx community out of their neighborhood so that the institution can exist and then prides itself on being an institution for underrepresented and minoritized communities. Considering the institutions history of displacing Latinx communities, it is important to understand how whiteness influences how the institution addresses the current impact of gentrification on the students the institution serves. One senior administrator, John, addressed this when discussing CCU's current expansion ideas,

> We've been approached by a major developer who offered us free real estate for like 20 years if we move into this new massive development, just north of the city. If this happens, if we build this huge development, plus the other huge developments that are being planned, the secondary gentrification is going to be massive and people are going to get forced out of their homes, forced out of their communities. So what I have said is, if we're considering whether we take advantage of this really good financial offer, is do we have the communities support and do we trust our partner in this that they have mitigated secondary gentrification in some real significant ways. I think if we do too many of these, we just sort of ignore the community and do what's in our best interest, we lose the trust of the community. So we have to develop that healthy reputation with vulnerable populations in [the city] so they see us as an ally.

John's reflections on CCU's considerations of expanding, connect to Bell's (1980) theory of interest convergence. Bell's theory of interest convergence described how white people will address racism when they benefit from the decision or action. CCU displaced Latinx communities to build the university. Recently, the institution achieved HSI status, which can potentially benefit Latinx students, but the institution also benefits from additional funding. Most recently, John described how the institution may make the choice to displace families again as a direct benefit for the institution and harm for the surrounding, predominantly communities of color. Each of these examples in CCU's history and current considerations uphold Bell's theory of interest convergence in how the institution justifies its decision to displace communities of color because it is perceived that the institution is a benefit to the community.

Summary

As I described in chapter one, I failed to recognize how my white lens influenced my work in higher education. Similar to my own gaps in recognizing how I perpetuate whiteness, it is important for institutions, particularly HwCUs, to look internally and understand their own perpetuations of whiteness. The combination of recently becoming an HSI and having a mission to serve minoritized student populations while being a HwCU made this campus an important case to explore. CCU's history of harm toward the Latinx community is important context for understanding the influence of whiteness at this HSI campus. Despite the institutions historical and current attempts at remedying its harmful past, because the institution is a HwCU, it is important to take a critical approach at understanding how whiteness influences the actions and the decisions CCU makes in support of its HSI status and Latinx students. The following chapters offer an overview about what was found in the case study analysis followed by a theoretical discussion and recommendations.

CHAPTER 5: THEMES

While there have been shifts in the demographics of students in higher education, there continues to be disparities in access and completion for Students of Color. It is important to understand and disrupt these disparities and understand how systemic whiteness at institutions contributes to racial disparities. This chapter presents the findings from the case study analysis at a recently established HSI to answer the research questions posed in this study. The primary research questions guiding this study included:

(a) In what ways does systemic whiteness influence a four-year public HSI?

(b) What role does whiteness play in how institutional agents employ strategies for serving Latinx students?

The research questions in this study were important for understanding how institutions seek to challenge histories of injustice and exclusion of marginalized populations. By identifying relevant themes, the current study sought to provide recommendations for higher education to consider when building institutional programs and support, like HSI status.

This study used a single site case study methodology and fourteen interviews. Document analysis was used to analyze interview transcripts. Thematic analysis and theories of whiteness from Matias (2016), Cabrera (2012), Bonilla-Silva (2018), Harris (1993), Annamma et al. (2017), and Bell (1992) were used to analyze the data. These critical whiteness frameworks helped expose the nuanced and everyday examples of how whiteness exists in rhetoric, messaging, and actions by institutions and university agents. Three themes were identified from the data analysis, *The Rhetoric of all as a Tool of white Supremacy*, *taxation of the bodies of People of Color*, and *maintaining whiteness through "good intentions."*

Theme One: The Rhetoric of All is a Tool of white Supremacy

The Rhetoric of all as a Tool of white Supremacy described how participants defined and prioritized the HSI designation as a benefit for *all* students. As described by Garcia and Okhidoi (2015) one of the key purposes of being an HSI is creating support services that directly benefit Latinx students. However, in this study, there are multiple examples of how the Center City University (CCU) prioritizes its HSI status as a status that will benefit all students at the institution. The focus on presenting HSI designation as serving all students is evident in both the interviews and content on the HSI website. It is important to question why there is such a significant emphasis on serving all students and resistance to focusing on serving Latinx students at an HSI. Two sub-themes were identified to demonstrate how the rhetoric of all was expressed, including *appeasing whiteness* and *challenging whiteness*.

Appeasing Whiteness

During interviews, questions were asked to define what it means to be an HSI and which students were served by the HSI status. Multiple participants connected the institutions HSI status to their mission of being an institution accessible to students, particularly in the metropolitan community surrounding the campus. While most interviewees did mention the institution's HSI status supports Latinx students, there was a greater focus on how the HSI designation serves all students. On the institution's HSI website, the president of the university emphasizes how in addition to HSI status supporting Latinx students, the institution's HSI status should support all students. Specifically, one of the goals listed on the website states "HSI designation also places an importance on the need to retain and graduate our Hispanic/Latinx students and provides an opportunity to create and implement better ways of doing things to retain and graduate ALL our students." As is described by Dijk (1993), critical discourse analysis is a process for understanding how language reinforces power systems. Considering critical

65

discourse analysis, it was interesting to notice in the quote on the university website that "ALL" students is capitalized bringing emphasis to the full student population over the specific needs of Hispanic students. In addition to the institution's website, several individuals across the interviews either centered all students, or alternatively, struggled with how the HSI designation is intended to support Latinx students while grappling with how the status supports all students.

During an interview with a senior administrator, Sally, who was a part of the early decision to strive for HSI, described how the institution was met with resistance about how their pursuit of HSI would impact white students. In response, Sally and leaders of this initiative shifted their language to emphasize how HSI status would support all students, not just the needs of the Latinx students:

> So back in 2005, the president at the time launched this [HSI] initiative, and he said, you know, we are going to become a Hispanic Serving Institution. And that was pretty revolutionary back then because a lot of institutions were HSI's, but they had received that designation through more of an organic process and ours was much more intentional and so my messaging behind this is we kind of awoke a sleeping giant...You have the naysayers that are saying, well, what are you going to do with the white students that you're kicking out and why are you only focusing on Latinx students, that makes no sense. And so the messaging that we started from the very beginning was HSI will support all students.

As demonstrated by this quote, Sally named the institution's intentional effort to minimize the concerns about white students leaving by emphasizing that pursuing HSI would support all students. Further, this quote illuminates how white students were prioritized in the messaging, as opposed to focusing on how Latinx students might feel or be impacted by the HSI designation.

This relates to Stewart's (2017) work on language of appeasement and how institutional diversity and inclusion efforts serve to appease dissent and maintain the status quo.

As was mentioned in Sally's comments, senior administrators were concerned of how HSI status could be perceived by non-Latinx, predominantly white members of the community. However, while there was an emphasis in interviews with the senior administrators about concerns raised related to seeking HSI, there was less discussion on how seeking and holding HSI was perceived by members of the Latinx community. As Matias (2017) described in her theory of whiteness and emotionality, the use of "all" was a way to respond to white people's emotional responses over those of People of Color. An additional senior administrator, Mark, talked about CCU's community perception and how this perception influenced the institution's communication about its HSI status and mission,

> But I think even more importantly than the financial component is the moral and ethical element of being a Hispanic Serving Institution. We have stacked our flag in a very public way and we have clearly stated that we are committed to supporting all of our students and it doesn't matter whether they're Hispanic or Black or White. It doesn't matter. Frankly, if they're documented or not documented... They are our family and we are committed to supporting them in every way that we can. So that to me is the power of being an HSI..... There again, there's sort of two parts to it. There's the financial part, the resource part which supports all of our students. But then there's sort of the public narrative. You know, that is particularly important I think to our minoritized communities.

As demonstrated in Mark's response, even while discussing the importance of support services for minoritized students there was still an emphasis on how the institution communicates and

focuses on serving all students Mark's comments further illustrate how CCU considered the public perception about being an HSI and how the public perception influenced which students were emphasized as being supported. For example, even when he described the financial rewards of being an HSI, which mostly benefit Hispanic students, he instead focused on how all students benefit. This quote relates to Matias's (2017) theory of whiteness and emotionality in which the emotional comfort of predominantly white students were prioritized. It further connects to Harris's (1993) theory of whiteness as property in which white people hold systemic power and influence over currency, places, and decisions. CCU's emphasis on appeasing the naysayers is a demonstration of how whiteness holds power in who has access, influence, and opportunity to higher education.

Mark's response relates to Sally's in that they both have an understanding their HSI designation is intended to support Latinx students, but the institution uses the status in a way to support and uplift all students. Similarly, to Sally and Mark, a third senior administrator, Adrian, described the HSI as benefiting all students and expands this point by focusing on how efforts that directly benefit Latinx students, also support white students. Adrian shared,

It's like when we do an anti-racist training...the people that can mainly benefit are white faculty and staff, for example, perhaps white students but I think that's something you know that's going to benefit everyone. You know, in some ways, there's a particular targeting or a saliency of sorts by way of where we place our resources and some of our time. But it's also about supporting everyone. So when I think about HSI I think about the specific needs of Latinx students, but I also think about how doing that work is truly about everyone and it's everyone's work. So it should benefit everyone, not just the Latinx students.

In each of these quotes from senior leaders, there is a clear focus on connecting their HSI status to supporting and benefitting *all* students at the institution. In addition to interviews with senior leadership, the conversation around the institution's HSI goal of supporting all students also arose in interviews with student affairs staff. For instance, in an interview with a student affairs professional, Brian, he described the institution's mission as "serving a high need population who would have struggled to access the institution either in academic preparation or by financing... I believe [the institution's] goal and role was to serve the metro area student population". Brian's comments described the institutions mission as serving "high need" students but did not describe Latinx students or race as a factor in how CCU serves students. Whether masked in "all" language or lumping the entire student population as "high need", both mask direct support for Latinx and students of color at an HSI. Similar to Annamma (2017) theory of color-evasiveness, emphasizing support for all promotes whiteness in how services and support is delivered and communicated.

While the rhetoric of supporting "all" students seemed to mask support for Latinx students, one student affairs staff member, Monica, slightly challenged this narrative with her description of how she sees the institution supporting students:

> I really feel like it's a university that tries it's best to understand who their students are and then meet them where they are versus trying to make students you know, come to some level or assimilate into some way of being. But it's really more about what we do as an institution to try to better understand the needs of our students and then provide the services and the resources and the support that works for them.

As Monica described in her response about the mission of the institution, she sees the institution as trying to understand students individual and unique needs and experiences. Monica

69

emphasized how support and resources for students is about meeting each students' experience, not trying to assimilate students to one way of being. The rhetoric of all students in how CCU understands its HSI status can communicate a goal of assimilation. Using HSI to serve all students does not honor students who have unique needs, cultural backgrounds, and experiences that influence their college experience. Like Monica, the following sub-theme describes a few other interviewees who challenged the institutions HSI status as serving "all" students.

Challenging Whiteness

While many interviews and the institutional website highlighted HSI as a designation to support all students, there were individuals who challenged this narrative and emphasized the importance of the HSI designation as serving Latinx and students of color. One of the research questions in this study is intended to understand the role systemic whiteness plays in how students are served at an HSI. A few of the staff, majority staff of color, challenged whiteness in how they serve students. Eric, a student affairs staff member, explained his understanding of what it means to be an HSI and serving students, "It's the provision of programs and resources specifically and intentionally connected to outreach and support and ultimately the success of our Latinx students." Later in the same interview with Eric, he further emphasized which students the HSI designation is intended to serve,

> Being an HSI doesn't necessarily preclude us or should have us not consider other
> populations of students who have been historically marginalized, but also happened to
> attend an HSI but not have that particular background. And so thinking about servingness
> in a way of serving you know any students who might have particular needs particular
> marginalized identities in navigating [the institution].

As is evident in the two quotes shared, Eric directly connected the HSI status to support services aimed at supporting the needs and experiences of Latinx and all marginalized student populations. The emphasis on supporting minoritized students, that was expressed primarily by staff of color, is a different focus than what arose in many of the interviews with predominantly white senior administrators. Along with Eric's comments, another member of the student affairs staff, Marco, described a challenge with identifying large institutional programs and services that support the HSI designation, "To be honest, I have trouble really finding larger examples or, you know, in my role specifically directly ties into serving Hispanic students or Latinx or Raza students." In Marco's description of what it meant to be an HSI, he centered the response around programs and services directly benefitting and connecting to the needs of Latinx students and the invisibility of many of these programs on campus.

Similar to the two student affairs staff members described above, Anthony, a leader in HSI initiatives at CCU, also described making efforts to connect HSI support to Latinx students, as well as additional students of color. Anthony shared, "We're in a unique position to really not only serve our Latinx students but then how are we also serving our other BIPOC students right our Black, Indigenous you know, Asian students." Additionally, Anthony also described a grant writing process at CCU to assist faculty and staff applying for HSI grants to emphasize support for Latinx students,

> We've really been looking at developing a structure for HSI grants. So again, looking at more of an easy way for folks and future PIs to have support from the HSI committee and really being able to help them with the data and making sure that they're serving our students, especially Latinx students in those proposals.

While in each of the interviews with Eric, Marco, and Anthony, there was some level of challenging whiteness in how students at an HSI are served, there was also struggle with appeasing whiteness. Anthony's attempt at using grants to support Latinx students is important, but like Bell's (1992) theory of interest convergence, the monetary gain the institution receives from accessing HSI grants needs to be unpacked. Before seeking grant funding, some of the points raised by Eric and Marco about an HSI centering the need of Latinx students and students of color needs to be prioritized at all levels of the institution. As was described in chapter four, an additional student affairs staff member, Monica, also highlighted how the institution's HSI status should directly address and support the surrounding community, whose neighborhood and community was displaced because of the creation of the institution. Specifically, Monica critiqued the state and institution for not adequately addressing the harmful impact of displacing families, "And unfortunately, the state didn't do a good job of ensuring that neighborhoods would stay together. So people got dispersed around…"

The four individuals quoted in relation to challenging whiteness all identified as People of Color in student affairs and were mid-level staff at the institution. As such, predominantly white, senior-level student affairs professionals were most likely upholding the narrative of HSI serving "all" students. As critical whiteness scholars (Cabrera et al., 2017; Matias, 2017) emphasize, whiteness is deeply embedded in education and to truly support students of color. The rhetoric of all is a tool for appeasing whiteness and white people's belief that higher education is their property and is reflected in the predominantly white, senior staff with the most power and say in how the HSI narrative is communicated to the public and students. HSIs and all Minority Serving Institutions must reflect on the intention and purpose of these designations and centering the students of color who the designation is intended to support.

