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Complete Draft #2

**Re/Framing the Hispanic/Latino Non-Profit Identity**

**Introduction**

The emphasis on strategy positions organizational rhetoric as both a practical and philosophical approach towards analyzing and using impactful symbols within messages in order to achieve a goal (Hoffman and Ford, 2009, p. 7). Hoffman and Ford (2009) posit that organizational rhetoric is embedded within an organization’s communication structure; thus, organizational rhetoric is not tied to only one specific sector (for-profit, non-profit, government agency, etc.) and instead uses rhetorical concepts, such as rhetorical situation identification, etc., to deconstruct and contextualize an organization’s communication structure in relation to internal and external stakeholders (audience).

The incorporation of rhetoric within an organization’s communication structure also contributes to the development and maintenance of an organizational identity. Moufahim, Reedy, and Humphreys (2015) state that it is “… primarily through rhetoric that organizational leaders seek to persuade individuals to align themselves with the organization and so to create an organizational identity” (p. 93). The terms organizational identity, identity, and image are interchangeably used by some organizational communication scholars, which problematizes consistency when referring to an organizational identity. However, most scholars still rely on Albert and Whetten’s organizational identity theory to define an organizational identity.

Introduced in 1985 by Albert and Whetten, and later updated in 2006, “…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). Albert and Whetten’s organizational identity theory explores how an organizational identity is used to centralize, make a distinction, and establish multiple identities based on audience, context, and needs of the organization (Whetten, 2006, p. 219). While organizational identity theory and organizational rhetoric are two separate areas, they both compliment one another in contextualizing how internal and external stakeholders (audience) influence an organization. Furthermore, emphasis on audience and context situates an organizational identity as constantly being shaped by rhetoric.  
 An abundance of literature on identity formation within the field of rhetoric exists, but there is limited scholarship in the field of rhetoric that situates an organization as a modern rhetor. Specifically, how an organization, as a modern rhetor, develops and maintains an organizational identity. If organizational rhetoric views organizations as “… performing as modern rhetors engaged in discourse” (Boyd, 2011), then there is a need for the field of rhetoric to acknowledge organizational rhetoric as an emerging branch within rhetorical studies. Globalization has shifted the rhetor from an individual to an organization(s); thus, scholarship within rhetorical studies must move forward in viewing organizations as fluid and constantly in motion. By studying organizations, the field of rhetoric moves forward by addressing the implications and benefits of how a rhetorical framework, such as emphasis on audience, context, rhetorical situation, etc., is both a theoretical and practical concept outside of the classroom. This dissertation study aims to situate rhetoric as an active component within developing and maintaining a non-profit’s organizational identity. The significance of selecting two non-profit organizations for this study instead of a public institution or a business is because of my personal interest in pursuing an alternative-academic career of working within the non-profit sector. The purpose of the dissertation study, research questions, and precautions on how to avoid a conflict of interest will be addressed first. Then, the theoretical framework of the dissertation study addresses the relationship between organizational rhetoric, field of rhetoric, and organizational identity, and examines the relationship between Hispanic/Latino based non-profits and Hispanic/Latino identity labels. The methodological framework of the study addresses the rationale behind selecting an ethnographic approach, the subject participants, data collection and analysis methods, and the limitations of the study. A tentative outline of the chapters and calendar concludes this prospectus.

**Purpose of Dissertation Study**

The purpose of this dissertation study is to analyze how the notion of Hispanic/Latino identities are rhetorically constructed by two Hispanic/Latino based non-profit organizations, Hispanics in Philanthropy (HIP) and Latinos in Tech and Social Media (LATISM). Background information on both non-profits is provided in the methodology section of this document. The dissertation study will not promote content from either non-profit organization, or advocate for one organizational identity to unify Hispanic/Latino based non-profit organizations. I will not be analyzing the identity label(s) of everyone within the organization because focusing on the identity labels of each individual within an organization takes the study into a different direction. Rather, the goal is to apply organizational rhetoric as a lens to identify ethnic/racial/cultural traits, specifically Hispanic/Latino racial/cultural/ethnic traits, within a non-profit’s communication structure and organizational identity. While this study focuses on the Hispanic/Latino ethnic/racial/cultural traits, the study may be replicated for other minority based non-profit organizations.

