

Interactions and friendships among peers in a Latino community

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Trondheim, June 2018



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BARNEFORSKNING
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Acknowledgements

My first thanks go out to my participants and those who helped me get the project going, without you, I would not have had all the wonderful conversations and insightful experience. Thank you for allowing me to interview you and participating in my project.

Secondly, I would like to thank my husband, Karl-Mikael Perfekt for his continued support and pushing me to do my best, although it felt impossible at times. Thank you for being there to remind me to keep going! Thank you to my mom and dad for always being there. I would also like to thank my friend, Anna Martola, for her help and extra encouragement when I needed it. Thank you for your support and discussions to talk things through!

Lastly, I would like to thank my supervisor Vebjørng Tingstad for her guidance and advice. I appreciated our meetings and our conversations. Without your advice, I would have been lost. Your input and help cannot be thanked enough, thank you!

Abstract

The United States has a large Latino population that has slowly been increasing in the last decade. Many parts of the United States are seeing influxes where there had previously been no immigration from Latinos. As these groups continue to grow, their arrival is met with challenges, such as learning a new language, and making friends. Friends and friendship has been a topic of discussion in the social studies of children and childhood. This study looks at the way in which Latino children are “doing friendship” and how that plays a role in their lives. Latino children are just one group in the United States but one which face many economic, educational and societal challenges. The aim of this study was to examine the ways that children do friendship in order to capture their views with friendship.

The study takes various theoretical perspectives to attempt to understand the ways in which Latino children display their friendships or the “doing” behind their relationships with friends. Ultimately, it takes a strong look at the social studies of children and childhood perspective with particular attention to the concept of agency and the ways in which friendship develop, looking at peer culture and cultural anthropology as theoretical perspectives to better understand the process of doing friendship in a Latino community.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

According to Donato (2003), there has been a tremendous amount of re-shifting in the Latino population of the United States since the late 1980s. “This movement has resulted in the increasing settlement of Latinos in areas of the country that have historically not had Latino populations, particularly in rural settings” (Donato, 2003, p. 1). The shift in Latino’s movement has led to many changes both to themselves individually as well as their families and betterment of their lives. Consequently, although a better life is at the core of this movement, the reception into the United States has not and is not always a smooth transition. The economic aspect of Latino’s arrival is most prominent as opportunity for jobs as a driving force for many. Namely, a doubling of Latinos moving to the South of the United States saw an increase of 2.4 million to 4.9 million from 1990 to 2000 (Donato, 2003, p. 6). Many Latinos begin their newly arrived lives in California but then move to other parts of the United States. Donato (2003) found both an internal and external movement with many Latinos moving from abroad as well as from California as internal movement, with 13 percent of movement being to the South. As such, Latinos have and are looking to settle and create a better life for themselves and their children than they previously might have had in their country of origin. Although there is a desire for better education, healthcare and safe communities, Latinos are, however, still lagging behind other groups in attainment of these areas (Lozano, 2015).

As the United States grows, there are new waves of immigration and changes to the economy, along with other factors that can change various policies, in turn affecting certain groups. With these changes to policies, both throughout history and in contemporary society, certain groups can sometimes find themselves to be on the lower part of the social and economic ladder. Latinos are one such group that have been affected by changing policies and are highly stigmatized. There are many reasons for this. One of these reasons is related to the fact that a high population of Latinos are illegally living in the United States, giving a generalization about Latinos not have a rightful place in the country. A most recent example of a consequence to illegal immigration has been the push to have Latinos leave the United States. Donald Trump, the current president, has issued statements calling for the construction of a wall between Mexico and the United States to stop the crossing of Mexicans into the United States (Fadel,

2017). Additionally, there have also been recent changes to immigration status and the fear of deportation, a rising risk as quotas for particular immigrant groups changes under new administrative changes. Recently, the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program has been under scrutiny. It allowed for children to get permits for work if they were illegal immigrants (Fadel, 2017). With a projected population of Latinos set to lead the American economy, changes to this policy as well others, are important to how Latinos will be affected in the future (Lozano, 2015).

Currently, 7.9 million illegal immigrants are thought to come from a Latin country (Zong & Batalova, 2017). Consequently, Latinos often have jobs that are low paying and laborious either due to their lack of proper legal status or lack of education (Donato, 2003). As such, the plight of Latinos in the United States is an important topic, especially the lives of children as they are changing the landscape of Latinos in the twenty-first century in the sense that they are becoming an increasingly larger part of the population. At 17% of the population, Latinos are a large part of it and one should be reflected in a diverse picture of job market, yet Latinos are not necessarily reflected in the greater job market. This has led to concerns as to how to diversify Latinos into more institutions (Lozano, 2015).

The Southern United States is also seeing a rise in Latinos looking for domestic work or factory work and Latinos seeking, as mentioned, a new home in a part of the United States not previously well versed with Latinos (Sox, 2009). There is a challenge in the transition to moving to a different state that is not as well connected with the Latino community as say California is. Ultimately, the changing dynamics of Latinos in the United States raises concerns for their status as well as the future of their children to better understand their establishment in school and society. With this, the United States should place greater emphasis on the well-being of Latino children as we know little about how the younger generation experience their everyday lives and challenges that might arise. Taking this into consideration, moving to a new country and hoping for a better future is an underlying theme for many Latinos. Although there has been a lot of internal movement from states such as California, many Latinos are making the South their first entry into the United States, making language and establishment difficult (Donato, 2003). They do so in order to establish businesses and work in factories, moving away from migrant work. As such, there are many challenges that arise, among them their children's struggle to learn a new language and establish some sort of normality. What children experience

of crucial challenges may, however, differ from what adults define as challenging conditions. Therefore, I have chosen to look at some Latino children and their peer relationships to understand more of their lives. Specifically, I am exploring how they do friendship as a lens to learn more about children's everyday lives and how they *establish* and *maintain* friendship.

1.2 Growth of Latinos

As I grew up in California, an area well known for its large Latino community, I found myself drawn to knowing more about the group itself. I also come from a Latino background and therefore looked to focus my study on this group. Latinos are defined as having a background of Latin American origins. More specifically, the US Census bureau defines Latino as, "...identifying oneself as someone whose origins (heritage, nationality group, lineage, or country of birth of the person or the person's parents or ancestors before their arrival in the United States) lie in a Spanish speaking country" (Drever, 2006, p. 26). There are many Spanish speaking countries and most represented in the United States are from Mexico, Central America, and South America. In the United States, they make up a large portion of the population, around 56.6 million identify as Latino and 35 percent of those are recent immigrants (Zong & Batalova, 2017). More specifically 17.9 million children have at least one immigrant parent from Latin America (Zong & Batalova, 2017).

The United States has had a large increase in Latinos for the last hundred years, yet only recently has this increase been seen across more states. Previously, there was a tendency for settlement to be concentrated on the West coast, East coast or those states nearest the Mexican border. The primary shift in Latino communities moving to other parts of the United States is due to economic trends where low-skill service jobs in the South allow for an overall better salary because of lower cost of living (Wainer, 2004). Historically, Latinos have worked as migrant workers on farms and low skilled jobs that could pay them in cash. Many continue to work two or more jobs and struggle to make ends meet. In recent years, drugs and violence in their country of origin have forced Latinos to seek a life in the United States in order to provide their children with a safer home and opportunities for a better education.

Tennessee, the location for this study, has seen an increase in Latinos in the last twenty years in particular. Specifically, the area where I conducted my research has seen an increase in Latinos in the last ten years. Overall, the southern states have seen a rise in immigration from

the Latino community, which has been a slow but steady rise (Donato, 2003). The economic changes and social interplay are pronounced in places like Tennessee where a Latino community was not as large as it is now (Smith & Furuseth, 2006). With this in mind, children's voices of the Latino community are an important note for policy makers and the education system. For example, many schools have had to implement programs for helping children learn English. Additionally, communities in the South are creating groups that help newly arrived immigrants get settled in the community. As these changes occur, a look at past research and projects helps to gather information about challenges that may affect Latinos arriving to the South.

1.3 Empirical focus

Children interact and learn with their friends, making it an important part of their daily life. "Friendships are a key part of the social, cognitive, and emotional development during adolescence because they provide social support and a context in which youth learn social skills" (Vaquera, 2009). These key social skills and friendship are interesting to myself as both a teacher and someone interested in the field of childhood studies. What role do friends have for children? Are there any special features of friendship that help make friends? Moreover, with the many stresses that I expect Latino children to face, I suppose friendship can be the support that helps them overcome difficulties. Challenges that I expect to be part of influential structural features, presenting in various ways in children's everyday lives are linked to issues such as *economy, language, marginalization, stigmatization, family support, education and leisure time*.

The overall trend for many schools in the southern states is that not enough attention is being paid to Latino children in school and in their transition to the United States if they do not speak English as a first language (Sox, 2009). With this, bringing to light the experience of Latino children in school is critical. Children who are Latino, often speak Spanish at home and when they arrive in school, they must learn English. This appears as a common trait among students who enter the Pre-Kindergarten class (aged 4) in many of the elementary schools in the United States. Along with this, students have difficulty communicating with the other students except those that might also speak Spanish. Sox (2009) noted that many schools in the South had English only policies, where only English is allowed and that forced teachers to conduct classes

in English. This in turn led to this lack of support for children who did not speak English as a first language, such as being unable to communicate in Spanish or lacking resources to access the material in school such as textbooks that are often used to bridge Spanish and English. Later children faced problems with grades and overall academic achievement due to a lack of support.

As one considers the factors that affect friendships, I argue that children's voices about friendship have to be examined. Previously, there has been a lot of focus on the negative influences that Latino children have on each other and in difficult neighborhoods (Delgado et al., 2015), such as forming gangs or falling behind in school, whereby children are often noted for low achievement and difficulty in school. This negative portrayal is one I want to step aside from, and bring children's experiences to the forefront, capturing their views. The culture, or association of being Latino and the tendency to have close familial structures, adds to the importance of the Latino name and sense of identity. I intend to approach children's accounts with an insider's view of being Latino and as such possess a kind of cultural identity about that this may mean, even if identity formation is a dynamic and blurring concept in modern societies (Giddens, 1991).

1.4 Previous Research

Research with children in the Latino community has previously been done with different approaches and perspectives, providing different results, some of which will be presented briefly below. Many studies have been focusing on *friendship quality* and much of the research done with Latino children is from a psychological perspective, looking at individuals, rather than groups.

A large number of previous research with Latino children has centered on data driven research, in-depth interviews and mixed with a diverse group of participants. For example, Suárez-Orozco, Pimentel, and Martin (2009) look at children and their academic progress for recently arrived immigrants. They looked at low income areas and the participants who lived there, of which many were Latino. The focus was to interview a diverse population and gather insight into their *academic progress*. Alternatively, Suárez et al. (2009) sought to conduct a case study examining immigrant youth and their struggles to adapt to a new country. In Suárez et al. (2009)'s research, immigrant youth face the challenge of finding a new identity in their new

environment. Brenner (2011) did research on another challenge children face, looking at how *loneliness* affects Latino children and she found that the Latino community was much more affected by a sense of loneliness than other groups when examining the friends in their lives. Specifically, there has been a structural emphasis in schools, looking both at *academic progress* as well as the individual concept of *loneliness* within previous research.

Additionally, Vaquera (2009) sees the gap in research between Latinos and their white counterparts. The time that children spend with their friends is a larger amount of time than with their families in many cases when children reach their teenage years, she argues. With this in mind, Vaquera (2009) notes the importance of these friendships but focuses more on how they affect Latino children *academic achievement*, thus promoting more research into a more focused look at children's relationships. Way and Chen (2000) discuss the lack of *minority research* with attention to friendship, focusing on minority groups that have been under represented in research. The research by Way and Chen (2000) also looks at types of friendships through surveys given at a school. Ultimately, they looked at the contextual factors that affected friendship from a quantitative and psychological perspective.

Today, children can communicate and “get friends” by technologies such as social media. Valkenberg and Peter (2007) researched how close children were to one another based on their use of online communication. In their research, children often stated that they were able to discuss more personal information with their friends when it was through an online mode of communication. Additionally, Tingstad (2003) researched chat rooms and the friends that children have online. The relationship formed through a digital portal like chat rooms opens the scope of what it means to be a friend and perceptions children have. This has implications for dynamics and flexibility in establishing and maintaining friendship. In a recent study, Willett (2015) explored how children discussed their online friends and friendships. The communication they had was often described as just “staying in” within an online community but did not qualify as “friendship” (Willett, 2015, p. 11).

My hope is to examine Latino children using other perspectives not previously noted in research. Qvortrup (2002) points to the societal forces that are both present in childhood and adulthood yet vary in childhood, something that has not been explored within Latino studies. Taking this into consideration, a broader look at Latino children's challenges makes it important to explore their experience with various societal forces (e.g. economy, language, education), as

previously mentioned. I will also include technology to help get a fuller picture of children and their friendships, especially as they perceive their relationship and communication. Thus, the focus on this specific group, Latino children, demonstrates the need for more research on friendships and relationships among one another.

1.5 Research aim and Questions

The main aim of this study is to explore how Latino children do friendship within the context of structural challenges in the area, in which they have moved.

Some of the research questions were:

How do children display friendship?

What things do children rate as important to their friendships?

What things help create a friendship?

What types of communication affect friendship (e.g. technology and social media)?

What kinds of issues complicate the development of friendship?

Can one have different kinds of friendships?

Can one share and care in different ways?

How easy is it to get friends and maintain friendship over time?

1.6 Approach

Children have knowledge and we must take what they have to say seriously and even conclude that they have knowledge of things that adults might not have (Nilsen, 1990). When conducting this study, I looked to talk to children in their own world, finding out how they perceived their relationships and world around them, using the social studies of children and childhood as my main theoretical approach. I focus on children's agency and their right to have a say in matters that affect their lives. James (2009) describes children as having agency in their ability to choose what they do. My search for literature about the phenomenon children's friendship has revealed a lack of knowledge about research with data from children's perspectives in general and from Latino children specifically. Additionally, friendship is seen in many parts of the world, and literature from anthropology helped frame my theory to examine the relationships

as they can vary (Desai & Killick 2013). The last twenty years has seen an explosion in how people communicate around the world and the experiences of children and their childhood. Each country has experienced this differently but, children are said to be in the forefront as technology enthusiasts (Buckingham, 2000). I was most curious to know how children communicated with one another, looking to recent studies on social media to help inform the topic. I aimed to look at the social aspect of their relationships and the “doing” of friendship. Ultimately, I chose to take one part of their lives to help communicate a sense of being that children might have about friends through their lens of being Latino.

1.7 Outline of Thesis

The following chapters will detail the study that was led. Each chapter contains specific information about the study and aims. The second chapter is the background that drives the context for the thesis. The third chapter looks at theory as a base and driving force within the study. The fourth chapter consists of the methodology that was used in the study. The fifth chapter presents empirical data, my analyses and interpretations. Lastly, the sixth chapter reflects and reviews the study in its entirety and further implications for research.

Chapter 2: Background

To help understand the backgrounds and lives of Latino children, as well as the general status of Latinos in the United States, a look at the historical, economic and social processes must be examined.

2.1 Introduction

As the United States grows and changes, so too does the population. The United States has fifty states and is a large country spanning a size comparable to "...twice the size of the European Union" (The World Book, 2017). With there being fifty states, there is a variation from one state to another. This concerns for instance that each state is different in both local government and demographics. Currently, 16.3% of the population of the United States identifies as Latino (The World Book, 2017). As Wainer (2004) describes, Latinos are, as already mentioned, spread among a larger area, no longer concentrated in the West, but spanning a larger distance and many states. The ability to know about Latinos and their assimilation to the United States is a key feature that many states are currently seeking.

With the growth of Latinos across the United States, there are important policy implications, such as education, which accommodates these changing numbers and English Language Learners (ESL). Gibson et al. (2004) notes that among Latino children, the important aspect of research needs to be centered on the role of peers and their effect on students, of which there is a significant research gap. The Southern states of the United States face a continued population growth of Latinos but without the proper resources and information to fully address the new demands of this group. Only a small amount of research is being done to examine Latino children and their adjustment in schools, one of many needs. The importance of the aforementioned and furthering ongoing research, is paramount to the success of states not only in the South but across the United States.

2.2 Location



Figure 1. United States Map highlighting Tennessee. Source: World Atlas.

