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How Social Media Affect the Social Identity of Mexican Americans

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How Social Media Affect the Social Identity of Mexican Americans

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A thesis submitted to the faculty of
Brigham Young University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Mass Communications

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ABSTRACT

How Social Media Affect the Social Identity of Mexican Americans

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This is a thesis conducted qualitatively using the Grounded Theory approach where in-depth interviews were conducted with 12 legal Mexican Americans in order to understand how social media affect Mexican Americans' social identity. This effect was understood by discovering the relationships between social identity theory and integration. Results showed that Mexican Americans felt that social media helped them with their English skills and connected them to their friends and family in Mexico. Mexican Americans were able to use social media to connect to their in-group community, and Mexican American community leaders were able to connect Mexicans to their in-group within specific areas of the United States. Mexican Americans interviewed said they often felt disconnected from Americans who had spent their whole life in the United States. In regards to social media and disconnect, Mexican Americans felt that online news, especially news sites' comment boards, poorly represented their culture, often focusing on the negative more than the positive.

Keywords: Mexican Americans, social media, culture, social identity, grounded theory, Mexico, United States

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Introduction

As research shows, media can significantly affect people's lives. Numerous research has been dedicated to the effects of media, especially on how the media affect immigrants coming or recently immigrated to the United States (Shinnar, 2008; Berry 1997; Mastro & Behm-Morawitz, 2005; Johnson, 1997). Sometimes the media are positive and it helps outside cultures to learn the language of the culture they are trying to integrate into and helping cultures to understand the culture they are residing in. But the communication media can also be negative: stereotyping, hate speech, exclusion, etc. When these immigrants who have recently come to the United States hear negative things about them immigrating there or about their culture in general, it can cause a great deal of dissonance and disturbance within and cause them to question their identity (Shinnar, 2008), which in turn disturbs the process of integration, which, according to research, is the ideal way for someone to reside in a new culture (Berry, 1997). Research in the United States has been done to understand how U.S. media represent other cultures and the effects of this media on those cultures within the United States (Batalova, 2008; Berry, 1997; Brennan, 2009; Croucher, 2011).

From newspapers to radio to television, there has been a great deal of coverage on how U.S. media affect other cultures and races, but a new form of media have emerged in the past ten years called social media, which has recently been scrutinized by researchers. Social media are a communication platform that gives its users the ability to communicate messages, specifically for friends, family, and colleagues. Social media allow one person to communicate with thousands of people about their products, their feelings, or basically anything (Mangold & Faulds, 2009).

In 2011, social media incited a nation to action when Egypt broke free from its oppressive leader by using Facebook and Twitter to not only incite their own people into action but to incite

nations outside their own to protest and unite together (Prettyman, 2011). Social media can revolutionize societies to do well and it can also make the voice of all people be heard. Social media make it easier for people to connect to friends and colleagues (Sheldon, Abad, & Hinsch, 2011; Croucher, 2011). Researchers now are trying to understand the effects of this most recent medium. With people interacting more online, there is more anonymity and openness. Comfort levels of Internet users have risen because people do not have to fear the confrontation of face-to-face interactions when they say something that goes against cultural norms (Ho & McLeod, 2008). This comfort and openness can lead to more racism and hate speech online on social media outlets like Facebook and Twitter (Alexander, 2010; Brauer, 2009; Goldberg, 2011; Pitts, 2010; Washington, 2010; Hughey & Daniels, 2013). Evidence that this is common and perhaps is a problem is the number of law articles and scholarly articles that have been published on online anonymity, online discourse, and social media and how to control harmful speech online (Wilson, 2001; Dahlberg, 2001; Scott, 2004). World leaders have felt the need to address the cultural attacks seen on social media (Clinton, 2010). People are able to freely speak their mind on social issues, whether socially acceptable or not. One common social issue that often populates online news boards with negative comments is immigration in the United States. Some people are for immigration but want stricter policies on legalizing immigrants and others want less stringent policies for becoming legal citizens. Whatever their feelings, people are able to speak their minds freely online, with almost no consequence for their actions. Research is now starting to explore the discussion within these online forums in regards to social media.

Among the many immigrants coming to the United States each year, Mexican Americans are the largest and fastest growing Hispanic subgroup in the United States (Guzman, 2001). Mexican Americans are often negatively stereotyped in communication mediums and research

has been done in the past to try and understand what these stereotypes are. Some have found that negativity can decrease integration and degrade the social identity of Mexican Americans specifically and receiving cultures in the United States in general (Berry, 1997; Shinnar, 2008). There is no current research that seeks to understand how social media affect Mexican Americans (Shinnar, 2008; Passel, Cohn, & Lopez, 2011; Mastro & Behm-Morawitz, 2005; Johnson, 1997).

It is possible social media may, in fact, help integration since it gives people the ability to stay in touch with family and friends more easily, and possibly helps them to learn English. This is because social media allows a person to be friends with anyone and to communicate through many languages. If social media does these things then the ability to integrate and have a strong social identity may advance. Social media may affect the integration and identity of Mexican Americans both positively and negatively. But social media can also have negative effects on identity, causing feelings of inadequacy, displacement and more. This thesis seeks to understand how social media affect the social identity of Mexican Americans in the United States.

Literature Review

In this literature review, there will be six sections. The first will explore the significance of integration and how it relates to acculturation. This section will also explore why integration is ideal and what needs to take place in order for it to successfully happen. The second section will further explain why integration is essential by looking at the social identity theory. The third section will discuss how social identities are often negated by stereotypes in the media towards cultures outside the United States and how those stereotypes can negatively impact the social identity of those trying to integrate their culture with the United States' culture. The fourth section will explain what social media are and what they are used for. The fifth section will look at how the Internet and social media affect other cultures through people being able to more

freely express their opinions. Finally, the sixth section will explain how to explore this new medium and its effects on other cultures. This section will identify why we choose to research Mexican Americans and how social media affects their social identity since they are the greatest immigrating culture in the U.S. and because they are stereotyped in the media was chosen.

Communication and How it Affects Acculturation, Cultural Adaptation

As a person is born into a society and develops certain processes, habits, and behaviors, they are socialized so as to fit in with those around them. When they are confronted with a new social situation they have to change to some extent in order to live in the company of those affiliated with this new social situation. This is basically adaptation, or change. Adaptation, in regards to international migration, is where a person raised in one culture migrates to a new and completely different culture and must adapt those two cultures in order to blend into their new society. This is specifically called acculturation (Gudykunst & Kim, 1997).

It is essential to understand how communication mediums affect the adaptation of immigrants into the United States.

Communication is the carrier of culture and social relationships. For foreign-born immigrants and temporary sojourners, communication activities in general, and interpersonal communication activities, in particular, play a vital role in shaping their cross-cultural adaptation process. It is through engagement in social communication activities of the host society that foreign-born individuals gain insights and skills that are necessary for achieving a level of functional fitness and psychological health in relation to the host environment. (Kim & McKay-Semmler, 2012, p. 375)

It was once believed in the U.S. that the best way for an immigrant to adjust to a new culture and country was to completely immerse themselves in their host culture's norms and leave their native culture's norms behind and assimilate. But some late twentieth century scholars now believe that integration, a blending of the two cultures, is a better form of adjustment (Berry, 1997).

In order to understand the differences between assimilation and integration, it is best to first understand acculturation. Acculturation is described as what happens when two different cultures meet or cross paths (Berry, 1997). Acculturation tends to look at the effects on the group that is being acculturated into a dominant society. Typically, there is a host culture/donor culture and there is a receiving culture. The host culture is usually the culture with the social and economic advantage and the receiving culture is looking to adapt to the host culture for various reasons: economic and social advantages and congruity between the two cultures, etc. There are things that will prevent the integration of the two cultures, such as how much and what kind of contact there is between the two cultures, and what the advantages are for the immigrants accepting and integrating into the cultures. There are four possibilities when the host culture and the receiving culture meet: assimilation, integration, marginalization, and separation (Berry, 1997). Assimilation occurs when the receiving culture completely adopts the norms of the host or dominant culture. Integration occurs when the receiving culture is able to adopt the cultural norms of the dominant culture, but still maintains their native culture's norms. With marginalization both cultures are rejected. Separation occurs when the receiving culture rejects the dominant culture's norms in order to maintain their native culture's norms (Berry, 1997). Assimilation into another culture can be a good thing, at least compared to marginalization and separation, because it gives the receiving culture the ability to take advantage of the social and/or economic

advantages of the host culture, but it can also be disadvantageous because the receiving culture tends to leave its culture of origin behind. Integration would be the seemingly happy medium: this is where a person is able to balance the culture they came from with the culture that they exist in.

Studies have shown that integration has significant benefits. Seeman (1996) researched whether social integration was beneficial or not for a person's health versus other acculturation patterns. Her results showed that it leads to reduced mortality risks and a better state of mental health. Berry, an expert and scholar in the study of acculturation said, "Acculturation strategies have been shown to have substantial relationships with positive adaptation: integration is usually the most successful; marginalization is the least; and assimilation and separation strategies are intermediate."

Berry goes on to define why integration is perhaps the best of the four:

In one interpretation, the integration strategy incorporates many of the other protective factors: a willingness for mutual accommodation (i.e. the presence of mutual positive attitudes, and absence of prejudice and discrimination-see later); involvement in two cultural communities (i.e. having two social support systems-see later); and being flexible in personality. In sharp contrast, marginalization involves rejection by the dominant society, combined with own-culture loss; this means the presence of hostility and much reduced social support. Assimilation involves own culture shedding (even though it may be voluntary), and separation involves rejection of the dominant culture (perhaps reciprocated by them). (1997, p. 24)

The only way for integration to truly work is when the dominant society is open and inclusive in its orientation towards cultural diversity (Berry, 1991). Research also shows that part

of assimilating and integrating is to not only try to understand the culture but also the language, which is one of the key ingredients to understanding and adapting to the host culture (McManus, Gould, & Welch, 1983; Stolzenberg, 1990; Nawyn, Gjokaj, Agbényiga, & Grace, 2012). The host culture also must be accepting of multiculturalism.

Obviously, the integration strategy can only be pursued in societies that are explicitly multicultural, in which certain psychological pre-conditions are established. These pre-conditions are: the widespread acceptance of the value to a society of cultural diversity (i.e. the presence of a positive “multicultural ideology”); relatively low levels of prejudice (i.e. minimal ethnocentrism, racism, and discrimination); positive mutual attitudes among cultural groups (i.e. no specific intergroup hatreds); and a sense of attachment to, or identification with, the larger society by all groups. (Berry, 1997, p. 11)

The theory of cross-cultural adaptation relates well to all of the aforementioned information. This theory or process describes the communication process of immigrants. According to Kim’s cross-cultural adaptation process there are four factors that work together to facilitate or impede the adaptation process.

(1) Individual predisposition (adaptive personality, ethnic proximity/distance, preparedness); (2) the environment (host conformity pressure, host receptivity, ethnic group strength); (3) intercultural transformation (functional fitness, psychological health, intercultural identity development); and (4) communication (host communication competence, host interpersonal communication, host mass communication, ethnic interpersonal communication, and ethnic mass communication). (Kim, 2001)

All of this being said, integration is said to be the ideal way to immigrate, but it is also a difficult ideal to obtain when the preconditions listed above are not met.

Social Identity Lends More Reason to Why Integration is Ideal

Not only is integration seemingly the ideal because it allows a person to adopt their host culture's norms and still maintain their culture of origin's norms, but it is important because when any of the other three things happen (assimilation, separation, or marginalization) the social identity of the person trying to integrate within their host culture can be negatively affected.

The social identity theory is a theory that looks at how a person sees himself or herself within both their in-group and their out-group (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). In this thesis, the in-group of the culture being studied is the native culture and the out-group is the host culture, or the United States. Receiving cultures living in their host culture's country need to be able to identify with both their in-group and their out-group as positively as possible. The social identity theory describes this, "Namely, if belonging to a certain group makes individuals feel good about themselves, maintaining affiliation with that group and preserving its positive evaluation compared to other groups will be very important to them" (Shinnar, 2008, p. 554). Research shows that people need to have a positive social identity. A positive social identity, which relates cohesively with the precepts behind integration, is:

- (a) People are motivated to maintain a positive self-concept;
- (b) The self-concept derives largely from group identification; and
- (c) People establish positive social identities by favorably comparing their in-group against an out-group. Having a positive social identity satisfies the individuals needs for inclusion and differentiation. (Shinnar, 2008, p. 554)

When a person does not have a positive social identity, these receiving cultures will cope in three different ways: individual mobility, social creativity, and social competition (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). In the case of individual mobility, the person will completely disassociate himself

or herself from their in-group and will solely favor the out-group assimilation. Social creativity is where the person will try to find another out-group that compares more positively with their in-group and social competition is where they will favor their in-group and try to disassociate themselves from the out-group as thoroughly as possible (separation). If a person with a negative social identity does either of these three things, it will negate his or her ability to integrate.