Theme Two: Taxation on the Bodies of People of Color

The current study sought to understand the ways whiteness exists at an HSI. One area important to explore for understanding and challenging systemic whiteness, is how institutional culture and practice reinforces systemic injustice. Ray's (2019) racialized organization theoretical framework described how race is constituted in an organization. As described in detail in chapter three, Ray's framework offers four tenets that unpack how racism exists in higher education. One of those tenets described how racialized organizations enhance or diminish the agency of racial groups. Similar to Ray's organizational framework, the theme of *taxation of bodies of People of Color* captures the multiple ways that systemic racism is embedded in institutional culture. This includes that individual agents' actions place a disproportionate amount of labor on staff and faculty of Color at CCU. At CCU, labor injustice was identified both in work-load expectations and a failure to address disparities in hiring faculty and staff of Color. This theme further connects to Squire, Williams, and Tuitt's (2020) work that identifies parallels between institutions of higher education today and slave plantations. Specifically, Suire et al. described how, today, institutions profit off the extra labor placed on and expected of staff and faculty of color for the institutions gain.

Most of the individuals interviewed in this study described an institutional commitment to serving students from historically underrepresented or minoritized backgrounds. While the value for serving students from underrepresented and minoritized backgrounds was a shared reflection across racial groups in the interviews, there were disparities in the labor placed on People of Color compared to their white colleagues. The labor injustice among People of Color was evident by who carried the emotional labor of supporting students of color at the HSI and who led equity initiatives. Specifically, it was evident that the institution continued to have racial

disparities in representation of faculty and senior leaders of color. The following sections

explains the ways labor and hiring injustices were endured by faculty and staff of color at CCU.

Racism in Labor Expectations

While CCU is nearly fifty-percent students of color, there is a significant

underrepresentation of staff and faculty of color. Multiple interviewees described disparities

across faculty and senior administrators of color on the campus. The theme of racism in labor

expectations describes how the few staff and faculty of color were tasked with carrying out a

significant amount of the weight of supporting and addressing the needs of students of color at

CCU. The institutional belief that "everyone" on the campus shares a passion for serving

minoritized students, without addressing the inequities in racial representation of faculty and

staff of color, maintains a systemic labor injustice on staff and faculty of color.

Participants of Color in this study described the extra emotional labor they endured to

support students of color. Because CCU has inequities in racial representation across the entire

campus, but particularly among faculty, a majority of the additional support for Latinx and all

students of color was provided by the few faculty of color. Stephanie, a faculty member,

described her experience of taking on additional labor to support students of color,

> Equity and inclusion committees that I'm on, we are looking at how we can make [equity]
>
> an important aspect of our process because I think we realize who's doing the work,
>
> which are predominantly faculty of color, which there is not as many of us. And so we're
>
> kind of taking on extra work in different aspects, if you will. We also take on different
>
> emotional labor.

Similar to what Stephanie described, the university's diversity and inclusion office leads

a diversity council with three sub committees striving to support equity and inclusion across the

campus. Data collection revealed that the diversity committees at CCU are made up of a majority

of People of Color, and the sub-committees have the same members of color serving on multiple

sub-committees. However, across the university, faculty of color only make up about twenty-two

percent of all faculty and only a slightly larger percent of the staff. Having nearly fifty-percent of

the diversity committee being made up of People of Color further illuminates the labor injustice

communicated by Stephanie about whose responsibility it is on campus to support equity and

inclusion. Angela, described the institutions attempts as more intentional equity practices,

however, the individuals who are being tapped to educate and inform departments across the

university about how to uphold equity, are offices predominantly made up of People of Color. To

describe this further, Sally, a senior administrator, described how "the updated strategic plan had

equity and inclusion infused throughout the entire document." However, like Angela described,

if the individuals being tapped to educate and train the entire campus on how to uphold equity

are a few offices, made up of predominantly People of Color, this further maintains the racialized

labor injustice experienced by staff and faculty of color.

As Garcia (2019) described, representation of faculty and staff of color at an HSI is

important for the Latinx and students of color on the campus. Throughout interviews with People

of Color, Garcia's description was evident in how faculty and staff of color support the students

of Color on campus. For example, in an interview with Eric, a student affairs staff member of

color, he described his efforts to try and support students of color who were navigating bias and

challenges in higher education,

> I'm seeing myself in many of our students and their experiences and their expressions of
>
> their time at [the institution]. Both in an affirming way, in a discovering my potential and
>
> my pride and who I am, and also in the challenges that students share around feeling

marginalized, minoritized, discredited, or discounted at times in their time at [the

institution].

As was described in earlier quotes from Stephanie and Eric, representation of faculty and staff of

color is important for students to have individuals they can relate to and connect with on campus.

However, because there are fewer individuals of color compared to students of color, there is an

overrepresentation of People of Color doing equity work compared to their white colleagues to

support students. Further, the staff and faculty of color quoted above described how they center

equity and the experiences of students of color on campus.

In addition to the experiences described by faculty and staff of color, white faculty also

spoke to this theme in their interviews. During an interview with a white faculty member, Kim,

she described how she prioritized the needs of all students, including her "dominant" students:

I was teaching a semester in London and a colleague was leading a course on British

culture...with the English there are all these layers in the English society and there's kind

of a blanket attitude, here come the colonizers and they are the root of all evil. There's

this underlying layer of among those colonizers there are a group of people who are

marginalized economically and marginalized sometimes culturally and this builds up into

aggression and we see that. There is a crisis of identity when it comes to being English.

And I remember myself sitting in the audience and thinking this spells trouble. This will

explode and it did. So when we come to racial relationships which is not only about the

marginalized, but also by the so called dominant groups. Because the dominant groups

are also very diverse within themselves... It's not as easy to approach the subject and

when we talk about the dominant group I also make it a point to myself to know that if I

peg somebody as dominant, and also excluding them from the conversation because they're tagged with a level of guilt that they shouldn't be carrying.

Similar to themes of appeasing whiteness, Kim's response connects to Matias's (2017) work on whiteness and emotionality. Specifically, Kim described that she builds curriculum and teaches classes with a significant consideration of how her white students might feel or be impacted in her classroom. Further, Kim specifically focuses on alleviating white student's guilt as opposed to repairing the harm toward People of Color. Unlike Stephanie's comments earlier, Kim did not center the needs of most of the students of color at the institution and instead has prioritized the white student's emotional experience in in her classes. Kim's comments reinforced the comments by staff and faculty of color who described disparities in People of Color supporting Latinx students. Specifically, by prioritizing the emotions and experiences of white students, this led to further marginalization and oppression of the Latinx and students of color the HSI was intending to serve.

Labor injustice was also exposed when participants described programs and services that support HSI efforts. When responding to the question about what it means to be an HSI and examples of programs that reflect this, most of the participants talked about the same few programs. Many talked about segmented equity programs like the Dreamer student services office and the multicultural student center and most spoke of HSI as defined by particular programs and services. In response to services that support Latinx students, one student affairs professional, Marco shared, "outside of programming that specific offices do, I'm not aware of any other initiative or way that the institution prioritizes Latinx folks." Marco also described this in more detail when asked to describe examples of HSI efforts,

To be honest, I have trouble really finding larger examples or, you know, in my role

specifically...my role directly ties into serving Hispanic students or Latinx or Raza

students...so directly serving right Spanish speaking students and their families. That's

work that I get to do right now. Virtual programming, but also ongoing support. So for

students and their families who reach out to us, you know, on a daily or weekly basis. I

think when you claim the title of being Hispanic Serving, you look at ways that you're

meeting Hispanic populations or Latinx or Raza populations where they're at and giving

them what they need not what we think. And I would say that's an example where I have

a privilege in the work I get to do. I think outside of that, it's hard to pinpoint specific

ways we've served those populations at a larger or at a broader level.

As reflected in this quote, participants highlighted only a few programs that reflect support for

HSI and these programs are primarily staffed by People of Color. This reality further reinforces

how the institutions HSI structure places the burden of the responsibility primarily on People of

Color to support Latinx students and the overall HSI mission. As Ray (2019) described in his

racialized organization theoretical framework, the existence of racism embedded in organizations

legitimizes the unequal distribution of resources. Further, similar to Ray's theoretical framework,

the unequal labor and resources placed on People of Color to support institutional equity

programs and initiatives maintains inequities and racial disparities in labor and hiring practices.

Finally, in addition to the labor injustice faculty and staff of color endured at CCU, it is

also important to recognize the role of white saviorism among white staff and faculty. As Fanon

(1970) and Burr (2010) described, white saviorism is connected to white people's belief that

their support of minoritized groups is altruistic when in fact is connected to the internalized

belief in the inferiority of People of Color and supremacy of white people. In this study, white

saviorism was exposed in how white people understood their support of students of color.

Multiple white staff described their interest in working at the institution to support

underrepresented and minoritized students. For example, one student affairs staff member, Brian

shared about why he chose to work at the institution. Brian said,

> You know, higher need level, you know, just across the board. Higher need, higher
>
> diversity, all those kinds of things. So I felt really charged up and challenged by being
>
> able to make limited resources really meaningful for that access component of where I
>
> feel my personal mission is and what my, why do I have this job, create access to people
>
> that don't normally get access.

Similar to Brian's reason for working at the institution, nearly all of the white people in

this study described a passion for serving underrepresented students as the leading reason they

work at the institution. A senior administrator, Mike, talked about his experience at an elite

school and then moving to CCU,

> …My first job out of graduate school was at a small very elite liberal arts college in the
>
> northeast. And it was quite literally the ivy covered buildings and it literally sat on top of
>
> a hill in the small town. And at the time I really believed that was sort of my dream job.
>
> You know, because that's sort of what I had always envisioned in my life as a college
>
> professor would be about. I ended up getting tenure there….And so we moved out here
>
> and that's how I ended up at [CCU]….It was about as different an institution as you could
>
> get, you know, But in in that move. I think that helped me see the value of higher
>
> education in a different way. Just because for most of us, most of the students that I was
>
> working with at that first job, it was, I was obviously having an impact on their lives and
>
> they were benefiting from their higher education. No doubt about that. But they also had

a lot of resources, they had a lot of options, it didn't matter whether they went to college, there they were just coming in with a lot of resources and that's obviously just not the case at [CCU]. It's not as much the case anyways…

As illustrated in this quote, Mike described his first students at his first college as "elite" and then described CCU's students as "about as different an institution as you can get." This conceptualization of students connects to Fanon's (1970) theory that whiteness upholds the systemic disbelief that white people are superior to People of Color. To Mike, the students at the elite school exemplified whiteness in higher education, measured by wealth, connections, and resources. His description communicates a belief that CCU students, an HSI with nearly fifty-percent students of color, is understood as needing help. White people's—our—interest in supporting underrepresented groups should be considered through the lens of white saviorism. The nuance in a passion for creating systemic, equitable change, and saviorism can be subtle but takes investment to disentangle and disrupt. Saviorism is unpacked in chapter five as it relates to whiteness and servingness.

Hiring Injustice

In addition to labor exploitation, participants also talked about the institution's struggle with hiring university senior leadership and faculty of color. Across interviews with faculty, student affairs, and senior administrators there was a recognition of the importance of hiring diverse, particularly Latinx, staff and faculty, but a recognition that the institution struggled to achieve equity among faculty and senior leadership. It is important to challenge whether the institution struggled to diversify staff and faculty of color or if CCU did not invest resources and change to support diversifying the institutions faculty and senior leadership. In a Faculty Resolution Statement to support diversifying faculty at the institution, it was communicated that

in 2018-2019, only 22% of all full-time faculty at the institution were People of Color. Despite disparities in hiring faculty of color, one senior administrator, Aaron, shared his belief that the institution was making great progress in hiring more Latinx staff and faculty,

> We are working harder and harder to increase the diversity of the university but one area where we are doing quite well is in the Hispanic or Latinx community. We have leaders at every level of the university who are from that community, not because of the HSI status but just because where we're physically located.

Despite Aaron's perception of the hiring practices at the institution, in addition to the only twenty-two percent faculty of color, the university website indicated that the provost's cabinet, president's cabinet, and faculty department chairs were also overwhelmingly white. Angela expressed a very different perspective about the demographics of the university "Even though within student affairs we have several leaders who are People of Color. We are horrifically lacking in other areas of the institution. And that really struck me, and I think it's super important to sort question around whiteness. When we think about who's making decisions." Thus, some student affairs professionals, like Aaron, communicated that the institution had been highly successful in increasing People of Color across all levels of the institution when the data clearly demonstrates disparities. This inconsistency is in line with Ray's (2019) racialized organizational theory, in which the institution and members of the institution all influence the culture of the institution. If senior administrators, with significant influence on hiring practices at the institution, believe CCU is successful in hiring more faculty and staff of color, this may continue to prevent structural change to hiring practices.

Adrian, a senior administrator, described the importance of prioritizing recruiting and hiring People of Color in order to support students as an HSI, "You know, because of the market

that is out there we've had to also be intentional about, you know, if we're going to attract Latinx students... also [have to prioritize] recruitment, retention and support for faculty and staff." As Adrian expressed, seeking to recruit and hire more Latinx faculty and staff, is an intentional way to support the institutions HSI initiatives and Latinx students. Similar to Adrian's point, one faculty member, Karen, described her perception of the institution's struggle to hire faculty and staff of color, and further added that the institution struggled to hire individuals from an equity and justice lens,

>We see the numbers of more Latinx students, we don't see that reflected in our faculty or in our staff and definitely not in higher administration. So if you think of, you know, if we divide administrators by senior executives and Administrators making under sixty-thousand you know there's, there's a little bit of a divide and there's definitely, we don't see that there but as you know, just hiring more Latinas and Latinos doesn't reshape the institution. So, it's really shifting that thing. I, I guess I struggled to find an example of how that thinking shifts from we're just going to invite more Latinx to the table, rather than really thinking about how this table needs to change.