The United States consists of fifty states spread across a large country. Recent estimates put the population at over 300,000,000 and ranking at the fourth largest country (The World Book, 2017). There are many cultures, understood as “‘a way of life’ that makes sense to individuals in a particular community” (Williams, 1961, 1989, as cited in Kehily, 2009). These cultures and groups comprise the United States, as such crediting it with being a very diverse country. For example, at least 13% of the population is estimated to speak Spanish, though this number could be much higher (The World Book, 2017). It is noted that the statistic of Latinos will vary considering that a separate listing for Latino is not included. This is because the US Census Bureau, “...considers Hispanic to mean persons of Spanish/Hispanic/Latino origin including those of Mexican, Cuban, Puerto Rican, Dominican Republic, Spanish, and Central or South American origin living in the US who may be of any race or ethnic group (white, black, Asian, etc.)” (The World Book, 2017). Thus, keeping this in mind, the population is large.



Figure 2. Map of Tennessee with surrounding states. Source: World Atlas.

The study took place in Tennessee, which is in the lower southeast part of the country. It spans two time zones and has a population of close to 7 million people (The World Book, 2017). The state prides itself as having southern roots, stemming to the Civil war in the late 1800s. There are many rural areas, but larger cities are seeing more people and groups such as Latinos arriving and experience an overall increase in population (Drever, 2006). Until the early 1990s, there was not much migration or immigration to Tennessee from Latinos. This can be noted so much so that the city of Nashville in Tennessee, the mayor has created a new office for helping new arrivals. The purpose of this new office in Nashville is to help drive the economy and engagement of Latino immigrants in the Nashville area (Lozano, 2015).

The growing number of Latinos in the southern states demonstrates a change in the neighborhoods and schools. Smith and Furuseth (2006) indicate a general trend toward a spatial change in the Southern States, especially Tennessee. Latinos are not necessarily concentrating themselves to one area as they might in the West Coast. Often there is a concentration of Latino communities within a community or neighborhood. While the Western part of the United States has historical connections with Latinos and migration, the South has not been afforded this previous immigration trend (Drever, 2006). According to the US Census, the state of Tennessee saw close to 100,000 Latinos come to the state between 1990 and 2000 (Drever, 2006). As new groups arrive in a new location, attention is made to the integration process or general settlement process for the families. Donato et al. (2003) also refer to the 1990 and 2000 US Census to see the growth of Latinos and furthermore the changes in families moving together, rather than one family member traveling first to settle. Among these changes, immigration status is a large factor that affects the changes in immigration to the South. Some families might have illegal status, leading to the growth in communities but the possibility that they do not necessarily join or become fully part of the community (Donato et al, 2003).

2.3 Key Terms/Concepts

There are some terms and concepts that are key to my study and within the broader understanding of both the children and friendship. They will be defined in the following section. Along with the terms, is a brief explanation of the context in which they will be used.

Latino

The United States recognizes Latino and Hispanic as interchangeable terms, yet Latino is sometimes more popularly used. Alcoff (2005) has discussed the variation in the terms and a geographical link with the word Hispanic being used in New Mexico and Texas while other parts of the United States prefer Latino. Some research indicates a political or historical affiliation with one name over another, yet ultimately the historical nature of the terms is one facet and it is up to contemporary decisions to decide which to use (Alcoff, 2005). The complication then lends itself to how people would like to be referred to and consequently, Latino will be used, as it is a term that is often used in research.

Immigration/Migration

Immigration itself is a topic that has always been present in the United States. Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco, & Qin-Hilliard (2005) find that in the last century, immigration and migration from Latin America has constituted the immigration discussion. Immigration is the movement of a person or persons from one country to another, differing from migration that is a larger group and can take place from country to country or within a country (Drever, 2006). Currently a third of the population in the United States is of Mexican origin (Suarez-Orozco, 2008). This means that immigration is a large part of making the United States as it is in its current state.

The study primarily consisted of many children who had immigrated to the United States and this became an important undercurrent throughout the study. As in previous years, immigration has been an ongoing discussion. Latinos have immigrated to the United States since the Mexican-American War of the late 1800s but illegal immigration has become prominent rhetoric in both the news and politics (Chavez, 2013). Although Latinos have been coming to the United States for more than one hundred years, the last forty years has had more illegal immigration (Chavez, 2013). The 1990s saw the Immigration Act come into effect, thereby limiting the number of immigrants allowed into the country each year (Chavez, 2013). As such, the number of illegal immigrants has been rising steadily.

Hector Tobar (2017) interviewed several Latinos who expressed great concern for the current environment of the United States. As they discuss, there is a constant worry for their well-being and ability to stay in the country. This is important considering currently there are almost 11

million undocumented or illegal immigrants living in the United States (Tobar, 2017). No longer can immigrants have free movement within their states and cities. They live in a new age of fear that they will be deported, sent back, to their country of origin or harassed. Additionally, immigrants who are legal citizens, fear for other family members and friends who are not legal and with a visit from immigration officers, could be deported (Tobar, 2017). Moreover, my impression is that there is a feeling of being threatened by a rising unwelcome atmosphere from many people.

Friendship

Friendship will be defined as the relationship between friends whereby there is a level of trust and understanding and they feel comfortable in each other's company (Barnes, 2003). Johnson (2004) points out that most children are friends with the same gender and this should be a consideration. Barnes (2003) notes that gendered friendships, boys only friendships and girls only friendships, can be different and thus should be considered in examining research, which I examined afterwards but was not a primary part of my initial research. Looking to an anthropological approach, family ties and relationships are often closely linked to friendship and is a consideration (Desai & Killick 2010). Another important consideration when defining friendship is that: "...friendships 'can be re-conceptualized as a culturally specific form of providing children with close daily social interaction with other children rather than a unique, and presumed universal, social construct'" (Gaskins, 2006, as cited in Corsaro, 2009). The intricacies of social behavior and further discussions on friendship vary and as such should be looked at from the perspective of a social construct and in the framework of social contexts that vary.

English Language Learner

The term English language learner (ESL) is used to describe someone who does not have English as their first language. This term is used in the study as it describes the group of participants in the study. Carhill et al. (2008) remark that there are varying levels of second language level acquisitions and therefore although someone might not be a native English speaker, their ability to communicate will vary greatly depending on their grasp of the language and how many years they have been learning it. Places such as Tennessee have seen an increased need for ESL teachers as demographics change in the area and more Latinos are arriving with only some English, or no English (Drever, 2006). Thus, ESL participants were

important to include in my study and in turn the concept of ESL programs in school were explored.

Language

The general trend of the growing Latino community in the Southern states is important to contextualize the study. Latino children themselves are now a prominent group but are still isolated to certain areas. One example where Latino's play a large role is in the ESL programs that schools are developing. Wainer (2004) notes the important role ESL training has in communities where the Latino population has grown. The importance of recognizing the Latino community and helping them become integrated into the system is key to moving Latino children forward in education (Wainer, 2004). At least one in five students in the United States has parents who are immigrants, many of whom do not speak English at home (Carhill, Suárez-Orozco, & Paez, 2008).

The United States are said to have the second largest Spanish-speaking community outside of Mexico (Burgen, 2015). As such, Spanish is a key language within the United States for many reasons. For this study, as well, along with English in which children communicated. Second to this was variations in native Mayan languages, Acateco being one, which was the native language that a few of the children spoke.

“Language signifies identity and social relations” (Carhill et al., 2008). If this is the case, then language is at the center of identifying markers for a group. Children first interact with other children through language in their own way. Immigrant students arriving in middle and high school tend not to receive as much support in language learning as those who arrive when they are younger (Carhill et al., 2008). The implications of this are that children then struggle to communicate with their peers. They may use non-verbal communication, such as hand gestures and body language, yet it becomes difficult to complete school work without learning English. Language used with friends is also different than that used in a more academic setting such as the classroom (Bailey & Butler, 2003; Cazden, 2001; Cummins, 1991, 2000, as cited in Carhill et al., 2008). Additionally, Carhill et al. (2008) noted that children could learn conversational English within two years but academic English and that used for classwork could take longer to acquire. Ultimately, “Activities are organized within particular social worlds or communities that share a common language, beliefs, values, and practices” (Monzó & Rueda, 2009, p. 24).

To consider language as the driving force that connects and brings groups and communities together is to then see children as they connect with others.

2.4 Technology and Communication in the United States

As there are a growing number of ways people can communicate, via texting and social media outlets, social interactions and communication with friends is also changing. Stone (2012) wrote an article detailing the changing landscape of interactions among children with the use of social media. As he notes, the growing number of social media sites allows for children to communicate with each other, not only in person but also via the Internet. Tingstad (2007) also notes the changing landscape of research with children and new technologies and the importance of doing research with them to better understand this area of research. Additionally, Valkenburg and Peter (2009) examined the use of IMing (Instant Messaging) and how it may influence children, pointing to the extension of the friendship beyond face-to-face contact. The extension of friendship was at the center of the study in determining not only the face to face interactions children made, but also how or if technology and social media platforms affected their interactions. These studies demonstrate the importance of technologies in communicating with friends and are therefore included in my study.

At least 93% of children aged 12-17 are going online in the United States (Lenhart, Purcell, Smith, & Zickuhr, 2010). Furthering this trend, many children's households have internet, yet there is still an 8% group that does not have steady use of the internet. Lenhart et al. (2010) noted that Latino children reported going online once a day to possibly only 3 or 5 times a week. This contrasted significantly with other children who reported going online several times a day. Additionally, Latinos very often fall into the category of low income households and interestingly, Lenhart et al. (2010) noted that this group of low income children had an increased use of social network sites. There are many factors and variables that are involved in the usage of technology in varying forms and there is a tendency for more children to have access to the internet and a cell phone, increasing some chances of using social media.

Additionally, in an article written for CNN, Wallace (2014) details the positive effects that social media has on children's relationship with peers. In it, she notes that children often feel more confident in their relationships because of social media, a facet of friendships that has not

been explored in depth. Buckingham (2008) also denotes a new perspective on the digital age of children and childhood and whether the use of digital technology is harmful or not. The information that is reported on children's relationship with peers and friendships is often quantitative, based off surveys. Not as much research has been done with giving voice to children themselves about their friendships and connection to social media, thus I wanted like to bridge this gap. Primarily I was interested in looking at both the interplay of friendships among peers but also the interaction they have with things like texting, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat and other forms of communication; and how it affects their friendships. Looking at both the friendship component and its connections to social media will give new insight into children's social spaces.

2.5 Academic achievement

Many research studies have studied Latinos and their academic achievements. There is often a focus of achievement and friendships. These friendships have been noted to have a positive effect on children's achievement (Woolley et al., 2009). Although academic success was not the focus of the study, it makes sense to look at the previous studies which took these perspectives into account. Woolley et al. (2009) specifically note that children who have strong friendships tend to do well academically. This can be used to understand children's overall perspective of being in school and the importance of friends in helping adapt to school. Additionally, previous research suggests correlations between children in their own same ethnic group, Latino in this case, and the variations in friends they have. Way and Chen (2000) specifically look at data from a school where there was a concentration of various ethnic groups at a low-income bracket. The focus was how friendship quality was measured amongst different groups. The results were data driven and open to further study in perceived quality of friendships within the same ethnic group and suggest a strong connection with friends and overall happiness with friends. As stated before, most children were given a survey to fill out which leads to the importance of interviews to help clarify and identify any other factors or variables in what makes a good friendship, especially in the Latino community.

2.6 School System and Challenges

The United States has three main school systems that children encounter from the age of 5 to the age of 18. The first of which is called elementary school, aged 5 to 10. Next is middle school, aged 11 to 13. Lastly is high school, aged 14-18. Each school contains different ages and varying transitions for children. Spring (2015) notes that the education system in the United States is put forth to further encourage equality amongst students. The system itself differs from the national level to each state and further to each county within the state. With each level of education, policies and education changes somewhat, making each child's experience different. It is important to note that the United States school system does abide by national guidelines for school subjects but that each state can make the final decision on school policies. Corsaro (2009) notes that in some preschools there is a difference in what is allowed to be brought to school, in his example certain toys. This is also the case when examining the schools in Tennessee where cellular telephones were allowed in the school where research was conducted. This is not necessarily the case in all schools, leading to one environment where this is happening. Weiner (2004) looked at the ways in which education and the school system needed to be changed in the southern states, especially to help accommodate and acclimate newly arrived Latino students. As a whole, many of the schools in the south are not prepared for the changes in demographics with a higher percentage of Latino children coming in and thus cannot access the needs of students appropriately (Weiner, 2004). In turn, this affects the greater perspective of Latinos in education and their position in the southern states.

2.7 Latinos in the Southern United States: Summary

The United States have, as already mentioned, had a large increase in Latinos for the last hundred years, yet only recently has this spread been seen across more states. Previously, there was a tendency for Latinos to settle on the West coast, East coast or those states nearest the Mexican border. Primarily the shift in Latino communities found in other parts of the United States is due to economic trends where low-skill service jobs in the South allow for an overall better salary because of lower cost of living (Wainer, 2004). Tennessee is a state located in what is called the South of the United States and part of the Southern States. Tennessee has seen an increase in Latinos in the last twenty years in particular. The economic changes and social interplay have been a marked changed in places like Tennessee where there has not always been a distinct community prior (Smith & Furuseth, 2006). With this in mind, children's

voices of the Latino community are an important note for policy makers and the education system.

The growing number of Latinos in the southern states has indicated a change in many ways, such as the neighborhoods and schools. Smith and Furuseth (2006) indicate a general trend toward a spatial change in the Southern States, especially Tennessee. Latinos are not necessarily concentrating themselves to one area as they might in the West Coast. Often there is a concentration of Latino communities within a community or neighborhood. While the Western part of the United States has historical connections with Latinos and migration, the South has not been afforded this previous immigration trend (Drever, 2006). According to the US Census, the state of Tennessee saw close to 100,000 Latinos come to the state between 1990 and 2000 (Drever, 2006). This is especially noted in respect to the nature of immigration. As new groups arrive in a new location, attention is made to the integration process or general settlement process for the families. Donato et al. (2003) also refer to the 1990 and 2000 US Census to see the growth of Latinos and furthermore the changes in families moving together, rather than one family member traveling first to settle. Among these changes, immigration status is a large factor that affects the changes in immigration to the South. Some families might have illegal status, leading to the growth in communities but the possibility that they do not necessarily join or become part of the community completely (Donato et al, 2003).

The general trend of the growing Latino community in the Southern states is important to contextualizing the study that was conducted. Latino children themselves are now a prominent group but still isolated to certain areas. One example where Latinos play a large role is in the ESL (English as a Second Language) programs that schools are developing. Wainer (2004) notes the important role ESL training has in communities where the Latino population has grown. The importance of recognizing the Latino community and helping them become integrated into the system is key to moving Latino children forward in education (Wainer, 2004). At least one in five students in the United States has parents who are immigrants, many of whom do not speak English at home (Carhill, Suárez-Orozco, & Paez, 2008). There are implications to the number of children with immigrant parents which should be considered in education.

Sox (2009) noted that many schools in the South had English only policies that forced teachers to conduct classes in English, with many students later facing problems with grades and overall

academic achievement due to a lack of support. This in turn affects their relationships with friends. The overall trend for many schools in the southern states is that not enough attention is being paid to Latino children in school and in their transition to the United States if they do not speak English as a first language (Sox, 2009). With this, bringing to light the experience of Latino children in school is critical. Based on the introduction and background information and reflection, I will in the next chapter present my main theoretical perspectives and concepts.

Chapter 3 Theoretical perspectives and concepts

3.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to describe and discuss the theoretical perspectives and concepts that I found useful in my study, from designing it to the analyses and concluding reflections. The role of theory is to help reflect on themes of interest. Brinkmann and Kvale (2014) highlight that in qualitative research, theoretical reflections are important to bringing interpretations to the surface. The goal is to lay out the theories that were used and thought about when preparing the study, when in the field and throughout analyses. The Social Studies of Children and Childhood constitute the main theoretical framework. Within this field of research, there are varying approaches to the study of childhood and each of these each influences the understanding of childhood, a basic tenant in the research conducted. In the previous chapter, some specific understanding about Latinos and Latino children in the South of the US are discussed to help clarify the phenomenon under study. Additionally, this chapter will focus on the historical background of the field, as well as specific approaches used throughout the study, such as the many facets of friendship as a means of understanding a group. Social Studies of Children and Childhood was at the center of the study, as well as an anthropological approach to friendship, whereby cultural norms can be better understood, making the Latino perspective seen through the use of friendship and cultural theory.