Mummendey and Schreiber support this conclusion by saying that in order to fight a lowered social identity a person will:

In any situation, where a group is able to compare itself with another group on some valued dimension, the group must attempt to differentiate itself from the other toward the positively valued pole of that dimension in order to preserve its members' self-esteem, meaning that the person will try to stand further from the out-group that persecutes it. (1983, p. 395)

Trying to socially stand closer to their in-group and further from their out-group would prevent the integration of the two groups, which would also negate their social identity. Padilla and Perez also noted something similar in their research, that the greater the discrimination of a person's culture that a person perceives from others, the greater the loyalty that person will have to their culture (Padilla & Perez, 2003).

Having a positive social identity is essential to integration because a person cannot integrate when his or her social identity is threatened because they either fight that negative social identity by completely leaving his or her native culture behind or he or she will reject the host culture completely.

Media's Negative Influence on the Receiving Culture's Social Identity

One thing that can greatly influence a person's social identity is the media because the media not only effects the perceptions of the receiving culture, but also the host culture. Racism and hate speech in the media are not new, nor is the study of them and their effects (Hughey & Daniels, 2013; van Dijk, 2000, 1997, 1992). Media include television, newspapers, radio, Internet, magazines, etc. A great deal of research in the realm of communication has sought to understand how the media portray other cultures and how these portrayals affect users of media. U.S. media has within it many stereotypes of different cultures and races: Asians, African Americans, Latinos, etc.

A study that sought to give insight into how Latinos were portrayed on primetime television showed that Latinos are often shown significantly less than Whites, Blacks, and Asians on primetime television (Mastro & Behm-Morawitz, 2005). Rankings in this study are especially low for Latinos considering how much of the U.S. population they represent. Latinos in Mastro & Behm-Morawitz' study were also depicted as being less professional and having lower paying jobs (2005). Mass media subscribe to the thought process that if a culture is important then it will be at the focus of mass media (Pember, 1987). And when Latinos are represented in the media, they often receive negative coverage; an example would be Latinos always being shown in the media as "the problem" (Rodriguez, 1997).

Fujioka conducted a study where he had a group of White students and Japanese students rate how they thought African Americans were portrayed on television. The study showed that the students thought that African Americans were portrayed significantly more negatively than positively, especially in relation to Whites (2005). The media have been proven, time and time again, to stereotype other races and cultures from that of the White, American culture (Maestro &

Behm-Morawitz, 2005; Hughey & Daniels, 2013; van Dijk, 2000, 1997, 1992, 1991). There is a more recent form of media that has only been around for ten years or so: social media. While a great deal of understanding has been gained as to how media, before social media, affected the identity of other races and cultures, social media is still being explored.

The media can play a positive role in the integration of cultures into the U.S. Johnson (1996) found in a study that she conducted with Latin American women that Latinas who watched television fulfilled some part in Latinos learning needs, but she also found that Latinas who watched English comedies had the highest acculturation stress.

Overall, minorities in general are highly “affiliated with and derive meaning from their group incorporate societal bias directed at the group into the self-concept and this leads them to perceive personal vulnerability to prejudice and discrimination. When high ethnic identification exists, awareness of the group's condition stimulates a personal sense that discrimination might be experienced individually” (Operario & Fiske 2001).

What is Social Media?

The United States is currently a technology generation, where almost everyone in the United States can have access to the Internet and social media outlets. As of June 10, 2013, there were 239,232,863 internet users in the United States and there are over 69 million people who subscribe to broadband. Seventy two percent of adults in the United States use social networking sites (Brenner, 2013). Ideas, thoughts and opinions are readily being shared on social media sites, sometimes by uneducated, poorly educated, racist, or biased people (Johnson, 1997).

The Internet in general is a place where people can obtain information, ideas, and opinions on any subject. It is a place where anyone can post any thought, opinion, idea, or fact without any real geographical boundaries (Brennan, 2009). It is a place that makes communication quicker,

easier, and cheaper (Leets, 2001). After the Internet was introduced to the world, social media soon became one of its largest assets and possibly one of its largest detriments. Social media give a person the ability to not only post his or her thoughts to the world, but they also give a person the ability to post his or her thoughts specifically for friends, family, colleagues, and other associates to view. Social media give access to information from people considered to be potentially reliable sources. The history of social media and its definition is not so complex. With the creation of blogs, and online diaries, the use of Internet became more than just a place for fact checking and emailing. The term social media was coined with the conception of social networking sites such as Facebook, MySpace, and Twitter (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

Social media differ from industrial media because they require almost no resources for someone to publish. Businesses refer to social media as consumer generated media (CGM) because they allow any individual to generate what they want to be in the media. Social media allow “one person to communicate with hundreds or even thousands of other people about products and the companies that provide them” (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). But the communication goes beyond endorsing products and companies. Being able to share opinions on any topic can also give social media users the ability to endorse their biases as fact and oftentimes these biases are endorsed by societal leaders and journalists (Deseret Connect, 2013; Gillath, McCall, Shaver, & Blascovich, 2008; Lewis, Kaufhold, & Lasorsa, 2010).

It is also relevant to note that social media have a quantitative capability, which means that places like Facebook, Twitter, and Linked-In can tell a person how many friends they have, and then break down the friends into social groups: age, schools, area, etc. But, while this has led to interesting research and results, it is relevant to note that it does not matter how many friends

or connections a person has on social media, so much as how they feel they are treated within that social network.

The number of peers (peer network externalities) and perceived complementarity (indirect network externalities) are more influential on extrinsic benefit (usefulness) than the number of members (direct network externalities). This finding suggests that the individual strongly believes that the breadth of his friends using SNS is great or when complementary resources such as various supporting tools, applications, and groups of social connections are diverse, the degree of SNS usefulness is naturally higher (e.g., broader circle of friends and more interactions). (Lin & Lu, 2011, p. 1159)

Social media on the Internet have given people even more opportunities to communicate with each other from almost any location in the world.

For immigrants and sojourners, mediated interpersonal communication such as email and the Internet can take on a particular significance. The ease with which non-natives can communicate with their family members and friends in the country of origin raises the possibility that their use of mediated channels in interpersonal communication with co-ethnics significantly influences their communication with members of the host society and, thereby, their adaptation vis-à-vis that society. (Varma, 2007, p. 552)

This insight shared by Varma does not mean that mediated interpersonal communication creates good communication between the native culture and the host culture, it merely influences the communication more—which could have a positive influence or a negative influence.

Internet and Social Media's Impact on Cultures and Their Identity

This section in the literature review consists of five parts. In order to show statistical growth within these two communication mediums, the first part addresses how the Internet is used and the number of people using the Internet and social media worldwide. The second part addresses an effect of hate speech in social media and the Internet and how it theoretically may be more unavoidable than ever before. The third part addresses the effect of being able to voice thoughts without consequence. The fourth part addresses how disguised false information online makes it difficult for users to distinguish between what is the truth and what is not. And the fifth part addresses the failed attempts to control hate speech and false information online.

Growth and change of Internet and social media.

While social media is still a new and ever changing field of study for many communication theorists, some research has been done in order to understand who is using social media, what they are using it for, and what satisfaction they can gain from social media. But little has been done, demographically speaking, to understand how other ethnicities use social media (Correa, Hinsley, & De Zuniga, 2010; Mangold & Faulds, 2009; Witte, Frank, & Lester, 2009; Wang, Huang, Huang, & Wang, 2009).

Croucher (2011) found that immigrant populations in various nations use the Internet to reconnect with their homeland, strengthen community ties, retro-acculturate, culturally adapt, and find intimate partners. Ogan and Ozakca (2007) found that, “for a group of Turkish workers who had returned to Istanbul from the Netherlands to work for a Dutch call center company in Turkey, mediated interpersonal communication helped to maintain ties with family and friends left behind in the Netherlands.”

Croucher (2011), Kim & McKay-Semmler (2012), and Ogan & Ozakca (2007) agree that social media and the Internet are effective ways for immigrants to keep in touch with their native culture. But what other effects do social media have on immigrants in the United States? This new medium is developmentally sound to study now, since it offers something new compared to other communication mediums.

A critical factor in the development of a new medium is that it must generally perform some additional function better than the existing media. For instance, newspapers were more effective than town criers because they provided a method of recording information; magazines developed because their quality of production and national news coverage was better than newspapers; radio emerged because it was more effective than magazines at delivering live timely content; television was more effective than radio because it combined audio and video images; and the Internet is better because it combines all these elements while adding the element of interactivity, according to Meeker. (Kimmel, 2005)

Pfister and Soliz (2011) have discussed some of the changes that digital media, a close follower to social media, have made.

Global turmoil prompts citizens to learn more about each other, and digital media fuels intercultural communication on a scale and of a kind that is a significant departure from the mass-mediated contacts of the last several centuries ... The technological advancements in digitally networked media and the exponential growth in the public's understanding and use of these media are leading to more opportunities for interaction. Thus, digital media offer unique contexts. (Smith & Soliz, 2011, p. 246)

Little research has been done to understand how social media have affected the adaptation process within cultures, which makes this topic a rich area to explore. “To date, non-natives’ use of interpersonal communication technologies has not been given due attention (Hernández, 2008), particularly from the perspective of the broader context of the overall adaptation process vis-à-vis the host society. Only a number of recent studies have documented that mediated interpersonal communication activities play a prominent role in the lives of sojourners and immigrants” (Kim & McKay-Semmler, 2012, p. 100).

It is essential to look very closely at the Internet and its effects on cultures and races when trying to understand social media’s effects on other cultures. The Internet is a safe place to start, because before social media became its own communication medium, the Internet was the newest and latest communication medium.

In 1994, extremists had laid a foundation of websites and hate speech online, using it to forward their own causes (Brennan, 2009). In 1998 there were law articles published with titles such as, “Hate Speech Over the Internet: A Traditional Constitutional Analysis or a New Cyber Constitution” (Weintraub-Reiter, 1998). Already the issue of hate online was being addressed and lawsuits were starting to abound because of threatening, forceful, and hateful speech.

Out of the 944,678,035 people in the Americas, 488,005,400 have access to the Internet and 322,417,860 use social networks like Facebook (Miniwatts_Marketing_Group, 2011). In these social forums, people can express their opinions, thoughts, and ideas in blogs, videos, and other social media outlets like Facebook, chat rooms, and Twitter, etc.

Unavoidable hate speech.

Selective Exposure theory states that people have the ability to select and choose what they view in the media that reinforce their existing views (Frey, 1986), but with social media,

there are often opinions that are disguised or unavoidably cultivated by those trusted as reliable sources, such as friends, or the friends of friends. Lately, it has become extremely difficult to tell who is an accurate source and who is not, when people can say what they want in the online world anonymously and without references.

If the theory of selective exposure is correct, then the Internet and social media give a person the ability to narrow their research to the things that reinforce existing beliefs, including those stereotypes that were integrated into them from birth, and opinions that are forcefully and memorably placed into their minds. For example, when an extreme series of events happen to a person then those things may be more prevalent and pronounced within the person's mind. Also, things that happened recently may be remembered more clearly by a person (Frey, 1986). People tend to be more forceful when they hate or dislike something than when they like it. This has become prevalent in the online news world with the birth of comment boards. These comment boards particularly relate to this research because they fit within the context of what social media are, anyone can comment on them, although often times it requires having access to a social media account such as Facebook. These comment boards are attached to a factual story, and people are often able to post whatever they like on these comment boards, whether it is off topic, hateful, vulgar, or factually inaccurate (Alexander, 2010; Brauer, 2009; Goldberg, 2011; Pitts, 2010; Washington, 2010; Hughey & Daniels, 2013). Selective exposure states that we have the ability to choose what media we view, and to choose the media that reinforce preexisting beliefs. The fact that these comment boards are attached to stories about social issues, stories that are usually well developed and supported by authority figures and facts, can possibly cause the immigrants reading these stories to feel cognitive dissonance because the comments are not

factual. Cognitive dissonance is the feeling of discomfort a person experiences when they hold two different opinions on an issue (Festinger, 1962).

In this state of cognitive dissonance a person may experience negative feelings, such as frustration and anger. If these comment boards make it harder for immigrants to selectively expose and even cause some dissonance, the results may further negate the ability of immigrants to have a positive social identity, since they may feel disconnected from the host. While a person is able to choose the story they want to read, the often off-topic comments wedged within relevant comments can lead to dissonance.

Arthur Santana, a doctor of philosophy student at the University of Oregon, wrote a dissertation entitled “Civility, Anonymity, and the Breakdown of a New Public Sphere.” His dissertation was completed by analyzing 22,000 comments from nearly 200 news stories in more than a dozen online newspapers. In his analysis he found that online newspaper comment boards that allowed people to speak anonymously and that contained news about immigration contain “comments by those who support tough immigration laws and who express themselves with emotionally laden, uncivil comments towards Latinos” (Santana, 2012). He claimed that his paper demonstrated “that in their new role in creating a new public square of open discussion, newspapers are sometimes creating forums for hate speech while also publishing content that is perpetuating negative portrayals of Latinos. Findings reveal that a new public sphere created by online newspapers, meant to promote democracy, is actually having the opposite effect for some minority groups.” Hughey and Daniels reported in their study that after nine years of the comment boards being up online, many U.S. newspapers are trying to find ways to handle offensive comments, which includes disabling comments on their site in general. These comments are perhaps making it harder to be selective.