Karen's perspective not only highlighted the institution's failure to hire faculty and senior staff, it also acknowledged the importance of hiring individuals, across racial identities, who bring an equitable lens to their work that supports changing the culture of the institution. Connected to Karen's point, Adrian, described purposeful efforts to better equip faculty and staff at the institution for engaging with students from critical and culturally responsive pedagogies,

>We have to account for culturally responsive pedagogy. We have, we actually have a higher education Diversity Summit coming up, […] and You know two keynotes... are both leading voices on anti-racist and culturally responsive work... There's one, the

curriculum right, the content assuring that we offer curriculum across different spaces

that account for history. Some representation of Latinx students, the authors', scholars'

content. But, but, more, more importantly, I think you know pedagogically that we are in

a position or put ourselves in the position to be as culturally responsive and relevant as

we're able to be with respect to the students who sit in our classroom, how we best

support them there too.

The focus on culturally responsive pedagogical, relates to Nuñez et al. (2010) which described

the importance of faculty upholding equitable pedagogical practices at an HSI in support of

Latinx students. Building equitable course content and hiring Latinx faculty influence the

students experience at an HSI (Nuñez et al., 2010).

The recognition Karen and Adrian named in how the identities and theoretical

frameworks that guide faculty impact the classroom, was also highlighted in how senior leaders

understand and respond to student needs. Angela, a student affairs staff member, talked about the

importance of race in the leadership at an HSI and reflected on a recent situation at the senior

administration level. In the interview, Angela described what senior staff considered during a

discussion about supporting athletes of color engaging in racial justice activism. Angela

described the pain the student athletes were experiencing because of the killings of Black men

and women by Police officers. The student athletes tried to express their concerns to the

primarily white senior leadership and administrators' response to the students, as described by

Angela were "cut and dry" and lacked empathy and understanding for the pain students were

experiencing. Angela shared,

Basically involved in this conversation were white people. There were People of Color

that I think were on the call, but they were not activated on this particular topic for

83

whatever reason, um, which could have something to do with their race. I don't know, but they, although, in retrospect, I sort of wish that they should have been activated on this topic, but regardless, the sort of guidance that was given was very like very sort of like definitive and didn't acknowledge, I believe the student who had contacted the athletic director about wanting to sort of organize protests was I think she was a Black woman. And like there was not even just acknowledgement of that. I mean, it was clear that the protests and that was we're going to be around race. Like, and that was fine. Like, and it wasn't like they cannot protest but there was no it was more around like what is the role of the athletic department and supporting this and it was, it was like almost so cut and dry.

Within this quote, it is important to recognize that Angela, a white woman, did not speak up or challenge the racial injustice she was witnessing. However, she criticized the People of Color who did not speak up. There was no reflection from Angela about how the decisions of the People of Color on the call were possibly connected to racism and how the staff of color could be penalized or silenced for speaking up. Therefore, Angela neglected to unpack how systemic whiteness punishes People of Color for stepping out against racism. As a result, she did not acknowledge the role that white people play in maintaining and upholding whiteness when we choose not to act.

While some of the student affairs staff named racial inequities across hiring practices in the division, a senior administrator, John, described his attempts at making structural changes to the hiring process within his division to diversify all levels of the staff. In addition to creating an equitable hiring practices committee to build the plan, John shared aspects of the plan were

implemented and he had already seen shifts in the applicant pool and more People of Color being

hired across the division. John described this plan and the outcomes as,

> Because we've got an equitable hiring initiative...three out of six recommendations are
>
> complete, and we are working on the rest. And, you know, I've hired two AVP's in the
>
> last year and a half, and they both have been women of color. Which I'm really proud of
>
> and know that I have nothing to do with it, other than being the person that makes the
>
> offer. But I think some of that is both of those individuals were referred to the institution
>
> by trusted colleagues and I think that's where the reputation of the institution plays a huge
>
> role in who's attracted to apply for jobs, you have to attract the right people. We have to
>
> hire the right people. And so often, people just have these biases about who they're hiring
>
> in what success or stellar looks like.

John expressed his pride in how he has implemented successful strategies for hiring

People of Color in his division. However, Angela, a senior student affairs staff member, pointed

out in her interview that while efforts to increase hiring more People of Color across the division

of student affairs is improving, more work is needed on retaining staff of color, "I think we need

to get folks to think critically about hiring and staff retention as well. I think both of those things

are relevant. We have had some additional leaders of color who have left the institution and so

right, so the retention piece I think is important as well." Even while the student affairs division

was making attempts to diversify who is applying to the institution, in student affairs and across

the university, it is important to also understand the demographics of who is staying and who is

leaving the institution and why this is happening. In addition to John's description about how he

has made changes to hiring in his area, he also acknowledged the broader university struggle,

And now we need to set the goals for where we want to see increases [institutionally].

The Board of Trustees is pushing really hard on the senior staff and giving the president

some pretty firm goals about diversifying leadership...We'll have five academic dean's

which right now all five, to my knowledge, identify white folks. So, two of those

positions will come open soon. Also, I just learned that of the provost's entire senior

cabinet of 17 or more individuals, there's only one person of color on that whole team.

As was aforementioned, John described how whiteness is perpetuated in hiring practices

including in hiring more racially diverse faculty and senior leaders. He also talked about how he

had successfully shifted hiring practices in his division to increase leaders of color being hired.

However, though he is a senior administrator, he did not describe how he was using his equitable

hiring model to support larger university efforts. Hence, John, an institutional agent, noticed

inequities, but did not take action to change the inequities on a broader scale. Considering Ray's

(2019) racialized organizational theory, institutional members influence the institutional culture

and practice. Inequities in hiring practices were named by multiple staff members, yet there was

no intentional university-wide effort to implement structural change.

In addition to John's perspective, Angela in student affairs also described how the Board

of Trustees was pushing the institution to be anti-racist. As Stewart (2017) described, many

institutions engage in language of appeasement in how they address inequities in higher

education. In Stewart's article, they urge institutions to center systemic change to policy and

practice. While it is important the Board named a desire to be an anti-racist institution, being

anti-racist requires structural and systemic change to policy and practice. Addressing the racial

injustice in the hiring practices at CCU, requires systemic changes beyond the boards support.

As García and Okhidoi (2015) described, representation of faculty and staff of color at an HSI

directly impacts students of color experience at the campus. For CCU, John described the importance of racial diversity in the classroom and across campus to better serve and support students of color,

> The thing that's going to get us to 50% 60% 70% [students of color] beyond just the changing demographics of [the state], is the residents of our academic programs and our faculty and if our curriculum doesn't engage students in the ways that they want to be engaged to learn, by the people who know who can speak to them and engage them in their learning in ways that work for them. Then we won't maintain and other institutions are going to do it better than we are. And I think that it's not an either/or situation. I think it's possible for us to really invest in our HSI status and invest in MSI status and really work with other communities of color to ensure that we're doing the best we can to serve them.

As illustrated in this quote, CCU has failed to increase the representation of faculty and staff of color at the institution. While most of the interviewees named the institutions challenge with hiring more People of Color, there was little evidence of plans for structural change. Members of the institution lean on the Board of Trustees ambition to be an anti-racist institution as the strategy for diversifying leadership and faculty at the institution. However, without clear plans for addressing policies and practices that have led to the inequities in hiring and labor injustice endured by People of Color, the ambition to become an anti-racist institution will likely result in continuing the same patterns in hiring practices. As multiple People of Color described, staff and faculty of color are overwhelmingly charged with building programs and plans to address inequities at CCU. Yet, there is no power or influence allocated to the committees and groups asked to take on this additional work. If sustainable and equitable change is a priority for

the institution, then structural change must occur to shift decades of unjust practice and labor placed on People of Color.

Theme Three: Maintaining Whiteness Through "Good Intentions"

One of the research questions guiding this study was how whiteness influences an HSI. Related to this question, a third theme was identified related to examples of how whiteness and white supremacy are maintained through actions and behaviors concealed as "good intentions." As was described in chapter two, whiteness is so pervasive and deeply embedded in institutional practice that it can be difficult to expose and disrupt (Cabrera et al., 2017). This is particularly true when we consider how white people and systemic whiteness is masked by "good intentions" that uphold systems of inequities. The following section breakdown this theme into three sub-themes: Departmental Reorganization, Lack of Accountability, and Performative Change.

Departmental Reorganization

Whiteness exists at all levels and within all practices of an institution. While institutions strive for racial equity for students, embedded whiteness can cause these attempts to fail or further uphold whiteness. In this study, multiple student affairs staff described the institutions attempt at supporting Latinx students and the institutions HSI status by reorganizing the institution's student activities office under the multicultural office. As described by John,

> So I'm excited about what we've done in [the multicultural center]. I'm excited that we sort of took the resources of the traditional student activities unit and said they are going to be better spent and more impactful if we use them through the lens of what's been happening in the Multicultural Center. And so collapse those efforts, giving primacy to how we serve students of color.

In addition to John's thoughts, Marco in student affairs shared that he expressed positive thoughts about the institution increasing resources and support to programs and services primarily dedicated to serving students of color, "...I think, establishing and moving financial resources to not only the establishment of a space but funding of positions... and the reorganization...I think is an example of [the institutions] and folks working towards a more equity minded or equity driven place or servingness." Further, similar to the way Marco and John described the reorganization and financial support of the multicultural center, an additional student affairs staff member, Eric, also talked about how the decision to create and support the multicultural center addresses servingness and supporting Latinx students,

> …the establishment of the [multicultural center] and what that represents is that mission...It's Knowing who your students are. It's knowing that if we don't address the equity issues that we inherit and those that we perpetuate we're not going to see significant changes in how our students navigate and succeed in higher education. The student affairs side, in particular, I think those are solid examples of how structurally, as well as with intention, we're thinking about how we serve students and we're cognizant about their identities and the systemic nature of all that we're in, how that influences how they navigate our spaces, how we can support them, how we should support them. It's all tied to that. It's all tied to access and I think that's what we're all about.

It appears through conversations with multiple student affairs staff that the purpose and intent of the reorganization was to make structural change in support of equity and the institutions HSI status. Angela further described how she connected the reorganization decision to critical scholarship about ways to better support Latinx students and the institutions HSI efforts,

I was really inspired by when we had Gina Garcia come to speak...It was very impactful and I mean she really sort of challenged us to say, you know, to blow things out of the water, essentially. A quote that's been resonating with me recently, I don't think she said it is "If things don't change things don't change" and So I think that was like, okay, we really got to change and rather than just making these sort of incremental, oh we maybe we'll shift some funding over here or maybe we'll hire an extra person over here. Maybe we'll you know feature this cultural center on the website or something. I think we got excited about really doing things differently. And so we merged them together, but the leader in the merge was the [multicultural center] not student activities.

Although it is important to support programs and services that directly address the needs and identities of the students on the campus, scholars such as Harper and Hurtado (2007) have argued that whiteness continues to influence who has power and control over how spaces and places are reorganized. Therefore, even if the intent was to support students color, it remains unclear if students of color felt a greater sense of support because of the reorganization. Similarly, the reorganization of people and offices will not successfully address systemic whiteness unless active efforts are put forth to deconstruct how whiteness remains embedded throughout these programs. For instance, as is explored in more detail in following sub-theme, the institution has yet to enact practices for assessing and holding staff and faculty accountable for practicing equity and supporting HSI. Though the institution has made some "good intention" changes, like the reorganization, without structural changes at the institutional level, and accountability for change, it may be difficult to truly shift whiteness practices with a reorganization.

Lack of Accountability

90

Another subtheme of maintaining whiteness through good intentions includes the lack of accountability measures for supporting equity. As was described in the labor and hiring injustice theme above, most of the individuals interviewed in this study described the staff and faculty at the university as having a shared commitment to serving students from historically underrepresented or minoritized backgrounds. One faculty member, Kim, responded to the question about how CCU supports underrepresented students by sharing "I would say that it's so interwoven in the way that our institution operates, but it's not necessarily very explicitly referenced, but it's the baseline in the core for almost everything that is done here." This quote illustrates that although most faculty and staff shared a commitment to serving minoritized students there were no formal accountability measures or expectations placed on institutional members for upholding HSI efforts and equitable practices. Similarly, Eric, described how he was unaware of any formal accountability measures and instead equity efforts relied on individuals who were personally committed to supporting equity and HSI efforts,

> Good question. None that are firm. I think that there's great opportunity and folks feel intrinsically interested in supporting HSI efforts. And so a lot of what we see is participation on certain task forces or groups to continue HSI, really becoming an HSI in the sense of how it is embedded in the fabric of the institution. But we're not there yet. I don't think that I see strong accountability.

Eric highlighted the importance of HSI efforts being a part of the fabric of the institution that should influence what everyone does and how they are expected to operate. However, he also acknowledged that no formal accountability measures were in place, suggesting that there was no way to quantify how well staff and faculty were enacting these values. Further, Brian, a student affairs staff member, shared that most people choose to work at the institution to support

"underrepresented students' success". Brian's perception, which was also described by others throughout the interviews, may lead to an assumption that a personal value to work at an HSI leads to equitable outcomes and services for students. However, personal interest and unchecked good intentions may nonetheless continue to reinforce systemic whiteness. These sentiments directly connect to Fannon's (1970) description of white saviorism. Specifically, an interest in supporting minoritized students is not necessarily an investment in structural change to shift whiteness. As Fanon described saviorism, white people enjoy supporting minoritized communities for their own intrinsic reward, not to truly challenge racism.

In addition to Eric's reflection on the lack of formal institutional accountability, Stephanie, a faculty member, described the lack of accountability she received from the institution and instead relies on her department expectations, "I haven't received any expectations. I think that in my department because we've already been really dedicated to diversity and social justice, we've been doing those things. So I don't think it's come down the pipeline for us at all." Similar to Stephanie's response, Karen further reinforced the lack of institutional expectation faculty receive, and instead equity practices are left to departments to either choose to support,

> So far it's not a formal part of our review process. At the departmental level it's an
> expectation that our curriculum reflects the student body that we serve. But I think it's that
> unspoken everybody knows we should be doing that. But there's no real way to hold people
> accountable to it.

The reflections from these staff and faculty illuminate how the institution relied on individuals and departments investment in equity and supporting HSI, without putting formal expectations and accountability in place. Good intentions for supporting marginalized groups could be a factor in supporting HSI and equity efforts. However, the lack of accountability might also contribute

practices that uphold systemic whiteness and fail to meet the needs of the Latinx and students of color on the campus.

As was described in the student affairs staff and faculty interviews, it was interesting to learn about expectations they received and then reflect on interviews with senior administrators. For one senior administrator, Adrian, there was a focus on the institutions value in being an HSI but no formal or direct accountability measures in place to ensure equity,

> Around HSI [people], who are all the players across and throughout the campus who are anchored in this work and serving the students not only in the curriculum, but also in student affairs... So I'm the convener of the strategies, we do have a diversity, equity, and inclusion, the DEI council that I created upon arrival and it is one of our diversity strategic plan pillars. So that were we are going to evolve and probably this year, create some goals and objectives around advancing HSI work.