**Research Questions**

Ultimately, this dissertation study proposes to conduct ethnographic research and address the overarching question of: What is the identification process towards forming an organizational identity? The significance of focusing on the identification process as an overarching question is to contextualize the impact of a communication structure(s) within a non-profit organization. The following sub-questions aids in deconstructing the rhetorical elements within the identification process and communication structures:

* How does a non-profit rhetorically engage with ethnic/racial/cultural traits when shaping an organizational identity?
* How is a Hispanic/Latino organizational identity rhetorically constructed by a Hispanic/Latino based non-profit organization?
* How does a non-profit strategically use symbols related to ethnic/racial/cultural traits to influence key stakeholders?

The implications of asking and answering these research questions is to contextualize the multiple audiences within a non-profit’s communication structure and discursive practices. Audience and context are integral elements within organizational rhetoric; thus, audience and context situates an organizational identity as being rhetorically constructed. A study focusing on how a non-profit rhetorically constructs an organizational identity by using ethnic/racial/cultural traits is beneficial for non-profits because the study supplements their community-based program development and documents used to connect with key stakeholders.

For the field of rhetoric, asking and answering these questions with organizational rhetoric as a lens contributes to identity formation scholarship within rhetorical studies by showcasing how rhetoric within a non-profit’s communication structure is actively developing and maintaining a non-profit’s organizational identity.

**Precautions to Avoid a Conflict of Interest**

Due to the limited research on Hispanic/Latino based non-profits and how racial/cultural/ethnic traits influence an organizational identity, preference has been given to Hispanic/Latino based non-profits. In order to remain consistent and not have a preference when referencing to Hispanics or Latinos, the identity label will be referenced as Hispanic/Latino throughout the dissertation study when the label is not being referenced by an organization and/or from studies/scholarly research. The different identity labels within the Hispanic/Latino community and how it influences Hispanic/Latino based non-profits will be explored in the extended literature, Chapter 2, of the dissertation study. The reason for using Hispanic/Latino identity label throughout the study is because they are the “most common and least problematic” labels (Rinderle and Montoya, 2008, p. 146). In addition, ethnic/racial/cultural traits and identities will be referenced as ethnic/racial/cultural traits to showcase, unless otherwise noted by a study and/or author, the interchangeable use of the terms within different studies. The differences between ethnic/racial/cultural traits terminology will be further developed within the extended literature review, Chapter 2, of the dissertation study.

**Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework for the dissertation will use organizational rhetoric as a lens to identify ethnic/racial/cultural traits within a non-profit’s communication structure and organizational identity. Organizational identity is an extension of organizational rhetoric. Albert and Whetten’s organizational identity theory serves as a starting point in contextualizing and addressing the implications of organizational identity. Organizational identity theory can potentially typify an organizational identity, but it is organizational rhetoric as an evaluative approach that can deter typification, also known as categorization, and provide a more in-depth explanation of how and why ethnic/racial/cultural traits are rhetorically constructed within an organizational identity. Worth (2014) asserts that a single theory cannot define and uphold the complexity and diversity of the non-profit sector, but, through the use of multiple theories, one can reach a better understanding of how a non-profit organization is structured within specific contexts. First, I trace the origins and framework of organizational rhetoric and its relation to the field of rhetoric in order to contextualize organizational identity theory; thereby, narrowing the focus to the non-profit sector. After providing a definition of the non-profit sector, an overview of the Hispanic/Latino profit and the complexity of Hispanic/Latino identity labels is provided.