Selectivity theories (Frey, 1986) offer three hypothesis: 1) Selective Exposure: we expose ourselves to things that encourage our beliefs, things that do not create dissonance; 2) Selective Processing: we also process those messages in ways that are consistent with our beliefs; 3) Selective Retention: We remember things in a way that supports our beliefs. Research exploring the role of selective exposure, specifically in social media, has suggested that using social media may have implications on individuals' exposure to attitude-challenging information. So, having the ability to be selective when using social media is more restrained. For example, recently, younger members of the Mormon faith (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints) have searched the Internet about their faith, in order to understand its history. The information presented to them seems factual and is presented with words that make their religion seem wrong. Youth in many faiths have also found themselves stumped on their faith, because so many websites tell them everything that is wrong with that faith, but fail to mention the things that are right (Brooks, 2012). These online messages create in these youth a cognitive dissonance that they settle by leaving their faith and beliefs. The struggle with online hate is not just faced by the religious. It is a struggle that affects everyone.

With enough exposure to something, whether negative or positive, a person's perceptions change in ways they may not have initially preferred. Social media allow individuals to share and be exposed to news via their social network, and social networks tend to include diverse people. This provides an opportunity to encounter dissonant information, even when finding information that supports your beliefs, because information, whether true or false, is endorsed by someone in one's network (McLeod, Kosicki, & McLeod, 1994). Those who communicate through this medium sometimes use it to propagate racist literature, symbols, and ideologies, while simultaneously providing ways to discuss these ideas (Gerstenfeld, Grant, & Chiang, 2003). For

instance, when in a chat room that is specifically geared to a certain topic, people may go there to discuss that topic with people who have similar feelings. But the topic could change; the discussion could become negative, and stereotypes, misinformation, and hate could be exchanged between two individuals who have learned to trust each other online.

Social media make it hard to distinguish the truth.

News sites have recently tried to control and moderate discourse on their stories. The New York Times, Deseret News, and other newspapers have even asked that public discourse on their stories remain respectful and nondiscriminatory (New York Times, 2011).

Social media have also given way to a whole new form of journalism called Citizen Journalism (Lewis, Kaufhold, & Lasorsa, 2010). National news sites are not immune to the difficulties of knowing what is right or wrong. One of the more recent scams is to report a famous celebrity as dead on Twitter, and news corporations have believed the posted tweets and fail to verify if they are factual. In 2011, there were reports of Will Smith, Eddie Murphy, and Britney Spears having died. When Whitney Houston was found dead in February 2012, the first source to report it was Twitter, but there were many people tweeting that they did not believe it to be true (Richardson, 2012). People have found it hard to know what is right and what is wrong online. CNN and other national news sites have made the mistake of posting a story on their websites before checking its credibility (Leopold, 2012). For example, a waiter took a receipt that a customer had given him and forged a note telling the waiter to get a better job. This story made national news, but the whole story was a hoax and this was not discovered until days after the story was published nationally. How many people ever found out about the error? Many might still believe the story to be true.

The Internet is full of opinions and it takes experienced and educated people to maneuver through the truths and lies adeptly (Daniels, 2009). It is hard for the average viewer to know when something is factual or not, especially when the site is disguised to hide its hate or bias (Daniels, 2009). And it is probably even harder for immigrants to wade through the truths and lies in social media and on the Internet because English is not their first language.

Anonymous and unchecked social media and Internet posters.

The once ostensibly unbiased realm of journalism has begun to change with the fast-paced journalism that comes forth from the Internet, where sources are not checked or opinions are interpreted to be facts (Deseret Connect, 2013; Gillath, McCall, Shaver, & Blascovich, 2008; Lewis, Kaufhold, & Lasorsa, 2010). Once, journalists were trained specifically to keep bias out of their articles. Now, many news corporations make it possible for anyone to write for their network, as long as it is relevant and seemingly factual. Deseret News, a Utah newspaper, has a program called *Deseret Connect* that allows anyone to write and send in news stories by people who have no journalistic background and likely know little of bias (Deseret Connect, 2013). Also, large news sites like CNN, ABC, and The New York Times make it so that anyone can anonymously post comments on any of their articles. Sometimes the comments can be insightful but other times they enforce stereotypes and unwarranted biases. This form of media, where not only are articles written but people are able to comment freely on those articles, is a form of social media, and while traditional media has great effects on cultures, social media may have even more pervasive and potent effects (Gillath, McCall, Shaver, & Blascovich, 2008). Gaertner and Dovidio said that racist comments and remarks were more pronounced when the situation offered anonymity and lack of accountability, especially in group or mediated environments (1986).

Under such circumstances, viewers' egalitarian self-concept is protected both by the vague media content as well as by the anonymity of the mediated environment. Consequently, exposure may elicit both traditional in-group-favoring responses such as stereotype adherence and more subtle race-based reactions such as differential evaluations in qualifications. (Mastro, Behm-Morawitx, & Kopacz, 2008, p. 5)

Being able to post comments on any article, whether controversial or not, gives extremists and other individuals, who may not even understand a story or its context—or in this situation understand the people—the ability to post as they please. And even those who read it may not have complete understanding of all sides of a story (Daniels, 2009). There is a feeling of protection afforded to people when they are able to post comments anonymously. Being able to say what you want to say, without the face-to-face threat of others could be seen as a benefit (Sheldon, Abad, & Hinsch, 2011). Having no consequences for online speech promotes racism and hate speech, because people can say what they want and not be called out by others for their words. It may also be worth noting that people usually do not have a fear of saying kind things in face-to-face situations, but the criticizing of others is held at a greater reserve in a face-to-face basis, but this is not so with social media (Ho & McLeod, 2008).

The Internet can be an outlet for good. For the shy and withdrawn, the Internet could even be an outlet for communication progression, helping such individuals share their thoughts and opinions. It can also help other cultures learn other languages and cultures. But not everyone uses it for good (Witte, Frank, & Lester, 2009). People are able to spew, anonymously and without forethought, whatever they want online without any real repercussions.

Hillary Clinton spoke of the benefits of the Internet and about the ability to share peaceful, political ideas anonymously and she also spoke of the threats that can be posted anonymously online or posts online that can cause a disconnect between religions and other cultures (Clinton, 2010). There has been great concern over anonymous Internet posts. Typically people would be concerned about what they say in social situations, but social media offer a different outlet for speech, an outlet to express opinions without fear. When there are no threats a person can freely speak their mind, without forethought (Krasnova, Gunther, Spiekermann, & Koroleva, 2009).

Often comments posted on national news sites that are not moderated can have the potential to shape public expectations of online discourse (Citron & Norton, 2011). There has been recent controversy over people publishing false information on the Internet, and large corporations like CNN getting hold of that information and publishing it, only to retract the story a couple of days later because it was not true. Often the false information published can be harmful (Leopold, 2012). Cyber smearing (Wilson, 2001) is what most of the corporate world call it when false information is posted. Wilson says there is a fine line between cyber smearing and anonymous speech—one gives the freedom to be expressive and the other takes advantage of the freedom of speech. While anonymous speech may add protection to yourself, to express an opinion that you believe needs to be expressed, there is a fine line as to whether that speech's untruthfulness and bias could be harmful (Wilson, 2001; Dahlberg, 2001; Scott, 2004).

While people may not believe the sometimes blatantly false statements about their race that they read online, there are those who go to extremes and create websites that resemble factual websites. These websites, called cloak websites by some scholars, tend to either take on the appearance of an official website, or they disguise racist hate speech on their website (Daniels, 2009). The way people communicate online challenges social convention, especially in regards to

privacy, in the way people construct their social identity, and in the way people interact with one another (Hargittai & Hsieh, 2011).

In regards to selective exposure theories and how those may effect integration of receiving cultures into the U.S.'s host culture there are many potential scenarios. In Kimmel's Marketing Communication book (2005), James Fitchett mentions that there may be even more dire consequences with social media, "Others envision a more dismal, even sinister role for future technology, resulting in the infringement of civil rights, further exploitation of scarce resources, and perhaps new and more complex forms of crime" (Kimmel, 2005).

No way to control social media without taking away critical rights.

Social media and the Internet are extremely hard to control. Judges and lawmakers have tried to control racist, hateful, and angry speech to some extent but those attempts have often failed. The Internet has allowed "marginalized extremist groups with messages of hate to have a more visible and accessible public platform" (Leets, 2001). The law has tried to intervene occasionally to address the offensive and hateful language posted online, but many people fight any actions taken to control speech online by addressing the constitution's promise of free speech addressed in the first amendment. In past cases, it has been extremely difficult to truly define hate speech and when it is noted as hate speech, the case is often thrown out because of first amendment rights.

A man was recently threatened with a sentence of up to 60 days in prison (Cornwell, 2012) for posting offensive speech on his Facebook about his estranged wife, unless he apologized daily on Facebook for a month about his comments. He's now fighting to get the case appealed, as it violates his freedom of speech. Trying to control all the postings by people who

are similar to this man would not only be expensive and time consuming, but in many situations could be considered a violation of the United States Constitution.

Controlling and patrolling the Internet and social media is often ruled in courts as a violation of free speech and many scholars suggest that sexist, racist, or basically abhorrent speech cannot be penalized (Leets, 2001).

Some people fight online racism by trying to educate people on what their actions can do and teach others how to respond to racist, hateful messages online. One research article suggested that sites like Google and Yahoo! should address cyber hate by “adopting accessible and transparent policies that educate users about their rights and responsibilities as digital citizens. Intermediaries' options include challenging hateful speech by responding with counter-speech, empowering community members to enforce norms,” (Citron & Norton, 2011) encouraging users to be more informed and exploring all sides of an issue before believing opinions online that claim to be fact.

A great deal of research has discussed the pros and cons of more control of the Internet and social media, but with billions of websites, it would be hard to pinpoint the many racial, and offensive websites that exist on the web. Whether control is introduced or not, there are cloaked websites that tend to either take on the appearance of an official or well-referenced website or a website that hides subliminal racial messages within its content (Daniels, 2009). It is usually difficult to tell who has authored these websites and they have hidden agendas, many of which include white supremacy.

One of the most well known examples of a cloaked website was “the Bush campaign,” where someone made their site look legitimate by using a domain name similar to the real campaign’s Uniform Resource Locator. Because it used the same images, reporters were taken in

by the website and were calling the real Bush campaign looking for clarification on policy issues (Meikle, 2002). While law articles cover what to do or what has been done in regards to free speech and social media, little research has been done to show the effects of what racist, hateful speech can do to the minorities and receiving cultures it attacks.

Not only are websites cloaked, but commenters online are able to convey their racist messages through coded language.

Coded racial language has long been used to convey subtle, yet potent, racial meanings in ways that appear well reasoned and focused on the common good. Newspaper comment fields engender specific types of coded language to fly well under the radar of moderators, like in other surveyed virtual formats. For example, young Facebook users often employ coded language or ‘social steganography’ to hide the intended meanings behind posts and status updates from parents and moderators. (Hughey & Daniels, 2013, p. 337)

In the end, it seems that very little legal action can be taken towards the effects of hate speech, because the harm is mostly emotional, not physical, and the law has a hard time justifying that (Calvert, 1997). Not only is there a good deal of protection of free speech online, but with billions of opinions accessible to anyone, it would be almost impossible to truly control hate speech. Attempts to control the Internet and social media, people hiding racism in their websites and biased citizen journalism all illustrate the potential harm of social media.

Social Media and Effects on Mexican Americans

In order to understand the effects of social media on other cultures, it is relevant to study another culture. Latinos account for 16 percent of the United States population. The 2010 Census counted 50.5 million Hispanics in the United States; they are the largest and fastest growing

minority group in the United States. Immigrants residing in the United States account for 30.7 percent of all U.S. immigrants and one-tenth of the entire population born in Mexico (Batalova, 2008). Mexico is the closest Hispanic country to the United States and 66 percent of Hispanic immigrants in the United States are Mexican. Mexican Americans are the largest and fastest growing Hispanic subgroup in the United States (Guzman, 2001). It is relevant to mention within this research that Mexican Americans are Mexicans who have come to the United States from Mexico and become legal U.S. citizens.

Thirty two million out of the 112 million Mexicans in Mexico use the Internet (Miniwatts Marketing Group, 2011). As of 2012, there are 38 million Facebook accounts established in Mexico (Social Bakers, 2012). Mexico and Brazil are among the top 10 Facebook growth markets and Facebook is one of the most popular online video destinations in Argentina, Mexico, and Brazil (Fast Track Media, 2012).