Adrian described himself as the convener of those invested in supporting HSI. While it is likely common on many higher education campuses to rely on a few folks who value work that supports HSI, this approach upholds the labor injustice theme described above and dismisses responsibility for all other staff and faculty from centering equitable approaches to supporting the institutions HSI status.

In addition to the reflections from Adrian, another senior staff member, Greg shared his belief that everyone at the institution is aware of the accountability measures, but it is the responsibility of the diversity office and student affairs to uphold these for the entire institution. Greg shared, "you will have to ask [the diversity office] or the [student affairs] they lead HSI work and we all just follow their lead". Greg's comment about whose responsibility it is to support HSI, further demonstrates how additional labor for supporting equity is placed on a few

staff who are mostly People of Color. However, Greg also shared how the HSI status provided a guide for everyone at the institution,

> I think we're more mindful about [HSI]. I mean, we're very proud of this status and we're proud of our relationship with the Hispanic community even before this status. But this is concrete. This is something we can measure. Now you know...the HSI status gives us a set of metrics we have to meet to keep that status...There's a saying in management, that which counts is that which is counted gets focused on and if we're counting the way that we support our HSI students we're going to focus more on that. We don't have a driving force like that for Black students or Women students or students of indeterminate gender. We support all those groups of students, but the HSI status has now given us a set of numerical metrics that we have to meet every year. So it makes us more mindful.

Greg's comments reflect that there are a few offices leading the charge and simply having HSI translates to the institution supporting Latinx students. Greg's reflection that the HSI status alone has made the institution more mindful about supporting Latinx students is in contrast to what was expressed in the other interviews about no institutional accountability measures for supporting HSI.

Taken together, the subtheme of the "good intentions" highlights how the fallacy that HSI designation automatically equates to supporting Latinx. Without any formal accountability measures, it remains unclear to what extent HSIs are truly challenging structural inequities versus maintaining systemic whiteness. As Garcia (2018) described in her Decolonizing HSI's framework, HSIs must support policies and practices rooted in anti-racism and anti-oppression. If CCU continues to place power in people's "good intentions" instead of creating accountability measures for assessing how Latinx and students of Color are being supported at the HSI,

whiteness will continue to influence how the institution operates and functions. Further, without accountability measures that ensure equitable practice and outcomes, staff and faculty may believe their personal values are enough to shift systemic inequities. However, staff and faculty actions and behaviors may be rooted in whiteness and white supremacy ideology that is difficult to expose and disrupt without accountability measures for naming and shifting the inequitable practices.

Performative Change

Last, a subtheme of performative change was identified as another means of maintaining whiteness through good intentions. Throughout interviews participants shared about what motivated them to strive for equity and take action against injustice. Over half of the interview participants in this study talked about how the killings of Black men and women in summer 2020 resulted in the institution striving for greater racial justice. Adrian, a senior administrator described how the board of trustees formed a committee in summer 2020 to hold the institution more accountable to strive for anti-racism,

> ...one thing I've really appreciated here. More recently was our Board of trustees guiding us through what it means to commit to anti-racism and actually standing by it. The fact that our trustees have themselves, established an amendment to their bylaws and created a committee on sustained racial justice that is placed alongside, structurally, the finance committee and the academic committee. It wasn't like a subdivision committee, it's right up there. All members of the trustees support it. And since then, they've gone through three professional development trainings at three hours each.

Adrian's comment indicates that the creation of the board's sustained racial justice committee was a recent development and happened in response to nationally recognized racist effects. The

95

creation of the board was also described in a recorded video of a president cabinet meeting from summer 2020 as a reflection of the institution's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Like Adrian's comments, additional staff also reflected on how the board's recent investment in anti-racism has impacted their perception of the institution's values. For instance, Anthony, described how the boards work has impacted him and his work,

> An example has been the Board of Trustees commitment to anti-racism and acknowledging that white supremacy does exist and that Black lives do matter... I feel like I'm on the same page with the leadership, because I like the Board of Trustees, we have a president is doing phenomenal work and leading the example.

From the interviews and reviewing the cabinet meeting recording from summer 2020, many expressed positive sentiments about the board's action. However, despite the board's recent anti-racism efforts, one faculty member, Karen, expressed her frustration about what it took for the institution and board to invest in racial justice. Karen shared that for years she had a racial justice resource library but it was not until after summer 2020 that her faculty colleagues started reaching out to her to borrow books. Beyond the resource library, several interviewees described how the Board of Trustees committee, multiple institutional committees for addressing hiring inequities, and equitable support services for students were formed after summer 2020. On a similar timeline as the Board of Trustees committee formed, one senior administrator, Mike described a resolution the faculty senate passed to support diversifying faculty. In the resolution, faculty described the long-time failure of the institution prioritizing hiring more faculty of color.

As described earlier, Sally shared the institution began seeking HSI status in 2007. Yet, the Board of Trustees created the sustained racial justice committee after the killings of Black men and women in summer 2020, not when the institution was striving for HSI in 2007 or when

it achieved HSI in 2018.While it is significant for a Board of Trustees and the faculty senate to be leaders in striving for racial justice on a college campus, it is important to recognize the nuance in the circumstances around what prompted or motivated the institution to center racial justice efforts. As Bell (1992) described, white people will only address racism when there is a benefit to them (white people) to support the effort. CCU chose to invest in racial justice only after it became a societal expectation and not supporting anti-racism could have led to enrollment declines or other negative institutional impacts.

Summary

In this study, the research questions intended to explore how whiteness exists at an HSI and what role whiteness plays in how university agents support Latinx students. The case study data analysis of university documents and interviews across multiple levels of the institution exposed examples of how whiteness influences an HSI. Many of the examples about how the institution supports HSI and equity initiatives offered by interviewers helped expose ways that whiteness continues to exist in all aspects of the university's larger equity initiatives. The three themes identified in this study included understanding how the rhetoric of "all" upholds whiteness, the taxation of the bodies of People of Color, and how "good intentions" uphold and support whiteness. Throughout the interviews, many of the examples of whiteness outlined in these themes were examples the institutional agents were giving for how CCU supported its HSI status. Often institutions believe they are making good, equitable decisions for supporting students of color. Yet, when examining the actions and behaviors through critical whiteness we are able to see a connection to whiteness and white supremacy. In the following chapter, I expand on how each of these themes connect to theories of whiteness, Ray's (2019) racialized

organization theory, and Garcia's decolonizing HSI framework, and conclude with

recommendations for HSI's and MSI's.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

In this chapter, I offer a discussion of the study findings. I first provide an overview of how the findings connected to the original research questions, (a) In what ways does systemic whiteness influence a four-year public HSI? and (b) What role does whiteness play in how institutional agents employ strategies for serving Latinx students? Next, I will discuss how the three themes—*all is the rhetoric of white supremacy, Taxation of the bodies of People of Color, and Maintaining whiteness through "good intentions* —relate to theories of whiteness. These theories include Matias's (2017) theory of whiteness and emotionality, Bell's (1980) work on interest convergence, Cabrera's (2019) theory of white immunity, Harris's (1993) theory of whiteness as property, and DiAngelo's (2018) theory of white fragility. Then, I offer implications and recommendations for recognizing and challenging whiteness at an HSI. I follow this section with a discussion of limitations and future research recommendations. Last, I share a reflection on my own growth and learning throughout this process.

Summary of the Study

The purpose of this study was to further understand systemic whiteness at HSIs. A single site case study was conducted at a recently established HSI with a mission of supporting students from underrepresented student populations. This study used theories of whiteness, Ray's (2018) racialized organizational theory, and Garcia's decolonizing HSI's framework to frame the study design, interpret the data, and complete the data analysis. The study took place from September 2020 through February 2021. Data were collected through fourteen interviews with senior administrators, faculty, and student affairs staff as well as document analysis of institutional documents and website content. All individual interviews were completed virtually on Zoom and

were audio recorded. I transcribed and analyzed each transcript. The following paragraphs will address the two research questions that guided this study.

In what Ways does Systemic Whiteness Influence a Four-year Public HSI?

Throughout interviews and document analysis it was evident whiteness influenced how the institution sought and maintains its HSI status. In this study, whiteness influenced how the institution communicated publicly the purpose if the HSI status, as a status that would benefit "all" students instead of focusing on how the status supports Latinx students. The focus on "all" students was coded language to appease white people concerned that the HSI designation would not benefit them and decentered the experiences and needs of the Latinx students the status is intended to serve. Additionally, whiteness influenced the HSI related to the disproportionate expectation that the bodies of staff and faculty of color would lead efforts for supporting and upholding equitable services and practices for the institution. The extra labor expected of People of Color was performed without compensation or power to enact systemic change. Additionally, the influence of systemic whiteness was exposed in examples offered during interviews for how the institution supports it's HSI status. Because whiteness influences every aspect of an institution, even when attempts were made to address inequities, because whiteness was not deconstructed, these attempts failed to make systemic equitable change.

What Role does Whiteness Play in How Institutional Agents Employ Strategies for Serving Latinx Students?

Interviews in this study exposed that much of the institutions HSI efforts were carried out by a few programs and services at the institution. Further, most of these programs and services were staffed primarily by People of Color. Moreover, as Ray's first tenet in his racialized organization theory described, racialized organizations legitimize the unequal distribution of

100

resources. Similar to Ray's theory, CCU's strategy for supporting HSI efforts and support of

minoritized students placed extra emotional labor on a few programs and services led mostly by

People of Color. Whiteness influenced how institutional agents accepted and uplifted the

inequities in who was responsible for carrying out equitable programs and services. Although

most interviewees across racial groups described a university culture of supporting minoritized

students, this culture, embedded in whiteness, maintained injustice in the labor expected of

People of Color. Moreover, interview analysis illuminated that despite a shared belief that an

institutional culture of supporting minoritized students, no accountability measures are in place

to ensure people and programs are equitable or supporting the HSI designation. The lack of

accountability on how HSI programs and services are carried out reinforces the inequities in the

extra labor expected of staff and faculty of color.

Finally, whiteness was also found in how many of the white staff described their reason

or purpose for working at the institution. Several white staff perpetuated Fanon (1970) and

Burr's (2010) theory of white saviorism in describing why they chose to work at the institution.

While striving to change policy and practice to better serve minoritized students it is important

that the nuance in actions that perpetuate white saviorism, which is embedded in actions that

support white supremacy, is disrupted and challenged. White saviorism maintains an unjust

system that allows white people to believe that caring and helpful intentions are enough to

support students of color instead of actually challenging systemic racism and whiteness.

Theoretical Discussion

Theories of whiteness helped uncover and expose examples of what Ray (2018)

described as racialized organizations that uphold and support systemic racial injustice. In Ray's

racialized organization theory, he described analyzing organizations as meso-level analysis to

understand how the meso-level informs the micro (individual) and macro (broader systemic level). This study completed a meso-level organizational analysis to understand systemic whiteness at an HSI. Using theories of whiteness (DiAngelo, 2018; Fanon, 1970; Harris, 1993; Matias, 2017) and Ray's four tenets of racialized organizations, I exposed whiteness at an HSI and consider how whiteness prevents HSI's from achieving Garcia's theory of decolonization. Cabrera et al. (2017) described the pervasiveness of whiteness in higher education and embedded practices of whiteness make whiteness difficult to disrupt. Like Cabrera et al., whiteness at CCU was exposed in how interviewees described the culture of the institution. Because whiteness is embedded in the culture of the institution, attempts CCU made at addressing racial disparities failed to create systemic change.

Garcia's (2017) nine principles for decolonizing an HSI provide strategies for HSIs to center anti-racism and anti-oppressive systems. While Garcia's framework is an important framework for decolonizing HSIs, if institutions fail to uncover embedded whiteness in the institutional culture and practice, attempts at using Garcia's framework may lead institutions to upholding systemic whiteness. Multiple examples were offered during interviews for how CCU was supporting it's HSI status and supporting equity. However, none of the examples provided deconstructing systemic whiteness and therefore despite good intentions for change, systemic whiteness prevented the institution from truly achieving Garcia's description of a decolonized HSI that centers anti-oppression and anti-racism. This study adds to the existing theories by recognizing how embedded whiteness prevents HSIs from creating systemic change that centers the needs and experiences of Latinx students.

All is the Rhetoric of White Supremacy

Whiteness is so deeply rooted in higher education systems that even when institutions believe they are making moral and ethical decisions that support equity, they are often maintaining racist, white supremist systems. The theme of *All is the rhetoric of white supremacy* refers to the focus on serving "all" students as the primary focus and benefit of HSI status. During interviews and data analysis in this study, participants repeatedly described the institution's HSI status as a status that would serve "all" students. It is difficult for an HSI to support educational inequities endured by communities of color if the institution prioritizes services that support "all" students over supporting the specific cultural and community needs of Latinx students and students of color (García & Okhidoi, 2015). This theme addressed both research questions in this study. Specifically, the rhetoric of all is connected to systemic whiteness and how whiteness influenced the way institutional agents support Latinx students. The following paragraphs utilize critical whiteness and Garcia's (2017) Decolonizing HSI's framework to unpack the embedded whiteness in centering service for "all" students at an HSI.

In Garcia's (2017) decolonizing HSI's theoretical framework, one of the principles she described is the institution's *mission*. Garcia's *mission* principle described how institutions center anti-racist and anti-oppressive strategies at an HSI. If an HSI is prioritizing how their HSI status is best for all students, over support for Latinx students, this can be a form of upholding whiteness and white supremacy. For example, in the interview with Sally, a senior administrator, she described how when the institution began seeking HSI, questions were raised by those in the community about how pursuing the status would impact white students. Instead of focusing on how the intent of pursuing HSI was to directly benefit the Latinx student population, Sally shared that the institution communicated to the campus and surrounding community that receiving HSI

would benefit all students. As Gasman (2008) described, HSIs are typically built at historically white institutions, embedded in whiteness and white supremacy. Challenging embedded whiteness at an HSI will require problematizing the very core and mission of the institution by de-centering whiteness and centering anti-racism. Upholding the narrative that the HSI status is to the benefit of "all" students is harmful and resembles rhetoric used in mainstream media of "all lives matter". Focusing on "all" students prevents institutions from focusing on the populations and groups most harmed and minoritized in higher education.