Childhood must be understood as having complexities that were not always present and are only recently being seen in modern society (Woodhead, 2008). The approach looks to childhood in the form of children's perspectives but from a variety of research. For example, there are certain similarities that must take place about the facts in comparing childhood research and there is also a degree of difference between the contexts that take place (Bloch, 1967, as cited in Jensen & Qvortrup, 2004). While seemingly complex in thought, the understanding is that childhood research examines the varying contexts within themselves and in comparing experiences of children. The following chapter will outline the perspectives and concepts within Social Studies of Children and Childhood that were fundamental for approaching my study in the ways I did, both theoretically and methodologically.

3.2 Social Studies of Children and Childhood – An Overview

The Social Studies of Children and Childhood, also known as Childhood Studies, is a somewhat new field that has changed how research with children is done. When childhood studies grew, the focus was in bringing some of the disciplines of psychology, sociology and anthropology together to help piece together some of the aspects already being studied about children. There are at least a few key features of the Social Studies of Children and Childhood, they are:

- “1. Childhood is understood as a social construction...
2. Childhood is variable of social analysis...
3. Children’s social relationships and cultures are worthy of study in their own right, independent of the perspective and concerns of adults...
4. Children are and must be seen as active in the construction and determination of their own social lives, the lives of those around them and the societies in which they live...
5. Ethnography is a particularly useful methodology for the study of childhood...
6. Childhood is a phenomenon in relation to which the double hermeneutic of the social sciences is acutely present” (Prout and James, 1990, p.8).

These characteristics are important to the understanding of society and the place that children have in it. The purpose is, “...to take account of a much wider range of childhoods than has traditionally been represented...by encompassing diverse global and diverse local experiences of childhood” (Woodhead, 2008, p. 17). Kehily (2009) notes the influence of school-based studies have given many contributions to a better understanding of childhood from children’s perspectives. James (2007) explores a main tenant:

“...childhood research is not simply about making children’s own voices heard in this very literal sense by presenting children’s perspectives. It is also about exploring the nature of the “voice” with which children are attributed, how that voice both shapes and reflects the ways in which childhood is understood, and therefore the discourses within which children find themselves within any society” (p. 266).

The focus then is on finding out what children want to share and presenting their perspectives appropriately. As such, the focus is on the child and their experiences. Using these studies provides a means to approach children’s everyday life and concepts of friendship.

Kehily (2008) discusses the historical changes in childhood and its varying qualities from different cultures with some dominance in Western perspectives within research. The extent to which these changes have been made, come to the realization that there are different types of childhoods and will vary by culture and time (Kehily, 2008). As such, this helped form some of my research questions. Additionally, Qvortrup (2002) notes, the individual child and not collective children is a shift in study that has made waves. This has led to more focus on children's individual perspectives and he goes onto explore the societal forces that affect childhood. His belief is that there has been a structure that has existed for generations, where children have always been a part of our society's system and yet not recognized as anything other than being children without looking at their beliefs and opinions (Qvortrup, 2002).

3.3 The Minority Child

Within childhood studies there are four approaches that can further be employed. The structure of society and where children fit into it is one approach. Samantha Punch (2009) discussed childhoods in the majority world as a common Western perspective and narrative. Children from South America and other third world countries can have vastly different experiences of childhood compared to those of the "majority world". Research by Punch was done with children primarily from Central and South America, Latino children, can often be overlooked and somewhat out of context. As such, Punch (2009) noted that the minority child is often not as prominent in the majority world but is essentially indistinguishable from adults with further identification (Punch, 2009). Latino children have long been a minority in many parts of the United States and as a whole overlooked, much as the minority child is seen. There is a tendency to place children into the larger adult discussion about topics such as immigration and politics. Children are not given a voice in the United States as is afforded in other countries where children's rights are taken into account (Walker et al., 1999). Thus, the perspective of minority group child is a consideration with this group of children as they are somewhat forgotten.

To go further, Latino children are a group that are studied in South and Central America, as Punch (2009) mentions and bringing them from their country of origin to the United States to be looked at can be done in the lens of a minority child. Jenks (2004) discussed the strength of the model in the minority group child because of the purpose and interest of the child being fully transparent. Jenks (2004) goes onto describe the difficulty in categorizing the group as a "...universal child to a minority group" (p. 109). It is worthy of mention because as Punch

(2009) notes, there is not a lot of research done on children who come from third world countries and live in the first world countries and their experiences in this perspective are crucial to understanding their experiences. Brabeck and Xu (2010) studied children that had been deported from the United States because their parents could no longer reside there, though they themselves were legally able to. The implication of this is that the adults are taken into account for being illegal and yet the child is not looked at, the child is given little status.

3.4 The Social Structural Child

Jens Qvortrup (2002) proposed that childhood is part of a structural model in which childhood fits. This structure is similar to that of class structure and society. To clarify further, childhood is not only something that happens temporarily but instead as persisted throughout time as a structural form (Qvortrup, 2002). Children have a role as being in the midst of childhood and as such associated and put into this role. The change in childhood can indicate historical aspects that alter certain aspect but the structure of childhood itself remains intact (Qvortrup, 2009). Jenks (2004) notes the reflexivity needed to use this model for childhood. The experiences can be different with each child and the influences they encounter both in their own setting and within the larger macro setting are to be noted. Jenks (2004) goes onto determine that children, "... inhabit a world of meaning created by themselves and through their interactions with adults" (p. 106). As such, children are active in their actions and place within society and possess the capacity to express themselves as they see their worlds. This study has a large group of variation within the Latino children and as such, some structural features are needed to find common ground. The concept of a structural model was used to help develop similarities and base questions that would help in discussing friendship. Ultimately the concept itself helps spread the variations into one continual line where childhood can be understood as a set time and thus interpreted within its own right. The academic approach to viewing children within this framework is a concept within its own right and has importance in making comparisons between approaches within Social Studies of Children and Childhood. Thus, it is essential to compare the approaches and bring forth the concepts that helped drive the study.

3.5 Children's Agency

As with much of childhood studies, there has been a shift in how we view children, specifically a shift away from who they will be as adults, but rather who they currently are. Alison James (2009) made important mention of this in the discussion of whether children are “human becomings” or “human beings” and the interplay between the two. This can be emphasized in the conceptualization of what childhood is seen as, but also the ways that children see themselves as participants in society (James, 2009). Keeping in mind that as previously mentioned, children were not seen as having very much agency in their ability to make decisions in the past. This is especially crucial for examining technology and children's decisions as society changes and the decisions that children make. James (2009) notes that access to media is a contested topic that can relate to children's agency. Societal and parental controls on children are often the ones exercising power as seen in historical trends. With the focus on agency, there is a reconceptualization on how children make their own decisions and can speak to their experiences. Within the focus on media, as James (2009) alluded, this can play into technology and how children can have their own identity projects and make their own choices about how they use the internet and different social and communication technologies. Ultimately James (2009) examines one strand of childhood studies and a focus on children's ability to have agency; a perspective that helped focus my study and give voice to children's lives.

3.6 Peer Culture

One varying perspective is *peer culture*, as seen by Corsaro (2009). Understanding peer culture as an experience between children is, “...as worthy of documentation and study in their own right” (Corsaro, 2009, p. 301). Research into peer culture revolves around a certain amount of autonomy that children must maintain. This autonomy comes from the children's acts against adult authority or can be theorized as such. “...two general themes consistently appear: Children make persistent attempts to gain control over their lives and to share that control with each other” (Corsaro & Eder, 1990, p. 202). The interplay between the two are not separate but indicate the theme of children's ability to control their own lives and further their relationships within them. Within this realm, children seek to push those authoritative figures in order gain the control that rests with them, that of their own lives (Corsaro & Eder, 1990).

It is with this concept in mind, children are supposed to have a certain degree of developed mindset about their peers. Peers are those other children within the same age group or similar. With this in mind, much of children's culture in school and outside has a development of identity that can be grounded in the need to break from certain rules placed upon them and lead to their own developed peer culture and further their relationships within them (Corsaro, 2009). Children can find themselves deeply involved in their surroundings with peers. Children spend a lot of their day in school and with their peers (Corsaro, 2009). As such, the relationships in their own peer culture and friendships are important to children's identity and routines. Corsaro (2009) also discusses the differences in school where children can have disputes or disagreements with their peers. This documentation on conflict is also a development of children's handling of their own problems and situations.

3.7 Economy of Dignity

The relationship between children can be characterized in different ways but can be defined by their weak or strong ties (Rysst, 2013). As such, the concept of inclusion and exclusion become important to the dynamic of social networks or relationships that children develop. Pugh (2009) states that children often, "claim, contest, and exchange among themselves the terms of their social belonging, or just what it would take to be able to participate among their peers" (p. 6). The system that children create is coined "economy of dignity" by Pugh (2009). In her description of this concept, she argues that children often create meaning in their experiences, similar to the concept of agency. The difference is in how children make meaning of their relationships in how they perceive their needs so as to avoid exclusion. Rysst (2013) examined the concept as well in order to examine the children's friendship networks. In the study conducted, Rysst (2013) examined how the socioeconomic standing of a child could affect the inclusion/exclusion factor as children would either be able to "fit in" or be outside the consumption trends taking place between children. In conjunction with inclusion and exclusion, Pugh's idea means that children's relationships can be based on other factors that will influence the size of their network or friends. As a concept that I have found in consumption theory, it is worthy in mention as it can help analyzing some of the empirical findings, even if it does not represent my main approach.

3.8 Friendship

Friendship has been researched in the Social Studies of Children and Childhood as well as in many other fields of study. As noted, there is a focus when examining friendship, as it takes a varying look at friendship and children to account for other factors, like children's voice, to interpret children's relationships, it provides an alternative approach to studying children. There are certain friendship ties that coincide with peer culture in particular, which was previously discussed, bringing friendship from this field to help understand the cultural perspective.

Rizzo (1989, as cited in Corsaro & Eder, 1990) noted that children maintain an internalization of friendship that helps during interactions with friends. "The importance of mutual intimacy and openness in friendship increases during adolescence..." (Youniss & Smollar, 1985, as cited in Corsaro & Eder, 1990). It is in this age of adolescence, ages 10-14 that moving the stage of friendship into a new stage where loyalty is also seen as a larger factor and changes. James (1996) conducted research with children and found that the defined concept of friendship was very different from child to child. Ultimately it is with this knowledge that friendship is a complicated and sometimes intricate series of events that construe friendship, that the concept itself was an underlying research topic throughout and the main research focal point.

There are different themes when studying friendship that emerge. Friendship can be seen in varying forms and contexts, namely based on mutual interests and the discussions that take place (Bell & Coleman, 1999). Social groups can affect the way friendships are formed, for example a family relationship or proximity to the other person. The narratives on friendships can bring cultural meanings about friendships to the forefront, with each relationship being developed in its own time (Bell & Coleman, 1999). As Bell and Coleman (1999) note, the important factor is that friendship patterns vary over time and the development of these friendships is crucial to the social life of the individual. Desai and Killick (2010) share these sentiments within their research, with theory grounded in cultural anthropology, friendship is an intimate relationship that comes from social contact and as such, there is importance in seeing the day to day events of the people involved in the friendship. One stance is that friendship is thus culturally constructed and depending on the culture, friendships may be seen as more individual or collective (Barnes, 2003).

Through these perspectives and concepts, there is a theoretical lens from which to look at methodology and methods to study friendship, which will be explored in the following chapter.

Chapter 4 Methodology

4.1 Introduction

The study that follows was primarily interviews, held with 12 children, where their views and opinions were heard regarding friendships. Many children had only been in the country for a year or less and some even felt more comfortable speaking Spanish during the interview. This range in participation led to insightful looks at their feelings, experiences and understanding of what it means to be a friend and what they look for in friendship. To understand their friendships, many aspects and facets of making friends and maintaining friends needed to be carefully looked at. More importantly, I aimed to see "...children as people to be studied in their own right, and not just as receptacles of adult teaching" (Hardman, 1973 as cited in Qvortrup, 2002).

I worked as a primary teacher during my time in Tennessee, the place for my study, and noticed the structure of the schools were different from my experience having grown up in California. Children were often asked to be completely silent for many parts of the day, such as sitting in the gymnasium in the morning before school, as well as during all transition periods of walking through the hallways. Many complained to me that they felt they did not have friends. Thus, my research question was refined even further. I found it imperative to get a perspective on friendship from the children in the area due to the inopportunity I saw for interactions with other children. More importantly, I wanted to know how the children themselves felt about their relationships and how they had developed. Questions then emerged; did children feel they had friends? Who exactly were their friends? When did they see their friends? I set out to look at children in the Latino community and find out more on their perspective about friendships with the added perspective of various forms of communication that are used for talking with friends. These forms of communication stem from different technologies and social media, included looking at texting and sites like Instagram, Twitter and Snapchat to help gain insight into the ways children engage in friendships. Questions were formulated using my past experience of working in schools and working with Latinos. Therefore, my research statement became what perspectives do Latino children have on their friends and friendships and doing friendship?

This chapter will present the various methods that I used in this study, such as interviews and observation; mainly talking with Latino children about their thoughts and perspectives regarding friends and friendships. The data gathering conducted in Tennessee, over a month and a half in 2017. Participants were met at a school and had varying meetings. The meetings varied in location around the school depending on room availability, as well as how long the interviews lasted, depending on the child and their time available.

4.2 Importance of Methodology

The process of organizing and planning the study does not come easily and ultimately the choice in methods is only one part of the larger picture. A consideration when beginning the organization of the study was noting "...children's doing, i.e. children's actions..." (Solberg, 1996, as cited in Tingstad, 2007). The concept of "children's doing" had to be at the center of what I looked at, the children's descriptions of themselves and their actions, their agency. I also considered what was planned but taking into consideration being flexible when interviewing children and seeing and hearing their responses. This extended to the types of methods used, interviewing and observation and how they were used due to the need for flexibility and reflexivity.

Taking into perspective the many methods that can be used, a basic tenant is to "listen to the child" (Woodhead & Faulkner, 2000). At the center of this research study, the listening aspect and talking with children was crucial. Additionally, I took a holistic approach to ensure children's wellbeing and rights were being met, building around "child centred" research (Woodhead, 2009, p. 25). Ultimately, methodology helps to give purpose to each component of the interviewing and study stage, focusing on the children's experiences.

Within the framework of Childhood Studies, I will describe the methodological perspectives taken. Additionally, I will go over how access and permission was obtained to gather information, ethical considerations of working with children and the process of gathering information from children.

4.3 Access and field site

Obtaining access to the children had many gate keepers. My first step was to receive approval from the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD). This took some time due to timeline changes in the study as well as logistical changes. I submitted appropriate paperwork and then modified documents according to feedback from NSD. The most important piece of this process was the informed consent form. Within the United States, the requirement for schools can be demanding with regards to the consent form that must be as detailed as possible.

The next step in the process, or next gatekeeper, was approval from the school district from where I chose to do my research. This was a difficult process because I needed to submit a similar set of documents as from those that were submitted to NSD. The school district requested a formal submission of a proposal of the intended study and a wait time for committee perusal. The district committee asked for a few changes in my documents, one of which was the consent form, asking for an amended document containing a “no” box for consent, although the NSD had previously asked that I remove this box. Once this change was made and appropriate documentation was completed, I had permission to approach any school I wanted to conduct research in (please see appendix 1 and 2 for the permission forms).

Understanding the community and area of my research site was crucial to selecting a school from which to conduct research. Ennew et al. (2009) note that once permission for access has been granted, then giving information about the study to the appropriate staff or authorities is the next big step. Upon investigation and research into the varying schools, I narrowed my choices to schools that had the most recent increase in Latino students. I then limited this further by focusing on middle school. I chose an age range that coincided with middle school, comprised of children aged 10-14. This selection was due to my desire to have more conversations with children and practical decisions about the hours of school that I could visit. The location was also of importance because I wanted to be able to access the site without losing time in travel, thus leading me to one middle school near where I was working. This school provided the correct age range, a large number of Latino students and the overall middle school location that I had in mind.

I contacted the middle school I had already selected with a high percentage of Latino students that were in the age group I was looking for. From here, I contacted the principal of the school.

This stage took much longer as my contact had to filter me to other contacts at the school that would be able to better help me. The principal of the school sent various correspondences which helped further the study aims and purpose. From there, I was given contact with English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers as well as the afterschool coordinator of programs at the school. These secondary gate keepers helped me in gathering participants for the study. Ultimately, I ended up working closely with the school's afterschool coordinator for the Boys and Girls Club that had a vast insight into the school population as well as a means of helping me get information about my study distributed and getting participants. This gate keeper was indispensable as without their help, I would not have had the proper introductions with many of my participants.

