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Peer Conversations about Inter-racial and Inter-ethnic Friendships

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by

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to understand how early adolescents talk about cross-racial and cross-ethnic friendships. Gordon Allport's intergroup contact theory provided the framework for studying the elements needed for inter-racial and inter-ethnic friendship formation. Qualitative data were drawn from four separately recorded peer group conversations. Participants (n=18) were recruited from Parrish Middle School in Salem, Oregon. Patterns that emerged from the data were sorted, categorized and identified according to the tenets of intergroup contact theory or extensions of intergroup contact theory. Analysis also looked at the use of metaphors and storytelling among adolescents. Results showed that while intergroup contact theory tenets of interdependence and common goals can foster cross-ethnic and cross-racial friendships, most students form these friendships through friendship chaining and common interests. Dual racial identity and peer group influence can also be positive factors in cross-racial and cross-ethnic friendship development. Further, storytelling examples by adolescents showed similar techniques to those used by adults. Overall the results from this study support intergroup contact theory as continuing to be a useful conceptual framework for encouraging cross-group relations.

Keywords: peer group conversations, adolescent cross-racial friendships, intergroup contact theory

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my middle school students, for all you are yet to become and to my father, Raymond H. Buckholz, for all you helped me to be.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

In 1954 Gordon Allport published *The Nature of Prejudice* in which he attempted to explain the human tendency to perceive differences between groups of people and then make judgments based on those perceptions. For him prejudice was "an avertive or hostile attitude toward a person who belongs to a group, simply because he belongs to that group, and is therefore presumed to have the objectionable qualities ascribed to the group." (Allport, 1954, p.7). In order to reduce prejudice and foster intergroup interaction, Allport postulated that four conditions must be met: interdependence or intergroup cooperation, approval or support by authorities, equal status between groups, and common goals (Allport, 1954, Bronson & Merryman, 2009b). Allport's ideas, research and publications came to be known as intergroup contact theory and his theory was influential in the landmark legal case of *Brown vs. Board of Education,* which ended the legal segregation of races in public schools (Bronson & Merryman, 2009b).

Prior to in-depth research on child development of racial attitudes, it was assumed that when *Brown vs. Board of Education* passed in 1954, desegregation alone would improve ethnic relations among students (Slavin & Cooper, 1999). But the situation was just not that simple. As Allport (1954) pointed out, merely assembling people of different races, colors, religions and national origins in that same place at the same time is not enough to destroy stereotypes and build camaraderie (p.261). As Moody (2001) discovered when reviewing the literature on race within schools, there has been the underlying assumption "that racial heterogeneity would promote relational integration" (p.707). In reality, the research from the 1980's on has shown a consistent pattern on

interracial friendship that finds fewer than 10 percent of Whites have friends who are other than White (Bonilla-Silva & Embrick, 2007). Fifty years after the *Brown* decision elementary and secondary school segregation has persisted. The outcome of this segregation for some American youth is "few opportunities to interact with those racially, ethnically, or religiously different from themselves" (Tatum, 2007, p.109). Even when today's children have increased opportunities to interact with other races, these interactions may also be increased opportunities for cross racial rejection (Bronson & Merryman, 2009a).

Scholars needed to know if intergroup contact theory, when applied with fidelity, could impact segregation. In 2011 Thomas Pettigrew and Linda Tropp published a meta-analysis of intergroup contact theory as it has been used throughout the world. After looking at hundreds of research projects, their findings concluded that "while intergroup contact typically reduces prejudice, it is most effective for reducing prejudice when it consists of close, high quality intergroup relationships such as those afforded by cross-group friendships." (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2011, p. 117). When cross racial friendships are formed they are particularly successful in reducing prejudice and fostering other positive cross group outcomes (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2011). One of those positive outcomes is that the formation of cross group friendships leads to the reduction of interethnic anxiety in new situations (Page-Gould, Mendoza-Denton, & Tropp, 2008).

Due to cultural and generational viewpoints, friendship is a difficult concept to operationalize, but most researchers agree that friends are people who interact with each other, have a high level of interdependence, and exhibit closeness (Bonilla-Silva & Embrick, 2007). Friendship opportunities between races do exist within the school day,

but are students willing to mix or do they simply stay with their own ethnicity? One aspect of this situation is the idea of friendship potential, which has been defined by Pettigrew (2011) as "the ability of the contact situation to provide people with the opportunities to become friends" (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2011, p.117). Implementation of Allport's four conditions of intergroup contact theory may be the key to a contact situation actually encouraging cross-racial and cross-ethnic friendships. What fosters friendship is a complex equation, but the research shows that individuals who do develop cross-racial and cross-ethnic friendships have acquired the most powerful form of intergroup contact (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2011).