In addition to Garcia's (2019) push to center the needs of Latinx students and students of color at an HSI, it is important to unpack why an HSI would choose to center their HSI status as a support for "all" students. As Matias (2016) developed, whiteness and emotionality is a theory of whiteness that describes how actions and decisions are made with the purpose of supporting and uplifting the emotions of white people over those of People of Color. As Sally shared in her interview, the institution chose to brand their HSI efforts as support that would benefit "all" students instead of focusing on how the status would directly benefit Latinx students and students of color in order to appease the criticism the institution was experiencing from members of the community about seeking HSI. As was identified by Matias (2016) in her theory of whiteness and emotionality, the emotions of the white people, who were worried that seeking HSI would no longer benefit them, were prioritized over communicating direct support for students of color. The nuance in language of "all" communicates a prioritizing of white students' feelings, needs, and existence. Despite the fact that many scholars (García & Okhidoi, 2015; Contreras et al., 2008) who have studied HSIs describe the disparities and inequities students of color on HSI campuses endure, the worry that white students may feel excluded was prioritized. What is particularly important to unpack is that the institutions focus

for serving all students was rooted in appeasing white students. However, as was described by

Adrian in an interview, when institutions center anti-racism and anti-oppression approaches, all

students benefit. The difference in the use of all in these examples is which students are

prioritized. When Student of Color are prioritized, still, all students benefit.

Similar to Matias's theory, Harris (1993) described the theory of whiteness as property.

In her whiteness as property framework, Harris outlined the ways white people's bodies hold

power and currency in society. Whiteness as property was illuminated in this study in the

institutions focus on HSI as serving "all" students. Senior staff at CCU described how when met

with resistance from the community about the impact on white students if the institution sought

HSI, the institution chose to center the narrative around how "all" students would benefit from

the HSI status. The "community" that was worried about seeking HSI, was likely white people

and like Harris's whiteness as property theory explains, white people who were concerned their

property, higher education, were being taken by People of Color. As critical race scholars like

Bell (1992) described, racism is constant and if institutions are going to challenge whiteness and

white supremacy, we must recognize the ways concerns, particularly from white people, are

rooted in racist, white supremacist history that influence how we operate today.

Further unpacking how the rhetoric of serving "all" students is connected to whiteness,

Bonilla-Silva's (2018) color-blindness theory and later redeveloped by Annamma et al. (2017) as

the theory of color-evasiveness, described how white people use coded language to evade

discussing race or recognizing the impact race has on policy decisions. During this study, when

interviewees described their institutions HSI status as serving all students, this was coded

language to appease critique from white people about pursuing and holding this status as an

institution. Like Matias's (2017) theory of whiteness and emotionality and Annamma, Jackson,

and Morrison color-evasiveness theory further illuminates how white people's reaction to the HSI status fueled the institutions initial and current messaging for supporting students. If institutions are unwilling to directly and intentionally seek HSI or any Minority Serving Institution (MSI) status to support the minoritized community the status is built to serve, then institutions will continue to uphold and promote whiteness and white supremacy.

This study sought to understand how whiteness influenced an HSI. Based on interviews and data collected from the institutional website, the rhetoric of all is a tool for centering support and institutional practices around the needs of white students over those of students of color. Yet, when "all" was used by staff and senior administrators it was used to demonstrate equitable support or inclusion. Many of the attempts at addressing inequities and supporting students of color at CCU were rooted in practices that upheld whiteness. This is a key finding and contribution to the literature—even when attempts for serving Latinx students are made at an HSI, without unpacking systemic whiteness and how practices uphold white supremacy, HSI's can maintain inequities and injustices experienced by minoritized students, faculty, and staff. In the recommendations section of this chapter, I offer suggestions using critical whiteness theories and Garcia's (2017) Decolonizing HSI's framework for decentering whiteness in support of Latinx students and students of color.

Taxation of the Bodies of People of Color

The theme of *taxation of the bodies of People of Color* exposed how People of Color were given a disproportional burden to uphold the university's culture and values of equity. Thus, in an attempt to promote equity for Students of Color, the university exacerbated the labor of faculty and staff of color to uphold these efforts which perpetuated systemic whiteness. This was also evident in the university's failure to address disparities in hiring practices. Ahmed

(2012) challenges institutions invested in supporting diversity and equity initiatives to demonstrate structural and systemic practices where it is the responsibility of everyone at the institution to uphold equity and inclusion. In the following section, I unpack this theme using existing literature and theoretical frameworks to expose how institutional practices and culture, embedded in whiteness, maintain and advance inequities experienced by staff and faculty of color at an HSI.

The data collected in interviews and document analysis demonstrated the institution's HSI status placed a significant labor injustice expected of People of Color. Throughout interviews, people described CCU's disparities with hiring more People of Color in leadership and faculty roles as "a struggle" or a "challenge." Institutions seeking, or who have HSI, or any designation that supports Students of Color, naming that you "struggle" with diversifying faculty and staff does not change or shift the injustice. Beyond naming the struggle, CCU needs to, as Garcia (2017) described in her decolonizing HSI framework, demonstrate that their mission and purpose is grounded in anti-racism and anti-oppression. It has been over thirteen years since CCU started seeking HSI, and despite multiple interviewers naming the racial disparities in hiring, no structural shifts have been implemented to change institutional practices for hiring and retaining more People of Color. Using the bodies of People of Color to take on the extra emotional labor to support the growing population of Students of Color on the HSI campus, without successful strategies for hiring more People of Color, upholds racist and white supremacy systems and the devaluing of People of Color. HSI's, and all institutions, must deconstruct the white supremacist practice of using the bodies of People of Color for the benefit and profit of the university.

Dade et al. (2015) urged institutions of higher education to reexamine hiring practices and make substantial, structural changes to challenge racism and injustice experienced by People

107

of Color. If an institution believes in its cultural practice that everyone invest in supporting minoritized students, yet fails to unpack whiteness, labor injustice will remain and the institution will struggle to retain staff and faculty of color. In Garcia's (2017) Decolonizing HSI's framework, she offers a decolonizing principle of *Membership*, ensuring racial representation across faculty and staff with a shared mission of challenging racist systems, like white supremacy. Interviews and review of faculty senate documents revealed the institution started forming committees to address hiring more faculty and staff of color and shifting the membership of the university. Despite the formation of these committees, as was uncovered in interviews with faculty and staff of color, the majority of those charged with pushing for equity at CCU were People of Color. Further, while People of Color were asked to serve on these committees, like the hiring committee, no substantial power was given to the work and no accountability measures were developed to ensure the work was being done by the rest of the institution. Like Garcia challenges in her principle of membership, in addition to forming committees to address inequities, white supremacy culture must also be examined and challenged to truly achieve racial justice across labor and hiring efforts. Labor injustice not only includes inequities in hiring practices, but also the extra emotional labor expected of People of Color at the HSI.

Malcom-Piqueux and Bensimon (2015), described the importance of institutions developing culturally sustained practices that support equity in higher education. Culturally sustained practices refer to pedagogical teaching that recognizes the importance of sharing stories and history from multiple perspectives, particularly from marginalized voices. Reshaping the culture of a HwCU to better support equitable outcomes as an HSI, takes university wide investment and commitment. While there may have been a shared interest in serving students

from minoritized backgrounds at CCU, the growing population of Students of Color were seeking People of Color for support. Because there are disparities in representation of faculty and staff of color, this required more emotional labor on top of the roles of the few People of Color on campus. Thus, without a sustained practice that required all faculty and staff to share the responsibility of upholding the HSI mission, People of Color were disproportionately responsible for the continual support of Students of Color and this disproportionate burden may even worsen as more Latinx students enrolled in the university. The emotional labor expected of People of Color at CCU relates to how Cabrera et al. (2016) described the pervasiveness of whiteness, and how normalized practice in higher education, can make it difficult to disentangle and disrupt how whiteness operates on the campus. The data suggests the white people at CCU believed because there was a shared belief across racial identities that it was everyone's responsibility to support minoritized student populations; however, this belief may have allowed white people to ignore and minimize the extra labor required of People of Color. As Harper and Hurtado (2007) described, many Students of Color seek faculty and staff of color for support in higher education. While it is important that everyone at an HSI is committed to serving and supporting minoritized students, embedded whiteness may prevent institutions from recognizing systemic disparities in the labor required of People of Color to support the Students of Color on the campus.

Further, as was described by Adrian, a senior administrator, the institution has a diversity, equity, and inclusion committee to support advancing equitable policies and outcomes at CCU. Based on reviewing the committee online, most of the committee was made up of staff and faculty of color. As was described by multiple People of Color interviewed at the institution, despite being a part of equity committees, these committees were not given much power to enact institutional level change. Squire et al. (2018) described the connection between contemporary

109

higher education institutions and slave plantations and how the bodies of People of Color in higher education are used by institutions for benefit and profit. To address whiteness in how the bodies of People of Color are used in higher education, Squire et al. urges institutions to consider who benefits from asking a Person of Color to invest time and energy in something and whether the goal for the request is for the benefit of the institution despite the impact on the person. Ray's (2019) racialized organization theory described how organizations are racial systems. Using Ray's theory, I found connection between how institutions and institutional members inform each other and together create the racialized culture of the campus community. Institutions, and we as white people, need to acknowledge the role race and racism play in the ways we place extra emotional labor on People of Color for our own gain instead of on actually addressing systemic racism and injustice. Recognizing how normalized, whiteness practice allows white people to place extra labor on People of Color must be deconstructed to achieve Garcia's Decolonizing HSI's principle of membership. Further, in addition to deconstructing how whiteness upholds inequities in the labor expected of People of Color, it is important to disrupt who has power and influence on policy and decision making at an HSI.

As was evident at CCU, while People of Color are asked to take on additional work to support equity, their efforts were not given power and influence to create systemic change. Again, as Squire et al. (2018), explained, it is common practice in higher education to use the bodies of People of Color for the profit or gain of the institution. Stewart (2017) urges institutions to shift practices so that they center equity and justice and are intended to make structural change. The equity committees at CCU appear to give the institution a group to lean on when instances of overt inequities arise and place the extra emotional labor on the mostly People of Color to address but the committee's efforts are not given power for systemic change.

Similar to the diversity and equity committees described above, data collected in this study also demonstrated there were only a few programs and services seen as supporting HSI, staffed primarily by People of Color. During interviews with participants, when asked which programs support HSI, participants described specific committees and programs like the multicultural center or the Dreamer student center. While these programs are important to creating community and support for minoritized students, as Garcia (2019) described, it is also important for an HSI to hold all programs, staff, faculty, and services to centering the needs and experiences of Latinx students. As was described in chapter two, Brooks-Immel and Murray (2017), identified five microconstructions of white-supremacy upheld by white faculty and staff in higher education. One of the microconstructions Brooks-Immel and Murray found described how white people believe People of Color see race while white people do not. Related to the theme of the taxation of the bodies of People of Color, when we as white people uphold thoughts and behaviors that deny how race impacts our daily existence we support and maintain systems that uphold white supremacy. Placing the responsibility of serving Latinx students and Students of Color on programs that are primarily led by the few staff and faculty of color maintains whiteness by placing the challenge of racial injustice on People of Color to solve. As DiAngelo (2018) described, we as white people must become accomplices in striving for anti-racism. To do this, we must recognize how we are a part of systemic whiteness and act to disrupt it.

Finally, this theme also relates to Matias's (2016) whiteness and emotionality theory which exposes how the emotions of white people are systemically prioritized over the emotions of People of Color. The labor injustice exposed in this study, and the white participants failure to recognize the additional emotional labor on People of Color, are examples of whiteness and

emotionality. If we as white people are unable to reflect and take action against the emotional labor our colleagues of color endure to support Students of Color at an HSI, we reproduce and maintain systemic whiteness. We have to do more than understand and name that there are disparities in hiring practices. When inequities exist, like Stewart (2017) described, systemic practices grounded in equity and justice are required to create actual change. In addition to the labor injustice exposed in this study, whiteness was also identified in several examples of described "good intention" efforts to support Students of Color.

Maintaining Whiteness Through "Good Intentions"

The final major theme of the current study involved maintaining whiteness through "good intentions" and refers to prioritizing the efforts and good will of predominantly white institutions and institutional agents over their actual success of challenging systemic racism. This includes what DiAngelo (2018) described as white people's attempts at "being nice" as a means of absolving ourselves as participants and enablers of racist systems. However, as DiAngelo described, being nice or having "good intentions" are not examples of challenging systemic racism. Instead, they are often tools for upholding and supporting white supremacy and racist systems. Therefore, it is important to unpack what is meant by "good intentions" and recognize how this theme relates to the aims of this study. Theories of whiteness help unpack and describe how whiteness exists in higher education disguised as good intentions.

One theory that helps disentangle whiteness in good intentions efforts, is Harris's (1993) seminal work on *whiteness as property*. Within this theoretical framework, Harris described whiteness as placing the power and control over how race and racism is addressed and challenged by the white people who hold the power in society. As seen in a recent report by American Colleges and Universities (2019), the senior leadership at most higher education

112

institutions are white. Moreover, as Stewart (2017) described, often when institutions of higher education attempt to address racism and white supremacy, institutions use strategies and language of appeasement that are not intended to change systems but instead give the appearance of change. At CCU, the act of reorganizing units was described as an example of how the institution supports HSI and equity. However, even when offices or departments are reorganized, the structures of the institution that are embedded in whiteness are not challenged or addressed. Therefore, even with the good intention of reorganization, whiteness remains.

In her Decolonizing HSI's framework, Garcia (2017) names *Mission* as a tool for challenging the very core and fabric of how an HSI operates by centering anti-oppressive and anti-racist ideologies. Within this framework, in order to successfully decolonize an HSI and disrupt how whiteness holds the power and influence at the institution, "good intentions" are not enough. To achieve Garcia's mission of an institution embedded in anti-oppression and anti-racism the institution must first understand how institutional agents uphold whiteness masked in "good intention" efforts. Therefore, to challenge good intentions, any institutional effort to support equity, like reorganizing, needs to first recognize the power and influence of whiteness and deconstruct it to support systemic change.