***Organizational Rhetoric and the Field of Rhetoric***  
 The inclusion of rhetorical theory within organizational communication scholarship grew in the late 1980s (Meisenbach and McMillan, 2008 as cited in Hoffman and Ford, 2009. p. 9). Thus, the convergence of the two fields, communication and rhetoric, led to the development of organizational rhetoric as an area of study. Hoffman and Ford (2009) define organizational rhetoric as the “… strategic use of symbols by organizations to influence the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors of audiences important to the operation of the organization” (p. 7).

* Address significance of communication structure within organizational rhetoric (Hoffman and Ford, 2009)
* Boyd (2011) claims the “…studies of organizational rhetoric have generally observed, for instance, the practice of speaking collectively brings with it both convenience and vagueness—convenience because multiple messages can be attached to the same organizational actor, but vagueness because individual responsibility and agency are veiled behind the organizational voice” (p. 76)
* Address the areas of rhetoric that are commonly used by organizational rhetoric – audience, context, rhetorical situation, and identification (Hoffman and Ford, 2009)
* Marin (2016) states that “in organizations, rhetoric intersects by ‘sanding’ the messages sent both to the internal and to the external audience. Messages must influence, and furthermore, persuade” (p. 94).
* **The following sources will be obtained from ILLiad and will be included in this section of the theoretical framework once I have access to them:**  
  1. Cheney, G. and McMillan, J.J. (1990). Organizational rhetoric and the practice of criticism. <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00909889009360318>

2. Feldner, S.B. and Fyke, J.P. (2016). Rhetorically Constructing an Identity at Multiple Levels: A Case Study of Social Entrepreneurship Umbrella Organizations  
<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/1553118X.2016.1144188>

***Organizational Identity Theory and Organizational Identity***

* “One of the most well-known definitions of organization was developed by Barnard (1939/1969). He wrote that a ‘formal organization is a system of consciously coordinated activities or forces of two or more persons’ (p. 73). This definition suggests three characteristics shared by all organizations: communication, willingness to cooperate, and common purpose. Each of these is important in understanding the role of rhetoric in organizations” (Hoffman and Ford, 2009, p. 4)
* An organization can be for-profit, non-profit, government agency (Hoffman and Ford, 2009)
* Hoffman and Ford (2009) use McMillan’s definition of organization as a focal point for organizational rhetoric by situating a where “a personal not a flesh-and-blood entity, but an organizational image which as been created from the accumulated symbols by which the organization represents itself” (McMillan, 1987, p. 10 as cited in Hoffman and Ford, 2009, p37).
* Albert and Whetten’s organizational identity theory is commonly used to describe the process of establishing an organizational identity (Worth, 2014). 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). Organizational identity theory is a self-reflective practice that centralizes, makes a distinction, and establishes multiple identities based on audience, context, and needs of the organization (Whetten, 2006, p. 219).
* For Albert, Whetten, and Worth, context establishes terminology that is used within the identification process of establishing an organizational identity.
* Cheney and McMillan (1990) state “The concept of identity casts organizational communication as a dialectic: organization members negotiate who “we” are; that identity is negotiated with the organization’s environment; and then the organization adjusts its identity in response to how it is perceived” ( p. 339).
* Worth (2014) found that most non-profit organizations share the same organizational identity characteristics, such as being organized entities, private, non-profit distributing, self-governing, voluntary, and of public benefit (p. 56 – 57). Despite sharing similar organizational identity characteristics, the communication practices that contribute to shaping an organizational identity varies between non-profit organizations.
* Similar to Worth, Pratt asserts that context plays a significant role when examining an organization’s identification process.
* Pratt (1998) adds “most conceptualizations agree that identification involves an individual coming to see another (individual, group, object) as being definitive of one’s self” (p. 172). For a non-profit, the “definitive self” is viewed through its organizational identity characteristics.
* While organizational identity theory and organizational rhetoric are two separate areas, they both compliment one another in contextualizing how internal and external stakeholders (audience) influence an organization. Furthermore, emphasis on audience and context situates an organizational identity as constantly being shaped by rhetoric.
* Moufahim, Reedy, and Humphreys (2015) state that “… by rhetorical frames we mean constellations of different discursive elements that together form a ‘common sense’ taken-for granted-view of the world for a given social group. We argue that current work on OI plays insufficient attention to the complex interactions of the political, cultural and historical resources available for organizational identity construction and that utilizing rhetorical frame analysis brings these to the fore” (p. 92)