4.4 Role of Researcher

My role as researcher was not that of an authoritative adult but rather a friendly adult the children could talk to. My stature being 150cm made it easier to somewhat blend in with the children so as not to appear too adult or authoritative. Additionally, I aimed to try to have children lead the conversation when possible. I looked to the children to dictate how we spoke and how we related. Though, this sometimes only resulted in some one word remarks and not as much conversation as I would have liked. Brinkmann and Kvale (2015) argue that the interviewer must try to avoid the association of being a teacher. From the beginning, I told children I was teaching at a local school, so they would know more about me and for some, they had attended the school, and this proved to be a connection between us. By disclosing information about myself and speaking informally with the children, I aimed to have open discussions with the children where they did not see me as an authoritative or teacher figure. Children were asked to actively participate in the study sharing their experiences. The procedures taken to talk to children were held under the main concerns of James (2007) whereby I aimed to have no power imbalance and taking many pauses to give children an open platform from which to talk.

4.4.1 Insider Vs Outsider

I would like to consider my work with participants as an insider because of my ability to relate to their Spanish backgrounds and understanding of the school dynamic in middle school. As

Alderson and Morrow (2011) explain, the researcher has both advantages and disadvantages to be an insider and outsider. This coincides with my experience in the field as having a small degree of insider knowledge and being an outsider to the children themselves. Having been working in the school district where they attended, this made it easier to understand the student's schedules and routines. I thought that my ability to communicate in Spanish was one form of insider knowledge. There was a need to be reflective as I went through the process of interviewing and observation as much as possible, participants were much more diverse than first expected. At first participants viewed me as very much an outsider because I was new. In some ways, I tried to be an insider in my ability to communicate in both languages that they knew, Spanish and English. I also thought I would be an insider because I am Latino. Yet, this connection with children as an insider became much more difficult for children who did not have Spanish as their primary language but rather their second, with Acateco being their main language. In the end, my role as an insider and outsider were displayed differently than I originally believed because of the many differences that occurred in understanding the dynamic and background of the children, especially the generational gap between myself and the children. As Solberg (1996) describes, there are problems when carrying out research where interviewers have the potential to fall back into their role as the adult or outsider but must try to remain within the world of the children. Having a proper introduction and contact through the school aided in the trust participants had in my visits and although being seen as an outsider, given a degree of understanding to interact and ask questions. Ultimately, I found myself as both an insider and outsider. I had knowledge of Latin culture, the Spanish language, and the school system. Yet, as I immersed myself in what children told me and learned from them, I realized I was not as knowledgeable about children's activities as I thought I was.

4.5 Methodological perspectives

Qualitative Methods

Social Studies of Children and Childhood and the methods as described by the field were taken into consideration and used as a basis for the perspective used throughout. The previous chapter discussed the various strands of the field and which perspectives I used. Qualitative research was at the center of my research.

A primary concern was using methodological perspectives that encouraged children express themselves openly. As Woodhead and Faulkner (2000) discuss, there should be a tendency to encourage children to freely talk and as a researcher, interpret their words. The actor oriented approach is used throughout the study, with a focus on agency. Therefore, building trust with the children and coming across to them in a manner that is approachable were considerations.

Interviews

Researchers in Social Studies of Children and Childhood need to be aware of children's voices and how they can be limited by varying degrees of discourse in the topic, the researcher's notions and other factors (Spyrou, 2011). This is reflected in the interviewing process. As Brinkmann and Kvale (2014) note, interviewing as a tool for qualitative research is best interpreted when looked at in context. This became a key aspect of my research. There were many instances where the qualitative aspect of the research was embedded in the interviews much as Brinkmann and Kvale (2014) stated they would be.

“In the normal case, these things do not happen during the course of the interview, and it is useful to pay attention to what happens after an interview as this gives us an idea of how much we take for granted about qualitative interviews and actually fail to notice when we are in the thick of things” (p. 106).

Within this framework, it was imperative to be aware, flexible and reflexive with this thinking. It is the responsibility of the interviewer to be considerate of the subjectivity and objectivity of the situation. From this stand, I took the tenants of interviewing and the rich data that can be obtained from gathering interviews to help in telling the stories children wanted to tell about their friends and friendships. The context of the children's background and the study area were important aspects of interpreting data and in choosing different means of meeting with the children.

Social media

The platform for communication and use of technology and social media has had a profound change in the last decade. There are many forms of social media platforms from which to choose from, as previously discussed. As these forms of communication change, so too does the way

children “do friendship” as previously mentioned in chapter 2 and 3. The idea of “doing friendship” is one that has been seen before with James within the context of “...being, becoming and losing friends...” (James 1996, p. 2). The cultural component of friendship can add an extra complexity in that “doing friendship” is seen differently depending on the context. As Ito et al. (2009) note, children using online communication see it as a space where they can exert autonomy in their communication with peers and friends. The act of the friendship itself is one where there is a platform from where the children can continue their friendships outside of having to be with their friends in person. When discussing social media and technology, this is seen through the use of posting material, such as words, phrases or pictures in Facebook, Instagram or Snapchat. The various uses are wide reaching, and each child interviewed had different interpretations about how to use the sites and texting or their phones as will be seen.

Children appeared proud to describe how the different social media sites worked for them, such as posting pictures on Instagram and communicating with Snapchat. Many though, most often those who had only been in the country for a few months, did not have any access to social media. The difference in how often children used sites like Facebook, Snapchat and Instagram varied as well as having access to the internet in general, cited as the most common form of using these sites was only when there was Wi-Fi. “While these teens may see one another at school, in formal or unstructured activities, or at one another’s houses, they use social media to keep in touch with their friends, classmates, and peers when getting together is not possible” (Ito et al., 2009, p.79). This use of social media to keep in touch seemed to be a popular discussion, children did not have the time to hang out with their friends outside of school. It seemed as though they had to rely on their use of social media for the everyday touch base moments. These discussions will be looked at below.

The afterschool coordinator whom was helpful in helping get children to be interviewed, explained that only recently had some access to social media been allowed in school, removing online blocks. Instagram had only been unblocked on the internet server recently and allowed for children to use their phones during lunch and in the hallways with more access. Twitter was used by the school district itself to post announcements, though children were not keen to use it. Ito et al. (2009) stated that the everyday smaller circle of friends could be boiled down to their mobile phones and texting, while the larger social media sites opened children up to a larger set of friends. As such, the friend group could be much larger with the growth of these

sites being available. The following interviews looked at how often children used social media sites and overall use of technology in their “doing friendship.”

Children who used varying forms of social media and technology were likely to communicate with friends or family using it. Some platforms mentioned were Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and WhatsApp. At times, it appeared that Instagram and Snapchat were most popular. The common ground with both was that you post a photo and a message and have someone view it or “like” it. The simplicity of the technology somewhat spoke for itself. As such, when asking follow-up questions with children about the use of technology such as Snapchat or Instagram, they just assumed I should know how to use it. In one interview, the child showed me their Instagram and how she used it for messaging a friend about particular pictures that were posted. Lenhart et al. (2010) found that children who were older often reported using online media platforms more often than those who are younger. This could account for some discrepancies in what was reported during interviews and then sometimes mentioned at other times.

4.6 Ethical Considerations

There were many ethical considerations when planning and organizing the study. As stated before, the study had to be approved by different committees. Alderson and Morrow (2011) note the ongoing debate on the international standards of doing research abroad. From the beginning, I abided by the guidelines set forth and seriously considered all ethical considerations needed. Among the most important was obtaining informed consent from participants. As Brinkmann and Kvale (2014) state, informed consent is of the utmost importance because it gives the participant an opportunity to learn about the study but also the autonomy to participant or not. Informed consent will also be discussed further below.

It is important to understand that the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) have not been ratified in the United States (Mehta, 2015). This approach to children in using Children’s rights is important to note as it is a key component of Social Studies of Children and Childhood and research with children. Throughout the study though I carefully took into consideration the thoughts and opinions of the children within the framework of the convention. James (2007) noted that the UNCRC has become important to giving children a

voice and furthermore, to policy makers rhetoric. Though, as mentioned, the United States has not ratified the convention and as such the implications of giving children a voice in matters that can be used for policy changes is an important matter. Since it is not recognized, most children need to also obtain parental consent along with their own consent. Through the various gatekeepers, I could give information to participants about the study and gather any questions they might have but ultimately it was up to the parents whether they wanted their child to participate or not. My contact at the school helped procure various participants who went home with the consent form and then brought it back to me. As per the district's committee, my consent form had to be further changed from the NSD's guidelines. The "no" box in the consent form needed to be completed so that there was an understanding that they did not need to participate, though this was explained when completing the initial stage of giving information about the study.

My contact at the school helped me present the study to various classes to give information about the study and aims. The biggest incentive being that participants could share their opinions about the school and their experiences, many of whom later told me in interviews that this prompted them to want to participate. At the end of this initial process, the parental consent and participant's consent were given from 12 children, with two children opting to not participate but still turning in the form. Informed consent was very important to the study as it provided participants with all the information about the study and knowledge about what to expect in discussing the themes.

Participants were also carefully reminded throughout the process that all data collected and information given about themselves was anonymous. Children were given the opportunity to choose a pseudo name if they wanted or we selected the name together. Often children were excited about the prospect of choosing their name for the study.

I had limited knowledge about the children's families, economy, siblings, and accommodation. Within the scope of my study, this was too much to include and the joint context was both being Latino and having moved to a new country. There were a few children who were rather shy about discussing where they came from before moving to the United States. This was important to pay attention to in order to lower affective filters and make participants feel comfortable. I had made a risk-assessment before beginning research that outlined the possible risks that could occur in this study. Among them was the possibility that children from the Latino community

were illegal immigrants or had family that was illegal and therefore might be uncomfortable talking about certain topics or trusting me as the interviewer. Many participants were not from the United States originally and as such could have been nervous about possible implications about the story of their arrival if they were to be illegally living in the United States. To maintain trust, I would reassure participants that none of the information would be used except by me for the sole purpose of writing my master thesis. In turn, they asked many questions about what a such a thesis was and what one does in university. This open communication was crucial to maintaining open communication and trust between myself and the children.

4.7 Informed Consent

As Brinkmann and Kvale (2015) mention, informed consent is the act of informing research participants about the study itself but also what the benefit or risk might be. The study itself should be thoroughly presented and participants given plenty of information about the procedures. Additionally, they argue that variations in who gives consent can arise in research. To this end, children in the United States must also have their parent or guardian give consent to research in addition to the children themselves. Before meeting participants, I had my study outlined and detailed as to my main purpose, gathering their thoughts and opinions about friends and friendship. Participants were given the consent form which also contained further information for both contacting me and understanding the study as a means for my master's thesis. Beyond this, if participants agreed to participant, they would bring back the form and I would meet with them. Before beginning any interview or observations, I carefully informed them about the study once more and asked for any questions. We went over the consent form they had signed to review information as well possible misunderstandings and questions. In doing so, I ensured participants were aware of the study in its entirety and their role within it. Confidentiality and anonymity were given great importance in discussions with participants in conjunction with informed consent.

4.8 Design of the Study

The study was designed with the intended purpose of visiting a middle school setting with children aged 10-14, in order to interview and observe children. Data was collected through informal and formal interviews as well as observation. The design was also subject to

constraints in time, location and various gatekeepers. As stated previously, the process was not smooth and therefore the design was altered to previous thoughts about what would be used in the study.

Children Profiles

As mentioned previously, children were aged 11-14 and had varying background stories. There were 5 girls and 7 boys who volunteered to complete interviews. The children identified as Latino and had at least one or both parents who spoke Spanish. There was a mix of where children had lived and their background that identified them as Latino. Two children had lived in Venezuela and the United States. Four children were of Mexican descent. One child was half Mexican, only having lived in the United States and the rest had lived in Mexico at some point in the last few years. Four other children were from Guatemala. They ranged in how long they had been in the United States. One child lived in Honduras for a time before coming to the United States. Another child had lived in Columbia, then moved to Ecuador and finally residing in the United States. Many of the children knew each other in connection with their ESL class and one boy and girl were brother and sister. Even if the children were not in the same class, they recognized each other from the halls and school community. This is highlighted in an attempt to capture the wide variety of children involved, as well as the cultural backgrounds represented. As James (2007) notes, there can be a risk of skimming over the diversities that exist in children's lives and as such their personal experiences should be carefully noted. The cultural differences of both being Latino but from different countries were important. As they were all Latino children, yet their responses on how friendship can be perceived varied, although all were grouped under the umbrella of being Latino, relating back to James' (2007) point so as not to gloss over their individual diversities.

4.8.1 Observation

Ennew et al. (2009) define observation as "...the basis of all good research" (p. 5.9). Both structured and unstructured observation are important to seeing the context of the research as a larger picture. Participants were in class when called to interviews. This was due to the difficulty in scheduling. Many participants did not have a way to get home if they did not take the school bus and therefore needed to be interviewed before the end of the school day. The participants were often excited to talk about the topic when they first met. At times the environment was difficult for them to answer questions in because we were not given much

privacy. The school space was limited and thus the participants had to contend with some disruptions and interruptions from announcements over the overhead speaker and the general flow of people walking by or around that sometimes, distracted participants. Participant's facial expressions and body language were noted and taken into consideration. Some participants were also more comfortable using their native language which was important to take into consideration. Mostly unstructured observation was used. This included as Ennew et al. (2009) notes a fixed location, the school, where I could observe children talking to other children and see behavior.

4.8.2 Informal/Semi structured interview

Before beginning an official interview, participants were given time to talk about themselves less informally and also given the change to ask the researcher personal questions. "Interviews with children allow them to give voice to their own experiences and understanding of their world" (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015, p. 169). It is with this notion that interviewing was at the center of my research with children. The ability for the children to both formally and informally discuss their feelings and thoughts was critical to seeing their views. From the beginning, the participants were told to ask as many questions as possible. Ennew et al. (2009) emphasize that an informal interview can help participants have more control in the process. Some participants asked personal questions about my own experiences in school as well as, "how old are you really?". Participants could sometimes choose where we sat for the interview if space was available. At times I chose the space due to the time of the day and availability given by the school officials. Woodhead and Faulkner (2000) consider the appropriateness of selecting a location and discussing how the child perceives a space. In their example, the children being interviewed were unnerved by a room that was considered a "naughty room" (Woodhead & Faulkner, 2000). As such, this experience prompted and influenced the study for it needing to be clear and precise when selecting a location by which children felt at ease. Additionally, Christensen (2004) noted children in an interview were aware of not wanting to be overheard or risk having someone know a secret they had told about a friend. This came into mind when planning the interviews so as children would not feel vulnerable if they felt they were going to be overheard. Ultimately, there were four interviews that were held with a small group of 2-3 children and these were conducted rather informally as I would give a topic or idea and ask the children to talk amongst themselves. Ultimately, the process allowed for there to be time to have children tell me whatever they wanted.

4.8.3 Formal interview

There were a set of formal interview questions with themes and specific questions that participants were given. These questions often were the guiding source to begin but sometimes moved into more informal discussions. The interview guide was thought out as carefully as possible to have open ended questions. As Ennew et al. (2009) point out, the need for open ended questions lead to more fruitful conversations. Sometimes though, there were instances where although the question could be answered more in depth, participants chose to answer simply. Although the question was formulated in an open-ended manner, the response was still one worded. Yet, participants either got more comfortable or simply were shier. This could also be due to the location of which the interview was taking place. There were three main themes that questions were associated with. These were:

- *Opinions about friends and friendship*
- *Engaging with friends and friendship*
- *Different forms of communication (social media)*

These themes helped to organize and give space for the children to speak more freely about each topic after or before the interview questions were given.

4.9 Transcriptions and Analysis

When beginning the process of interviewing, I always knew that transcription would be a large part of my study due to the time it would take to translate and transcribe. I used a voice recorder to record the interviews. The interviews themselves would help gather more information into the participants' thoughts and perspectives. It made sense to record interviews as I was not always sure how much time I had with each participant. The time needed for transcribing an interview depends largely on how the interview will be used and how in depth it needs to be (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015). When reviewing interviews, sometimes things I thought I had understood were clarified when listening to the interview again. In the moment, maybe I thought I had understood, but upon listening and then listening again to transcribe, some parts of the conversation become clearer. For example, in one conversation I thought the child had said something about a new social media platform, but I just hadn't heard them clearly. An example of a potential misinterpretation is when first talking with them, I first thought they

were talking about “furaapp” but then realized it was “whats app”. On another occasion, I thought the child had said a Spanish word but then when re-listening to the interview, it turned out to be in their native language, Acateco.

