**Introduction** Identity formation continues to be an area of research with increased scholarship due to the interdisciplinary approach of how, why, and where identities are formed. The field of rhetoric often theorizes racial/ethnic identities are socially constructed through an intercultural lens (Flower, 2003; Kim, 2000; Sha, 2006; Kim, 2007). Identity formation theories outside of the field of rhetoric vary, but an analysis of current scholarship situations identity formation as a rhetorical act (Flower, 2003; Grabill, year). By analyzing how racial/ethnic identities are constructed and appropriated within the non-profit sector, it aids in connecting the application of rhetorical theory within the public sphere. Scholarship within the non-profit sector grew in the 1980’s (Anhejer, 1990), and with this growth it was found that non-profit organizations shifted from being “perceived as small bands of activists, but rather as the new super brands” (Wootliff and Dery, 2001). According to a study of global brands within the non-profit sector, Laidler-Kylander, Quelch, and Simonin (2007) found “the roles brands play and the stakeholders they address vary depending on the characteristics of the organizations themselves” (p. 275).

For both non-profit and for-profit sectors, organizational identities are tied with marketing and branding strategies (Heyman, 2011; Pope, year). The purpose of this literature review is to explore relevant scholarship on how a non-profits organizational identity is created through Twitter. A brief overview of themes found within relevant scholarship is provided, and is followed by how I will apply the current research to my dissertation prospectus.

**Intercultural Rhetoric Inquiry on Cultural Identity Formation** The constructive process of rhetoric, according to Habermas, is dependent on the use of intercultural rhetoric (Flower, 2003, p. 43). Grabill (year) and Flower (2003) situate identity construction as a rhetorical act. Linda Flower (2003) asserts the use of intercultural rhetoric in inquiry is a meaning-making activity where difference is viewed as an asset for “…constructing more grounded and actionable understandings” (p. 40). Intercultural rhetoric takes on a heuristic approach, and the limitations associated with the use of intercultural rhetoric/communication for the construction of cultural identity stems from typification where it is implied that culture can be “positively located” and categorized (p. 35). The categorization of cultural characteristics is further examined by Kim (2007), where she claims current research regarding cultural identities deviates from the “traditional representational stance” to “other forms of practice” (p. 242). It is through these “other forms of practice” that allow for cultural identity to be examined from an interdisciplinary perspective (Kim, 1999).

Research on cultural identity follow four ideological positions:

(a) cultural identity as an adaptive and evolving entity of an individual;   
(b) cultural identity as a flexible and negotiable entity of an individual;   
(c) cultural identity as a discrete social category and an individual choice;

(d) cultural identity as a flexible and negotiable entity of an individual; and

(e) cultural identity as a discrete and non-negotiable social category and group right.   
(Kim, 2007, p. 242)

Communication as an active process then resembles to what Grabill and Latour discuss whether the social is created or merely exists. The adaptability of cultural identify is then grounded in communication practices. Using Appadurai, Hunsinger (2010) maintains the cultural is active, dynamic and situated in economic, political, and historical elements (p. 34- 35). From a psychologist perspective, social identity theory is embedded “….in the basic human tendency of cognitive categorization, and the membership in, and identification with, an ethnic group renders the individual an emotionally significant aspect of the individual’s self-concept.” (p. 241). Intercultural rhetoric, then, has the potential to empower marginalized voices (Kim, 2007; Flower, 2003).   
  
**The Formation of the Hispanic/Latino Identity**  
 In the past decade, the number of identity labels used by Hispanics/Latinos has increased (Rinderle and Montoya, 2008, p. 145). From Chicano, Mexican-American, Xicana, Mexican, to name a few, a myriad of identity labels have surges due to the population increase (Rinderle and Montoya, 2008, p. 145). The option to select Mexican as a category in the U.S. Census was introduced in the 1930s. Followed by Spanish as a “mother tongue” in the 1940s, whereas in the 1950s and 1960s the U.S. Census collected data within five southern states using the category “persons of Spanish surname.” In the 1970s the U.S. Census Bureau introduced the Hispanic origin, and continued to only ask of “ … a 5- percent sample of households.” Then, in the 1980s and 1990s, the U.S. Census expanded the category to “Spanish/Hispanic origin or descent” with Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, or other Spanish/Hispanic as options. The category of “Latino” is introduced in the 2000 U.S. Census, which led to 35.3 million people selecting the “Hispanic or Latino” category and situated the Hispanic community as the leading ethnic minority group. (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000; Rinderle and Montoya, 2008, p. 145). Despite the U.S. Census attempt to expand identifiers of the Hispanic population, the Hispanic/Latino identity label preference has procured a myriad of identity labels (Rinderle and Montoya, 2008, p. 145). In a participant-centered research study, Rinderle and Montoya (2008) found that the “term Hispanic=Latino because, given the many label choices and concomitant issues, these two terms are the most common and least problematic for most members of [Hispanics of Mexican decent or origin]” (p. 145). Now, the U.S. Census Bureau defines Hispanic origin “…as the heritage, nationality, lineage, or country of birth of the person or the person’s parents or ancestors before arriving in the U.S.” As of July 1, 2013, the U.S. Census Bureau estimates 17% (roughly 54 million) of the total U.S. population are Hispanic. Pew Research Center positions the projected growth by the Hispanic population to reach 107 million by 2065. The population growth then leads to a demand increase of services catering to the Hispanic/Latino population, specifically those by Latino centered non-profit organizations (Pineida, 2000).