The Mexican-born population in the United States was 11.5 million in early 2009. In the process of integrating, Mexicans are not expected to relinquish their receiving culture in place for the host (Buriel, Calzada, & Vasquez, 1982). They, in fact, still need that culture to identify with, as explained by the social identity theory. As Mexicans are the largest immigrating race in America, it may be difficult for them to identify with a specific group (Passel, Cohn, & Lopez, 2011). Trying to further oneself socially and economically in the dominant culture *and* maintain ties to their culture of origin may prove difficult for Mexican Americans, especially when the dominant culture posits negative connotations on their culture of origin. When they do not have this positive identity they cope in three ways: individual mobility, social creativity, and social competition (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). An example of this is that because the Latino culture has long been judged second rate by many so-called modern cultures (such as the United States),

United States Latinos experience increased levels of pride for that which they can call their own [their Latino culture] (Rodriquez, 1988).

Shinnar did a study that found that Mexican Americans tend to dissociate themselves from their ethnic group, mostly because they wanted occupational advancement. Attitudes toward Mexicans tend to be negative and stereotypical. Mexicans feel that dissociating themselves from their culture would help them to advance in the workplace. However, because of skin color, names, accents, etc., it can be near impossible to fully dissociate yourself from your ethnic group. After conducting in-depth interviews, Shinnar found that many Mexican Americans did not try to seek promotions in the work place because the Americans they worked for did not want them to advance in the work place, mostly because of the stereotypes assigned to Mexicans (2008).

United States Mexicans and Hispanics, in general, are grossly underrepresented in many forms of media. In television, they are underrepresented, especially compared to their proportion of the U.S. population (Mastro & Behm-Morawitz, 2005). When they are depicted on television it is in stereotypical roles: comics, criminals, law enforcers, and sex objects (Faber, O'Guinn, & Meyer, 1987; Mastro & Greenberg, 2002). These depictions are often unavoidable, especially in regards to online media. While doing interviews, Leonard (2010) sought to understand United States Latinos perceptions of cells phones, computer and Internet. A couple of the people interviewed, when asked about how they used the computer, said they felt that they did not have a choice about whether they access the good or bad things on the Internet. Instead they said they found that as they technology to assist them with their daily activities they were usually exposed to things that they would prefer to not to read or see in order to access the information they needed.

Mexican Americans are stereotyped in face-to-face interactions, and in the media. Now the question is, are they stereotyped in social media and how do those stereotypes make them feel?

In this study the author processed and tried to answer the overriding question: How do social media affect the social identity of Mexican Americans? In order to answer this overriding question, three other questions that would lend to answering this overriding question were identified. Overriding research question (RQ1): What do social media do to build or denigrate the social identity of Mexican Americans?

Americans often say stereotypical and hateful words on social media; in order to understand how this could affect Mexican Americans we must answer this question.

RQ1: What impact do social media have on Mexican Americans with the host culture?

Social media does give Mexican Americans the ability to network with people from all around the world, including people from their native land or people in their current area who share their culture.

RQ2: What impact do social media have with Mexican Americans and their native culture?

Facebook and Twitter and other social media outlets were developed in English and their primary users are from the U.S. Does having U.S. native born citizens in a Mexican American's network cause any effects?

RQ3: How do Mexican Americans use social media to adapt?

Method

The method for this thesis is composed of three sections. The first section will discuss the methodological approach used to answer my research questions. The second section will discuss

the execution of the research: participants, locations, atmosphere, instruments used, and interviews. The third section will discuss how interviews were analyzed and coded and how trustworthiness was established in this qualitative thesis.

Approach

Understanding how social media affect the social identity of Mexican Americans was sought. There were some preconceptions going into this study: assumptions were made that social media would create a greater connect for Mexicans to their in-group and a greater disconnect to Mexicans' out-group. It was also assumed that social media would engage and enhance the language skills of Mexican Americans.

In order to test the research questions, Grounded Theory (Corbin & Strauss, 1986) was chosen for this thesis because of its flexibility in analyzing and adapting to the data as it is received. Grounded Theory often utilizes face-to-face, open-ended interviews with subjects. It allows the researcher to use a guiding set of questions, but also allows the researcher to adapt questions midstream as the data being collected suggests themes that may be more pertinent. These adaptations continue until a point of saturation is reached and no new data is collected (Corbin & Strauss, 1986).

Grounded theory aims to “develop explanatory theory concerning common social life patterns” (Chenitz & Swanson, 1986). This research looked at the common social life patterns of Mexicans' Internet use, specifically focusing on their social media usage and how social media affected them. Frequently, when researching a topic that has little or no coverage it is difficult to identify specific theories that relate to it rather than stating a grounded hypothesis in the beginning. Essentially, the research started from the ground up. Using grounded theory, specific theories were identified from the data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

The grounded theory approach used in this research thesis helped to test the social identity theory, along with the selective exposure theory, and cognitive dissonance theory in order to see how these theories complement the results. It helped do this by seeing if any of these three were present within the collected data. Guba, Lincoln, Glaser, Strauss, and Corbin considered grounded theory to be more than just a theory for discovery but also a theory for verification (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Corbin & Strauss, 1986). It was Glaser and Strauss (1967) who said that grounded theory allows us “to discover what *is* going on.” The purpose of the researcher in using the grounded theory is “to explain a given social situation by identifying the core and subsidiary processes operating in it” (Baker, Wuest, & Stern, 1992, p. 1357). While relevance and cause was established for the research she was doing in the literature review and even proposed some possible effects, it was not possible to actually come up with enough information to formulate answers in the beginning. Conducting interviews allowed for this type of discovery.

Grounded theory was most applicable because no specific categories have been established nor can they be until the data collection begins, which is a method of action supported by the Grounded Theory. Many researchers use in-depth interviews or focus groups to answer their questions. Shinnar, who interviewed Mexican Americans and sought to understand their social identity, wanted to see how stereotypes shaped the social identity of Mexicans (2008). Shinnar’s in-depth interviews reinforced and also showed new details (2008). As she conducted the interviews, she found common themes and patterns that she later discussed in her paper. They were themes that supported her research, since she was looking to understand the social identity of Mexicans.

The initial sample does not need to be so specific. Hutchinson (1993) argues in favor of a wide, diverse sample in that this ensures extensive data that covers the wide ranges of behavior in varied situations. Lincoln & Guba (1994) make similar arguments. They advocate, since the purpose of sampling will most often be to include as much information as possible, maximum variation sampling to be the usual sampling mode of choice.

The Mexican Americans were asked open-ended questions that delved into whether or not Mexicans have run into hate speech and other offensive language while using social media. There was one overall question with three sub questions to seek answers from this research. Each question had follow up questions that could be used in the interviewing process, as well as to explain what needed to be understood.

Overriding research question: What do social media do to build or denigrate the social identity of Mexican Americans? There were three other sub research questions that sought to answer the main one. In order to answer these questions, the research asked those interviewed specific questions to obtain answers to the main research questions.

There were three additional research questions sought to find answers to.

RQ1: What impact do social media have on Mexican Americans with their host culture? *Do you read the news online? What kind of stories do you read? What newspapers do you read? How do you feel about the immigration stories you read? How do you feel about stories you read written by Americans about your culture? How do you feel about the comments you see online on your Facebook and on news sites about your native culture? How do you feel about the American culture since coming to the United States?*

RQ2: What impact do social media have with Mexican Americans and their native culture? *What language do you mostly use on social media sites? How do you feel social media*

help you stay close to your native culture? How do you find other Mexicans in the American community with whom you can relate? How do you feel about your culture since coming to the United States?

RQ3: How do Mexican Americans use social media to adapt? *Do you use the Internet? Do you use English when you use social media outlets? How do you learn to write English? Do social media help you with your English? Do you ever use social media to find answers to questions about the United States culture?*

Do Mexican Americans use the Internet? What social media do Mexican Americans prefer? Do they read the news online? Do they read news about their culture? How do they feel about the news they read in regards to their culture? Do they feel fairly represented in social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, etc.? How do Mexicans feel about themselves? Do Mexican Americans feel better as an individual and as a Mexican American since coming to the United States?

Execution of Research

Participant selection.

Mexican Americans were defined as citizens of the United States, of Mexican birth, or descent (Phinney & Devich-Navarro, 1997). Participants selected were found through the Mexican Consulate and through community leaders—the author did not know any of the people interviewed previously. All participants lived between Salt Lake City, Utah, and Utah County, Utah. Participants were chosen this way—mostly due to monetary and time constraints and also because of the large Hispanic population in Utah—200,000 out of three million people in Salt Lake City alone. Participants were also required to be over 18 in order to meet the requirements of the Institutional Review Board. Participants were also required to have lived in the United

States for at least five years, so that they would have had a chance to learn the culture of the United States as well as some of the English language. Participants were also required to have had some experience with social media and to have access to the Internet, since Internet access is required in order to use social media.

Detailed description of participants.

There were 12 participants total. Six participants were men and six were women. Nine of the interviews were done face-to-face and the other three were done over the phone. All participants were bilingual, with Spanish being their first language. All interviews were conducted in English, except for one. In that interview, the participant's daughter acted as interpreter. Participants were allowed to look at the questions before the interview and the questions were offered in both English and in Spanish (See Appendices A and B). The participants came from diverse backgrounds. Five of the participants were members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, which was expected since Utah has a dense population of Mormons. The other seven participants were either Catholic or did not affiliate themselves with any religion. Seven of those interviewed have children, six are married, four are single, and one is divorced. Ten out of the twelve interviewed were employed, one was a stay-at-home mother, and the employment status of one was unknown. All of this is mentioned because diversity is significant in this study. Saturation did not want to be found too quickly by interviewing people who were too similar. Three of the 12 interviewed were community leaders. Their real names were used in this thesis, but the other participants were given pseudonyms in order to maintain their privacy. This also made it easier to follow the Institutional Review Board requirements.

Everyone interviewed owned a computer and a cell phone, except for two who owned neither. Everyone interviewed who had a phone was able to access the Internet. The two who did not have access to a computer or a cell phone did have places where they were able to consistently access the Internet. This is important to know because it could not have been determined how social media affected the person if he or she did not have regular access to the Internet through some medium.

Three participants were community leaders. Their full transcripts can also be found in the Appendices.

Community Leader 1: Salvador Lazalde is the volunteer President of The Federation of Mexico and is the manager at the Red Robin in Sandy, Utah. Lazalde has lived in the U.S. for over thirty years. He came here in his early twenties. He has been using Facebook and Twitter for almost a year.

Community Leader 2: Jonathan Puente is a representative of a group called Latinos in Action. He has been in the U.S. for most of his life. He works with Latino students in a Utah County high school.

Community Leader 3: Ana Lamb has been in the U.S. for over 15 years. She works for the Mexicans National Federation. She travels often and her interview was recorded over the phone while she was in D.C. representing Mexicans by lobbying for less strict immigration policies.

Location and atmosphere.

Interviews were conducted in locations where the participant felt comfortable and open, such as their homes, their church building, or their place of work. In most instances, it was assured that the atmosphere where the interviews took place was comfortable and quiet, so that

the participant would be able to answer questions without distractions and to the best of their ability.

Instruments.

In qualitative research the most important instrument is the researcher. The author conducted all interviews. In all instances, the interviews were recorded with a digital recorder and a video camera was used in three interviews. The interview that was done over the phone was also recorded on a digital recorder. The digital recorder was started immediately after the participant gave permission to be recorded. The digital recorder stayed on until the interview was fully finished. This was done to ensure that recording did not end prematurely. All participants gave permission to be tape-recorded.

Interviews.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted. There was a set list of questions that were brought to the interviews. During the interviews these questions were followed up with other questions, depending on the participant's response. Participants were allowed the freedom to guide the discussion. Questions were often tweaked after each interview, as topics began to be established. Non-verbal cues were often noted through the interviews. Instead of just recording the words, different responses were noted through body language and tone of voice. For instance, the participant may have said something that does not necessarily appear too significant when just the words are read, but if it is noted that the participant was crying when they said this, the words can take on a whole new context. Noting these cues made it easy to identify more themes and give more accurate meaning to their words (Legard, Keegan, & Ward, 2003).

Once finished, each interview would immediately be transcribed from the tape-recorder, so that the researcher could make more notes, and keep the topics fresh that she had identified

during each interview. As questions were asked, responses were only a couple words long. At first the author wanted to do more talking than she needed to, but she found that in order to deepen responses, she needed to follow up with deeper questions that complemented what they had said or she would follow up their response by asking for examples. Usually, this would awaken a response in the interviewees and they would have more to share on the topics discussed. Interviews were as short as 20 minutes and as long as an hour and a half. Most interviews were over an hour.

At the beginning of the interviews, the participants' responses were very wide and general, but as the author entered into the tenth, eleventh and twelfth interview it became apparent that the information from participants was repeating itself and that saturation had been reached by the last interview.

Coding and Analysis of the Data

NVIVO.

Analysis was begun by using NVIVO (NVIVO, 2013), which the author had used in the past and had been trained on. She already had a few themes identified because in qualitative research, coding and analysis take place while the interviews are performed, but she wanted to really dig into the results to see what else there was to be found in order to answer her research questions.