Another example of maintaining whiteness through good intentions includes the cultural belief that all staff and faculty support minoritized students without any accountability measures in place for assessing how students are served. Thus, despite the believed institutional culture of supporting minoritized students, no accountability measures existed to ensure this value was upheld. Throughout interviews, I asked participants about expectations or accountability measures they received for supporting and upholding HSI efforts. Most described the staff and faculty culture of supporting minoritized students as a metric for supporting HSI. However, as

discussed earlier, staff and faculty of color carry more of the weight of addressing and supporting the Students of Color and equity initiatives on the campus. As white people we have been socialized not see ourselves as a racialized group and that we can ignore the invasive ways that racism influences how we act and behave (DiAngelo, 2018). For instance, Brooks-Immel and Murray (2017) found in their microconstructions of white supremacy that white staff and faculty tend to center their diversity discourse around helping and caring. We as white people uphold racist systems and practice by centering our efforts around caring and supporting minoritized students instead of on how we are challenging and disrupting our own and systemic racism. As DiAngelo (2018) described, white people believe if we care enough—or are nice enough—we can absolve ourselves from addressing racism.

As white people, we are a part of systemic whiteness and racism, we benefit from an unjust system that devalues the lives and experiences of People of Color for the benefit of white people (DiAngelo, 2018; Harris 1993). When white people focus on caring about students instead of addressing systemic whiteness, it allows white people to stay comfortable and maintain the status quo by not actually focusing on the real crisis of racism and instead on us feeling good about our efforts. Despite the communicated belief that the institution valued serving minoritized students, white administrators failed to recognize how the responsibility for serving Latinx and Students of Color at CCU was disproportionally placed on the fewer staff and faculty of color. As Ray's (2019) racialized organization theory described, individual actions and behaviors influence organizational culture. This includes that without formal accountability measures in place for supporting HSI efforts, it can be difficult to systemically expose the disparities in who is supporting equity and who is not. Likely, if CCU had accountability measures in place for supporting HSI efforts there would be greater representation of faculty and

senior leaders of color on campus and institutional agents would be able to name examples of metrics and data they collected to understand how they are centering and supporting Latinx student. As an example, in my interview with Angela, she described the failure of multiple white administrators' to acknowledge how racism across society was impacting Students of Color. Angela described a senior staff meeting where white senior leaders were discussing a student athletes concern with racism in society and how the institution should respond. The white senior leaders did not reflect on the emotional and mental health toll of racism on the students and staff on campus but instead focused on the rules of the institution. Further, there was no discussion about how the institution's rules and policies may be embedded in whiteness and might fail to support the student's needs.

As Matias (2017) described, whiteness and emotionality center the emotions and experiences of white people over People of Color. The senior leader's lack of recognition of the deep emotional and life impact of racism on the student athletes of color is a demonstration of how the white senior leaders uphold whiteness despite good intentions. Like Garcia (2017) described in her Decolonizing HSI framework, if the institution's mission and purpose, through accountability, was grounded in anti-racism and anti-oppression, the white senior leaders may have had more skills for understanding how to address the impact of racism on the Students of Color.

Related to lack of accountability rooted in anti-racism, an additional example of good intentions embedded in whiteness and white supremacy is white saviorism. Fanon (1970) and Burr (2010) described white saviorism as white people's actions for "saving" People of Color and "helping" People of Color achieve white cultural values and expectations. White saviorism maintains a hierarchy of white people and white cultural expectations as power over People of

Color who need to be "saved" (Burr, 2010). Saviorism was seen in this study during interviews

with white staff and faculty who described a commitment to HSI because they feel bad for

struggles students overcome and believe that with their help, the student can be successful.

Related to saviorism, in Brooks-Immel and Murray's (2017) study, they found white people

described their diversity efforts as being helpful and caring. The belief that you are helpful or

caring to People of Color, again, demonstrates a belief that you have superiority or power over

the person or group you are helping or supporting. To truly challenge systemic whiteness, like

saviorism, we as white people need to relinquish our internalized power and follow the lead of

the community enduring and navigating racism instead of thinking our good intentions will

create change. Being caring and helpful without challenging systemic racism maintains the status

quo and white people's comfort.

Finally, the final sub-theme of the "good intentions" theme involves performative

change. In this study, when participants were asked to give examples about what it means for the

institution to be an HSI, many gave recent examples related to how the institution responded to

heightened awareness of systemic racism and white supremacy after the killings of

Amaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and George Floyd in summer 2020. During interviews and

listening to recorded video of president boards meetings from summer 2020, university staff and

faculty praised the institution, and specifically the Board of trustees for their investment in anti-

racism initiatives. The anti-racism investment was noted by one senior leader as "occurring

because of the racial unrest across society" despite the fact that the institution had been seeking

HSI since 2007. In an article by Squire et al. (2020), the authors state "We posit that

campuses engage in contemporary plantation politics. People of Color, and particularly Black

people, are exploited in various ways for economic gain at the sake of their humanity" (p. 3,

2018). The sub-theme of performative change relates to this quote because of the institution did not engage in these anti-racist initiatives until they benefited the institution. The need to respond to racial injustice had always existed in higher education but the university only engaged in this work when it became expected by peer institutions.

Performative change also relates to Bell's (1980) interest convergence theory. Interest convergence is when white people and white systems only choose to address racism when it is to their benefit to do so (Bell, 1980). Although almost all participants in this study spoke highly of the institution's recent anti-racism efforts, it is important to unpack the nuance in when the institution chose to act. The board of trustees and institutions "good intention" efforts to create racial justice hiring committees and learning opportunities came after universities were being challenged and questioned by people and media in unprecedented ways. If the institution, an HSI with nearly 50% Students of Color, chose not to act, the institution also knew that their enrollment could suffer. In addition to enrollment, the establishment of committees to "address" racial injustice may serve to, as Stewart (2017) described, appease students the institution is doing "something," The decision to act only when it also serves the institution maintains white supremacy. All institutions, and particularly HSI's, need to deconstruct racist systems and expose whiteness prior to pursing HSI status not when it is convenient or institutionally beneficial. As Garcia (2017) described in her Decolonizing HSI framework, the purpose of an HSI should be to support Latinx students using decolonizing and anti-racist ideologies.

This study discovered multiple themes and examples regarding how HSIs can maintain whiteness and decenter the needs of Latinx students. As the themes in this study illuminated, often, even when an HSI attempts to support equity, the institutions efforts are rooted in whiteness and white supremacy that center appeasement instead of systemic change. As Bell

(1980) described in his theory of interest convergence, institutions cannot solely seek HSI because of the benefits and rewards of the designation. Above profit or gains, institutions must prioritize the HSI status as a means for challenging whiteness systemic and centering the needs and experiences of the Latinx students the designation is intended to serve. In the following section, I offer recommendations and suggestions for HSIs to challenge and disrupt systemic whiteness in order to better serve Latinx students.

Implications and Recommendations

The findings in this study can assist institutions seeking HSI, institutions with the HSI designation, and institutions with any minority serving status in understanding how systemic whiteness can influence strategies for supporting Latinx students and all Students of Color. The findings in this study will assist higher education institutions in recognizing the relationship between the institution as a whole, members of the institution, and how together they contribute to or challenge systemic whiteness. The following sections I will first provide recommendations at the institutional level for those institutions seeking HSI status and for governing boards of HSI's. Next, I offer recommendations for staff and faculty in higher education for addressing whiteness at the individual level.

Recommendations for Institutions Seeking HSI

HSIs were created in the early nineties to increase access and success of Latinx students into and through higher education. However, most HSIs are formed at HwCU and the embedded whiteness on these campuses can make it difficult for institutions to equitably serve Latinx students and Students of Color. This study further illuminated that disrupting and dismantling whiteness requires structural change with a commitment to shifting culture and practice in support of Latinx students and Students of Color. To achieve Stewarts (2017) description of

centering equity and justice in higher education, institutions must recognize how the core of the institution is grounded in whiteness and systems that promote white supremacy. While HSIs can support Latinx students, the institution also always benefits from achieving HSI status by achieving genuine financial gains from federal grants to increase enrollment. Therefore, because there is always institutional benefit, it is important for institutions to deconstruct their intention for seeking HSI. This involves challenging and disrupting whiteness in how institutions strive for HSI and employ services for students. As Garcia and Okhidoi (2015) described, Latinx students should be the priority for an HSI and the focus of the programs and services the institution builds. As was discovered in this study, centering the HSI narrative around serving "all" students is a tool for upholding white supremacy and the needs of white students.

Institutions must make strategic efforts for challenging whiteness at HSI's. This will involve focusing institutional efforts on uplifting and supporting Latinx students, faculty, and staff at the institution. Moreover, de-centering whiteness should be done before receiving HSI to reduce potential harm to students who attend an HSI and the faculty and staff of color who will take on more emotional labor if whiteness is not addressed. Garcia's (2018) first principle in her decolonizing HSIs framework holds that HSIs need to center their *purpose* around supporting students racial and cultural understanding. If an institution prioritizes how their HSI supports "all" students, this derails efforts to focus on the needs and interest of the Latinx students the additional HSI designation is intended to serve. Programs, student support services, financial aid procedures, for example, should center the needs and experiences of Latinx students. Garcia (2017) offered recommendations for institutions to consider servingness for Latinx students at HSIs by understanding student outcomes (i.e., graduation rates) while also supporting the cultural well-being and community of Latinx students on the campus. Regardless of the

perceived impact of building intentional programs to support Latinx students on white students, as was a concern raised by members of CCU, as a core of being an HSI, Latinx students need to be prioritized. It is only when HSIs center Latinx students above the benefits of the institution the HSI will truly serve students.

An important finding in this study further illuminated what Squire et al. (2018) described as the taxation of the bodies of People of Color for the institutions gain. Embedded whiteness at many HwCUs leads to these institutions perpetuating and maintaining racial injustice in hiring and labor practices towards People of Color. As was identified at CCU, HSIs placed unchecked extra emotional labor on the few faculty and staff of color on their campus to support the HSI status and equity initiatives. If HSIs are intended to serve Latinx students and Students of Color, as Harper and Hurtado (2007) found, it is necessary to prioritize increasing the representation of faculty and staff of color. Institutions need to implement equitable approaches in the hiring process. For example, making demonstrated experience in serving Latinx students and Students of Color a minimum requirement in job descriptions. Additionally, adding interview questions to all interview processes that inquire about the applicant's commitment to equity and serving Students of Color. Further, as Garcia described in her decolonizing HSI's principle of membership, all members of an HSI must be held to anti-oppressive and anti-racist practices and collectively carry the load of deconstructing whiteness and white supremacy.

Since whiteness is often embedded in institutional culture and practice, institutions seeking HSI need to recognize whiteness will influence decision making and the experiences of the students on the campus, regardless of "good intentions." As Nuñez and Bowers (2011) described, many Latinx students attending an HSI, chose to do so because of the designation. There may be an assumption that if an institution has HSI status, the institution is more equipped with supporting

the social, emotional, and academic experiences of Latinx students. If the institutions seeking or those who have HSI are not unpacking the harmful ramifications of systemic whiteness, Latinx students may be misled in the intentions and goals of the institution. Regardless of the financial and enrollment gains an institution can receive from seeking HSI, the institution needs to first deconstruct existing policies and practices embedded in whiteness that may be placing additional barriers and challenges on students, faculty, and staff of color. For example, instead of relying on personal value for supporting Students of Color, institutions can hold staff and faculty accountable for investing in HSI initiatives and promoting equity in yearly evaluations, tenure processes, and all promotional opportunities at the institution.

As Garcia (2018) described in her decolonizing HSI framework, her *membership* principle urges that the voices of minoritized faculty and staff be centered and given full power and influence in institutional decision making. Like was described in this study, equity committees with no institutional accountability measures or expectations do not carry power and influence. Instead, when committees are created without institutional accountability for carrying out equity practices, it, as Stewart (2017) described, appears performative and a means for maintaining whiteness as the status quo. Instead of creating committees to give the appearance of action, it is recommended that senior administrators at HSIs who are charged with making and implementing decisions for the campus give power and influence to the communities who the decisions and policies will impact most. For instance, as was described previously, if there are inequities in hiring, it is recommended to invest in deconstructing the current hiring practices and build institutional expectations and accountability for hiring candidates of color as a commitment to HSI or any Minority Serving status. As Harris (1993) described in her theory of whiteness as property, whiteness affords wealth, ownership, and leisure to white people who hold power.

Similarly, as Cabrera et al. (2017) described the pervasiveness of whiteness in higher education, institutions with HSI status need to deconstruct how the institutional system upholds the theory of whiteness as property in who has the greatest access and opportunity. Without accountability for how the institution is expected to support HSI, policies and practices embedded in whiteness will likely create greater racial disparities instead of shifting inequities experienced by Students of Color. One recommendation for challenging whiteness in who holds power at an HSI is understanding racial representation at the senior level, mid-level, and entry-level positions at an institution and invest in creating racial equity at all levels through the equitable hiring practices previously mentioned.

Further, the interviewees in this study described multiple committees committed to equity initiatives on the campus. However, instead of these committees only serving to offer recommendations for change, the committees should be charged with making structural, systemic change and given the power and influence to enact the change across the institution. As Stewart (2017), described, to achieve racial equity and justice, institutions need to invest in structural changes to the institution. Institutional efforts with no accountability or power will likely fail at addressing systemic inequities. Senior leaders at HSI campuses need to invest in deconstructing how whiteness influences what is prioritized and given resources. For instance, as was described in theme one, CCU gave primacy to their HSI status serving "all" students instead of focusing on how the status directly supports Latinx students. If institutional accountability measures focused on how policies and practices at CCU directly related to the cultural community and success of Latinx students instead of on "all" students, the institution may be able to address racial disparities in retention of students and the experiences of the faculty and staff of color. In addition to power to create change, the members of these committees should be

compensated for their extra labor as a symbol of recognizing their value and supporting the institutions HSI status. Further, for institutions seeking or who have HSI, to challenge systemic whiteness it is also important to recognize how individuals at an institution can enact change for challenging systemic whiteness.

Recommendations for Evaluating Agencies of HSIs

In addition to institutional recommendations for challenging systemic whiteness, it is also important to recognize the role and influence evaluating agencies of HSI's can have on challenging systemic whiteness. It is recommended that organizations like Excelencia in Education, Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU), and additional institutional evaluation boards consider systemic whiteness when ranking, promoting, and assessing HSI campuses. It is recommended that evaluating boards use Garcia's decolonizing HSI framework and the nine principles she addresses as areas for assessment and evaluation of an HSI. For example, using Garcia's principle of *membership,* evaluating boards can help encourage HSI institutions to demonstrate how racial justice in hiring and labor is being practiced and valued in support of the institutions HSI status. Further, Garcia's *incentive structure* principle could be used as a road map for how to access if HSI's are centering anti-racism and anti-oppression by receiving recognition and rewards based on upholding these commitments.