***Hispanic/Latino Non-Profits***

* Contextualize the non-profit sector; This dissertation study focuses on the non-profit sector. 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.”
* Scholarship pertaining to Hispanic/Latino based non-profit organizations is limited to the 1990s. The limited statistical data on Latino based non-profit organizations has been described as “sketchy” and “incomplete” (Cortés, 1998).
* Provide a historical overview of the Hispanic/Latino 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, 1999, p. 33).

In 1998, Cortés utilized the term Latino as a collective identity to describe the Hispanic/Latino community; however, it is not the norm for all non-profit organizations catering to the Hispanic/Latino population to adopt the collective identity of Latino. Cortés (1998) 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).

While an assortment of labels are used by individuals within the Hispanic/Latino community, the Hispanic/Latino non-profit sector has found an interchangeable use of Cortés’s definition of the Hispanic/Latino label.

The interchangeable use of the term Latino, as found within the scope of Hispanic/Latino identity scholarship, demonstrates a diverse and politicized process of how identity labels are used. In 1970, the Hispanic origin was introduced by the U.S. census Bureau, thereby:

a version of the question has been included in every census since. Spanish surname, place of birth, and Spanish mother tongue responses were also used as identifiers of the Hispanic population in the 1970 Census and were the only Hispanic identifiers in prior censuses. Over the last 40 years the question on Hispanic origin has undergone numerous changes and modifications, all with the aim of improving the quality of Hispanic origin data in the United States, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Island Areas. (Ennis, Vargas, and Albert, 2011, p. 2)

In 2010, the U.S. Census Bureau defined the 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.” Racial/ethnic/cultural identities is then limited to a panethnicity constructed by the government. Yet, despite the U.S. Census bureau’s attempt to establish a panethnicity, studies show how the heterogeneous population of Hispanics has led to a diverse set of identity labels (Taylor, Lopez, and Martinez, 2012). From Chicano, Mexican-American, Xicana, Mexican, to name a few, an assortment of identity labels within this heterogeneous population has increased due to the rise in population (Rinderle and Montoya, 2008). The 2011 National Survey of Latinos (NSL) found that identity labels within different Latino subgroups vary “… with nativity and language usage the strongest predictors of identity preferences” (Taylor, Lopez, and Martinez, 2012). Furthermore, the same survey discovered that 51% of their Hispanic/Latino participants have no preference between Hispanic/Latino, but only 29% agree that Hispanics/Latinos share a common culture (Taylor, Lopez, and Martinez, 2012). The two studies are a small sample of how the perception of of ethnicity, race, culture, and cultural identity are highly contextualized and subjective. Using working definitions and ideological constructs by the U.S. Census Bureau and other studies focused on Hispanic/Latino identity labels then becomes pivotal towards establishing a comparative analysis of the different perceptions of identity label use.

**Methodology**   
 The dissertation study will use an ethnographic methodology to examine the identification process when forming an organizational identity. Pending IRB approval and signed letter of consent and commitment, data collected from interviews with key stakeholders and artifacts from the two non-profits, Hispanics in Philanthropy (HIP) and Latinos in Tech and Social Media (LATISM), will be interpreted using Hoffman and Ford’s (2009) evaluative reading model.

***Ethnographic Methodology***

An ethnographic methodology is the preferred method instead of a case study because it provides the opportunity to collect data with insider knowledge and insight from interviewing the non-profit organization’s key internal stakeholders. During the data analysis portion of the dissertation study, patterns and/or themes can be triangulated between the artifacts and the interviews. Triangulating data is beneficial because it aids in reducing bias. Interpreting collected artifacts without the interviews can potentially lead to creating a narrative from behalf of the non-profit; thus, possibly misinterpreting findings. Rather, the interviews supplement and contribute to the interpretation and findings of the racial/ethnic/cultural frameworks, meaning, and structures within the non-profit’s organizational identity.