Since the attempts of legislators and social leaders have not ended the friendship segregation based on race that still exists in American schools today, it is important to hear from the students themselves on this topic. As a veteran middle school teacher I have an interest in learning more about the nature and formation of friendships amongst the adolescents where I teach. I designed this study in order to hear from today's youth on issues relating to friendship, race, and cross-racial friendships. Working in the mid-Willamette Valley of western Oregon, a site of recently shifting demographic balances, gave me access to adolescents willing to talk openly about race and friendship. Thus, the research question directing this inquiry is: "How do early adolescents talk about cross-racial and cross-ethnic friendships, and how are the tenets of Allport's theory reflected in their talk?" The conversational data collected was analyzed by using discourse analysis (Cameron, 2007; Ritchie, 2011b) and coded for two of the tenets of Gordon Allport's intergroup contact theory, interdependence and common goals. The other two tenets, equal status and support from authorities, were dropped as focal points of the research

because those topics that would not occur naturally in adolescent conversations. This study was an investigation of how early adolescents, those who are twelve, thirteen, and fourteen years old, view their own social interactions and the role race plays in friendship formation.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Intergroup Contact Theory

First, I would like to take an in-depth examination of intergroup contact theory. Gordon Allport's inquiry into race and intergroup relations has dominated social science for the last five decades (Slavin & Cooper, 1999).   Social psychology and sociology have placed Allport's intergroup contact theory at the center of their research, since contact between people of different groups is a fundamental concern (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2011). Allport conducted his research with World War II survivors from Europe, as well as those who had lived through race riots in the United States during the 1940's. His argument was that (for most individuals) prejudice could be reduced by equal status contact in the pursuit of common goals. If institutional support from laws, customs, or general practice existed, then the reduction would be greatly enhanced. Most importantly though, was that the contact "lead to the perception of common interests and common humanity between members" of the groups involved (Allport, 1954, p. 281). Contact that brings firsthand knowledge will produce more reasonable understandings about minority groups and for this reason, contribute to prejudices being reduced (Allport, 1954). But Allport (1954) was adamant that only the type of contact which leads people to *do* things together was likely to change attitudes (p.276). Just sitting side by side on a bus, church pew, or in a set of desks was not going to produce changed beliefs. Moody (2001) summarizes contact theory as having three key elements: (1) equal status of participants, (2) cooperative interdependence, and (3) explicit support for interracial mixing from recognized authorities in the setting (p.687). A combination of setting, purposes and

attitudes leads to interracial friendships, and when one of these three elements is lacking, interracial conflict results.

Although social psychology has been criticized for an overemphasis on the individual's prejudices and stereotypes, intergroup contact theory does take into account the essential social dimension of ethnic interaction (van Dijk, 1987). Allport (1954) acknowledged how difficult it is to define an in-group, however, he did set the parameter "that members of an in-group all use the term *we* with the same essential significance" (italics in the original- p.31). Separateness among groups is seen as a common phenomenon according to intergroup contact theory. The way people date, eat, play, worship, visit, and live follows an automatic cohesion that is not sinister, but merely convenient. Allport (1954) argued that humans form groups which naturally tend to stay apart, but he did not see this as exclusively a manifestation of prejudice. Instead he explained it through a human's desire to be with their own culture, which is easier and takes less effort (Allport, 1954).This preference for one's own kind produces a natural prejudice against those who are out-group, or not "we". These "common prejudices create common bonds" that further strengthen this social cohesion (Allport, 1954, p.154). The in-groups that are created from these common prejudices are important to physical and social survival and individual self-esteem. Because of this importance, partisanship and ethnocentricism develop regarding out-groups. The familiar becomes the preferred. Situations or individuals who are outside the in-group are seen as somehow less in status and quality, but are not necessarily viewed with hostility in every circumstance. In-group loyalty may exist without any awareness of corresponding out-groups (Allport, 1954).

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Once the foundation of separation exists, however, patterns of thinking arise that make overt hostilities plausible. Some groups manifest a need to reject out-groups and maintain an ethnocentric orientation. But for many groups, in-group membership is just daily living. The membership constitutes a web of connections that are supported due to habit and simplicity. Thus most humans do not display prejudice as a matter of asserting superiority as much as showing a preference for the familiar. Friendships are formed with people who are most like "us". It is when contact with the unfamiliar happens that people begin to feel threatened (Allport, 1954).

With Allport's (1954) intergroup contact theory as a base, many other researchers have charted the characteristics and importance of in-groups. The research of van Dijk (1987) confirms Allport's ideas about prejudice being a "group attitude" (p.195). In addition, van Dijk (1987) places emphasis on the fact that prejudice is not merely an individual preference, but the opinions held by the entire group. A difference, even one that is assumed, in any social dimension creates an "out-group"; which in the case of ethnic or racial attitudes is based on ethnic or racial characteristics. The ethnic attitude is acquired, transferred, and implemented by members of the in-group to perceive and socially interact with members of the out-group. The problem is that the interaction generally structurally favors the in-group and its members (van Dijk, 1987). Another problem in that most people's attitudes are constrained by the in-group to which they belong, and deviating from that preselected "menu" may cause social repercussions (Jackman, 2005). The in-group places pressure on an individual as they make friendship choices. Therefore a social stigma may exist for those individuals who have friends from an out-group. Out-groups are seen as less variable, more monolithic, and "all alike",

while in-group members are viewed as varied and having a continuum of qualities. This

is the basis for prejudgments of out-group members (Fiske, 2005).