**Defining the Non-Profit Sector**

The end of the Mexican War and the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo in 1848 sparked the creation of “nonprofit mutual assistant associations” from the “Mejicanos” in order to defer political and economic persecutions. During the 1960s the non-profit sector saw a growth of Latino nonprofits apply for tax-exempt status; 4-7 annually compared to 1 and 14 annually after World War II. The average rate between 1985 – 1989 saw an increase of 151 per year, and, during the 1990’s, the Latino nonprofit sector saw the formation of over 300 organizations (Cortes, 1999a, p. 33). The non-profit sector is comprised of charitable organizations that are classified by the Internal Revenue Service as a public charity or private foundations. Under the section 1986 tax code, public charities are classified as 501 (c)(3) tax-exempt organizations. 501 (c)(3) tax-exempt status are commonly referred as non-profit organizations, and differ in classification from religious organizations, political organizations, and Civic Leagues, Social Welfare Organizations, and Local Associations of Employees due to the restrictions imposed on lobbying and political action (IRS). The National Center for Charitable Statistics (2015) found that as of September 2015, there are 1, 532,250 tax-exempt organizations. The breakdown of the tax-example organizations includes: 1,061,916 public charities, 102, 055 private foundations, and 368,279 “other types of non-profit organizations, including chambers of commerce, fraternal organizations and civic leagues.” Cortes (1999b) defines U.S. based Latino non-profits as:  
 Organizations whose missions focus on Latino community problems or aspirations; they   
 are controlled or led by Latino community members. In addition, Latino nonprofits are   
 either (a) tax-exempt corporations governed by Latino directors or led by Latino chief   
 executives, or (b) voluntary associations dominated by Latino members or constituents.

(p. 19)  
As a Latino non-profit, its organizational identity is established through the services it provides as well as through the marketing and branding strategies it employs.

**Defining Marketing and Branding within the Non-Profit Sector** The use of marketing techniques was stigmatized within the non-profit sector until it grew in popularity during the “late 1960s and 1970s” (Wenham et al., 2003 as cited by Pope). Now, marketing techniques are common and regularly used by nonprofit organizations (Pope, year). Marketing is defined as the process of analyzing and executing management pratices that meet customer satisfaction. For nonprofit organizations, the lack of monetary gain (in order to meet tax-exempt status) translates to marketing for social impact. According to Winton and Hochstadt (2011), “The big difference between a non-profit’s marketing message and that of a for-profit company is that the benefits are different; in the case of your nonprofit, you’re not selling products and services, you’re selling social impact” (p. 412). The social impact is tied with the organization’s ability to create a competitive advantage through a strong online presence and branding strategies, which is commonly achieved through the use of social networking sites like blogs, Facebook, and Twitter (Chenhall, Hall, Smith, 2010; Heyman, 2011). Jennie Winton and Zach Hochstadt (2011), non-profit marketing consultants, provide four key features of a marketing plan for a non-profit:

“1. An organization must analyze their current marketing situation by conducting researching, reviewing past marketing and strategic plans, interviewing leaders within the organization, auditing marketing materials, and researching/analyzing competitor’s strategies.  
2. An organization must establish clear marketing goals and areas where investment is needed, such as in revenue, volunteers, and advocacy.  
3. Next, the organization must “… identify the people you think are the most likely to take action and target your message to them” (p. 416).  
4. Next, the organization must determine how to engage with the audience. The authors provide several tactics, such as direct marketing (e-mail, telemarketing, mail), online (blogs, online banner advertising, social networking, websites, widgets, video), public relations (media publications in audio/visual and online/print formats), events, mobile devices, and banners/signs.”

Marketing, then, is reliant on branding. For the non-profit sector, the most effective type of branding is establishing an online presence, thus, the use of social networking sites creates both the opportunity to establish an organizational identity and create a networked community for the organization to interact with volunteers, donors, users, and their targeted audience (Heyman, 2011). First, I will address how social networking sites, specifically Twitter, act as networked communities in order to contextualize how social media, specifically Twitter, are spatial manifestation that leverages and create identities and narratives of its users, thus, establishing an organizational identity.   
  