***Subject Participants***

Criteria for selecting HIP and LATISM is based on the different use of Hispanic/Latino identity labels within their organization’s name, strong presence within the Hispanic/Latino non-profit sector, extensive networking within the Hispanic/Latino based non-profit sector, and their differing online and offline presence. The following section provides a description of their background and significance to this dissertation study.

***Hispanics in Philanthropy (HIP)***

HIP differs from LATISM because it is centered more on philanthropic investments. Since 1983, HIP has provided several outreach and research incentives. Located in Oakland, CA, the mission of HIP is to “strengthen Latino communities by increasing resources for the Latino and Latin American civil sector; increasing Latino participation and leadership throughout the field of philanthropy; and fostering policy change to enhance equity and inclusiveness.” They are one of the leading non-profits aimed towards diversifying the non-profit sector while raising millions of funds for non-profit organizations. Their extensive philanthropic network made them an ideal candidate as a subject participant. While a site visit is not required for this dissertation study, it remains an option that can be negotiated with the non-profit organization.

***Latinos in Tech Innovation and Social Media (LATISM)***  
 The second non-profit, LATISM, is located in several cities throughout the United States, and has a stronger online presence than HIP. However, HIP has wider outreach programs than LATISM. Both non-profit organizations have a strong online presence and publicly accessibly content. LATISM, has 22 chapters with over 190,000 members, and does not list the main head quarters on their website. According to the LATISM website, “LATISM has been hailed to be the most powerful and influential network of Latinos/as involved in social media. The #LATISM hashtag which generates millions of impressions daily is used by politicians, businesses and organizations to reach the latino community.” The interchangeable use of #LATISM and its popularity has lead to making this non-profit organization an ideal candidate as a subject participant. The criteria for selecting a LATISM chapter for this dissertation is based on the recommendation by the LATISM headquarters. While a site visit is not required for this dissertation study, it remains an option that can be negotiated with the non-profit organization.

***Data Collection***

During the summer of 2006, I will contact HIP and LATISM to ask about participating in the dissertation study. Prior to the submission of the IRB paperwork, the two non-profit organizations must provide a signed letter of consent and commitment[[1]](#footnote-1). The signed letter of consent and commitment acknowledges participation in the study that includes, but is not limited to, cooperation with identifying key stake holders and being interviewed. The following scenarios and proposed plan of actions will be administered if a complication arises with the subject participants:

* If one non-profit organization declines to participate in the study prior to the submission of the IRB paperwork, then the dissertation study will focus on the non-profit organization that submitted the signed letter of consent and commitment.
* If both non-profit organizations decline to participate in the dissertation study prior to the submission of the IRB paperwork, two non-profit organizations in El Paso, Texas will be selected and proposed to the dissertation chair, Dr. Isabel Baca, for approval. The criteria for selecting the non-profit organizations will be based on the the different use of Hispanic/Latino identity labels within their organization’s name, strong presence within the Hispanic/Latino non-profit sector, extensive networking within the Hispanic/Latino based non-profit sector, and their differing online and offline presence. After they are approved, the two non-profit organizations will be asked to sign a letter of consent and commitment. The dissertation study must study at least one non-profit organization; however, if both non-profit organizations decline, then a case study methodology will replace the ethnographic approach. Then, four non-profit organizations will be selected and proposed to the dissertation chair, Dr. Isabel Baca, for approval.
* While a key stakeholder may decline an interview request and/or withdraw and ask to remove content from an interview, attempts will be made to interview other key stakeholders that are identified by the organization. The non-profit organization must request complete withdrawal from the study in order to be fully removed from the study.
* If HIP and/or LATISM withdraw participation during the dissertation study after receiving IRB approval, then only publicly accessible information will be collected and analyzed. A new IRB form with new organizations will not be submitted.