NVIVO is computer software used for non-numerical unstructured data indexing, and is computer software often used by qualitative researchers. This software allows for a rich analysis of texts. After interviews were uploaded into NVIVO, analysis began by running a frequent word search. This general search allows the user to see what words were used most. Often a researcher will have to go through the list and identify what words are significant and what words are not—

words like “and, if, but, they, etc. are usually added to a “stop-words” list—meaning that those words are not significant—so then a word frequency analysis is run, and “stop-words” are excluded from the results. By running the Word Frequency Analysis, the author was able to see what words were used the most, and this allowed her to identify themes more clearly. After themes were identified, they were coded in NVIVO. NVIVO allows the researcher to put these codes into different categories and gives the researcher a great deal more organization and the ability to not lose information. This process makes analysis faster, and more consistent. Key words were found that had synonyms. An example would be that by searching the word Facebook, it could then be found what was said in regards to it.

The themes found and sorted for were: which social media outlet was used most, use of Spanish or English online, what news sites were followed, stereotypes encountered online, community involvement, culture and language connection to social media, what social media was used for, connection to native land, and connection to host culture.

Establishing Trustworthiness and Reliability

It is important that trustworthiness was established in this qualitative thesis, because it improves the credibility of the findings. There were several ways that trustworthiness was maintained, NVIVO being one of those methods. Constant notes were kept throughout the interviewing process. These notes included notes their non-verbal gestures. Using the interview questions, answers were followed with more in-depth questions and then the results were viewed from the interviews and conclusions drawn as to how social media have affected their identity as a Mexican and as an American.

The Constant Comparative Analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) was used, which is where the researcher constantly compares their notes from interview to interview and pulls out themes

and as the interviews proceed the researcher continues to adjust and adapt their interview questions. This method is a part of grounded theory.

As the interview proceeded, trustworthiness and reliability was established by keeping memos and notes that helped to identify categories and themes later on.

It is often harder to establish trustworthiness with qualitative research, since the results are not generalizable and the process is more personal than quantitative. By taking careful notes, and being aware of biases, a credible level of trustworthiness was established (Kreftig, 1991; Rubin & Rubin, 2011).

Results

In the results section of this thesis, insight was shared into the research questions asked before interviews and analysis began. The results from the interviews, which were conducted between December 2012 and March 2013, presented a great deal of new information for scholarly discussion. Many of those interviewed expressed positive feelings about social media in general. They believed that social media gave them the ability to stay connected to their in-group (Mexico), but when it came to how they connected to other out-groups (Americans, etc.) the feelings shared were negative.

Participants often said that Facebook and other social media forums have helped their English skills, helped them to stay connected to their culture back home, and helped their in-group (Mexican) social identity—in essence social media have helped their social identity and ability to integrate in many ways. However, negative feelings were expressed as well. Mexican Americans often felt stereotyped in online news. They also felt hurt by things people have said to them directly or about their culture online. They felt that the only news shared about them was negative. They felt a disconnect from their out-group (Americans) and in many instances they

called themselves invaders or outsiders. The results are organized by each research question asked and subcategories listed within that give further insight into answering that research question.

RQ1: What impact do social media have on Mexican Americans with their host culture?

Representation in social media's online news and their comments boards.

The researcher found that social media seemed to cause some cognitive dissonance in those interviewed, and caused others to struggle with the stability of their social identity. They often felt that their culture was not mentioned enough in the news or they felt that the only stories that people want to comment on were stories where Mexican Americans did something unsavory.

Seeing these negative things online often made them feel sad and some said they had cried from the comments made online. As mentioned before, it is extremely hard for a culture to integrate when that culture is met with hostility from their host culture (Berry, 1997). It was also harder to feel a connection to their out-group and easier to draw more closely to their in-group when they sensed that online hostility. There were a lot of feelings shared from participants in regards to how Mexican Americans felt poorly represented in online news—especially by people who posted negative comments toward them on a news story's comment boards—which is another form of social media. Comments were shared from participants on the anonymity of these comment boards, on common stereotypes assigned to Mexican Americans and many participants felt that they were seen as outsiders. Over half of those interviewed said that they felt that their Mexican culture was negatively represented online or not represented at all. The literature review in this paper drew connections to the increase of anonymity and hateful speech, especially toward Latinos (Santana, 2012). A few participants shared feelings about how they felt people were sharing opinions online about Mexicans, opinions that they would most likely never say to a

Mexican American in a face-to-face situation (Ho & Mcleod, 2008). One participant, who has been in the United States for over 15 years, expressed these feelings, along with the feelings that not only do these words hurt Mexican Americans but they also affect Americans who have not formed opinions on the subject of immigration.

Excerpt 1

So, now that we have more access to our cellphones, more access to express ourselves, and without people really knowing who we are, kinda like anonymous, people just kinda say it out loud or just type or say some hatred words and yes, that does, unfortunately affect some people. I mean some people out there who don't know how to make decisions and they'll read comments from there, from other people who are negative and automatically those people will fall into and we are more prone as humans to go towards the negative than the positive.

Another participant who has lived in the U.S. for almost 20 years, said something along those lines as well:

Excerpt 2

Sometimes they don't say it to the person to person, it is only said in comments and things like that. They might say this and that on the Internet, but when they're face-to-face they don't say anything like that.

In regards to the two participants' comments about anonymity, this is not a new concept in the realm of the Internet and social media today. There have been many law articles in the past that have tried to find ways to prohibit anonymous speech and prosecute it because of the potential harmful effects that it has (Wilson, 2001; Weintraub-Reiter, 1998). This issue of anonymity has been addressed in the past as well, particularly in Santana's research (2012).

Social norms are now greatly challenged by this latest medium. It is a cross blend between writing and face-to-face communication. People's written opinions were not so readily made known in the public sphere when they were filled with hate speech, especially when those opinions were ignorant or ill-formed and poorly written. In regards to face-to-face communication, people were not likely to blatantly express hateful opinions. As shown by the comments expressed in these interviews, social media have revolutionized communication and in regards to anonymity there are next to no repercussions for offensive language. While anonymity increases a person's ability to express their thoughts and opinions and ability, encouraging them to take more fully take advantage of their first amendment rights, having the ability to speak one's mind should come with some responsibility and consequence.

Seven participants also voiced concern that they felt they were not represented at all in the media and on the few occasions when they were, it was negative. Latinos represent approximately 15 percent of the U.S. population now and to feel that their culture is next to never mentioned within the news is some thing of consequence. Another respondent, a single mother of two children whose business is mostly conducted online and has been in the United States for over 10 years, felt this way.

Excerpt 3:

I think in the news, in English news they don't talk a lot about us. They don't talk about us in our culture and immigration problems.

Others shared similar feelings.

Excerpt 4:

They were mentioning about the news, a shooting happens and automatically, boom, they title it "it was an American, it was a Mexican or it was a Russian, they automatically they

title you and after that all the people that are automatically hated, you know Chinese or Japanese or Mexicans or Americans, automatically because they did the shooting we have to hate all of them, we have to hate the race just for one person.

This of course is not unusual from studies done with other communication mediums who also noted the same things, that the Hispanic population was poorly represented ... when it was represented. Jonathan Puente expressed the thought that in the beginning social media even tried to keep the Latino population out of their networks, which, if true, would create even more of a disconnect between Mexican Americans and their host culture. It might have been cause for the disconnect that Puente felt many Mexicans had with social media. He cited that many of his Mexican friends were a lot more immature or played games or used social cues that were outdated.

Excerpt 5:

Why were most white people leaving Myspace and a big thing at the time was you could only join Facebook if you had an e-d-u. mailing address. So they were saying is that a way to keep Facebook white? You know like, a lot of people of color don't have an e-d-u e-mail address and then once they opened it up to all e-mail addresses, a lot more people left Myspace and came over to Facebook. It's interesting, you ought to look that up there's a lot of articles on how Facebook you can only join face book with an edu account. It kind of kept it very white. Yeah, very exclusive, yeah. Yeah, there was a bunch of articles written about how Myspace was the ghetto of cyber space, you know because that's where all the people of color, the poor people had their accounts cause they couldn't get a Facebook cause they didn't have a edu. But that was how they compared it to walking

through the ghetto and getting harassed and there's all these shady characters and you don't know who's who.

Not only did Puente feel like some cultures were kept in the cyberspace ghetto, but another participant felt that any coverage in social media about Mexicans was primarily negative. Hare made the point, and others made a similar point as well, that when there is a shooting and it was done by a Mexican then it gets immediate attention and people will read these news stories and put stereotypical comments on their Facebook's or on News site's comments boards and will generalize the actions of one Mexican to the whole race:

Excerpt 6:

Well, it depends what they, the news is about. For example my, she wasn't my friend, her husband works with my husband, what I talking about happened two or three years ago. This couple has a daughter like mine, in that time. I not sure what happen, but she killed her daughter and that was in KSL, when she got arrested and everything. I went to see the news in KSL, all the people they are, you know you write there...yeah, comments. Most of the comments were racist, they said stuff like, 'even the Mexicans don't love each other,' 'they kill,' 'they kill kids,' and 'why did they come here.?' Most of the people come here, because they want a better life.

A participant, who has been in the U.S. for five years, shared similar thoughts about only receiving negative attention. With primarily negative attention focused on the Mexican American culture, it can only be presumed that this would affect their social identity to some extent.

Excerpt 7:

I don't know, every time I hear about Mexico it has to be something negative. Someone killing someone, someone dealing drugs, um, and I mean they don't have to but they just

don't pay attention to the culture itself, they just pay attention to the bad things that happen in the country.

Five of the twelve people interviewed specifically said that online news and news in general misrepresented them. One participant, who has been in the U.S. for 17 years and is a representative of the Mexican population, felt that the news was mostly negative toward Hispanic people, and that oftentimes people would stereotype Mexicans, because of the negative stories they viewed online.

Excerpt 8:

And its always just a hot topic but, ummm, it seems to be more negative than positive because Americans they don't want immigrants here and they don't want, you know, they don't take the time to investigate or get to know the person without give them the title of 'the Mexican' or 'oh, the Salvadorian,' you know? They title us or automatically they think something bad about us or you know, U.S. American if you have a bad experience with Latin person at America they'll start building up a hatred towards, um, Hispanics, just because of that event that happened in your life, negative with that person and it just varies. It seems to be more negative than positive and if Americans could really turn around and see us.

Participants seemed to feel that Americans were swayed by the negative media they saw online, or the stories about drug dealers or killings that occurred in Mexico or the United States. The consistent finger pointing towards only the things Mexicans could do wrong, did not make them feel right. A participant who has been in the country for over five years said,

Excerpt 9:

I think that because of the stereotypes it is quite negative. Yeah, it's actually pretty negative with all those drug dealers and stuff like that, but um I don't know. I don't feel like Mexican Americans don't have representation here, unless its negative stereotype and then it turns around.”

While social media have made it possible for people to open up about their feelings on issues, those feelings are not always welcomed, even if they are true or positive. As mentioned before, there is little control that can be exercised online. The control is lacking, but the questions comes to mind of how much can really be controlled in regards to free speech, namely first amendment rights. Unless a person specifically mentions a place, a date, a name(s) and an action that they plan to execute then there is next to no case that can be made for someone who has been offended or hurt by racist or hateful comments online.

Many individuals interviewed shared the feeling that they wanted to be treated as an individual, but because of their skin color or their accent that was not possible. Placing a person within only one culture because of their skin color and not allowing them to adopt or integrate within the other culture could possibly make their social identity more tenuous.

Excerpt 10:

Oh yeah, and I just think its funny and I just feel bad for people like that, that they are, that they don't want, that they get so carried away about a story that happened and they start hating the individual, the race and you know, there's nothing that we can and the fact that I'm Mexican or that there are a lot of Mexican killers or want to hurt other people, they were raised different from me, just because they are a bad person, just because my neighbor is a bad person doesn't make me a person, you know and you know, unfortunately the comments are so negative, they're always, I think people, or I think

media has made us so, or I think Facebook has made us so open, or because before the twenty-first century you could never share your feelings or you know, you could never stand up for yourself, said Beca Royce.

Before the twenty-first century, news comments came in the form of letters to the editor, which were handpicked by the editor to go in the paper. But just one article can get thousands of comments. There were a lot of negative words that showed up in the word frequency cloud created on NVIVO (Appendix C)—the word frequency cloud shows the words that showed up the most in all the interviews combined--words like negative, bad, and never. These words were grouped together and were located closest to the words Hispanic, Latino, news, and Mexican, which could illustrate that Mexicans really do feel negatively stereotyped by people and the news.

The researcher found that Mexican Americans felt that social media and its comment boards made them feel hurt and feel like outsiders. They often felt cognitive dissonance, seeing and being told that the U.S. is a land of opportunity and then coming to the land and not being accepted, not being allowed or welcomed to partake of the opportunities.

Feelings hurt by other’s opinions expressed in social media.