**Creating a Network Society**  
 In “Informationalism, networks, and the network society: a theoretical blueprint,” Castells (2004) argues that networks evolved with communication technologies as social organization introduce new agents and contents into its networks (p. 5). A networked society is then established based on their flexibility, scalability, and survivability. Spatial manifestations within a networked society exist due to practices and the spaces being networked. According to Castells (2004),

Since networked practices are based on information flows processed between various sites by communication technologies, the space of the network society is made up of the articulation between three elements: the places where activities (and people enacting them) are located, the material communication networks linking these activities, and the content and geometry of the flows of information that perform the activities in terms of function and meaning. This is the space of flows. (p. 37-38)

From connecting with friends to networking with others, social networking sites have been evolving since 1997 (boyd and Ellison, 2008, p. 213). Social networking platforms in the early 2000’s “shaped the business, cultural, and research landscape” (boyd and Ellison, 2008, p. 215). Social media as a space of flows creates virtual communities. The popularity of Twitter is seen in having over 288 million monthly active users, and of those 288 million users an estimated 90% of users between 2005-2013 were between the ages of 18-29 (Pew Research Center). Microblogging introduced a new method of communication and networking with Twiter in 2006. Twitter imitates Pratt’s (1991) version of a contact zone, due to it being a social and intellectual space where ideas converge through the use of hashtags. Twitter then, as a social space, allows cultures to “…meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out in many parts of the world today” (Pratt, 1991, p. 34).   
  
 Social media has shifted from being seen performative and used as a communication tool, but, as a digital and, to what Selfe and Selfe describe, as a linguistic contact zone. Affeldt (2007) supplements the politicized formation of contact zones, in particular spaces by commenting how space centralizes meaning due to it connecting our perceptions, experiences, with time, thereby creating new meaning and approach to invention and discourse (p. 193). Pratt argues cultures in contact zones “….can constitute themselves as horizontal, homogenous, sovereign communities with high degrees of trust, shared, understandings, temporary protection from legacies of oppression” (p. 40). Hashtags procure a sense of activism, but also provide the opportunity for a voice to be heard, which are fundamental components of contact zones. Due to the public forum of Twitter, Twitter is not a normative safe contact zone, but it is a forum where the original intent of a specific hashtag is to create and establish a community of trust where individuals can collaborate and raise their voices in solidarity, Twitter crafts an assortment of virtual communities that are divisible by hashtags, which are constructed by using the # symbol to stress key words, topics, and to categorize messages. Through the use of hashtags, Twitter then becomes a “space of flows” due to hashtags creating different nodes, or virtual communities, that use hashtags to provide meaning to their narrative. This shifts the use of Twitter from a functional level (archiving and using social media as a communication tool) to serving as a rhetorical act. Boyd and Ellison (2008) position the accessibility of social networking sites to initially attract “homogeneous populations… so it is not uncommon to find groups using sites to segregate themselves by nationality, age, educational level, or other factors that typically segment society… even if that was not the intention of the designers” (p. 214). This segmentation creates elements of a networked society, and positions social networking sites/social media as a digital space where technology and communication unite. By focusing on the discursive practices it challenges the functional use of social media, due to it emphasizing it being a contact zone where rhetorical strategies are used to create narratives and virtual communities.

**Creating an Organizational Identity through an Online Presence** Social networking sites/social media are a spatial manifestation that leverages and create identities and narratives of its users. Social media has steadily risen to become one of the most used mediums of electronic communication where users create their online identity and digital narratives (Page, 2013, xv). Social network sites have “rich sources of naturalistic behavioral data” (boyd and Ellison, 2008, p. 220). Yet, minimal research has been conducted on how non-profit organizations use culturally specific hashtags in digital spaces to participate and create narratives and counter narratives in digital spaces. While a diverse and complex amount of hashtags exist, the popularity of hashtags associated with cultural identities warrant attention.

Since the early 1990’s, Rheingold has identified key progressive movements for how technology and communication have converged. Rheingold (2002) centers virtual communities to being “…organized around affinities, shared interests… enable many people to communicate with many others… [are] text-based, evolving into text plus graphics-based communications” and are “ relatively uncoupled from face to face social life in geographic communities” (p. 4). This social and mobile revolution has led to a broader approach to how social media can be viewed as both a communication tool and having elements of a networked society. This approach is capitalized by the non-profit sector by interpreting Latino/Hispanic identities and appropriating them for both branding purposes and the creation of an organizational identity. The creation of an online precense is attributed through the execution of Storytelling 2.0 (Heyman, 2011). Storytelling 2.0 is defined by Heyman (2011) as the process of organizations creating their own narratives using social media tools. The narratives address how and why the organization has made an impact, thus, taking it a step further than branding because “storytelling must be linked to [the organization’s] communications strategy” (p. 431). In order for a story to be successful via social media, an organization must have specific objectives, in-depth audience analysis, and an awareness of the different levels of engagement.