Additional plans of actions that arise will be discussed with the dissertation chair, Dr. Isabel Baca. The following section provides an overview of the content that will be collected between October 2016 – May, 30 2017.

**Website -**  Prior to requesting interviews with key stakeholders, I will examine the non-profit organization’s website and focus on ethnic/racial/cultural symbols and/or messages that elicit or “ …influence the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors of audiences” (Hoffman and Ford, 2009, p. 7). The non-profit organization’s website is the main method of communication with multiple audiences and promotion of an organizational identity. Thus, colleting data from the website will strengthen and make the interview questions more specific and procure a more efficient interview session. Content from the website will be screenshot and noted within the data collection notes – this includes modifications made to the website. An attempt will be made to access the website’s trafficking data provided by Google Analytics, a tracking software. Content from Google Analytics is useful because it provides statistical data on site visits, trending words/content, etc. ; however, the non-profit organization may opt to not discuss or provide access to the statistical data if it is deemed sensitive. Data that is collected from the site and Google Analytics will be placed in a separate hard drive and placed in a secure location.

**Twitter and Facebook Social Media Accounts–** I will look at each non-profit organization’s Twitter and Facebook bios and will record ethnic/racial/cultural symbols and/or messages that elicit or “ …influence the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors of audiences” (Hoffman and Ford, 2009, p. 7). Twitter and Facebook were selected due to being the only social media platforms that both HIP and LATISM shared. The aim of the study is to compare identity formation constructs, thus, selecting the same platforms adds consistency. Additionally, the audience for social media platforms differ from the website; thereby, influencing the communication structure of the organization. For the sake of time and financial reasons, tweets and posts will not be individually collected, but may be recorded and included if access is given to Google Analytics and/or a similar trafficking software. An attempt will be made to access content from Google Analytics and/or similar tracking software; however, the non-profit organization may opt to not discuss or provide access to the statistical data if it is deemed sensitive. Modifications to social media sites will be screenshot and noted within the data collection notes. Data that is collected will be placed in a separate hard drive and placed in a secure location.

**Semi-structured Interviews –** After data is collected from the website and Twitter and Facebook accounts, semi-structured interviews with a minimum of three key stakeholders from each non-profit organization will be requested and completed individually. An attempt will be made to interview more than three key stakeholders from each non-profit organization. The criteria for selecting the key stakeholders is based on managerial access to information and/or website and social media accounts and because they are responsible for approving and disseminating content that contributes to an organizational identity.

The initial targeted key stakeholders are members from the Board of Directors, Public Relations Directors, and/or Program and Marketing Directors. supplemental key stakeholders will be selected and/or recommended by Board Members and Program and Marketing Directors. Each individual will receive the same interview questions, but may be modified based on job title and/or conversation. The scheduling for the interviews will be based on the participants’ schedule, and may be held via e-mail, phone conference, and/or Skype. A site visit for interviews is not required; however, if funding is available and is the only method to interview and/or access content, then a site visit may occur. During the interviews I will take notes, record, screenshot (if applicable), and transcribe content. The interview exchange may lead to additional questions emerging and/or shifting the conversation to a different subject. Any additional questions that emerge can potentially lead to a follow-up interview with open-ended questions. Modifications to the interview questions will be noted in the methodology section, Chapter 3, of the dissertation study. While a follow-up interview is not required, an attempt will be made if additional content and/or emerging patterns that requires an interview occurs during the data collection and analysis process. Data will be stored on a separate hard drive and placed in a secure location. The following section provides an overview of the semi-structured interview questions.   
**Proposed Interview Questions (Subject to revision)**

In a 2011 study on organizational identity, Richard D. Waters and Paul M. Jones (2011) surveyed 100 non-profit YouTube videos. Their study alongside Hoffman and Ford’s (2009) evaluative reading model influenced the semi-structured interviewed questions[[2]](#footnote-2).