There were 18 interviews in total with 12 participants. At least five interviews were conducted in Spanish and were then translated into English. All participants spoke Spanish with three speaking Acateco, a Mayan language, as their primary language. As such, there was a need to be careful in how the questions were given both in English and Spanish since for some English was not the primary language and for others both English and Spanish were not the primary language. Around 5 participants chose to speak in Spanish and 7 chose to speak in English. The majority of interviews, 17, were in English though used some Spanish to help explain a word here or there. My ability to communicate in Spanish was very helpful as it functioned to provide a connection with participants and prompt some questions as well, mainly being asked frequently why I spoke Spanish. I explained that the reason I spoke Spanish was that my parents had come from Puerto Rico and Spanish was their first language. Many of the children were new to the United States and giving them information about my background sometimes helped them see that there were things we could relate to each other, having parents with Spanish as a first language for example.

Transcriptions were given much thought and careful work after interviews were given. Most interviews were recorded, as previously mentioned, with only 1 participant not wanting to be recorded. The participants were observed and interviewed using a set of interview questions but also more open conversations. Bell & Coleman (1999) examined the ways in which friendships are formed, the varying situations and locations which they exist, as well as how it can be construed as culturally dependent. This type of situation that Bell and Coleman research was one that was used when examining the interviews as transcripts. Saldaña (2013) examines the ways in which coding can be used when looking at data and in particular, theming the data, was used. It was important to have the research question available, how are children “doing” friendship, but then taking the different items that children discussed and seeing how it answers this question. As Bell & Coleman (1999) mention, their development of friendship as a topic of growth, there are generalizations found within the interviews that were used to guide analysis.

At times, the interpretation of the interviews can be varied but interpretation was critical in examining the interviews (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). Children were asked many of the same questions, but the development of the interviews and responses varied greatly. To analyze the data, I used *thematic analysis* to look at the children's responses and find which themes or topics were repeated (Aronson, 1995). I would listen to each interview and then transcribed them. As I listened, I would write down words and themes I thought popped up. When I went to transcribe, I listened to the interviews again, clarifying notes about the children I had written. Lastly, when the transcripts were finished, I read each one and used *thematic analysis* to find words and phrases that were used repeatedly or of interest. For example, at least three children had clarified questions by saying "here or there" and many had used the word trust, of which these will be looked at in the following chapter. With these words and phrases, the process is to note patterns and behaviors (Aronson, 1995). From the transcribed interviews and notes, I carefully underlined items of interest and tried to find connections between the children. Additionally, as I began to write, I would go back to the interviews and look for other themes that started to emerge from the writing process. There were moments during the interview or transcription where I could have possibly asked for further detail, but did not, as I did not want to pry due to constraints in what I thought might be upsetting, for example some of the children might have been illegally living in the United States. Ultimately, some things are clear with how children described their thoughts, but it should be noted that it can also be up to interpretation, as will be seen with the children. The analysis of these interviews and their ideas from the children will be discussed further in the following chapter.

4.10 Concluding reflections

There were many ways that the study could have been organized and yet, the factors that most affected the organization were time and access. Although given access to the study site and children who wanted to participate, there were many obstacles in actually acquiring the time for interviewing and observation. Many times, the school schedule would change and a child I had planned to interview would be unable to interview that day. Thus, the need for flexibility in interviewing was key. My location given for interviewing often changed and this also affected the environment where children had to get used to using different spaces to meet. Time was often taken away from interviewing due to busy schedules on the part of those adults who were gate keepers. I was not allowed to pull students out of class without first checking in with

two adults, and this occurred each time I went to visit. Ultimately, due to limited time in the schedule given, I worked with what I was given and listening to children's voices about their thoughts and opinions about friends and friendships while looking at how they communicate with one another. From these steps taken to ensure interviews and observations were completed.

The following chapter will present empirical data from the study, including themes that emerged from the interviews and conversations with children. The most characteristic things that emerged from my data are the same things from the beginning; children want a friend who they can trust and who they can just be around easily. These children face different circumstances that I will come back to in more detail in chapter 5.

Chapter 5 “Doing” Friendship

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents findings and discusses the children and their experiences outlined from the interviews and observations, specifically focusing on their ideas and concepts about “doing” friendship. As the social studies of children and childhood was a core concept, the idea of agency was present throughout the study. The aim of the study was to gain a perspective into Latino children’s lives through looking at their views on friends and friendship, as well as their interaction with social media and technology affecting these. There were interviews and observations done to collect information, as mentioned in chapter 4. The interviews themselves were analyzed from the perspective of looking at what children said and their “doing” of friendship as Latino children. Most importantly, the overall sense of understanding about the experiences of the children in their own voice, agency, and was most important when approaching each interview (James, 2009). I aimed to capture what children in the Latino community felt was important in “doing” friendship. From this aim, I looked at anthropological perspectives from Desai and Killick (2013) to ascertain the relationships through cultural anthropology contexts of friendship, being Latino. To help clarify, Desai and Killick (2013) explore friendship across different countries and examine relations, which they term *relatedness*, the friendship processes are not solely individual, but social.

With this in mind, the interviews and experiences of the children were seen as they were, their own personal perspectives. Children actively make sense of their friendships themselves, they are confident in their descriptions which I think demonstrate a fair amount of *agency* and ability to distinguish what they want from their relationships. This agency manifests itself as *relational agency* whereby children’s concept of their relationships can be interpreted from their perception of what is important to them (Cross et al., 2002). The children’s cultural upbringing and relatedness seem to affect who they first meet and often socialize with (other EAL students who are Latino in their class and speak Spanish).

5.2 Friends – a fluid concept

Friends and friendship can be defined differently depending on the context. Friendship can be seen as a process and from a cultural anthropological perspective, one that is fluid and can vary greatly from one context to another (Desai and Killick, 2013). Leo aged 12 says this about his friends, “*Like you make friends when you help someone like if someone gets bullied you tell the teacher*”. His response shows that a helping friend is important to him and themes like bullying might be going on, but a friend could help by telling a teacher. Often, I noticed children had similar responses, of which will be looked at in the following section. The meaning of friends and friendship depends on many factors as many of the children interviewed display in their responses. As from the discipline of cultural anthropology, friendship is not a concept that can be widely used from one context to another (Desai & Killick, 2013). The context of the location, children and activities in my study all differ, but all interviews had one common place, they were at school.

5.3 Different perspectives on friends and friendships

Sometimes, a Western perspective is used when describing friendship, and yet a more wholistic perspective should be applied, incorporating more cultures, societies and places (Bell & Coleman, 1999). The argument is that one must take note of this so as to see the situation and experience of the children from an open view, but also taking into consideration that there might be bias from a Western cultural perspective, sometimes influencing the understanding of what children say (Bell & Coleman, 1999). Punch’s (2009) concept of a majority childhood comes to mind looking at some children’s responses and experiences. George, aged 14 who recently arrived from Guatemala and speaks some Spanish but primarily Acateco, had limited things to say about his friends. He says he just said “*hello*” to become friends with his friends. He goes onto discuss the jokes he and his friends say but mentions that he often he sends texts or only talks a little bit. Having primarily grown up in Guatemala, it is possible that the questions I asked were seen as difficult as I had no context for his previous school or friends from his country of origin. I received limited response from George and the one-word answers about his “jokes” with friends, “Nintendo”, “texting” or “soccer” as answers to things he does with friends. His context for friends has changed as he translates his new environment from English and Spanish to his first language of Acateco. From a cultural anthropological perspective, the Latino experience can be viewed as a series of situations and experiences that affects friendship, the interplay between the Latino background and how children are adapting to a new ‘melting

pot culture' to make friends. In connection with Pugh (2009)'s comments on the "economy of dignity" and relational agency, George might still be finding his grounding in the country, having only been in the United States for a short time and finding inclusion in his relationships. While children's friendships are important, the cultural background of being Latino is also a crucial component to the study as it helps give context and some background to what the children discuss.

5.3.1 Quality of friends and friendship

The central theme to gather insight into the children's lives was friendship, of which they were asked to describe what they thought that meant. Some children were eager and quickly responded quickly while others had difficulty explaining what it meant. Connor aged 11 said he did not know how to describe friendship. I found this to be to the point because he did not know how to put it into words but could have other ways of describing friends. It could be that friendship indicates something that lasts in time and space and can often be a more abstract relationship. Yet when discussing friends, he said:

A friend is someone who is there to look after you and there when you need them and you can just hang out with them and tell them anything.

Connor's confusion for the first question but clarity in the second portion leads to the complex nature of friendship and how children might have interpreted my questions. The questions could have been phrased differently if I were to do the questions again. Taking this into consideration, the questions and responses themselves should be looked at for what children found to be most important. For example, Connor talks about hanging out a lot and his answers mirrors some other participants. Connor also discussed quite freely that his friends were important people in his life. The desire to be able to express themselves as noted through "tell them anything" and subsequent conversations with Connor note a lack of people in his life he feels he can be open with. In a later section, the people children feel they can talk to, will be looked at as it plays a role in their perceptions of friends and how adults interact in this world as well, of which Connor expresses some annoyance at who he feels he can speak openly to. Ultimately, these differences in what friendship meant to them was varied in either the simplicity or complexity of how the child viewed friendship. Hanging out is seen as a means to independence and finding common interests with friends (Ito et al. 2009), focusing on the relational aspects of their agency.

Alison, aged 13, had a lot to say about both friendship and friends. In her discussions, she mentions the important role her friends have in her life, particularly her best friend. Although Alison has been in the United States for more than a year, her best friend in Venezuela is still important. This will be discussed in a subsequent section about “here and there,” indicating that she distinguishes between the geographic location of her friends. The access to technology helps play in keeping that friendship alive. Here she describes her views on friends and friendship:

I: What do you think is friendship?

A: When you like each other. Like real friendship I think is when you're talking and you never like run out of things to talk about. You always have something to say.

I: If you could describe your perfect friend, describe them.

A: I will describe my best friend because she is my best friend ever, she's like perfect. She's funny, she's really funny. And...she's like not very, girly so she doesn't tell me to wear pink. She's like won't let me wear pink so like I...so she always...like when I'm feeling sad, she notices that and says you want to talk about it and then when she's sad, I'm there. And yeah. And we're writing a story so. Fan Fiction.

There are a lot of things present in the comments and response from Alison. She clearly has an idea of what a friend means to her and what is most important in friendship, agency (James, 2009) is visible and comes forth as a key concept when listening to her response. One can contrast the interview with Connor in that Alison goes into more feelings. Her body language and facial features exude an excitement in talking about her friend, her voice even gets higher and a bit louder when she was talking about her friend. She discusses the important of how the friend makes her feel and noticing whether or not the friend can help if she is feeling down. The excitement of Alison as she described her friendship was important because it gave purpose to her feelings and opinions, she clearly feels a connection to her friend. Her opinions can be understood in one way: “Two general themes consistently appear: Children make persistent attempts to gain control over their lives and to share that control with each other” (Corsaro & Eder 1990, p. 202). Corsaro (1990) sees peer culture as children seeking to begin building their identity in their own lives which can be seen in Alison's response. This control of gaining more control over their lives is important in the narrative that Alison and the other children describe.

Their friendships and feelings are shared with one another and give meaning to their shared experiences.

Lana, aged 12, had a lot of experience with having shifted friends, having moved twice before moving to the United States. These shifts are added experiences to her status of being Latino and what her journey has been coming to a new place.

I: To start off, in your opinion what makes a friend?

L: Uhhmm, a friend hmm, well in school its like really easy to make friends but I must say like if you know them for a long time you know like stuff about them and they know some stuff about you. And you're kinda like hey, hi, hi and so kinda like that's how I feel friends are. I don't know.

I: What's friendship?

L: Friendship? Its like when you need someone who is there for you and they will help you. And then like homework, you missed a day and they say hey I have the notes and they help you like something.

There appears to be *relational agency* in Lana's construction of what friendship means to her, she has linked her school experience and those who have been kind in giving notes and helping to forming friends (Cross et al, 2002). Lana having only been in the country for a little while, seems to have a connection with school. It is where she meets her friends and thus having them take notes for her would be deemed important to her friendship, the structure is set up for her to interact with other peers her own age by organization of her classes. The ESL classes often encouraged the children to help each other by way of small class size and other children having been in the same situation, being new to the school and learning a new language. The school is her location for making friends. Lana stating that a friend is, "someone who is there for you" is something that was similar among many of the children. Many of the children's responses can be boiled down to the essence of having someone to count on. The structure that was in place for them to meet was important and yet their agency was essential as they the children really wanted to be able to count on their friends. Thus, this relationship between friends is a reliance on their friend, possibly clinging to those who are new in their lives in a new country.

5.4 Being Social, Negotiating Friendship and Identity

There were variations in the description of friends and therefore the circle of friends themselves was sometimes blurred or not always clear. Looking at Latino children, family and culture are important to their lives. In cultural anthropology, kinship is often described within friendship, family members as friends is common (Bell & Coleman, 1999). Many times, children discussed the variation from talking to parents and adults. The ability to talk to someone is a key focus for many children. In one group interview with three boys, they had the following conversation:

I: Do you think your friends have as much influence on you?

C: They have more ...

H: Like social...

C: Friends have more social, you have more ...

H: Communication, you can say more things to them. Because you cannot say everything to your dad like you cannot say to them uhh umm they gave me a write up because I say a bad word in class or how am I doing today, great. I didn't do my homework because I didn't want to.

A write up is when a child is given a paper explaining that they misbehaved in some way. The ability to tell your friends something that you want to be a secret for your parent is a good thing, helping you avoid involving parents in the trouble you have at school. Connor has some difficulty expressing his thoughts about how friends affect him differently, but Henry goes onto say that it comes down to “communication” as he mentions. He feels that he can easily communicate with his friends while if he tried to tell his parents, grandparents or teachers the same thing, he thought he would get in trouble. The fear of getting in trouble or being told to do something by adults was something the boys in the group interview discussed at length. Corsaro (1990) mentions the deviation from adult authority as children get older and the focus on the peer group. This focus on the peer culture can account for some variations in how children talk about friends versus adult figures, their peers are held at a higher regard. When observing the boys in a group interview, versus the girls, it was a bit of a contrast. The girls seemed to talk about their mothers more. They discussed talking to their mothers yet do not necessarily tell them everything.

In a group interview with some of the girls, negotiating friendship was about having people around themselves. They had the following to say:

I: How is friendship important to you or why?

Alison: Ah ok, because this, you know Edgar Allen Poe?

I: Yeah

A: From him, "no man is an island so we all need people around us"

I: ahh ok, so you guys wouldn't be by yourselves?

Lana, Alison, Maggie: No!

M: Cause if you were by yourself you would have nothing to do.

A: You wouldn't have anyone to talk to. You'd be alone.

L: I feel like I'm the type of person that just goes to some random place and gets 5 friends and then yeah.

The interaction among the three girls was one where they all seemed to agree on this point, friendship was about finding others to share experiences with. The children were adamant in the discussion that a lot of their day was spent with friends and the idea of being alone was scary. Through this description, the girls were all in agreement, nodding their heads, their friends were important and gave them "something to do." It appeared that relations and being social come first, friendship develops through being together.

One set of children were brother and sister and as I got to know them, their friendship was close. One might describe them as best friends. When broaching the subject about whether they considered each other as friends, they were shocked and said that it was almost a given, they get along and have similar interests, therefore of course they were friends. This friendship between family members would be characterized as kinship within cultural anthropology, family members who are in a close relationship, again blurring the line between family and friend. These two were already friends yet did not name each other as a close friend, they said it was a given. They went on to say that their mom gets annoyed from the many inside jokes they have and the fact that they leave their little brother out of conversations. Additionally, they were only a year apart in age which they thought was good since they could have some of the same friends and share what their experiences were in middle school, with the other person understanding what they were talking about.