In addition to using Garcia's (2018) framework as a tool for assessing HSI campuses, it is also recommended that evaluating agencies to challenge institutions to recognize when their interest in pursuing HSI is rooted in whiteness and white supremacy. Like was discovered in this study, CCU chose to seek HSI to increase the enrollment of Latinx students at the university. Beyond enrollment, institutions must demonstrate a commitment to serving Latinx students and

Students of Color from an anti-racist and anti-oppressive framework. For example, in addition to enrolling at the institution, how has the institution addressed systemic barriers for minoritized communities in K-12 with preparation for accessing the institution? Has the institution demonstrated a commitment to serving and uplifting the Latinx community prior to students applying to college? If evaluating boards include Garcia's framework as part of how HSIs are evaluated it might help disrupt the inequities in institutional benefit and instead, focus on how programs, services, and resources center the needs of Latinx students and communities.

Additionally, evaluating agencies can assist with naming and challenging performative change at HSIs. For example, when HSIs are selected for the *Seal of Excelencia*, Excelencia in Education could evaluate the performative nature of the HSI's efforts for serving Latinx students. For example, evaluating and complicating what motivated the institution being evaluated regarding when they chose to increase resources and support for Latinx students. Did increases in support come after student protests, community backlash, or negative media? Or in the institutions systemic commitment to supporting anti-racism and anti-oppression. Agencies that evaluate and rank HSIs can assist in challenging whiteness by evaluating institutions more critically and from an anti-racist and anti-oppressive framework.

Recommendations for Staff in Higher Education

Rays's racialized organization theory described how institutional agents, at all levels, are influenced by and have influence over creating and maintaining the culture of an organization. This was evident at CCU during interviews when people described a shared institutional and personal investment in supporting underrepresented and minoritized students. However, it is important to unpack the nuance in how this culture for serving minoritized students can support

124

and maintain whiteness. The following section provides recommendations for staff about how to challenge systemic whiteness at an HSI.

At CCU, multiple staff spoke highly of the equity committees and programs at CCU. However, there was no recognition, particularly by the white staff interviewed, of the extra load People of Color were expected to carry to support the Students of Color on the campus. To assist in deconstructing whiteness, we as white people need to recognize how race and racism are connected to the ways we experience the workplace and how whiteness allows us to dismiss how racism influences our expectation of placing extra labor on staff of color to address inequities. As white people, we need to recognize and challenge how we uphold racial injustice and be a part of efforts to center anti-racism at the institution. For example, to challenge racism and our own whiteness, we as white people need to confront how our focus on personal rewards and gains (promotions, salary increases connection with colleagues or our supervisor) dictate our actions. As Matias (2016), described in her theory of whiteness and emotionality, when I prioritize my own emotional experience, or the emotions of other white people, instead of addressing racism, I am maintaining and promoting whiteness.

Again, as Gasman (2008) identified, many HSIs are formed at HwCUs and as Wilder (2010) detailed, have histories of white supremacy and racism. Despite good intentions, wanting to be helpful, or caring, white staff at HSIs need to commit to our own investment in deconstructing internalized dominance and whiteness. As white people, we contribute to and benefit from whiteness every day. The privileges we receive from whiteness, can allow us to mask the harmful reality that we are maintaining injustice and white supremacy. Like many interviewees in this study, it is not enough to name the injustices we see, like a failure to hire more People of Color. We must commit to being a part of creating and implementing change,

125

regardless of discomfort, fear of making a mistake, or risking our career advancement. It is not enough to feel good about helping a student who experiences systemic barriers for accessing and completing college. As many People of Color do every day, we as white people must take action in support of anti-racism and anti-oppression in higher education. Action can begin with investing in deeper learning and understanding of our perpetuations of whiteness through readings, workshops, and anti-racist white accountability affinity groups to unpack our internalized dominance.

Recommendations for Faculty at an HSI

This study reinforced the influences whiteness has on academic departments. The faculty of color in this study described how they are expected to lead equity and social justice initiatives at CCU and that no formal assessment or accountability exists from the institution on these efforts. To truly challenge systemic whiteness, equity and justice must be an expectation of all faculty, not just the faculty of color to take on the added emotional labor of addressing inequities. The provost, deans, department chairs, and all faculty must lead with the expectations that all faculty need to be equipped with teaching from a decolonial and equitable framework. As Garcia (2018) described in her Decolonizing an HSI framework, faculty curriculum should center anti-racism and anti-oppression. Connected to a decolonial pedagogy, faculty need to complete trainings to unpack their own bias and how their biases impact their teaching and interaction with students and colleagues.

As a strategy for ensuring all faculty are expected to support HSI goals and equity initiatives on campus, academic departments could create assessment measures specific to equity and inclusivity connected to tenure. Examples of how faculty can demonstrate a commitment to HSI is through redeveloping courses from an inclusive pedagogical framework, participating on

equity committees, and demonstrating an investment in supporting Latinx students and Students

of Color at the university. By connecting involvement in HSI initiatives to the tenure process,

this will encourage faculty to invest their growth related to supporting HSI and equity.

Finally, as Harper and Hurtado (2017) described, Students of Color often seek support

from faculty of color on campus. Recognizing that HSIs have a higher percentage of Students of

Color, HSIs could invest in the extra labor of faculty to support Students of Color. For example,

faculty of color could receive course releases for the extra time the faculty of color spends with

students or add supporting Students of Color as a way of demonstrating institutional service

requirements for Tenure.

Summary of Recommendations

A priority of any institution seeking HSI, or any minority serving status, should be

naming, unpacking, and disrupting how whiteness exists at the institution. Receiving HSI

without first deconstructing how systemic whiteness exists and creates a harmful environment

for the student populations the status is intended to serve, is an example of white supremacy. We

can no longer engage in appeasement practices that suggest effort but serve to maintain the status

quo and continue racist systems (Stewart, 2017). As was evident in this study, without

deconstructing systemic whiteness, many of the strategies for supporting Latinx students and

People of Color at HSIs can unintentionally or intentionally maintain white supremacy.

Institutions, staff, faculty, and HSI evaluating boards must do better to invest in anti-racist

practices that aim at making structural, systemic change (Garcia, 2017; Kendi, 2019).

Limitations and Future Research

Although this study provided novel information regarding how systemic whiteness is

embedded within HSI's, there are several important limitations that lend to future research. The

current study was completed a large, public, accessed based institution located in a western metropolitan city. To complete a more thorough understanding of whiteness on HSI campuses, it is suggested that additional research be done to understand how whiteness exists across institutional types and geographical regions. For example, the findings in this study may have differed or illuminated additional forms of whiteness at a private, small, liberal arts institution in the Northeast. In addition, the findings in this study might either be reaffirmed or shifted by researching and understanding whiteness at multiple HSIs.

In addition to exploring the research questions in this study at additional institutions, it is also recommended that a study focus on how whiteness directly impacts students at an HSI. This study explored systemic whiteness at an HSI and did not directly include student voices. In addition to understanding systemic examples from university staff, faculty, and documents it is helpful to learn and understand from students how whiteness exists and impacts Latinx students and all Students of Color. Understanding how whiteness impacts students at an HSI may also lead to better understanding how to create and implement services that truly serve students at an HSI. More specifically, further research could unpack how the impact of HSI's rhetoric of the status supporting "all" students directly impacts the experiences of Latinx students. Exploring how centering HSI around all students instead of on Latinx students, from a student's perspective, might help uncover additional strategies for further disrupting how systemic whiteness impacts the students at an HSI.

This study identified a theme of labor injustice endured by staff and faculty of color at an HSI. It might be helpful to further unpack how the bodies of People of Color are used at HSIs or any minority serving institution for the benefit of the institutions. Using the bodies of People of Color to uphold white supremacist systems has been a part of higher education since its inception

in the United States (Wilder, 2013. All institutions, and especially institutions with or seeking HSI, need to confront and illuminate racist practices that serve to exhaust and dehumanize People of Color for the institutions profit. This is true for both the faculty and staff at the university and the students. Institutions must not center their own financial gain as the driver for seeking and securing HSI status. The People of Color who are at the center of why HSIs and all MSI's exist, must be prioritized in how institutions carry out policy, practice, and support. It would be helpful for future research to explore how HSIs unpack whiteness in their hiring practices in support of more equitable practices.

Finally, this case study was conducted during the Covid-19 pandemic. Because of the pandemic, all interviews, document analysis, and data collection were done remotely. It might have been interesting to include campus observations in the data collection. In future studies, it might be helpful to observe on-campus committee meetings addressing the budget, resource allocation, and policies to understand HSI conversations more deeply. In person data collection might have illuminated different perspectives and observations in the data.

Personal Reflection

The diversity in higher education course in this doctoral program exposed me to Cheryl Matias's work on whiteness and emotionality (2016). In Matias's book she unpacks how white people's feelings and emotions are prioritized over the emotions of People of Color as a protection of white supremacy. Matias's book was an awakening to how I uphold racist systems and have prioritized protecting white people's feelings and emotions at the expense of challenging and disrupting racism. Reading Matias's book opened my eyes to critical whiteness studies and gave language and theory to the everyday ways systemic whiteness upholds racism

and white supremacy, and how I am a part of the system. It was after reading Matias's book that I decided to shift my research focus to understanding whiteness in higher education.

As a white woman who is passionate about advocating for equity and justice for marginalized groups in higher education, I have learned how important it is for me to continually confront and challenge the ways I uphold and perpetuate whiteness. Studying systemic whiteness has forced me to grapple with my own insecurities and fear with challenging racist systems. While learning about Matias's (2017), Bell's (1980), Harris (1993), Cabrera's (2019), and DiAngelo's (2018) works, I've had to hold a mirror to myself and question how I have maintained whiteness through my own discomfort with confronting racism and allow fear of punishment drive me to inaction. In higher education, as a practitioner and now as a scholar, I want to authentically advocate for equity and justice. To do this, I must always commit to recognizing how I contribute to and uphold injustice. Studying systemic whiteness at an HSI has forced me to engage in deep and reflective critical whiteness work.

Each article, theory, and finding in this study led to many conversations with my wife, family, friends, and colleagues around grappling with my interpretations and whether I was giving justice to exposing the injustice in how HSIs serve and support Students of Color. In my findings, I identified examples of ways I have perpetuated and supported whiteness and white supremacy. I recognized that similar to many of the people who participated in this study, I have also centered my equity and social justice work around efforts that would benefit "all" instead of how I was centering minoritized communities. I recognized that I used rhetoric like "all" because of whiteness and my fear that efforts directed at supporting Students of Color would be minimized or dismissed. I recognize now that I was participating in language of appeasement and upholding whiteness and white supremacy. I hope the findings in this study help additional

higher education professionals with challenging how our efforts often serve to maintain and uphold unjust systems instead of striving for equity and justice.

I have immense gratitude for my advisor, Dra. Susana Muñoz, who pushed me to think more critically and deeply about what I was seeing and learning from the data and how I used theory to expose systemic whiteness. Throughout my doctoral journey, Dr. Thomn Bell, a fellow critical whiteness scholar and member of my doctoral committee, supported and challenged me to consider my own perpetuations of whiteness and I my own journey related to the theories and findings identified in this study. This study helped me further discover the ways systemic whiteness exists at and HSI and how institutional agents, I, uphold and maintain institutional whiteness. The multiple examples of how race was evaded at the HSI as an attempt either appease white discomfort or uphold white supremacy was a reality check for me about how important it is to think deeper and be more critical about how we serve and support Students of Color.

Summary

This study sought to understand how whiteness impacts an HSI and the ways institutional agents support Latinx students. Considering that HSIs are intended to serve and support Latinx student access and retention to higher education, it is important to unpack how systemic whiteness may prevent institutions from truly serving Latinx students. This study found multiple examples of whiteness at CCU.

Many of the examples interviewers offered for how the institution was supporting its HSI status were strategies grounded in whiteness and white supremacy. Further, because there were no formal accountability measures or expectations placed on institutional agents, there was little or no recognition of the existence of whiteness at CCU. This study helped further expose how

important it is for institutions seeking HSI or any Minority Serving Status to unpack how systemic whiteness influences all aspects of the institution and the institutional agents at the university. If seeking HSI status is intended to better support access and success of Latinx students, the institution needs to critically analyze any policy or practice to ensure Students of Color are centered. Further, while the HSI designation was created to support Latinx students in higher education, institutions with HSI always receive a benefit either financially or from enrollment. Therefore, as a strategy for challenging systemic whiteness, institutions with or seeking HSI need to deconstruct their purpose and intent for seeking HSI and ensure that institutional benefit is not prioritized over the experiences and success of the students the designation is intended to serve.

REFERENCES

Ahmed, S. (2012). *On being included: Racism and diversity in institutional life*. Duke University Press.

Alexander, M. (2012). *The new jim crow: Mass incarceration in the age of colorblindness*. The New Press.

Allen, T. (2019). Decades after the Auraria campus displaced a neighborhood, a scholarship meant to make amends may be on the last generation. *Colorado Public Radio*. Retrieved from https://www.cpr.org/2019/08/19/decades-after-the-auraria-campus-displaced-a-neighborhood-a-scholarship-meant-to-make-amends-may-be-on-the-last-generation/

American Council on Education. (2019). Race and ethnicity in higher education: A status report. Retrieved from https://www.equityinhighered.org/.

American Council on Education. (2019). Race and ethnicity in higher education: A status report. Retrieved from https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/reference_list_electronic_sources.html

Anderson, A. (2013). Teacher for America and the dangers of deficit thinking. *Critical Education, 4*(11), 2847.

Annamma, A.A, Jackson, D.D., & Morrison D. (2017). Conceptualizing color-evasiveness: Using di/ability critical race theory to expand a color-blind racial ideology in education and society. *Race and Ethnicity in Education*, 20(2), 147-162.

Arnold, J., & Kowalski-Braun, M. (2012). The journey to an inaugural chief diversity officer: Preparation, implementation, and beyond. *Innovative Higher Education*, *37,* 27-36.

Bell, D. (1980). Brown v. board of education and he interest convergence dilemma. *Harvard Law Review*, 93(3), 518-533.

Bell, D. (1992). *Faces at the bottom of the well: The permanence of racism*. Basic

Books.

Biewen, J. & Kumanyika, C. (Hosts). (2017). *Seeing white* [Audio Podcast]. Scene on Radio.

Bonilla-Silva, E. (2018). *Racism without racists. Color-blind racism and the persistence of*

racial inequality in America (5th ed.). Rowman & Littlefield.