Modeling the questions after the study and evaluative reading model enhances the replicability of the dissertation study.

***(x will be modified to reflect the non-profit organization’s name; y will be modified to reflect patterns and/or themes from collected data):***

1. Please describe your familiarity with organizational identity. What is its role within your organization?
2. Who are the key stakeholders that participate in the development of organizational documents, such as website, social media accounts, etc.?
3. What content, messages, visuals are used to represent and develop x’s identity online?
4. How is online content created to represent and develop the organizational identity?
5. Does diversity influence the development of organizational documents and organizational identity? If so, how? If not, why?
6. Do ethnic/racial/cultural traits play a role in the development of the organization’s identity? If so, how? If not, why?
7. How do you define ethnic/racial/cultural traits within x’s organizational documents (website and social media)?
8. I noticed that you used Y to represent and engage with X’s stakeholders via Facebook and Twitter. What impact does Y have with your audience?
9. What role does the platform play with how you engage with x’s audience and/or stakeholders?
10. Are relationships with key stakeholders and the community established through the representation of ethnic/racial/cultural traits and/or identity labels? If so, how? If not, why not?
11. What boundaries are created when developing and distributing x’s organizational documents (online and offline) when dealing with ethnic/racial/cultural traits and themes?

Additional artifacts may be collected and included in the findings if it enhances and/or contributes to the identification process when forming an organizational identity.

***Data Analysis*** Data will be interpreted using Hoffman and Ford’s (2009) evaluative reading model. The evaluative reading model is significant within organizational rhetoric because of its focus on the rhetorical situation, exigencies, audiences, constraints and assets, and recurring situations within an organization’s messages and/or artifacts (Hoffman and Ford, 2009, p. 75). Similar to completing a context analysis, using organizational rhetoric as a theoretical and practical lens aligns with Hsieh and Shannon’s (2005) claim of how“… identifying and quantifying certain words or content in text with the purpose of understanding the contextual use of the words or content…is an attempt not to infer meaning but, rather, to explore usage” (p. 1283). Thus, the evaluative model identifies and interprets ethnic/racial/cultural traits, specifically the role of Hispanic/Latino traits, within a non-profit’s communication structure and organizational identity. In doing so, patterns and themes emerge from the website and social media accounts prior to the interviews. The significance of interpreting content prior to the interviews elevates the interviews as a primary method to contextualize, affirm, and/or discredit findings.

**Limitations of Study**  
 The limitations of the dissertation study are centered on the terminology used to describe identity labels that may lead to researcher bias and/or misrepresentation of the non-profit organization as a collective identity. When dealing with ethnic/racial/cultural traits, typification may occur, thus leading to researcher bias. Typification and categorization implies that culture can be “positively located” and categorized (Hunsinger, 2006, p. 35). To typify or to categorize, for Hunsinger (2006), is controversial due to situating culture/cultural as being formulaic. Typification is then seen as being linear and formulaic due to the ability to categorize “cultural” traits to a group, which devalues the heterogonous traits of a group. While patterns may be present within groups, culture is not formulaic. The purpose of the dissertation study is not to categorize and provide a formulaic response that represent the Hispanic/Latino community. Rather, the study aims to showcase the complexity of the Hispanic/Latino identity label use and how it influences, and is contextualized, within two specific groups.

**Outline of Chapters**   
Titles, number of chapters, and content within each chapter is subject to revision.   
**Chapter 1 – Introduction**  
This chapter will introduce the dissertation study, research gaps, and the need for additional research within the field of rhetoric. This chapter intends to situate the field of rhetoric in conversation with the non-profit sector.  
  
**Chapter 2 – Literature Review**   
This chapter will expand on the: will address the relationship between organizational rhetoric, field of rhetoric, and organizational identity, and examine the relationship between Hispanic/Latino based non-profits and Hispanic/Latino identity labels.