At first, I would have thought that many of the children would have stated something about being Latino as an identity marker. I had introduced the topic of the study as being about Latinos and about friendship, yet this identifying characteristic, Latino, was not something that the children themselves brought up. There were some subtle remarks about the children they spoke to or first became friends with, other children who spoke Spanish. Lana was the only child who mentioned that she had Spanish in common with her friends and that they spoke Spanish together. This lends itself to the belief that the children hold their culture and identity to an extent quite close and important. Some children described their friends as smart or similar to their clothing style. Some said they like to have the same interests but also that their friends were similar. This points to an identity in their friendships. John, aged 14 talked about how important it was that his friends also took care of themselves. This meant being well dressed, fixing their hair and smelling good as he described. When observing John, I noted that he also carried these characteristics as he took care in his appearance. During the interview, he pointed to himself a few times to indicate how he liked to take care of himself. He laughed a bit when he was describing himself and his friends. John was careful to mention that his friends were people who he could also just be himself with. The comfort of finding a friend to be around that John felt he had enough similar interests but also was someone of interest, something that came up often. Tingstad (2003) describes the work of Giddens and Goffman who look at identity formation as a lens from which John's descriptions could be analyzed:

“The concept of identity can be analysed on different levels of abstraction. By *identity formation* is meant both the process of the children growing into a society and the lifelong identity processes in which an individual acts reflexively in relation to the self and the surroundings. The notion of *formation* refers both to something that is formed and to the act of having or taking form” (p. 159).

This formation is an interesting perspective from which to see John's identity and how he reacts to himself in relation to others. The notion is that John's surroundings could be seen as adding to his identity, making friends at school and sharing interests.

When talking with Connor, he described the following.

I: Tell me something about your everyday life you want me to know about, what would you want to tell me?

C: I like to dress up a lot. Like [pulls on shirt to show]

I: Take care of appearance sort of thing? Do your friends like to do that too?

C: No they just wear whatever, some of them

This description about wanting to take care of oneself is again not something I expected to hear. As noted above, Goffman (1990)'s interpretation would be a *presentation of self* that Connor is manifesting in his response. Though Giddens (1991)'s would see this as *self-identity* that Connor views as important to his perception of himself and his identity. He then goes on to describe what other interests he has:

[announcements over the PA system in the background]

I: Um what do you have in common with your friends?

C: Hmm what do we have in common....we are all like a little shy at first but once you get to know someone, once you get to know them like your really used to talking to them and ...and... I think that's it.

I: So you mentioned your best friend is a girl?

C: [nods] mmhmm

I: Do you have more friends that are girls or friends that are boys? Or pretty equal?

C: They're equal

I: What do you do when you're with your friends?

C: Just like um just like joke um around and play and talk and make jokes and stuff like that

I: Do you have particular type of jokes that you like?

C:No

I: Any old joke?

C: Wel....I what do you call a gummy bear that has...ahh I just told you the answer What do you call a bear with no um that cannot talk?

I: What?

C: A gummy bear. I told you the answer.

Connor has certain things he considers as details in common with his friends. These things like jokes and that they are shy are commonalities that he holds. Children look to commonalities between themselves as well as what things they can share with their friends, such as jokes as

Connor states. The easy nature of “joke and play and talk” are at the center. For Connor, material things are not important but rather the time spent with friends.

One girl, Maggie, aged 12, noted a complexity to her friendship with her best friend. Her friend had gotten in some trouble recently and she went on to tell me the following:

Um well my perfect friend she's like mean and like sometimes she wants to fight everyone that she hears talking about everybody. Me and her are best friends but we got into a fight. And then we ended up getting suspended for five days. And that was like other people's fault because we like listened to other rumors that people say. And yeah she's like really mean, she looks mean, but she's really nice.

Maggie describes her friend as mean and later says that the reason she was suspended was because of a fight she got into with her best friend. This negative connotation is one that Barnes (2003) discusses as well, citing that friendships can be put into negative contexts as much as positive. It was not clear who started the fight but that although this might be construed as a negative context between the two girls, they are still friends. Though Maggie considers her friend to be a really good friend, she also complains about how she is someone who copies her and who gets really mad. The friendship is one where they get angry with one another but continued to be friends after their fight. Goffman's theories of how the behavior of people in relation to another comes about as a means from which to understand Maggie and her friends relationship: "...individual roles are influenced by others' expectations and actions. In this respect, social identity is manifested as normative expectations and demands" (Tingstad, 2003, p. 159). It would appear that her friendship is influenced by her friend and they are still friend even after the fight they had.

5.5 Communication with friends: Here versus There

As I got to talk with the children, there was inevitably a conversation about their friends and who they were. Often, children would ask me about whether I meant friends “here” or “there.” This coincided with my questioning about friends but leads to insight into the distinction children made about the location of their friendship. They are using their *relational agency* and distinguish between location and the different ways, in which they maintain established

friendships from a distance and establishing/maintaining friends that are close, geographically (Cross et al., 2002). To them, friends and friendship was not necessarily a broad term to be used in different circumstances or places, it was maybe only one or another. Culturally, this can also be distinguished within the context of the location, which is why this topic marks itself well with the context of school. The here and now was happening as children had their interviews. Yet, some children focused on what had happened before, in the “there”, meaning where they had lived previously.

The location of the children as they made friends is important to the overall experience of the children. School provides a place to interact and be with other children of the same age group. For example, Daria aged 12, first asks for clarification in my question about learning about her friends. She asks, “here?” and I tell her friends from either in Mexico or here is fine to discuss. She goes onto mention that she does not have friends in Mexico, where she had recently moved from, that she only had friends in the United States and had met them at school. I try to ask why but she does not have an answer and continues discussing her friends that she has made at school. The “new life” in a new country is all embracing in her everyday life, leaving for previous life behind.

Additionally, “While the school experience also provides an important context wherein proximity and shared activities can aid the formation of friendship, such friendships have little chance of flourishing outside of the school setting” (Froerer, 2013, p. 149, as cited in Desai & Killick, 2013). This can be seen within the context of the children’s experiences such as they did not often have experiences with their friends outside of school. Many of the favorite experiences were from the school setting and revolved around school. As such, the concept of friendship for these children is rooted in the setting from which they spend the most time, the here. Additionally, these children had only been in the United States for a short period of time by which the “here versus there” question and comments are better understood with the assumption that the children are clinging to their friends from the past as well as making new connections in their new school.

Alison was one of the children in the study whom I was able to get to know more because our schedules allowed for follow up interviews and more flexibility to have informal conversations. Additionally, Alison had somewhat different responses to activities, such as Fan Fiction, a form of writing where she would write her own version about what happens to Percy Jackson, her

favorite book and character. She and her friend Veronica would write the stories together and she finds this is a different thing to do than other girls at her age, making finding things in common a large factor in her search for friends. When talking with Alison, she never mentions her sadness at having to leave her friend. Yet, her description of her friend, as well as her body language, somewhat not as energetic when talking about having left her friend as well as a more serious look, indicate her missing her friend. Alison also has a lot to say, in regard to her likes and dislikes, giving a confidence of now feeling settled. This might have been different if I had interviewed her when she had first arrived in the United States. Giddens (1991) discusses self-identity and the perception of themselves, based on their biography (as cited in Tingstad, 2013). Alison appears to take a strong self-identity in her confidence discussing her friends and interests.

Children sometimes had differing views of how they saw their communication with friends. Alison was clear on her explanation of how she talks to a friend everyday via Instagram and WhatsApp. This particular friend was from Venezuela and is described as her best friend. When she moved to the United States, she ended up having to leave her friends behind but was able to continue communicating with her best friend via social media and the application WhatsApp. A mixture of here and there as she continues to communicate with her.

A: Ok I just have a phone, I don't have a laptop, so like WhatsApp, Instagram, Viber, watsapp, Snapchat,.

I: You said watsapp?

A: Yes, whatsapp.

A: Hmm I don't think I talk to them in any other way...hmm video call like Skype sometimes and that's it

I: Can you describe how you talk to your friends on a typical day?

A: I usually text them, like with Veronica, I make a lot of calls, and video calls, because like with my other friends we don't talk as much sometime.

I: Um so from what I'm hearing, I'm hearing that from social media, or rather technology has really helped your communication. Is any other social media been a part of your friendship. You mentioned Instagram.

A: Well we just send each other things. We don't really post pictures of ourselves, well she does but I don't. I don't like to and my dad and mom, they don't let me. And I don't want to do that?

I: Ok but you follow each other on Instagram?

A: Umhm that's like we send each other pictures, like funny pictures and things like Percy Jackson. And say that like this is you, literally, this is you from someone from the series.

I: Do you have an example? Would you mind letting me see? Remember this is all private?

A: This one is in Spanish, wait no this one is in English, I like this character Leo, so I sent her this, and he's like son of Ofestes so he controls fire.

I: Oh because this is from Percy Jackson. [Laughing looking at the picture] I like that

A: Those kind of things. [pointing out another picture]

This friendship between Alison and Veronica was very important to many of the activities Alison talked about. When looking at Desai and Killick (2013), the formation of a formal friendship needs to have a shared activity in order to fully form a friendship. The shared interest in fan fiction, leads Alison to identify Veronica as a close friend whom she shares close details of her everyday life. The use of WhatsApp helps to maintain the friendship and demonstrates a somewhat dependent reliance of the use of technology like the application WhatsApp. Yet, when asked about other forms of communication beyond those formerly mentioned, she did not use them. The reason behind her choice of communication was interesting as such:

I: Do you have Facebook or anything?

A: No I don't. I don't have Facebook, twitter or anything because my mom don't want me to.

The influence of her mother is important to note because although she has a variety of other methods for communicating with her friend Veronica, she is not using two forms because her mother does not want her to. The availability of communication is there, yet there is a need to examine parent's control or say in the matter as well. The easy access to their phones and having wifi and school shows that there is access there that possibly was not available before and a means to connect outside of school as well. The access to various other social media sites can also indicate a certain degree of *relational agency* whereby Alison solely communicated with her friend via WhatsApp but did not appear to have new friends at her new school with whom she communicated with. She was taking her experience and creating her construct of her friendship network.

Later, in a group interview with Alison and Henry, they said they did not use the computer very much. Yet, right after we spoke, they went to the computer portion of their afterschool club. Additionally, Henry had his phone with him constantly, indicating that it was used. As both Henry and Alison were interviewed as well as them being brother and sister, their variations in both describing how they use social media and their attitude toward various sites were interesting as it showed another side of school interaction, the means of using a computer to connect with others. In all these examples, children have their own agency of what it means to be a friend or what friendships is to them and their ability to use different forms of talking to their friends.

5.5.1 Language – a double edged sword

When beginning an interview, I reviewed the study and my choice for Latino participants and children. Upon reflection, and in retrospect, asking what Latino means to them should have been a consideration and should possibly have been a theme or topic of discussion. Ultimately, country and language seemed to be understood as Latino identifiers. Though before beginning, it was not clear what participants I would end up working with and the wide variety of children being recently arrived in the United States. The shift to a Latino status became important as I saw the bigger picture of what I saw it was expected to be a Latino child, trying to make friends in a new school. Many of the children did not talk about their friends from before, but instead chose to focus on the now, this will be seen in the “here and there” discussions.

As discussed before, language was a topic that came up again and again with Latino children. To begin, one of their main classes, ESL, connected them with other students through their joint efforts in learning English and communicating, when possible, with other students in their native language, Spanish or in some instances Acateco. This native language is spoken in Guatemala and for many of the children, it was a first language, followed by Spanish and then were in the process of learning English. This proved difficult at times as I did not speak Acateco and sometimes did not know how to properly communicate a question in either Spanish or English as for some children it was their second or third language. The ability to communicate is essential to making friends and meeting people. The transition from being a beginning learner of English to fluent can take time and the process can affect the journey children have at school.

When talking with the children, Spanish came as a natural part of the conversation as they chose to do the interview or talk with me in Spanish. Five out of the total 17 interviews were conducted in Spanish. The rest of the interviews were conducted in English but had some Spanish words interwoven into the conversations. The language was also an obstacle in interviewing. In one situation, the children may have interpreted my question differently as it translates one way in Spanish and another in English. When asking, how would you describe your friend, in Spanish this is often seen as describing them physically due to the nature of the word “describe”, as it can be seen as having two meanings. At least three boys mentioned physical size when talking about their friends. They stated that they wanted their friends to be shorter than they were. When asked why, they noted that it was to make themselves feel taller. John smiled before describing the physical stature of his ideal friend and Connor giggled a bit after. This can be interpreted in one of two ways, either they value stature in their friendships or the question and how it was posed was interpreted differently. In contrast, the one girl, Nina, aged 12, used adjectives about personality, saying her best friend is “just nice” and “not bad”. Identifying friends as concrete examples from which children could speak to was important and yet seemed to be mixed when looking at the varying interviews, indicating that language played a role in the interview process as well.

In a group interview with Lana, Maggie and Alison, there was discussion about using Spanish and how it affected them:

I: Do you have any, do you think there's anything that makes it hard to make friends

L,M,A: hmmm No

A: I used like a lot of weird words to express myself and sometimes when I don't know the words like I'm not going to talk at all

I: ohhh that's interesting

[talk about learning a language and not being able to speak a language is hard...]

L: I have a friend and she gets embarrassed when she speaks Spanish, oh not Spanish in English. She says its kinda hard to say this in English.

A: Its not the same to say in English

L: For me, Speaking in English is pretty cool, its like you have your own language. I remember in Ecuador where I used to live and everybody spoke Spanish and started learning English. So I was the only one that remembered everything. They encouraged

me to learn more.

I: Do you all feel comfortable speaking English now?

L, M and A: ummhmm

M: I don't like, we have in our 3rd period, in Ms. Shane's, she usually gets mad because we talk in Guatemalan language

I: What language?

M: Yeah its Acateco. And then some of us be speaking Spanish but we usually speak both

The conversation led to insight into the children's views about language and how it is used at school. Language can help with communication in many ways. Lana was very proud of how far she had come in learning English and yet she and the other girls recognized that not everyone felt the same way and that it was a bit of a hurdle to coming to the United States, having people understand you.

After this portion of the interview, Lana gave some further insight into her personal reasons for why she does not speak Spanish at school anymore. Lana said the following:

L: I don't speak Spanish because of this accident that happened to me. Since then I don't speak Spanish.

I: At all?

M: Why?

A: Tell me

L: Well it was like a really stupid reason. But since then, the teacher got so mad at me, I was new and it was my second year in USA so um I remember I came here in 2013 so I was in 5th grade, I remember this teacher, we had a sub and she was really mean. And I remember I couldn't really talk a lot of English so I told my friend like because we were doing work, I was cutting and we were gluing and I asked to borrow a glue stick so they gave me a glue stick and the teacher thought we were saying bad things about others in Spanish and the teacher got mad and said we can't speak Spanish. She said if I catch you speaking Spanish again you'll get in trouble. My friend started crying and then I started crying.

I: Do you still speak in Spanish at home?

L: The only time I speak Spanish is at home and sometimes with my close friends. And sometimes Mary and Alison.

This experience marked Lana. She told me that she no longer spoke Spanish at school, only at home. While she was able to talk to her friend in Spanish and that did not change, she went onto say it affected how she interacted with her teachers and some other children. Although this incident only occurred once, it marked Lana in her connection with being Latino. She felt that there was a difference in friends, the ones she connected with in their experience of speaking Spanish but she branches out into other groups of friends, not only Latino as she tells me. I could only speculate why this might be, possibly from her past experience and not wanting to limit herself to speaking Spanish but it seems to have changed her perspective.

John described having made friends when first arriving at the school and to the country but having them translate for him, those from his ESL class. Later, he made friends by translating for them when they were recently arrived. When discussing this with John, he was very proud of having made friends through translation, especially after he first arrived from Honduras and did not have too much English. Being able to translate for others was a big step for him and made his friendships special as he described, a view at his making his own friends through his own means and agency.

Some children discussed the problems they had in finding friends. One child, Wayne John aged 14, stated his difficulties in making friends. Spanish was not his first language, rather Acateco was and therefore he had trouble talking with other children who did not speak Spanish. He spoke some Spanish but said that he really disliked the children who used bad words in Spanish and they sometimes said bad things to him.

Good, there, here, a lot. Not bad. But they are saying, I don't understand what they say, what things they say, and I don't like it.

While listening to Wayne John, I interpret his body language as upset. He is smiling when I first meet him but then frowns as he starts to talk about the “bothering”.

He went onto describe how Spanish itself was a difficulty in meeting people at school and making friends.

I speak a little Spanish and because I don't speak Spanish they say, they say bad words and I don't like bad words. I am not going to say something and they don't listen to what I am saying. I am bothered when they see it bothers me and it is just pure bothering.

This was somewhat obscure as I asked what types of things they said but he just continued to say he stays away from those children. When asked about friends he might have made he said he did not really have any friends. This was difficult to hear considering one would like to know that the children have acclimated themselves to the school. He has only been there for three months. Although he said he did not have friends, when leaving another child went up to him and asked if he was taking the bus. He smiled widely and followed her out the door.