Mexican Americans not only felt misrepresented or forgotten in online news and social media, but they also felt degraded. Feeling bad about your native culture can cause a great deal of disconnect and can weaken social identity, along with integration abilities (Shinnar, 2008; Berry, 1991).

Excerpt 11:

“It’s like after you see the news and TV and it makes you feel so unbelievable. It’s crappy to see that and hear that. Sometimes I try to avoid it. They talk about depressing things like kidnappings and rapes. They don’t say anything nice, pretty much.

Many of the participants mentioned how their feelings were hurt when they first read the comments posted on online news stories or on Facebook and other social media forums. Some expressed that they were able to move past those feelings of hurt but others expressed that those comments, although they believed them to be ignorant, were still hurtful. A participant who has been in the U.S. for 15 years said,

Excerpt 12:

And you get really offended, but then you realize that people just don't know. A lot of the comments there are really offensive but these people they have a different lifestyle, they grew up here, things were a little different here, their judicial system works. But a lot of Mexicans when they come up here and get a lot of those negative comments, those negative feelings, they're offended, they want to fight back but we're the ones that are uh, some people call it invading this country, uh, we're the ones who came here, its optional but you just deal with the good and the bad, you just deal with it.

One woman started crying when she began to talk about the comments she sees online.

Excerpt 13:

Most of the comments were racist, they said stuff like, 'even the Mexicans don't love each other', 'they kill', 'They kill kids', and 'Why did they come here?' Most of the people come here because they want a better life.

Many participants mentioned that they wanted to come to the United States because it offered a better life than the one they had in Mexico or because their parents wanted a better life for them [Appendix G]. They were often saddened by the comments on social media sites, because Mexican Americans were just seeking to live the American dream.

Excerpt 14:

You know, the thing to remember is...it make me sad,
a participant said, in regards to things she has seen on Facebook about her culture. Another participant spoke of how hurtful the comments were.

Excerpt 15:

Do you mean if I've seen the comments? After having been in DC, here, but um, for example in the beginning it was very painful to hear how people were referring to the Hispanic community, like when they were saying we were stealing jobs and that we were, uh, you know, destroying their country or living with those taxes that they are paying and that and living with that and I didn't have any answers. You can see that people, that they are convinced they believe that it is true, but listening to all these stories that people have, their struggling, you realize that these people don't have anything and if they are getting mad at them I just get so sad, they don't understand how the immigrants suffer and all the ignorance that is around and um it wasn't helping me to know this from people when there are people fighting or trying to get a better opportunity, so uh, being part of a change, I think that has what has helped me to overcome those problems.

Two of the participants said that the comments were hurtful and they said if those who make the hurtful comments had lived in Mexico, they would understand who Mexicans really are and why they wanted to live in America. A participant said as much and began crying as she expressed these thoughts.

Excerpt 16:

Instead of us focusing on the positive, it's just the negative all the time...I mean, I have cried a lot when there is negative comments like that, where people on the immigration. I have a lot people I know who have come to this country, and I know they are illegal and I

can't help them and I know that they are not bad people, but at the same time I know that they are here to just provide for their families, because unfortunately in our country, in South America and other countries there are governments that are not as good or organized as we are. I mean we are way more organized in the United States. I mean yes we are corrupted in our country, but every country is corrupted. You know, if, people that they have so many negative thoughts, I want to send them to Mexico and leave them on the streets of Mexico for a month or live in Central America, to see the conditions how people live there, then I can guarantee you that their opinion of Latin Americans or any immigrants will change cause they've had everything, I mean they have everything.

She also said that most of the Mexicans coming to this country just want to work and take care of their families, but she often feels stereotyped online by some people in this country.

Excerpt 17:

In this country you get fired from you work and then the government will pay you to do nothing. In Mexico or Latin America you don't get those privileges, you will die in the street the minute that they kick you out of their job. I mean, I would love to see all those negative people that have all those negative comments go down there, go serve over there and then you'll change your opinions about any negative or any negative opinions that you have. Go serve other people and I can guarantee that their mind will change. And that what I will tell them, they are closed minded, they have lived in a place where everything is given them in silver platter, they have never experienced being poor, they have never experienced that not having food for not one day, but for weeks or being able to survive on rice weeks.

The participants felt hurt from the negative comments in social media, especially those made on news comment boards. Ana Lamb, a community leader, reads KSL articles a lot and finds that the comment boards that discuss her country and political issues are often frustrating.

Excerpt 18:

KSL, that is where you read. First off they, I have Hispanic accent and when there is something going on with the Hispanic community I look on KSL and pretty much everyone agrees on those comments there that Mexicans have to go back to their country, well, yeah there are a lot of Mexicans here in U.S. but not every Hispanic is Mexican, so at the beginning I was like why do they say that and I was kinda mad at first, but eventually, after a few years really you know, time, after all these years, they haven't learned that not every Hispanic is Mexican and I get frustrated and mad about that but yeah, you can see every time something happens with a Hispanic person they say that and now, I can see why they are saying that.

These hurt feelings from reading things online in the media and its users can cause the social identity to suffer because reading messages that insult your core culture cause dissonance and either cause a person to draw more closely to the native culture or can cause that person to completely leave their native culture and adapt the host culture (Berry, 1991). And in some cases it causes anger and violence. Their social identity is weakened when they see things online and they continue to feel disconnected from their out-group, especially since their out-group insists on pushing them away. These comments are hurtful because they directly attack who these people are and where they come from.

Mexican disconnect from their out-group.

When one is not able to compare their Mexican American in-group positively with their out-group this can cause a resistance within and Mexican Americans may disengage their ability to integrate and maintain a positive social identity (Shinnar, 2008; Berry, 1997). Social identity theory posits that when a race does not feel that they compare positively to a dominant out-group that their social identity may be denigrated (Shinnar, 2008). In their interview, participants typically felt that Mexicans were their in-group and that Americans who had lived in the country for their whole lives were their out-group, even though the Mexicans interviewed were legal citizens of the United States, who considered themselves to be Americans and were proud to be a Americans.

Five participants mentioned how they felt they were considered invaders or how Americans did not want them in their country and how they wanted to solve the immigration problem by kicking them out. The word invader, as shown in Appendix F, was used six different times within the interviews. The participants were often exposed to these negative messages online and some of them reacted with feelings of cognitive dissonance, not sure where they belonged in the scheme of cultures. Some felt that they were visitors in this country and should just put up with some of the stereotypical things said about them. However, one participant felt she was as much an invader as any other American, Mexican or otherwise.

Excerpt 19:

[In regards to online comment boards] You know they title us or automatically they think something bad about us or you know, U.S. American if you have a bad experience with Latin person at America they'll start building up a hatred towards, um, Hispanics, just because of that event that happened in your life, negative with that person and it just

varies. It seems to be more negative than positive and if Americans could really turn around and see us, then we could and if the immigration problem was to be resolved, we could help the deficit that the United States has currently, if they were to give access to a lot of people to pay taxes. But Americans see us as invaders. That we came to their land, even though it isn't really their land, so yeah. And we're not and I think Americans are just as much invaders as we are and I will take that as an invader if a native American whose says I am invader I will take that but Americans I will see that as...and sometimes we focus on the negative all the time and if we were to focus on the positive and really turn around.

As mentioned in the literature review, Mexican Americans relate to their in-group (Mexicans) and when their in-group is stereotyped by the dominant out-group then according to Mummendey and Scriver (1983), the Mexicans will feel a lowered social identity, which in turn will lower their self-esteem. When a person's social identity and self-esteem are lowered then that person will seek to differentiate their in-group from the out-group they feel threatened or hurt by (Mummendey & Scriver, 1983; Croucher, 2011). From comments made in interviews, there may be some Mexican Americans suffering some lowered social identity when they are stereotyped and receive negative attention in the world of social media.

Mexican Americans, when they consider their in-group to be their Mexican culture, will more than likely not want to be connected to the dominant out-group, which will then dampen their ability to integrate their two cultures. When Mexican Americans say they feel that Americans do not want them in their country, then Mexican Americans do not feel like they are a part of the United States (Padilla & Perez, 2003). This was mentioned quite often when the

participants spoke of the disconnect they felt from the American culture after they read the negative comments posted online, on Facebook, and on news outlet comments boards.

Another example of this is that, according to the participant responses, the host culture (United States) does not make the receiving culture (Mexican Americans) feel fairly represented or welcomed into the host country even though they are both legal and documented or trying to be so. The negative stereotypes voiced in social media may make it difficult for Mexicans to favorably compare their in-group with the out-group, which according to Shinnar (2008) will make it less possible for them to have a positive social identity. And it may be disheartening to those trying to integrate their Mexican culture with the United States’.

Croucher (2011) presented the idea that, “Social networking sites have gained in popularity among immigrants in many nations as a way not only to keep in touch with members of their in-group, but also to foster relationships with members of their new dominant cultural milieu.” This paper has examined those relationships and has found from the interviews that Mexican Americans did indeed keep in better touch with their in-group. However, from a news and social perspective Mexican Americans still seemed to have difficulties establishing a relationship with the dominant culture.

Social media have just as much force, if not more, as television, newspapers, etc., since it can provide everything the others can, along with a more real connection to other people, from all backgrounds.

RQ2: What impact do social media have on Mexican Americans and their native culture?

Connection to Mexicans’ in-group.

As Croucher (2011) said, the Internet gives various immigrant groups the ability to reconnect with their homeland and strengthen community ties. One very positive thing with social

media is that it gives Mexican Americans the ability to maintain their culture by being able to stay in touch with family and friends in Utah and make connections in the United States with those from Mexico. Most people use Facebook to stay connected to family and friends and Mexicans are no different, but their connections usually span to more distant areas and cultures (Sheldon, Abad, & Hinsch, 2011; Waldinger, Lim, & Cort, 2007).

Mexican American participants seemed to particularly like using Facebook to stay connected to and integrated with their culture in Mexico by keeping in touch with their Mexican friends from home online and by reading the news stories their friends in Mexico post on their Facebook accounts. Those who have lived in the United States for the majority of their life have been able to make connections with family in Mexico that they have never met. All participants said that Facebook was what they used most often, and it was the one they used most out of the online social media outlets. More than half of the participants do not even use any other social media outlets.

One of the participants, a Mexican woman who moved here 17 years ago, is able to keep in touch with her family and her husband's family who are all still in Mexico by using Facebook.

Excerpt 20:

My family, his family they live in Mexico and I can post photos, they can see the photos.

In Facebook you can know everything. For example, we went on vacation in California this past winter and they can see our photos. And they say, 'Oh, I see you went to California and had the time of you lives.'

Some Mexican Americans have even met up with friends and family they left behind in Mexico that they either had not seen or sometimes even heard from in over a decade or family they had never met at all. Jonathan Puente, a Mexican American leader in Utah County said

Excerpt 21:

You know it's kind of funny, you make me think of my mom. She's only been on Facebook less than a year. And her friends, you know she's a school teacher, and her friends on Facebook are just her teachers but then she found all her childhood friends from Mexico and you know, so all a sudden for like me like 20 people I didn't know added me as a friend and I was like, 'Mom who are these people?' And she's like, 'Oh, that's your cousin, that's your aunt, and that duh, duh, duh, duh.' And you start seeing connections that don't think would have been there without social media you know like and she hasn't been on there very long but in a weird way it's bringing her world. Now I'm chatting with cousins I didn't know.

One participant was able to connect with old friends from Mexico who had come to the United States.

Excerpt 22:

And I could find two of my friends, one from high school back in Mexico. I found one and she lives in Colorado. And I talk to her on Facebook, 'Oh, nice to see you, nice to know about you.' And one of them came to visit us. Facebook helped us to find all our friends that we haven't talked to in a long time.

Facebook has also made it possible for community leaders to gain more involvement from the community by making connections through friends of friends on Facebook and being able to get a message out to many people in a fast way. Salvador Lazalde, a Mexican leader in Salt Lake City who is in charge of over 10,000 Mexicans, said adamantly that Facebook has helped him to reach a broader audience.

Excerpt 23:

I've [been] using Facebook for the last nine months. In nine months I have six hundred friends already and when I have friends come from the organization I mean my Facebook, I have, uh, Senator Robles, I mean I have people who work for the state ... it is fast. You do something and its right there. It's really fast. You want to know something, 'we are doing meeting 4 south or whatever' people do it right away. Now you get Internet on your phone and now you can do serious messages on your phone. So, you can reply quick and fast. E-mails you have to stay in your office or at home but Facebook, I mean it helps. I mean you can do e-mail from your phone but Facebook, more people see it, people follow it."

It was Shinnar (2008) who emphasized that people relate best to their in-group and if they feel connected to their in-group then they are more likely to have a positive social identity. Having the ability to find family and friends on Facebook, who are not in the country, gives Mexican Americans a stronger connection to their in-group and may improve their social identity and self-esteem. Some participants, who had only been using Facebook this past year, are feeling that new connection.

Excerpt 24:

I never did it, it never caught my attention. I heard of other people doing it, I saw my wife doing it and it's a really cool tool, it's a really cool way to keep in contact with your friends, especially with me when they live really far away. I just never got into it until two months ago.