Bradley, W. S., Garven, R. J., Law, W. W., & West, J. (2018). The impact of chief diversity

officers on diverse faculty hiring. *The National Bureau of Economic Research*.

Brooks-Immel, D., & Murray, S. (2018). Color-blind contradictions and black/white binaries:

White academic upholding whiteness. *Justice in Higher Education*, *39*(39), 315-333.

Brunsma, L. D., Brown, S., & D., Placier, P. (2012). Teaching race at historically white colleges

and universities: Identifying and dismantling the walls of whiteness. *Critical Sociology*,

39(5), 717-738.

Bryson, D. (2018). In the '60's Denver decided to replace this community with the auraria

campus. Here's what it lost. *Denverite.* Retrieved from

https://denverite.com/2018/11/05/denver-auraria-history-displacement/

Burr. J. (2010*). The altruistic self and the desire of developing others: Towards a post-*

development ethos of action (Publication No. MR636609) [Doctoral Dissertation,

Dalhousie University]. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing

Cabrera, L. N. (2012). Exposing whiteness in higher education: White male college students

minimizing racism, claiming victimization, and recreating white supremacy. *Race*

Ethnicity and Education, *17*(1), 30-55.

Cabrera L. N. (2019). *White guys on campus: Racism, white immunity, and the myth of post-*

racial higher education. Rutgers University Press.

Cabrera, L. N., Watson, S. J., & Franklin, D. J. (2016). Racial arrested development: A critical whiteness analysis of the campus ecology. *Journal of College Student Development*, *57*(2), 119-134.

Cherng, H. S., & Halpin, P. F. (2016). The importance of minority teachers: Student perceptions of minority versus white teachers. *Educational Researcher*, *45*(7), 407.

Cohen, M. A., & Kisker, B. C. (2010). *The shaping of American higher education: Emergence and growth of the contemporary system*. Jossey-Bass.

Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2007). *Research methods in education* (6th edition). Routledge Falmer.

Conrad, C., & Gasman, M. (2015). *Educating a diverse nation: Lessons from minority-serving institutions.* Harvard University Press.

Contreras, F., & Contreras J. G. (2015). Raising the bar for Hispanic Serving Institutions: An analysis of college completion and success rates. *Journal of Hispanics in Higher Education, 14*(2), 151–170.

Contreras, F. E., Malcom, L. E., & Bensimon, E. M. (2008). Hispanic-serving institutions: Closeted identity and the production of equitable outcomes for Latina/o students. In M. Gasman, B. Baez, & C. S. V. Turner (Eds.), *Understanding minority-serving institutions* (pp. 71–90). SUNY Press.

Crenshaw, K. (1989). Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sec: A black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory and antiracist politics. *University of Chicago Legal Review, 8*(1), 139-167.

Dade, K., Tartakov, C., Hargrave, C., & Leigh, P. (2015). Assessing the impact of racism on black faculty in white academe: A collective case study of African American faculty.

Western Journal of Black Studies, 134-146.

Delgado, R., & Stefancic, J. (2017) *Critical race theory: An introduction* (3rd ed.).

New York University Press.

DiAngelo, R. (2018). *White fragility: Why it's so hard for white people to talk about racism.*

Beacon Press.

Dijk, V. T. (1993). Principles of critical discourse analysis. *Discourse & Society, 4*(2), 249-283.

Doran, E. E. (2015). Negotiating access and tier one aspirations: The historical evolution of a

striving Hispanic serving institution. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education*, *14*(4), 343-354.

Duster, T. (2009). The long path to higher education for African Americans. *Thought and Action*, 99-110.

Fanon, F. (1970). *Black skin, white masks*. Paladin.

Foste, Z. (2019). Reproducing whiteness: How white students justify the campus racial status

quo. *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice*, *56*(3), 241-253.

Garces, M. L., & Bilyalov, D. (2019). Navigating the quicksand: How postsecondary

administrators understand the influence of affirmative action developments on racial

diversity work. *Teachers College Record*, *121*(3).

Garcia, A. G. (2019). *Becoming hispanic serving institutions: Opportunities for colleges and universities*. Johns Hopkins University Press.

Garcia, G. A. (2018). Decolonizing hispanic serving institutions: A framework for organizing.

Journal of Hispanic Higher Education, *17*(2), 132-147.

Garcia, A. G. (2017). Defined outcomes or culture? Constructing an organizational identity for

hispanic serving institutions. *American Educational Research Journal*, *54,* 111S-134S.

García, G., & Okhidoi, O. (2015). Culturally relevant practices that "serve" students at a

    Hispanic Serving Institution. *Innovative Higher Education, 40*(4). doi: 10.1007/ s10755-

    015-9318-7

Gasman, M. (2008). Minority-serving institutions: A historical backdrop. In M. Gasman, B. Baez

    & C. S. V. Turner (Eds.), *Understanding minority-serving institutions* (pp. 18-27).

    Albany: State University of New York Press.

Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce. (2019). The unequal race for

    good jobs. Retrieved from https://cew.georgetown.edu/cew-reports/raceandgoodjobs/

Gioia, D. A., & Thomas, J. B. (1996). Identity, image, and issue interpretation: Sensemaking

    during strategic change in academia. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 41*(3), 370-403.

Gonzales, D. L., Kanhai, D., & Hall, K. (2018). Reimagining organizational theory for critical

    study of higher education. *Higher Education: A Handbook of Theory and Research*, 33,

    505-559.

Harper, R. S. (2017, November 11). Personal communication.

Harper, R. S., & Hurtado, S. (2007). Nine themes in campus racial climates and implications for

    institutional transformation. *New Directions for Student Services*, *120*, 7-24.

Harris, I. C. (1993). Whiteness as property. *Harvard Law Review*, *106*(8), 1707-1791.

hooks, b. (2000). *Feminism is for everybody: Passionate politics*. Routledge.

Jones, S. R., Torres, V., & Arminio, J. (2014). *Negotiating the complexities of qualitative

    research in higher education*. Routledge.

Jordan, S., (June 16, 2007). Hispanic challenge: Getting more into, out of college holds big

    payoff. *The Denver Post*, p. 29. Retrieved from https://infoweb-newsbank-

    com.ezproxy2.library.colostate.edu/apps/news/documentview?p=WORLDNEWS&docre

f=image/v2%3A12C7581AC4BD0728%40EANX-17D6C66BB26C2831%402454268-
17D3A0ABBAB7BC0B%4028-17D3A0ABBAB7BC0B%40.

Kendi, I. B. (2019). *How to be an anti-racist*. United States: One world.

Kendi, I. B. (2016). *Stamped from the beginning: The definitive history of racist ideas in
America.* Hachette Book Group.

Ladson-Billings, G. (1998). Just what is critical race theory and what's it doing in a nice field of
education? *Qualitative Studies in Education*, *11*(1), 7-24.

Latino, M. N. (2010). Unmasking whiteness: A framework for understanding inclusive
leadership at a predominately white institution (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from
ProQuest Collection Database.

Leonardo, Z. (2009). *Race, whiteness, and education*. Routledge.

Lloyd-Jones, B. (2009). Implication of race and gender in higher education administration: An
African American woman's perspective. *Advances in Developing Human Resources*,
11(5), 606-618.

Malcom-Piqueux, L., & Bensimon, E. M. (2015). Design principles for equity and
excellence at Hispanic-serving institutions. Retrieved from http://education.utsa.
edu/images/uploads/30207-PerspectivasPolicyBrief_Issue4-2.pdf

Matias, C. (2016). *Feeling white: Whiteness, emotionality and education*. Sense Publishers.

McCambly, N. H., & Haley J. K., (2016). Equity and the "b" word: Budgeting and professional
capacity in student affairs. *Journal of Student Affairs Research*, *53*(2), 205-217.

Melaku, M. T. (2019). *You don't look like a lawyer: Black women and systemic gendered
racism*. Rowan & Littlefield.

Merriam, B. S., Johnson-Bailey, J., Lee, M., & Kee., Y. (2001). Power and positionality:
Negotiating insider/outsider status within and across cultures. *International Journal of*

Lifelong Education, 20(5), 405-416.

Metropolitan State University of Denver. (2008). Press release: Enrollment is up, especially

    among students of color. Retrieved from

    https://temp.msudenver.edu/pressreleases/2008/09-17-2008.shtml

Metropolitan State University of Denver, (2007). Press release: Metro state ranked first in state

    for ethnically diverse faculty. Retrieved from

    https://temp.msudenver.edu/pressreleases/2007/10-22-2007.shtml

Milem, J. F., Chang, M. J., & Antonio, A. L. (2005). *Making diversity work on campus: A*

    research-based perspective. Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges and

    Universities.

Miles, M. B., Huberman, M. A., & Saldana, J. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods*

    sourcebook (3rd ed.). Sage Publications.

National Center for Educational Statistics. (2016). *Bachelor's degrees conferred by*

    race/ethnicity and field of study: 2014-15. Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of

    Education.

Nayak, A. (2007). Critical whiteness studies. *Sociology Compass*, *1*(2), 737-755.

Nuñez, A., & Elizondo, M. (2015). Institutional diversity among four-year hispanic serving

    institutions In A. Nuñez, S. Hurtado, & E. Calderon Galeano (Eds.), *Hispanic serving*

    institutions: Advancing research and transformative practice (pp. 65-81). Routledge.

Nuñez, A., Ramalho, E. M., & Cuero, K. K. (2010). Pedagogy for equity: Teaching in a hispanic

    serving institution. *Innovative Higher Education*, 35, 177-190.

Nuñez, A. M., & Bowers, A. J. (2011) Exploring what leads high school students to enroll in

Hispanic-serving institutions: A multilevel analysis. *American Educational Research Journal*, *48*(6), 1286-1313

Parker, L., Deyhle, D., & Villenas, S. (1999). *Race is…race isn't: Critical race theory and qualitative studies in education.* Westview Press.

Ray, V. (2019). A theory of racialized organizations. *American Sociological Review*, 84(1), 26-53.

Rooks, M. N. (2006). *Money black power: The surprising history of African American studies and the crisis of race in higher education*. Beacon Press.

Salinas, C. (2020). The complexity of the "x" in latinx: How latinx/a/o students relate to, identify with, and understand the term latinx. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education*, 1-22.

Sangaramoorthy, T., & Richardson, B. J. (2020). Black lives matter without black people? *Inside Higher Education.* Retrieved from https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2020/10/16/many-people-deny-how-pervasive-racism-higher-ed-and-how-its-often-reproduced

Santiago, D. A. (2006). *Inventing Hispanic-serving institutions (HSIs): The basics.* Washington, D.C.: Excelencia in Education.

Solorzano, G. D., & Yosso, J. T. (2002). Critical race methodology: Counter-storytelling as an analytical framework for education research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, *8*(1), 23-44.

Southern Regional Board of Education. (2017). Student and faculty diversity. Retrieved from https://www.sreb.org/sites/main/files/fileattachments/al_student_faculty_diversity.pdf?16 17131337

Squire, D., Williams, B. C., & Tuitt, F. (2020). Plantation politics and neoliberal racism in higher education: A framework for reconstructing anti-racism institutions. *Teachers College*

Record, 120, 1-20.

Stewart, D. (2017). *Language of appeasement. Inside Higher Education*. Retrieved from

    https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2017/03/30/colleges-need-language-shift-not-

    one-you-think-essay.

Suarez, C., Anderson, R. M., & Young, S. K. (2018). The changing roles and contributions of

    campus diversity offices and their influence on campus culture. *Metropolitan*

    Universities, *29*(1), 64-76.

Urban Displacement Project. (2021). Denver gentrification and displacement. Retrieved from

    https://www.urbandisplacement.org/denver/denver-gentrification-and-displacement

Wilder, S. C. (2013*). Ebony and ivy: Race, slavery, and the troubled history of American's*

    universities. Bloomsbury Press.

Werts, F. J., Charmaz, K., McMullen, L. M., Josselson, R., Anderson, R., & McSpadden, E.

    (2011). *Qualitative analysis: Phenomenological psychology, grounded theory, discourse*

    analysis, narrative research, and intuitive inquiry. The Guilford Press.

Yin, K. R. (2018*). Case study research and applications: Designs and methods* (6th edition).

    United States: Sage Publications.

APPENDIX A: EMAIL TO PARTICIPANTS

Hello,

My name is Brandi Scott and I am a doctoral student at Colorado State University in the Higher Education Administration program and I am conducting a research study under my advisor, Dr. Susana Muñoz.

The purpose of this study is to understand how systemic whiteness impacts a recently established Hispanic Servicing Institution and the institution's ability to support Latinx-students. I am contacting you to request a recorded interview for this study. In my study, the institution and all individuals participating will be anonymous. The interview should take about one-hour and will be audio recorded and the audio will be transcribed. After transcription, a copy of the transcript will be shared with you to confirm accuracy and validity of the conversation.

My interest in this study stems from my own experience working at HSIs and my belief in institutions ability and responsibility to create greater access and opportunity for historically marginalized student populations.

I appreciate your consideration of this request and if you have any questions, please feel free to contact me, scottbrandi14@gmail.com.

APPENDIX B: Interview Questions

Senior Administrators

1. What is the driving purpose and mission of the institution?

2. What does it mean to you to be a Hispanic Serving Institution?

3. In what ways does race influence how you build policies at the institution?

4. In what ways do you consider how your own race influences your position?

5. How is Latinx culture prioritized in the development of institutional practices?

6. What factors are considered when limited resources are available with multiple priorities?

7. How does your HSI status influence how Latinx students are served and supported?

Student Affairs

1. What does it mean to you to be a Hispanic Serving Institution?

2. How is Latinx culture prioritized in the development of institutional practices?

3. What factors are considered when limited resources are available with multiple priorities?

4. What factors do you consider when creating programs and services for students?

5. In what ways do you consider how your own race influences your position?

Faculty

1. Please describe how race is considered in the development of your course materials?

2. In what ways do you consider how your own race influences the students in your course?

3. How is Latinx culture prioritized in the development of institutional practices?

4. What does it mean to you to be a Hispanic Serving Institution?

Students

1. What does it mean to you to be a Hispanic Serving Institution?

2. What do you think are the universities priorities?

3. How have you felt valued and supported at the institution?

4. In what ways do you think race is considered at the institution?

5. How is your cultural background supported in the classroom and in campus programs?

6. As a student, in what ways have you seen the institution center Latinx students' needs? (student question)