Sometimes children gave a lot of details about their friends, but it depended on different factors. One setting that provided some rich dialogue was with children in a group. Additionally, the following girls interviewed, gave more details about their friends and general interests when in a group setting.

M: Well I have a lot of memories, remember with that one girl I told you about I been in a fight? Yeah, I have a lot with her. Me and her do everything together. And if, I do something, she gotta do everything I do. She won't do something outside of what I do. Like she be like, like sometimes she gets what I get at lunch and she'll eat it

I: So do you still consider her a really good friend?

M: Yeah, me and her are still good friend even though we got into a fight

I: OK. What do you guys think about that?

A: I want a friend with a personality

L: I normally don't fight I just say sorry if I do something wrong or if they did something bad I will wait until they say sorry or something like that. Because I had a friend, "friend" and we were at lunch.

I: "friend"

L: Yeah "friend" because he came up and said, do we still have beef? And I'm like I don't know. Because I went to this other table and he ate lunch and I opened it and it had some gum so I shared it with everyone who was at the table and then I'm not gonna talk to you for a week, no a month and he said Ok. He never said sorry. I just let it pass.

A: I can't stand people who just say OK to everything, they are OK with everything. I

don't know I just find it weird. In Margarita where I used to live everyone loved me because I was the only one who would stand up to the math teacher, because she was mean. So she would start saying something that was wrong and I would say, "nope" that's not Ok. And then we would start arguing. [continues with story about teacher and her fight with the teacher]

L: I feel like I'm a person that's just Ok. Just chill. I'm just like OK.

M: Yeah she's just like a really nice person, I don't think she likes to fight anybody.

L: No like when she got ISS, I was like What? What did she do? [referencing A]

A: No people think that when they see me I'm sweet and quiet

I: Whats ISS?

A: In school suspension

L: Yeah

I: Why did you get an in school suspension if you don't mind my asking?

A: Because this kid he was really annoying me, he took my roly bag. So I took his notebook. I wish I wouldn't have done that. I gave him his notebook back.

The conversation the girls have is one where they are talking about all the things that comes to mind, such that they have made sense of their own friendships. The accounts about themselves and their friends shows a clear description of what they want from their friends and friendships, similar to what has been seen in other interviews.

In the act of negotiating friendship, the ability to have the language to understand one another was key but also the use of social media helped bridge that gap as children could use pictures to talk with one another. George discussed how he talked with friends through various technologies or social media:

Interviewer: Do you have a phone?

George: Yes

I: Do you send your friends texts?

G: Yes

I: Do you send them a lot of texts?

G: Not a lot

I: Do you have Instagram?

G: Yes, Snapchat, Facebook...

I: What do you prefer, Snapchat or Instagram?

G: All. Snapchat, facebook, instagram

I: How do you use Instagram?

G: Huh?

I: What do you put on Instagram?

G: Pictures

I: What do you put on instagram?

G: Of photos

I: Of soccer? what photos?

G: Of soccer, of Barcelona.

I: What do you put on Snapchat?

G: Being with my friend

I: Do you use the features on snapchat?

G: Yes I use the things. [shows the feature for a selfie and using the extra picture on it]

[somewhat unclear what is pictured] Shows me how to use icons for adding to picture.

The simplicity of his explanations can only be explained in one of two ways. Either he did not understand what I was talking about or he does not give much thought as to how he uses the different application of snapchat and Instagram. As I went onto look at Snapchat and we examined the app together, I could see that George was excited that he used Instagram, Facebook and Snapchat, he grinned and leaned over to look at the app, seemingly interested. Though, he did not express himself much as to how it was used, or more specifically all the ways he might use the app. This could be due to the language barrier, George spoke Acateco as a first language, therefore Spanish, although clearer than speaking English for him, was still a struggle to find certain words. Again, the means of using pictures in Snapchat or in Instagram could potentially unlock communication with new friends. This concept of using pictures to make friends as one learns the language, could have been something I asked in a follow up had I had time.

Another child, Leo aged 13, simply used social media:

Interviewer: So you mentioned texting, do you use any other kinds of communication with your friends?

Leo: Like I use messenger, Instagram, Facebook and Snapchat

I: Wow that's a lot! Uhh how do you talk to them through those forms of communication?

L: Like kinda.

I: Do you send them pictures? Do you write words mostly?

L: No

I: If you were to send a friend a picture through Instagram how would you do that?

L: Like I just be texting like words

I: Do you think that those types of communication have helped your friendships?

L: Yeah

I: How?

L: Like if you say something kind they'll say like back and....

Although Leo was not one for saying much, the use of these forms of communication, social media, indicate that it is a part of his life. It would have been good to have had more time to re-interview Leo and find out how he is still using the social media website. The casual nature of stating “Like I just be texting like words” indicated a way of communication that suits him very well if he prefers not to use many words. In my observation notes, I noted the facial expression of Leo and I realized it was almost one of annoyance at being asked about how he communicates. The feeling was that he was using Instagram as just a “normal” way to talk to friends. The other social media platforms, such as Facebook and Snapchat were also just there. He did not elaborate much, also telling of the experience to him, it does not excite him but rather just exists as a way to talk.

5.6 Where friends are made

Through the data so far, I have realized that friendship seems to have the most potential to grow face to face at school since the children rarely meet after school, which again means that school is a space for establishing friendship and maintaining it, became a crucial issue for me to pursue. “Children are brought into preschool, kindergartens, and elementary schools for academic learning but also to learn how to develop friendships with peers” (Ito et al., 2009, p. 77). As we examine Latino children, the rhetoric is on the extra challenges poised to the children who come to the United States from another country. Cultural perspectives and attitudes come into play when going to a new school as children are changing their surroundings. Most of the

participants were from another country originally and therefore had to make new friends but also in a new language. With this in mind, the status of being Latino is prominent as is the struggle to obtain language and understanding of the school system.

5.6.1 Space for friends

Children often focused on friends at school as stated before. The space for friends was centralized to the school. Some said grades and parents affected their ability to hangout with friends outside of school. Hanging out is a phrase and concept that many children felt were important to their friendships and was often done at school. It was an interesting trend in interviews that children only mentioned time with friends in school but that unless it was an organized sport, they did not really have time or were allowed to be with friends outside of school. The school setting was at the center of the conversation for many reasons. The school itself and the set up allows for this. Students can be with their friends in the morning when in the gym and then also during passing period. Lunch is not necessarily a time for friends because they might not have the same lunch time schedule and therefore texting with friends was also important, so they could communicate throughout the day.

Lana said she did not get to see their friends too often:

Umm friendship...or..well uh I think we should have some time, free time so we can all talk and get together because its just like classroom...walk, sit...same thing everyday so I think more free time with friends and like friendships

She was very adamant about how there was not enough time for friends and had high hopes for what I was doing, that is could somehow influence the school to change and give children more time with their friends. Lana became more smiley when talking about friends and her activities with them. It was clear that the friendship connections Lana was making were important to her and added a special component to her day. Desai and Killick (2013) have noted that friendship itself can provide "...insights into different forms of sociality" (p. 129). From what Lana is stating, this appears to be of significant importance to her as the more time she spends with friends, the more she enjoyed school, as she can be observed smiling and laughing with friends as soon as we finished our interview.

From the structure of school, there are forces in society that can influence children. When discussing what types of things Henry discussed with his friends, he mentions the following:

Um talk to them, I tell him what happened. I tell him things that are funny to me. Most things are funny to me too. Um I tell them what I think about the school, about my grades, about the teachers, and sometimes I tell them what I think about them.

Henry shows agency in his confidence in responding. By describing the things, he discusses with friends, he discusses his friendship making, especially about telling his friends what he thinks of them. Additionally, friendship comes out in the dialogue between himself and his friend, talking about what they find funny. While one thinks about this interaction, the background that Henry has only been in the country for a short about of time makes his space for friends specific to school.

5.7 Key features of friendship

James (1996) stated the following when considering the dynamic relationships that exist with children, “Do they engage in a variety of types of friendships with different children, demanding mutual trust from some while enjoying a more simple companionship from others?” (p. 319). This question was also present while interviewing children and finding the quality from which they were “doing” friendship.

5.7.1 The Importance of Trust

Molloy et al. (2010) noted that trust was among the qualities that friends adhere to when forming friendships. The children were coming from another country and culture, starting at a new school. Many participants felt that they needed trust in order to consider someone a friend. When asked what makes a friend, Alison, aged 13 said,

They have to be able to keep a secret. Like if you tell them something they can't tell someone else. They cannot be snitches. Or like they have to be with you in your worst times. And sometimes they have to be quiet when you want them to be quiet. Don't just

keep talking and talking and talking. I'm that kind of friend that just keeps talking and talking so I don't like those kinds of friends, people, because I am that type of people.

Corsaro and Eder (1990) discuss power and control in relationships that children have, of which Alison's description of her ideal friend and what she wants from the relationship can be seen as her taking control of what she deems as an ideal friend. As he describes, children seek to, "...gain control over the attitudes and behaviors of peers" (Corsaro & Eder, 1990, p. 202). The use of "quiet" and "keep a secret" makes it clear what she is looking for in her friends. Her description of a friend is that they are at the core, trustworthy. The use of "snitches" is important because it denotes the concept itself as crucial to be a friend and reiterates the same thread that was mentioned before when asking children to describe a friend or friendship. The term "snitches" is also a particular word that can be interpreted differently depending on the context. The conversation about how they keep a secret is a description that leads to her understanding of the word. As other children also discussed, the trust needed in these friendships is one that can be traced to the children's change in environment, having moved and building new relationships.

Seeing as friendship was at the heart of the study, and the focus on friendship led to many other aspects about the children's lives. Children were asked their opinions about friendships and what it meant to them. Some were similar, but in some ways, each have a unique perspective to themselves and what they want from a friend. One participant, Henry, aged 11 said the following when asked what friendship was:

Hmm has a really good relationship with friends. Like you could tell all about your life and they would not tell anyone, they keep a secret that you want to keep in secret, they will respect you. They will, you know like do nothing to you.

As Henry discussed his concept of friendship it was something that he found needed to be a mutual respect relationship. This concept was an indicator how friends should behave and also how he would behave. Respect and secret were stand out concepts because in later conversations, Henry discussed the importance of these things, they made friends real and trustworthy. When thinking about these ideas, culture comes to mind and Henry's background of having moved and having to make new friends in new places. Henry had grown up in Venezuela and had only moved to the United States recently, though had lived in the United

States for a short time as a child. When observing Henry with friends or with his sister, he was always smiling or laughing, with an ease about him. The part about a friend being able to keep a secret was interesting because he had a situation where a friend in Venezuela had not kept a secret about some vandalism he had done at the school. This later turned into his seeking to make solid friends at a new school and in a new country, thus seeking respect. The experiences of his past and his previous country of origin affect his behaviors and actions in his new environment. In a later interview, as will be analyzed a bit later, Henry's search for friends also looks at power, where he wants to be the leader seeking respect.

John, aged 14, also reiterated similar sentiments as Henry, in his interview when discussing friends. He talked about a friend as not being a "snitch" and a friend is someone who is trustworthy. When John mentioned snitch, he was quick to emphasize that the person needed to be like him and know when to say things. I thought this was interesting because he was the second child to mention "snitches" and he was very matter of fact about his description of a friend. These concepts of friendship appeared to be both personal in anecdotes but also somewhat textbook. It is difficult to know how much of this was due to influences of what friendship should be, and how much was what the children actually seek in real situations, when searching for a friend. Most interestingly about both interviews, both children had lived in countries that have had turmoil, Henry having lived in Venezuela and John having lived in Honduras. It could very well be that their focus on trustworthy friends stems from their need to feel safe as they previously might not have. Although, this was not a point of conversation as many of the children chose not to discuss life in their country of origin, but it was also not a focus of the study. Upon reflection, this would have been another component that could have been part of the study or used in follow up interviews had there been enough time.

Maggie, aged 12, also had some different experiences and reflections about friendship. Maggie has lived in the United States primarily most of her life with a few years in Mexico.

I: I want to know your opinions about friends and friendship? So in your opinion, um, what makes a friend?

M: By like trusting them, and not talking about them behind their backs. Um because like there you want to make friends and you talk about other people and they hear that you be talking about other people and they might not want to be your friends.

I: Ok

M: And then friendship is kinda hard because like you get into drama with your friends and stuff. And then like you say guys are not friends anymore but then like a week after that you become friends again.

Maggie heavily discusses the importance of trust through the phrase “not talking about them behind their backs.” In doing so, she is putting emphasis on her own life and experiences with friends as she has had some difficult situations, as will be discussed further in the following section. The ability to be angry with your friend, possibly not being “friends anymore” but then making up was a note of interest because of its importance in allowing friends to be forgiven. Maggie later discusses a situation in which she had conflict with a friend and they were angry with each other, with this friend being seen as her best friend, this will be discussed further on. When thinking about friendship as a topic, Maggie has clear things in mind. Now these views, come into play when considering that she has possibly had a difficult time moving or changing schools, having moved recently. Her “trust” emphasis can be seen to have a lot to do with her ability to not make a fast friend, rather to have the confidence in someone. The comparison between a friend and friendship are somewhat marked by the distinction between having conflict (friendship) and a friend generally being someone to trust. Again, the topic of trust is seen again and key to the children’s responses as it is seen as a marker for a friend, it must be there for them to be considered a friend. Since Maggie did not identify her experience living in Mexico, her movement and need for trust cannot be confined to a Latino status.

5.7.2 Shared Interests

As children were interviewed, we started off by getting to know one another, as previously mentioned in chapter 4. Children often appeared shy but once they discussed their various interests, this created footing from which to talk. James (2007) mentions the desire to discover the differences children have that might establish friendships. For this example, I looked to take the commonalities and see if this was a source of bringing together children as James had studied children’s ability to be social actors, could they identify their own desires for finding interests in friends? For many boy children, they said football was a favorite activity. Girls were often vaguer. Music and play of some sort were mentioned. Some children who were younger also stated playing quite often, ranging from tag, running around, jump rope and simply “playing around”. When further inquiry was obtained, children went into describe this play from their country of origin but that in the United States, this play was not always possible. The

age of the children also varied the answers. Some children in the 6th grade, around 11/12 years of age gravitated toward this play while older children focused on sports or simply “talking” as a main activity.

John was sheepish when describing his use of social media like Facebook, which he said he used at least 7 hours a day, often while at school. The conversation about what he did showed knowledge in the social media site of Facebook and Snapchat. He stated that it was very common to look up football players and share new shoes he was interested in with his friends, sending photos of the team or something he was interested in over Instagram. When asking him about posting pictures on Instagram, he clarified and showed me that he only actually sent photos via the messenger part of Instagram and not actually in posting material. The topic of using Facebook and Snapchat changed John’s mood and was interesting to see how he livened up to the discussion. While John spoke about his experiences with the different platforms, he demonstrated the way in which children view the forms of communication, as something to look forward to and be excited about.

5.7.3 Activities with friends

Corsaro & Eder (1990) note that play is important to socialization and creating peer cultures. This play can come in many forms and sometimes routines begin at a young age. When looking at the school, the belief is that once children leave elementary school and enter middle school, they are focusing on classes and school work. “Play is considered a particularly childlike form of activity, and this view is a historical and cultural phenomenon” (Mouritsen 2002, p. 22). The activity of play itself is one that can take different forms as different children described the various activities they like to do with their friends. This association is one that came up as a theme in some interviews with the children. Many of the younger children, aged 11, mentioned play as a key activity they do with friends. Chris, aged 11, briefly talked about play. He does not give specific examples of play at first but then says the following when asked about types of play: *Play soccer, play...hmm all types of games. Make someone laugh.* His answer is short but illustrates what he does with friends. Chris came from Guatemala not recently and his experiences with play could be both from the United States and Guatemala though he did not specify.

Play in itself was not something that all the children expressed as an activity. Though Mouritsen (2002) states that, “The informal forms of play culture (and everyday life) are the basis for what children acquire in the educational system...” (p. 20). The children who described forms of play were the children who had limited English and Spanish, their native language was Acateco. This could be a factor for why they limited their answer to “play” as it could be they were unable to fully express themselves. Though their description of activities varied, play was one activity and could be described as games and sports. These activities are something that children experience while in school, as Mouritsen (2002) goes onto discuss, the play culture is something that children can experience differently depending on their geographical setting. Alternatively, the children’s Latino status plays a role in the geographical understanding of their descriptions, due to their previous country of origin. The cultural component, or social aspect of being Latino and how children come to understand their local play in a new environment can differ.

