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**Rationale and Research Questions Draft**

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. Scholars within the non-profit sector attribute identity formation ideology to Albert and Whetten’s organizational theory. Albert and Whetten’s organizational identity theory is commonly used to describe the collectively-shared features of non-profits and their stakeholders. The application of organizational identity is a self-reflective practice that centralizes, makes a distinction, and established enduring multiple identities based on audience, context, and needs of the organization (Worth, 2014; Whetten and Godfrey, 1998). The process of establishing an organizational identity is then dependent on the situated knowledge created by non-profits and their stakeholders. According to organizational theorists, non-profit organizations are open systems, thereby “…are dependent on and interact frequently with their external environments. This is true because of their dependence on external resources, their social missions, and the involvement of volunteers at various levels of the organization” (Worth, 2014, p. 59). Marketing and branding strategies are two of several methods where non-profits interact with their external environments. A study of global brands within the non-profit sector by 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 influenced by marketing and branding strategies (Heyman, 2011; Pope, 2009).

While an abundance of information exists on organizational research, minimal attention is given to how Latino based non-profits interpret racial/ethnic identities as part of their brand and organizational identity. 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. A prominent non-profit studies scholar, Michael Cortes (1999), reiterates how “statistical data on Latino nonprofits are sketchy and incomplete at best.” It is through this incomplete data where the application of intercultural rhetoric can foster a new understanding of how Latino based non-profits interpret racial/ethnic identities as part of their brand and organizational identity.

Racial/ethnic identities are often theorized as being socially constructed through an intercultural lens (Flower, 2003; Kim, 2000; Sha, 2006; Kim, 2007). 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). The interpretation and appropriation of these identities are rhetorical acts that create situated knowledge and networked societies. It is these through these networked societies that helps form a brand and organizational identity for a non-profit. Through an intercultural inquiry of organizational documents, interviews, and ethnographic observations, this study aims to address a prominent gap within the non-profit sector studies by using rhetorical theory. The purpose of the mixed method of ethnographic and case study of Hispanics in Philanthropy (HIP) and Latinos in Tech and Social Media (LATISM) is to deconstruct how the notion of “Latino” became theorized as an intercultural term and its application within the development of an organizational identity and networked society.

**Research Questions**

1. How did the notion of “Latino” become constructed and theorized as an intercultural term within the field of Rhetoric and Writing Studies?
2. What does an organization identity for 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations imply for intercultural inquiry and culture?
3. How are the interpretation and appropriation of racial/ethnic identities/characteristics used as rhetorical acts to form an organizational identity and networked society?
4. How does Hispanics Hispanics in Philanthropy (HIP) and Latinos in Tech and Social Media (LATISM) interpret Latino/Hispanic identities and appropriate them for an organizational identity?

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