Community leader Salvador Lazalde has found that Facebook has made it possible for him to connect his friends and others to the Mexican Federation and he is able to find out what is going

on back in Mexico and share it on Facebook. He was also able to connect with a family member from back in Mexico that he had never met.

Excerpt 25:

That's why when I talk about family, when you have people there, where you have then you know they want to be a member of the club or the Mexican Federation but at the same time, here in Utah my name, lots of people know my name because lots of time when they see my name on Facebook they want to be my friend because they know what I am doing, they know that I friend those people. Like Peter Carew, every one wants to be friend, like everyone wants to be Luz Roble's friend because who knows something, people they want to be your friend. But right now I have friends from all parts of Mexico. I like it because I want to know what's going on there. If I want to know about my country and can go to my FB, say what's going on I heard this happened, and they know what's going on. But once again I need to be careful with people I don't know, I don't want to answer questions but if they ask personal questions like the other day they say, 'Who's your dad? What's your name? What's going on?' I say, 'Why do you want to know this?' And they say, 'Because your dad have my last name.' And then I say, 'Oh its part of the family.' They want to know if we are family and then we start to talking and then we find we coming from the same family cause of same last name.

The participants seemed to not feel a great disconnect from their in-group when they came and lived in the United States. They were able to stay in touch with those from home and meet others in the country who shared their native culture.

In Appendix C, word frequency cloud using NVIVO was made. As explained before, all of the stop-words were deleted. Some of the most used words were "Facebook," "know,"

“family,” and “friends.” This may show the connection that Mexican Americans enjoy having Facebook to connect to family and friends and people they used to know. Being able to connect to your in-group and feel positive about your in-group creates a stronger social identity (Shinnar, 2008).

Connection to the community.

All three community leaders often found that having a Facebook account and a Facebook page for the groups they represent was very useful for communicating with different communities. Salvador Lazalde, along with the other community leaders, has found that Facebook makes it easier to connect with specific communities. Using his Facebook account and the Mexican Federation’s Facebook page, Lazalde, who has been in the U.S. for 34 years, is able to communicate what is going on in the world and he is able to keep track of what is going on in Mexico, whether it is significant or not.

Excerpt 26:

Having a Facebook you get your information really fast. Most people won’t check their e-mails anymore; they check Facebook or twitter. I don’t if you know what happened on Saturday. An actress passed away in Mexico City, and this person was very popular, but you don’t see e-mails, “Hey this person passed away,” you see Facebook, boom right there. So I think that we don’t want it but Facebook is one of the richest to let people know what’s going on. Once again, I am one of the people who didn’t want it, but I think that is a new way to get information from people.

Lazalde uses Facebook to keep up with what is going on with his community back in Mexico, but he is also able to effectively communicate with his Mexican community in Salt Lake City.

Excerpt 27:

I think so because it is fast. You do something and its right there. It's really fast. 'You want to know something, we are doing meeting four south or whatever,' people do it right away. Now you get Internet on your phone and now you can do serious messages on your phone. So, you can reply quick and fast, e-mails you have to stay in your office or at home but Facebook, I mean it helps. I mean you can do e-mail from your phone but Facebook, more people see it, people follow it.

Jonathan Puente, a community leader for the Latinos in Action, has found that Facebook is really useful for getting in touch with the Latino youth.

Excerpt 28:

Do you guys know off the top of your head how many people are following us? [Puente asks his students at Provo High School where he works for Latinos in Action]. Around 2000. And most of our, um, anything we put on, we mostly get around 800 views. So I mean these kids are obviously on and on you know checking us out. So yeah we get that with Facebook.

Facebook makes it very easy for these community leaders to communicate with a large group of people about events they are having for Latinos/Mexicans in the area. It makes it easier for Mexicans to connect with others from their country and be able to keep up with their culture, but it also gives them the opportunity to meet and discuss what they feel they are missing in this country. They are able to create awareness within the Mexican population residing in the U.S.

Puente said:

Excerpt 29:

Yeah, I know the thing is we get a bunch of questions. Kids ask us on Facebook like when are you guys coming to this school or when are you coming to this school?

Messages are communicated more quickly with social media and Mexican Americans' ability to make connections with others from their culture in the United States happens a lot faster too.

Lazalde has been able to make connections with other Mexican American representatives in Utah and the country in general.

Excerpt 30:

I've [been] using Facebook for the last nine months. In nine months I have six hundred friends already and when I have friends come from the organization, I mean my Facebook, I have, uh, Senator Robles, I mean I have people who work for the state. Only half my friends from the organization. I mean Ben McLuchlen is a friend of mine. The Mexican Federation is going to do that work.

Not only are community leaders able to connect to people in their area, but Mexican Americans find that social media can give them the ability to make connections with their leaders. One participant uses Facebook to keep up with what is going on with the Latino population in the United States,

Excerpt 31:

Sometimes I get stuff on TV and Facebook. I listen to the radio. I can read some English. Yah, sometimes he puts up both English and Spanish. Tony. J-y-a-p-i-a-s. You can ask him questions on Facebook and make calls on the radio. Yes. Because I follow Twitter and she's a lawyer from California, her name is Jessica Lawigus. She talks about a lot of stuff too and immigration. They, I follow her too. She has Facebook and twitter too. And she used to show up at a show in the morning and speak Spanish.

Altogether, Mexican Americans in the interviews shared a lot of positive insights into their social media usage, especially with the ability to connect to friends and family back home, but how does

this really help them integrate with their new society with which they reside? A male participant who has been in the U.S. for around six years felt positive.

Excerpt 32:

No, no, we have our own network systems. First of all, it's because we have big families and because Facebook a lot of times will set you up automatically and it blows up just like that, you have almost your contacts. At first I had 40 or 50 and then I go, 'Damn I have 200 of them.' And the thing I am seeing is the friends of the friends we're friends. Ha ha it's beautiful.

While they were able to connect to their in-group community in the U.S., there was no connect to out-group community. While some would question the need of this study because social media so obviously makes it easy to connect with people, but it does not necessarily help them connect with the right people, or with the people who will further their ability to integrate and feel connected to the society with which they reside. Half of the Mexican Americans interviewed said that they typically read and wrote in Spanish when they were online. A huge part of integrating and connecting to the host culture is learning the language. How can they learn the language any better if they are primarily using social media to connect with those that share their culture and language and when they choose to forego using English?

RQ3: How do Mexican Americans use social media to adapt?

Learning the language and understanding the culture.

Berry (1997) said when expressing why integration was better than assimilation, separation, and marginalization, that “involvement in two cultural communities” may be why integration is one of the best methods for adjustment. One way that Mexican Americans and other cultures can be involved in their native culture and their host culture is by having an

understanding of both languages. Social media, primarily Facebook, have helped to enhance the English skills of Mexican Americans and it seems it has assisted some integrate their culture to the United States. Facebook is primarily in English, although settings can be altered to Spanish. Eight of the Mexican Americans interviewed said that their choice of language on Facebook depended on their audience, although most of the time it was English.

When they were talking to friends and family in Mexico, they typically wrote in Spanish, but when they were communicating with people in the United States they preferred to communicate in English. Mexican Americans were able to integrate by learning English, but they were also able to maintain their Spanish language by communicating in both languages, depending on who they were talking to.

Excerpt 33:

I use both, because, like I have family from my husband's side. They like to know what is going on in our life so I use English. But for my friends and family in Mexico I do it in Spanish.

For most of the interviewees, it depended on who they were talking with, or what they were reading online.

Excerpt 34:

I read in Spanish when I look at how my hometown is doing. They're going through a hard time right now with the war on drugs and that's really affecting where I am from, so I read their news in Spanish because that's straight from their newspapers. But, as far as world news I read that in English.

Three of the twelve people interviewed said they specifically prefer to read and write in Spanish online. A participant who has been in the U.S. for about nine years, said,

Excerpt 35:

Oh yeah, you know my people are out of States [Facebook reference] of course they do everything in Spanish. Some people are in the United States but are just visiting a little while, they have a hard time in Spanish culture. I translate for them, Spanish to English. I prefer to use Spanish. If I have got Spanish friends, then I am going to use Spanish. You can communicate better. It's easier.

Participants interviewed used both languages online and are able to more effectually meld their two cultures together, although even that can get a bit confusing. This is unique, since all of those interviewed spoke Spanish as their first or primary language.

Excerpt 36:

They speak Spanglish. And then they say they don't understand that and I post something in Spanish and they don't understand it, and so I told you. I speak Spanish but I speak English and so, some people on Facebook I know can't even speak Spanish.

The majority of those interviewed shared feelings of how social media helped them with their writing and grammar in English, but often said that they still did not have very many friends on Facebook who were American. As mentioned before, most Mexican Americans use Facebook to keep in touch with family and friends back home. One participant said matter-of-factly that:

Excerpt 37:

When I'm with English speaking of course it helps me with English. It helps you with the typing, with grammar, you know, language and English, you know.

And social media helps some to enhance their reading skills as well. The need to be able to speak English, in order to use social media, which is dominantly an English driven realm, may drive some Mexican Americans to learn the language.

Excerpt 38:

Of course, it improves, helps a lot. Helps me to improve my reading. Actually when I don't know a word I look on the Internet and I can write better.

Social media can help Mexicans to quickly overcome that feeling of not understanding the language, slang, culture, or English word definitions. Many of those interviewed like to use Google Translate and other Internet applications to look up words they do not know.

Excerpt 39:

Of course, it improves, helps a lot. Helps me to improve my reading. Actually when I don't know a word I look on the Internet and I can write better.

A participant said through her daughter, who acted as interpreter, that she practices and enhances her English skills using Google and Facebook on her phone. Those interviewed have access to things like Google Translate via internet and can quickly find ways to understand words they did not know. Social media and the Internet seem to offer a quick way for Mexican Americans to get answers to their language questions.

Excerpt 40:

On the Internet I like to find the words I don't know. I hear a new word and I like to know what that mean. It's like my dictionary. I like it because I don't have to look through dictionaries. I like to ask questions when I don't know something.

Social media often force Mexican American to use both languages in order to connect with their Mexican friends and family back home and with their American acquaintances in the United States. This helps to further the integration process.

Excerpt 41:

Um, I think its one of the things that have been more helpful for me because I see myself

forced to spell things, so yeah, I can remember how to spell and learn new words.

One participant, who is currently spending a few months working in Mexico, said that he likes to use Facebook to help him remember the language.

Excerpt 42:

Myself, personally, of course, I get to practice my grammar and then I get to practice, you know, my English and my grammar. So, if I don't get over there [United States] I could forget it, maybe not forget it, not practice it and just not catch spiderwebs and [deleted]. So, I like to keep it going and it helps it to maintain myself more fluid in that area of communications.

Of course, there are those who admit that social media can be negative for building language skills. Hermana Fole feels like Facebook and other social media sites are not useful for her two sons, who were born and raised in the United States.

Excerpt 43:

My kids don't see me doing that and so they're not interested. They don't like to go on the Facebook. They don't like it. And their reading is much better; their grades is much better. And the kids now their reading and grades are down. People don't do the full sentences; you have to figure out what they're saying.

Some participants said they liked to use Facebook and discussion forums, where they can ask specific questions and get answers from people. This helped one of the participants to understand American culture more fully. Ana Lamb said that when she first came to America she had a difficult time understanding some of the cultural differences between Mexico and the United States and she would often look online at discussion boards—a form of social media—to learn about the differences between the two cultures.

Excerpt 43:

We have very strict norms in Mexico like say, you just to go out and eat. We don't like your kids, culturally, to throw food or like, my girls, we don't like to go out without our bows, their bows, so you know, they have to be well dressed like that and that's how we have strict norms. But with my husband, he is more laid back. He doesn't care. So when I was struggling with that I went online and like, I was reading about it, like something that the Mexican culture and American culture are different, like they [United States] don't care how you dress.

Even though she's lived in the United States for over a decade, she still uses social media to get answers to some of the American cultural differences that confuse her.

Excerpt 44:

Well, you gotta look and go to Google also and you know, you go to Google and they answer for something you don't know--go to the Google Internet forums is what he's referring to. Oh yeah, I do it all the time--ask questions on Facebook.

Social media make the intermingling of cultures easier in some ways. As one participant discussed his feelings about America, he admitted appreciation for the ability to be able to keep up with both the American and Mexican cultures, no matter where he is in the world.

Excerpt 45:

I feel Americanized and everything I do is American. Do you understand me? Anything I do is American. So, so anything I can do that goes with the system I know I'm not with that [deleted] straight up, with the system and check how people can use your first and last name as a weapon against yourself. They don't have a check on that. So, I make my social network against the system. The social system that goes with the network, the good thing

about them I can be anywhere around the world and still be from where I am from, so I can found out if my friends are having a good day or if someone's been born. That's beautiful to me. No matter where I am in the world, I can get connected and start my own little company. And I can pick it up anywhere in the world and start it just like that.

And some just seek to feel a part of something.