**Conclusion**

Social network sites have “rich sources of naturalistic behavioral data” (Boyd and Ellison, 2008, p. 220). Yet, minimal research has been conducted on how non-profit organizations use culturally specific hashtags in digital spaces to create network societies and produce narratives and counter narratives in digital spaces. While a diverse and complex amount of hashtags exist, the popularity of how non-profits appropriate hashtags for branding purposes warrants attention. In addition, scholarship pertaining to Latino based non-profit organizations is limited to the 1990s, and the existing research predominantly addresses funding and income disparities between Latino and non-Latino based non-profit organizations. Due to the limited research on how Latino based non-profits establish an organizational identity based on cultural values. Introduced in 1985 by Albert and Whetten, “the concept of organizational identity is specified as the central and enduring attributes of an organization that distinguish it from other organizations” (Whetten, 2006, p. 219). Controversy surrounding Albert and Whetten’s (1995) definition of organizational identity stems from scholars within the non-profit sector studies deviating from the definition of organizational identity. In addition, there are limitations to the literature presented in this paper, primarily because identity formation is reliantly subjective and researchers, as Hunsinger (2010) has warned, may fall into the trap of categorizing cultural traits thus creating a narrative/cultural identity for the organization and/or individual. The application of organizational identity and categorizing racial/ethnic characteristics from qualitative and quantitative data procures limitations and obstacles that I will need be mindful of as I progress through my dissertation. As part of my methodology, I will review the works of a minimum of twenty scholars whose work is housed within the field of intercultural rhetoric and non-profit management. Through an analysis of branding strategies and studies completed by scholars in the field intercultural rhetoric and non-profit management/sector, such as one provided by Laider-Kyler et. Al. and Young Kim, I will apply Pratt’s (1990) use of contact zone to situate how the notion of “Latino” began as an intercultural term and how, as a racial/ethnic identity, it is constructed, interpreted, and appropriated for branding purposes. In doing so, non-profit organizations are situated as cultural contact zones. By analyzing how racial/ethnic identities are constructed and appropriated within the non-profit sector, it aids in connecting the application of rhetorical theory within the public sphere. In addition, it contributes to the discourse of the impact of Latinos.

I seek to make a contribution to the existing literature within the field of rhetoric and non-profit sector studies by exploring how Latino non-profits use Twitter as a contact zone to create network societies while establishing an organizational identity. The methodology that I will apply is to use data collected by the National Center for Charitable Statistics, I will categorize Latino non-profits located within U.S.-Mexico border communities from 2014 – 2015. Then, I will use non-profits with active Twitter accounts and administer surveys and interviews and apply organizational identity theory and actor network theory in order to find common themes within their Twitter practices. I aim to explore:

1. How did the notion of “Latino” become constructed and theorized as an intercultural term within the field of Rhetoric and Writing Studies?
2. Using Pratt’s notion of a contact zone, how does Twitter serve as a networked society and contact zone?
3. How is an organizational created by 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations through Twitter usage?
4. How do Latino based 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations interpret Latino/Hispanic identities and appropriate them for branding purposes in Twitter?

The amount of non-profits that I will survey and interview is to be determined at the moment. One example of a non-profit that I aim to use in my dissertation is LATISM.  
 LATISM (Latinos in Tech Innovation and Social Media) is the largest organization and hashtag, when it is accompanied by the # symbol, used by social media professionals and advocates of Latino origin/culture. LATISM began as a “501(c) 4 nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to advancing the social, civic and economic status of the Latino community” in 2009. As a non-profit organization, LATISM cultivates online discourse pertaining to education, health, technology, and business to “reflect the rich diversity of thought, heritage and culture” of the Latino communities. The mobility of Latino communities then becomes the foundation used to analyze online social networks and their discursive practices in online spaces. The LATISM hashtag (#LATISM) capitalizes on the use of social/participatory media to create a network and a social space where multiple networks interact to foster advocacy and digital narratives of the Latino community. The hashtag is not restricted to age, nationality, gender, etc., and emphasizes the solidarity of those in Latino communities as well as their supporters. LATISM promotes the hashtag as a movement, thereby interchangeably using the phrase LATISM as the non-profit, a self-proclaimed movement, and/or to some as a culturally specific identity marker for issues pertaining to the Latino communities. The phrase Hispanic and Latino is also interchangeably used in social media content pertaining to the Latino community by several Twitter outlets, but the sentiment remains the same: the hashtag #LATISM enhances innovation and creativity amongst the diverse Latino population online. The Latino community is not confined to the #LATISM hashtag nor is it a definite marker of identity and narratives of the diverse Latino communities that participate in digital spaces. The #LATISM hashtag is one of several hashtags used by LATISM and other accounts to promote and encourage discourse on social media. #LATISM was selected due to the interchangeable nature of “LATISM.”