**Chapter 3 – Methodology**

This chapter focuses on the methodological framework of the dissertation study. The rationale behind selecting an ethnographic approach and the subject participants, data collection and analysis methods, and the limitations of the study are described in full detail in this chapter.   
  
**Chapter 4 – Data Analysis**  
This chapter intends to discuss the findings and my interpretation of the data.   
**Chapter 5 – Conclusion**This chapter will summarize the dissertation study and address the limitations that were found during the data collection process. Specifically, I aim to explain the rhetorical agency in re/framing the Hispanic/Latino identity by both non-profits, and how organizational rhetoric is both a theoretical and practical lens towards understanding an organizational identity. In addition, the chapter will provide recommendations on how to improve the methodology for future studies and suggestions for an improved framework that can be used by both academics and non-profit practitioners.

**Dissertation Timeline (subject to revision)**

**FALL 2014 (Completed)**

* PhD Student course work
* Ask Dr. Isabel Baca to be dissertation chair

**SPRING 2015 (Competed)**

* PhD Student course work

**SUMMER 2015 (Competed)**

* Create syllabus and reading list for independent study with Dr. Baca

**FALL 2015 (Competed)**

* PhD Student course work
* Independent study with Dr. Baca

**SPRING 2016 (Competed)**

* February – Contact and finalize committee for dissertation; receive feedback on

work submitted from previous semester

* February 10 – Meeting with Dr. Baca at 2:15PM
* February 26 – Submit draft of research questions and rationale; submit working reference list
* March 2 – Meeting with Dr. Baca at 3PM
* March 28 – Submit draft of Literature Review
* April 25 – Submit draft of prospectus (includes overview of chapters and revised timeline/plan of work)
* May 3 - Meet with Dr. Baca and receive feedback
* May 3 – Set up summer meeting schedule with Dr. Bacaand confirm a potential meeting with Dr. Dura during the summer
* Dr. Dura agreed to be the second reader on the committee

**SUMMER 2016**

* June – August – Study for comprehensive exam
* June 29 - Submit second draft of prospectus for review to Dr. Baca; schedule potential meeting dates via e-mail.
* July 1– Contact third reader; contact HIP and LATISM organization to inquire about their participation in this study; letter of confirmation should be received no later than July 30. Follow-up e-mails to both organizations will be sent between June 1 – July 30.
* June – July – Revise and continue working on draft for the prospectus; draft proposal for IRB paperwork; schedule meeting with Dr. Baca and Dr. Dura via e-mail.
* July 30 – Must have a confirmed third reader
* August 5 – 8- Comprehensive exam is due by 8AM on Aug. 5

**FALL 2016**

* Defend prospectus and submit IRB paperwork no later than September 30th
* August – December – Finalize research paperwork (if applicable) and begin conducting research; submit bi-weekly research reports to Dr. Baca
* November 14 – Submit Chapter 1 to Dr. Baca; revision and submission dates for for committee members will be discussed via e-mail.

**SPRING 2017**

* February 1 - Submit Chapter 2 to Dr. Baca; revision and submission dates for Dr. Dura will be discussed via e-mail.
* April 3 - Submit Chapter 3 to Dr. Baca; revision and submission dates for for committee members will be discussed via e-mail.
* Research should be completed no later than May 30, 2017

**SUMMER 2017**

* June – July – Analyze data and work on Chapter 4

**FALL 2017**

* August 31 - Submit Chapter 4 to Dr. Baca; revision and submission dates for committee members will be discussed via e-mail.
* November 13 - Submit Chapter 5 to Dr. Baca; revision and submission dates for committee members will be discussed via e-mail.

**SPRING 2018**

* January – March: Revise and finalize the dissertation.
* March 12- Submit dissertation to committee no later than March 12
* April 14– Defend dissertation no later than April 14 (graduate school deadline to defend is last week of April)

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1. A copy of the signed letters of consent and commitment from both organizations is available in the appendix section. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. A copy of the original questions from both studies is available in the appendix section. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)