Excerpt 46:

There are some people who get on the Internet because they don't know who they are yet and want to feel part of something.

And this was said by a participant who came to the United States when she was sixteen and still struggles to know which culture she identifies with the most.

Learning the language and being able to more fully understand the out-group's culture, the participants often saw the United States in a positive light, as a good country to live in. But they did not feel so positively towards native born U.S. citizens.

Overriding question: How do social media affect the social identity of Mexican Americans?

In conclusion, the author would like to summarize these results by more clearly answering the overriding question. There are several effects that social media have on Mexican Americans' identity. The findings mentioned illustrate that it gives Mexican Americans a way to connect to their in-group. No matter where they are in the world, they can use Facebook and online news to keep in touch with friends and keep current on the things going on back home.

The negative comments posted on social media about their native culture, the stereotypes addressed to them because of their skin color, their language, etc. has the potential to negatively affect them. They have no connection to the U.S. when Americans do not make them feel positive

or good about their native culture or when members of the host culture post negative, racist things online and in social media.

Immigrants are not able to integrate if they do not feel included within the American culture. Many participants did not feel included in or inclined towards the United States when they saw negative comments online. But Facebook does give Mexican Americans some ability to integrate and strengthen their social identity within their host culture, because many of the participants use Facebook in English and many of them say that using Facebook and other social media outlets in English has helped them to understand the language and to understand the American culture which is an essential part of immigrating.

Conclusion

The research done in this paper not only identifies that Mexican Americans are stereotyped, to an extent, in all forms of media, including social media, but the results from the study conducted begins to show that social media affect how Mexican Americans integrate. It affects their social identity.

It was mentioned in the literature review of this thesis that research had been done to understand why people use social media and that in the past few years researchers have started to dig deep into the reasons for the effects of social media, especially on immigrants (Correa, Hinsley, De Zuniga, & 2010; Mangold & Faulds, 2009; Witte, Frank, & Lester, 2009; Wang, Huang, Huang, & Wang, 2009). Many researchers and journalists state that there is a great deal of negative representation or poor representation of other cultures, including the Mexican culture, online (Citron & Norton, 2011; Pfister & Soliz, 2011; Kim & McKay-Semmler, 2012; Croucher, 2011; Hughey & Daniels, 2013; Boyd & Marwick, 2011). And recall that Hernandez and Kim

said only recently has research begun to specifically highlight how social media affect the communication habits and adaptation of sojourners and immigrants.

This paper represented the findings and added to the findings of other researchers, in regards to social media and its uses and effects, especially on immigrant populations. Yes, social media are used to create and maintain relationships with those geographically nearby and those geographically distant (Croucher, 2011). Many Mexican American participants said their main reason for using social media was to find out news regarding family and friends.

Yes, social media give Mexican Americans, and maybe other immigrants in the United States, the ability to more easily learn English and understand the United States' culture. They were often required to have some ability at writing in English on social media forums. Mexican Americans in this study felt that they were able to understand different social cues more readily and by being able to look the meaning of words up on Google and having to read and respond to Facebook friends in English, they learned to write and read a lot better.

This research makes a deep connection to the positive and lasting effects of social media, but it also highlights the potential negative effects. Citron and Norton believed that the Internet has the ability to shape public discourse online, including hate speech, if not properly moderated (2011). Hughey and Daniels and Boyd and Marwick showed that newspaper comment boards were full of racist comments when the story dealt with immigration (2013).

Coded racial language has long been used to convey subtle, yet potent, racial meanings in ways that appear well reasoned and focused on the common good. Newspaper comment fields engender specific types of coded language to fly well under the radar of moderators, like in other surveyed virtual formats. For example, young Facebook users often employ

coded language or ‘social steganography’ to hide the intended meanings behind posts and status updates from parents and moderators.

They pointed out the negative comments, and this research supplemented with the effects.

Mexican Americans were hurt; they were often brought to tears by the things they read on online comment boards, on Facebook and other social media outlets. The majority of comments were made by Americans who blatantly wrote that they did not want Mexicans in their country—legal or not. These comments or postings often caused an inner battle within many of the participants interviewed in this thesis, who spoke that they could not understand the strong hate focused in their direction when all they wanted was a better life.

Masses of research have been dedicated to adaptation and to the understanding of acculturation. This research shows integration as being ideal. As the United States has adopted this adaptation as their ideal way for immigrants to adapt their cultures to the U.S., it makes it hard for Mexican Americans to reach this ideal when their social identity can not identify with its host culture and its native culture is insulted because they feel threatened or hostile about the things they read online, as illustrated by the comments made by participants in this paper’s research.

In summation, social media’s effects are far reaching and barely tapped. This research shows that while Mexican Americans are able to use social media to stay connected to their native culture, social media often creates an even greater barrier for them with their host.

It is also worth noting that this research opens the door for more research into how social media fit into current communication theories and perhaps begins to identify new theories that come from this new communications medium. One example from this research is selective exposure theory that states that we choose to view the information that support our prior beliefs

most, but how applicable is that theory in regards to social media, when hundreds of unique opinions are seen daily that do not necessarily reinforce any preexisting beliefs, but instead challenge those beliefs. This research sought to understand how social media affect the social identity of Mexican Americans. It did not generally search for a black and white answer either. Meaning that the research was not done in order to understand whether social media affected Mexican American's social identity positively or negatively, but instead the research explored potential ways it might affect their social identity. Answers were found, but it was not one way or the other. Their social identity was both potentially strengthened and potentially weakened. It cannot be denied that learning the language greatly helps with integration and in many cases, social media reinforced Mexican's language learning skills. They were forced to type in English in order to communicate with their American associates and friends. Then again, many of the Mexican Americans chose to use Spanish over English online. They also used social media as a tool solely to communicate with those that shared their culture, which would not have been beneficial towards assimilating, but could help to bolster their social identity in connection to feeling close to their in group. But what really needs to be examined is their relationship with their out group. Not only did they feel offended and deeply hurt by the posts and comments made about them online by Americans, but they also were limiting their integration process by connecting to mostly Mexicans on social media. Temporarily this solution may have bolstered their social identity, but if they cannot communicate properly or feel accepted by their host culture then this affects their job, their future relationships, and their social comfort. This research did deal closely with the negative comments and posts online, not because it was meant to be the main focus of this research, but because those that were interviewed were very forthcoming with

stronger and more negative emotions when they discussed their relationship with their host culture online.

In summary, this research opens the door to discovering how social media affect its users. It gives a glimpse of how people are more fully exercising their first amendment rights. In summary, this research does not make a case for or against social media, but shows some of its potential effects within general contexts.

Limitations

There are several limitations in this study, one of which would be for the researcher to draw from a more diverse population, for instance, interviewing Mexican Americans on the East Coast and West Coast and not just Mexican Americans living in Utah. Other limitations of this study are that those interviewed did not have a lot of online media habits before they came to the United States because most have been in the United States for at least ten years. This study could be even better if interviews were conducted with several people who had not been in the United States for over seven years, which is around the time computers and the Internet became a lot more accessible and prevalent in the home. Another limitation to this study is that the majority of the interviews were conducted in English, instead of in the participant's native language, which could have limited the participant's level of comfort in disclosure. Questions could have been narrowed down from social media to how Mexican Americans felt about online news stories and the comments boards that accompany those stories.

Future Research

This research was a very broad look at the effects of social media on immigrants, specifically Mexican Hispanics. It would be beneficial if this research could be extended to a broader, larger audience of Hispanics in the United States, in order to gauge other cultures'

feelings on how they feel they are represented in the news in the United States and perhaps see the differences between each culture and whether past communication mediums' established stereotype factors into this most recent medium of communication, social media. Other future research could focus more clearly on the online news consumption and habits of Mexican Americans and if and how they contribute to online news comments boards and discussion forums.

It would be interesting to turn the results from this qualitative thesis into quantitative research in order to apply the results to a generalized audience. It would also be interesting to see if there is a specific online news site that Mexicans prefer, since seven out of the eleven Mexican Americans interviewed in this study said that they read almost all the national news at CNN, and to take the consistent results from this and build a quantitative study that could be generalized to the Mexican American population as a whole. It would also be interesting to do a qualitative study to find out why they prefer CNN to other news networks, in order to understand what strategies CNN has incorporated to gain such an audience's favor.

One other context that may be of interest for future research would be a greater look at how social media are controlled. More research could be done on social media and the first amendment. It would be extremely relevant to this research to further develop the conversation with those interviewed to understand if they recognize that social media give a person greater opportunity to exercise first amendment rights, to see if the U.S.' values on media are understood by Mexican Americans and other cultures. Future research could also delve into the communications theoretical frameworks and explore how social media affect theories, if indeed it does.

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APPENDIX A

Interview Questions in English

1. Do you use the Internet?
2. What news sites do you read?
3. How do you search for facts online?
4. Does the Internet help you to understand the United States' culture?
5. What do you believe the culture of the United States to be?
6. What social media do you use or prefer?
7. Do you feel fairly represented in America's social networks?
8. Do you feel fairly represented in the news?
9. Do you feel like social media have helped to enhance your English skills?
10. How are your English skills?
11. Have you run into any negative stereotypes or hate speech while using social media?
12. Do you feel like your views of the world have changed since you came to the U.S.?
13. Do you feel more connected, positive about the U.S. since coming here or less?
14. What were your media habits before you came to the U.S.?

APPENDIX B

Interview Questions in Spanish:

1. ¿Utiliza Internet?
2. ¿Qué sitios de noticias lees?
3. ¿Cómo busca datos en línea?
4. ¿Le ayuda el Internet a entender la cultura de los Estados Unidos?
5. ¿Como describiria usted a la cultura de los Estados Unidos?
6. ¿Qué medios de comunicación social utiliza o prefiere?
7. ¿Te sientes bien representado en las redes sociales de Estados Unidos?
8. ¿Te sientes bien representados en las noticias?
9. ¿Sientes que los medios sociales han ayudado a mejorar su inglés?
10. ¿Cómo son sus habilidades en inglés?
11. ¿Ha encontrado estereotipos negativos o expresiones de odio durante su uso de los medios sociales?
12. ¿Sientes que tu punto de vista del mundo ha cambiado desde que llegó a los EE.UU.?
13. ¿Te sientes más conectado y positiva acerca de los EE.UU. desde que llegó aquí o menos?
14. ¿Cuáles fueron tus hábitos de usar los medios de comunicacion antes de venir a los EE.UU.?

APPENDIX C

Word Frequency cloud from all interviews

again anything bad club come comments community country culture email english every
face **facebook** family feel find friend friends google helps
hispanic information internet keep kids **know** last mexican
mexico name negative never news now out **people**
person phone post right same social spanish start talk talking time whats world

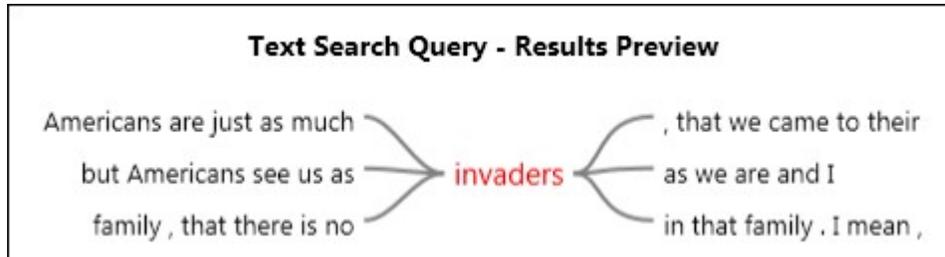
APPENDIX D

Word frequency list of all interviewed

Word	Length	Count	Weighted Percentage (%)
know	4	126	4.14
people	6	103	3.39
facebook	8	65	2.14
friends	7	33	1.09
time	4	27	0.89
friend	6	24	0.79
spanish	7	23	0.76
name	4	22	0.72
negative	8	22	0.72
english	7	21	0.69
mexico	6	21	0.69
news	4	21	0.69
now	3	21	0.69
whats	5	21	0.69
family	6	19	0.63
bad	3	17	0.56
mexican	7	16	0.53
comments	8	15	0.49
community	9	15	0.49
hispanic	8	15	0.49
again	5	14	0.46
feel	4	14	0.46
right	5	14	0.46
country	7	12	0.39
face	4	12	0.39
google	6	12	0.39
information	11	12	0.39
kids	4	12	0.39
out	3	12	0.39
person	6	12	0.39
start	5	12	0.39
talk	4	12	0.39
world	5	12	0.39
same	4	11	0.36
talking	7	11	0.36
anything	8	10	0.33
email	5	10	0.33
internet	8	10	0.33
keep	4	10	0.33
last	4	10	0.33
never	5	10	0.33
social	6	10	0.33
club	4	9	0.30
come	4	9	0.30
culture	7	9	0.30
every	5	9	0.30
find	4	9	0.30
helps	5	9	0.30
phone	5	9	0.30
post	4	9	0.30

APPENDIX E

Text search query of the word invaders



APPENDIX F

Text search query of the word better