Daria, aged 11 also related to play. Her description of play went as follows:

Interviewer: What do you have in common with your friend?

Daria: Drawing

I: Oh drawing, anything else?

D: Playing

I: What do you play?

D: Games or toys

I: What types of toys?

D: Of Barbie. I play with my sisters

Through this excerpt of Daria’s activities, it appears she has some variation in activities, drawing, toys and games. Additionally, she notes she plays with her sisters but does not mention any particular friends she plays with, besides her sisters. The difference in Daria and Chris’ responses leads to further questions about what has changed in their activities from where they lived before. The comparison in activities between “here and there” would be something that could have been further elaborated.

Henry, aged 11 said he had many activities with his friends but did not specify any specific activities when first asked. Interestingly he discussed asking his friend’s mom for food because

he liked her cooking more than his own mom's cooking. Upon further discussion he came to say:

Um, we play with his video games and when he came to my house we like play on the computer, we play with my video games. We almost do the same things, like go to the pool and play soccer.

Although when I first asked about how Henry communicates with his friends he was not very precise. He mentions the computer and then later says that he messages his friends. These interactions were around the use of his phone or computer and affected how he interacted with his friends as we continued to talk. In one instance, I observed Henry looking at his phone and laughing as he was sending messages with his friends. I observed his interactions with his phone and asked what he was doing. Henry showed me his messages and some games he played with his friends. These moments of explanation or a passing moment where he discusses these activities gives a glimpse into the dynamic and varied ways that he interacts with his friends.

Maggie previously described some use of technology and social media in her life. In one instance, she described her friend, regarding how she was suspended (removed from school for a period of a few days). As we got to know one another further, Maggie told me that her friend had been angry, prompting the fight, because an inappropriate picture of her friend had been released on Facebook. She had this to say about her use of social media:

Maggie: I don't really know. We be, just be like texting and stuff on Facebook. That's what we mostly like to do. Or we do Snapchat where you can post pictures and then you put doggie stuff and then we put something on it and then we post it.

Interviewer: Would you say you use it everyday?

M: No not everyday.

I: Just sometimes?

M: Yeah every once in a while

I: How many times a week would you say you use it?

M: I don't use it that much anymore. Not that much. Like cause like on Facebook people are really nasty about what they post on there. And I was like I not about to log into it I don't log into it. When I don't log into it I have 53 messages and 56 notifications and stuff.

She went onto describe how her friend had gotten in trouble for using Facebook and letting her picture get out. This was eye opening as it led to a conversation about her not liking the website, her description of people being “nasty” about what they put on the website. Yet, she still used other social media communication. The discussion around her use of the website, albeit distant after the incident with her friend, still indicates an importance to connecting with others, as seen with the notifications she has when she logs into her account.

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter looked at the ways in which children in the Latino community were “doing” friendship. It examined the structural aspect of school and the “newness” in coming to a new country and making friends. Following, these interviews and their analysis will be reviewed in Chapter 6 concluding remarks as a look into the reason why these interviews were most important.

Chapter 6 Concluding Remarks

6.1 Introduction

The following will detail the concluding remarks about the study and give further thoughts on future implications. It is with these thoughts and insights that the recommendations for future research will be continued.

This study aimed to look at how Latino children are “doing” friendship. The children were asked to share their opinions and thoughts to have a voice in discussing their everyday life. Overall, the study looked to explore Latino children as they see their friendships, both at school and outside as well as through uses such as social media. Though children were open in their interviews in discussing friendship, they sometimes lacked further elaboration. James (2007) highlighted the problematic nature of children’s voices in that the interviewer can sometimes take the children’s words but are interpreting it through their own views. There is a certain degree of cross-over with James’ (2007) social studies of children and childhood and a cultural anthropological viewpoint where one must be mindful of the different ways that the researcher is looking at the information. As such, the study will now be looked at from a focal point of seeing the study after its completion and through a larger lens.

6.2 Understanding of the Bigger Picture

The context of the children’s lives was vastly different from child to child. This background and context provided children with a story from which they could speak from. The key focus was to see the children as children with an identity of being Latino and connection to the Spanish language, along with their everyday experiences with friends and technology.

Children’s responses and discussions highlighted the main points outlined in chapter one, following the research questions. It became clear that children value friends and friendships, especially within the school context as it allows them a way to share interests. Goffman (1990) discusses *personal and social identity* and this emerges as one perspective for examining the children’s lives and reflections on friends and friendship. This came through as a key concept that was not necessarily thought about from the beginning, the interplay that friendship and

friends have, on children's lives as they come to a new country and have to essentially start over again.

6.3 Results

The responses about activities children did and discussions were focused to the school setting and context and as such it is unclear what the responses would have been outside of school. With this in mind, there is a need to be aware of the limited scope of the environment, as this may have affected the responses. As such, school is a focus because it was where many of the children discussed their time with friends. Additionally, school is the first location that most children go to when arriving to the country where they meet new people and get situated into the new country. The location of the study also affected the limited interactions outside school with there being farther distances between children's homes and the need to take a bus, affecting how and when they could be together.

While children shared their thoughts and opinions on the subject of friends and friendship, there were many other topics that could have been explored. Children had similar experiences and thoughts on how to make friends and what friendships were. There were times where their status as a Latino affected their friendships because of the ability to communicate with other Latinos. Other times, children could respond what friendships meant to them but then had difficulty explaining friendship as a concept. This speaks to children's thoughts about the concept itself, almost as if the both were already interconnected and did not need further explanation.

As other research has shown, Latinos and their success in school is an ongoing topic for education policies and friendship is an indicator of how well they can do. Faulkner and Miell (1993, as cited in Woodhead & Faulkner, 2000). They note that children's work in school is better if they are with a friend versus a perceived acquaintance. This directly corresponds to the response of many children who said they enjoyed their time with their friends and the classes where they had friends in them. The research gap that was trying to be filled was one of a predominantly academic based focus on Latino's progress and not as much into their relationships, rather the complexities of navigating school that Latino children face.

The dynamic of school, mixed with the status of being Latino can be difficult in creating an identity in school. The ability to make friends seemed to correspond to children and their well-being as they described their experiences. Corsaro and Eder (1990) said, “For older children, the peer group (especially same-sex friendship groups) provides a secure base for making sense of and dealing with new demands regarding personal relations, sexuality, and identity development”. These new demands were much greater for the Latino children interviewed as many of them were starting a new peer group in a new country.

6.4 Future research

In retrospect, there are many topics that could have been further explored during the study. the immigration and migration patterns of the children might have also been another focus. It was hard to know the direction of the study beforehand but since the children were so varied in their place of origin and story of coming to the United States. The study could take a continued look at how the children manage their stay in a new school and with their friends. The children’s family situations and backgrounds could help gain a bigger picture of what they have dealt with prior to coming to a new country. Do they continue to see friendship in the same way a year later? What difficulties do they face outside of school?

Looking back to Fadel’s (2017) highlighted problems with DACA and the ongoing fears that Latino’s education and future is at risk, one must bring this forward as a future research topic. Using Childhood Studies research tool, children’s voices in research is critical to furthering future policies in the United States, especially in light of the UNCRC not being ratified. Alderson (2011) notes this in her work to address many of the social, economic and political inequalities that exist with children (as cited in James, 2007). It is the hope that children’s challenges by coming to a new country, learning a new language and making new friends can be raised as a top priority so as to see children have the support they need in schools. It is especially important to provide children the opportunity to interact with other children in order to be able to engage in doing friendship, a time and a place in school.

6.5 Conclusion

The study has many elements that diverge into other topics. The process itself had obstacles and therefore I had to work with what I was given. When looking back at the time spent

conducting the study, I wish I would have spent more time and possibly done follow up interviews. In particular more follow up with the children who spoke Acateco and finding out how they are doing friendship, with a focus on the language and what they perceive as challenges. For example, Wayne John described he often just wanted to be left alone but was faced with “bad words” in Spanish and a misunderstanding between himself and other children. This challenge was just one dilemma that children faced and provided a snapshot of children’s experience with trying to make friends. As such, the children’s stories were much more varied than what was originally anticipated. Each interview depicted the children’s challenging situations and everyday lives, how they do friendship and relational agency. The ways in which children are “doing” friendship in the Latino community have varying elements, among them the obstacle of arriving from a new country and learning a new language. Although having faced different challenging situations, many of the children seemed well adjusted and most appeared to enjoy the time to discuss what they do with their friends. Even with each child’s own experience, some difficult, they appeared to do friendship in varying ways and demonstrated some relational agency in some way. I suggest regular communication with Latino children who are recently arrived so as to help bridge gaps that might occur in the growing United States landscape.

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Appendix 1 – English Consent Form



Parent/Guardian Informed Consent Form

This is an informed consent form for the participation in the research project entitled “Interactions and friendship among peers in the Latino community” conducted by Michelle Pietri. The purpose of this research project is to get insight into how children think and feel about friendship. The initial aim will be to look at the research question of what do children in the Latino community think about their own friendships? This project is part of my Master’s degree program in Childhood Studies at the Norwegian Centre for Child Research, Norwegian University of Technology and Science (NTNU).

Please take some time to read through and discuss the decision of participation with your child and others involved. The decision to participate is up to you and if you decide to let your child participate, you will be asked to sign this consent form at the end of this document. This study consists of a variety of methods like observation, focus group discussions and interviews. The project has been submitted and reported to the Norwegian Centre For Research Data (NSD). I am interested in learning more about what factors and experiences help in forming friendships. I look to the Latino community since it is a growing community and important to better meeting children’s needs in school. I am interested in learning about the daily life of your child and their experiences with friends and also delve into how technology and social media plays a role.

The research will take place over four weeks from March 27th – April 21st but your child’s participation may only take an hour or so a week. This is to be done during after school hours at the afterschool program on site. They might be asked to participate in an interview either individually or in a group. Your child will be asked to discuss their social media interactions with friends but will not be asked to give any photos or download information from any media site. Instead they may volunteer to discuss information about the social media they use and how they used it. They will be asked to describe what they define as friendship as well as ways they might communicate with friends. They will also be observed as they interact with friends. Lastly, interviews will be voice recorded but will not be kept for a time longer than needs to be transcribed.

It is voluntary to have your child participant; if you do not want your child to participate you are not obligated to. If your child does not participate, no information will be collected from them. If you decide to participate in the study but would like to withdraw, you may withdraw at anytime. The information given by your child will be made anonymous in the final publication. Each participant will be given a pseudonym for the project, thus ensuring his or her confidentiality in the project. You may request to view the interview guide that will be used. The data collected about your child will be kept securely and will primarily be interviews and observations and notes taken during various activities. All information collected will be made anonymous after the project has been completed in June 2018.

If you have any question or concerns during your child’s participation, afterwards or you would like to get a copy of the final results of the research do not hesitate to ask and contact the supervisor or researcher.

Researcher’s Name: Michelle Pietri
michellp@stud.ntnu.no

Supervisor: Vebjørng Tingstad
vebjorg.tingstad@svt.ntnu.no

Name and signature of the guardian and participant who have read and understood all the information and therefore agree to participate in the study.

I have read through this consent form and understood what the research is all about. I give consent for my child to participate in the research project.

YES

NO

Date: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Parent/Guardian Name/Signature

Participant Name/Signature

Appendix 2 – Spanish consent Form



Forma de consentimiento para padres/guardián

Ésta es una forma de consentimiento para participar en un proyecto de investigación titulado “Interacciones y amistad entre amigos en la comunidad latina” conducido por Michelle Pietri. El propósito de este proyecto de investigación es para tener información en como los niños piensan y se sienten acerca de la amistad. El objeto inicial será mirar la pregunta de la investigación, ¿Qué piensan los niños en la comunidad Latina acerca de sus amistades? Este proyecto es parte de mi programa de maestría en Estudios de la Niñez en el Centro Noruego de Investigaciones de la Niñez, Universidad Noruega de Tecnología y Ciencia (NTNU).

Por favor, tome tiempo para leer y discutir la decisión de participar con su hijo/a y otros. La decisión de participar es suya y si quiere que su hijo/a participe, haga el favor de firmar esta forma de consentimiento al final de este documento. Este estudio consiste de varios tipos de métodos para recoger información como observaciones, discusiones en grupo y entrevistas. El proyecto ha sido presentado al NSD en Noruega y aprobado. Estoy interesada en aprender sobre los factores y experiencias que ayudan en formar la amistad. Voy a usar la la comunidad latina porque es una comunidad que está creciendo y es importante para satisfacer mejor las necesidades de los niños. Estoy interesada en aprender sobre la vida diaria de su hijo/a y sus experiencias con sus amigos/as y ver qué papel tienen la tecnología y medios de comunicación sociales.

El estudio será durante cuatro semanas desde el 27 de marzo hasta el 21 de abril pero la participación de su hijo/a solo puede tomar una hora cada semana. Esto va a ocurrir después de la escuela o en el programa de después de la escuela. Se les pedirá que participen en una entrevista individual o en grupo. Se les puede pedir que discutan sus interacciones con medios de comunicación sociales con amigos pero nunca se pedirá que den fotos o información de algunas enlaces de medios de comunicación. La información puede ser voluntario si quieren discutirlo y como lo usan. También van a tener que hablar sobre como definen lo que es una amistad y como hablan y se comunican con amigos. Es posible que sean observados con

amigos para ver como interaccionan. Finalmente, las entrevistas serán grabadas y transcritas pero serán retenidas por la duración del Proyecto solamente. Es voluntario tener a su hijo/a como participante, si no quiere su hijo/a como participante, no es obligatorio. Si su hijo/a no participa, ninguna información será recogida de ellos. Si decide participar, pero decide retirar del proyecto, puede retirar en cualquier momento. La información dada por su hijo/a será anónima en la publicación final. A cada participante se le dará un seudónimo, asegurando su confidencialidad en el proyecto. Puede hacer una solicitud para ver la guía de preguntas para la entrevista. Los datos coleccionados sobre su hijo/a serán mantenidos seguros y solo serán las entrevistas, observaciones y notas cogidas durante las diferentes actividades. Toda la información será hecha anónima después que el proyecto se termine en junio del 2018.

Si tiene alguna pregunta o preocupación durante la participación, o si quiere una copia de los resultados finales, no dude en preguntar o ponerse en contacto con la supervisora o investigadora.

Nombre de investigadora: Michelle Pietri
michellp@stud.ntnu.no

Supervisora: Vebjørng Tingstad
vebjorg.tingstad@svt.ntnu.no

Nombre y firma de padre/guardián y participante quién ha leído y comprende toda la información y por lo tanto está de acuerdo en participar en el proyecto.

He leído esta forma de consentimiento y comprendo lo que se va a investigar. Doy mi consentimiento para que mi hijo/a participe en este proyecto de investigación.

SI

NO

Fecha: _____

Correo electrónico: _____

Número de teléfono: _____

Firma de padre/guardián

Firma de participante

Appendix 3 – English Interview guide

Interview Questions

All responses are voluntary.

Opinions about friends and friendship

Looking at the children's thoughts and feelings about what it means to be a friend. Finding out the children's general concept of friendship.

- In your opinion about what makes a friend? What is friendship?
- Describe your perfect friend.

Perceptions of their own friends and friendship

What does friendship mean in their own lives? Is there is a difference between their concept of friendship and their own experiences?

- How did you become friends with your friends?
- How would you describe your best friend?
- What do you have in common with your friends?

Interaction with friends

Examining the ways in which the children interact in person with their friends.

- What do you do when you are with your friends?
- Where do you see your friends?
- Describe your best memory with a friend.

Different forms of communication through social media

Social media refers to any communication, which is not in person. Getting a sense of children's interactions with social media. How important is social media to children's friendships?

- What types of communication do you use with your friends?
- Describe how you talk to your friends through social media.
- How has communication through social media been a part of your friendships?

Appendix 4 – Spanish Interview Guide

Preguntas de entrevista

Todas las respuestas son voluntarias.

Opiniones de amigos y la amistad.

- En tu opinion que hace un amigo? Que es la amistad?
- Describe tu amigo perfecto?

Percepcion de amigos y la amistad

- Como te hiciste amigos con tus amigos?
- Como describeras tu mejor amigo?
- Que tienes en comun con tus amigos?

Interacciones con amigos

- Que haces cuando estas con tus amigos?
- Donde vez a tus amigos?
- Describe tu mejor memoria con tu amigos.

Diferentes formas de comunicacion por social media

- Que tipos de comunicacion usas con tus amigos?
- Describe como hablas con tus amigos por social media.
- Como ha sido usado comunicacion por social media en tus amistades?