Being part of an in-group has certain physiological and social benefits. The

tendency to assume that all the members of your group are nice or smart is called

essentialism (Bronson & Merryman, 2009a). This essentialism may lead to people being

more generous towards or forgiving of others in their in-group (Gaertner & Dovidio,

2005). Behaviors that are condemned in out-group members are explained away and

excused for those of the in-group. In-group membership decreases physiological distance

and more quickly arouses empathy, so as a consequence socially positive behaviors are

offered more readily to in-group than out-group members (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2005).

The prejudice that develops from these positive social behaviors carries with it the idea

that the in-group should somehow be treated more favorably than the out-group (Brown

& Zagefka, 2005). This preference appears in the results from testing instruments like

the IAT (implicit association test) where people more quickly associate positive terms

with members of high-status groups and in-groups and more negative terms with

members of lower status groups and out-groups (Fiske, 2005).

Allport's intergroup contact theory has occupied a place of prominence for those

trying to unravel the mysteries of group contact. His ideas, however, have been modified

and extended over the years (Aboud, 2005). In their 2011 meta-analysis Pettigrew and

Tropp discovered 515 distinct studies that tested for the effects of intergroup contact on

some level (p.8). Taking place in more than three dozen countries, these studies

broadened Allport's original understandings of contact effects and the potential

applications of intergroup contact theory (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2011). Over and over the

essential elements of status equality and interdependent action have proven to be the catalysts to promoting friendship integration (Moody, 2001). Not all aspects of intergroup contact theory, however, have been left unchallenged. Some researchers have raised questions about the theory's emphasis on the individual. Jackman (2005) notes developments in intergroup relations that cannot be completely resolved within Allport's framework. Jackman (2005) also postulates the keys to understanding attitudes and behaviors towards in-group and out-group members are found within the in-group's social organization and the limitations and prospects that are thus created (p.96). Recent research findings also support an important role for peers, especially in-group peers when it comes to forming attitudes about out-groups (Aboud, 2005). Similarly Brown and Zagefka (2004) have found evidence that strong in-group identification does not always result in competiveness with out-groups, but may "lead to a heightened *intragroup* focus" (p.66, italics in original). Overall, Allport's intergroup contact theory has proven its heuristic value through the decades, but it is not without its detractors as well.

Research conducted in the late twentieth century has yielded several examples of shortcomings in Allport's theory. Seen as being hostility driven, intergroup contact theory has been criticized for being over simplistic and not able to accommodate the complexities of intergroup attitudes and discrimination. Motivations by dominants, such as a strong desire for control, were not considered in the original postulations. The focus was merely on overt hostility (Jackman, 2005). More recent research has revealed that some prejudices are not marked by the negative attitudes that Allport postulated (Eagly & Diekman, 2005). Deviating from conventional intergroup contact theory findings, Gaertner and Dovidio (2005) note how developing a common group identity is an

important component to reducing intergroup bias, whereas Allport suggested that it was simply a facilitating factor (p. 79). Other factors that Allport did not take into consideration include those individuals with dual identities, for example those who are bi-racial. According to Gaertner, Dovidio, and Bachman (1996) "In contexts involving ethnic and racial subgroups, for example, maintaining original identities may be very rewarding, rather than threatening…" (p.275). Having to span the gap between majority and minority leads some multi-ethnic university students to a reaffirmation of their cultural heritage as well as their common university identity and thus producing positive intergroup attitudes. Allport did not anticipate the importance of majority-minority group distinctions and that some individuals would opt for full assimilation while others would prefer to engage in multicultural acculturation patterns (Gaertner and Dovidio, 2005). Still for all of its shortcomings, intergroup contact theory provides solid and measurable tenets that reveal how cross-racial friendships can be formed.

Friendship Segregation

As noted before school integration has not ended racial segregation in American society. Just having students of different races attend the same school doesn't mean they won't self-segregate once inside the school doors (Bronson & Merryman, 2009a). If there are only two races at a school it is more likely an "us vs. them" attitude will exist. Once multiple races are present then the social dynamics change and some racial segregation is mitigated (Moody, 2001). When it comes to selecting friends, more than just a person's ethnicity comes into play; common interests, gender, social standing and the proportion of each ethnic group present are all salient factors (Aboud, 1987). For example, a single Japanese or Mexican student may be a class favorite, but a dozen or

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more students of a different ethnicity may be regarded as a clique of their own and cross group friendships may never form (Allport, 1954). This situation is called friendship segregation or "the correspondence between an attribute that defines a class of people and friendship choice" (Moody, 2001, p.681). Moody's (2001) research revealed that schools with the racial heterogeneity of 30 to 65 percent had the largest increases in friendship segregation, while very highly heterogeneous schools had lower levels of friendship segregation. Moody (2001) notes that within a totally balanced school the probability of seeing cross race friendships would be the same as the school racial heterogeneity. Variables such as school resources and location-rural, suburban, or urban- also can affect friendship segregation (Moody, 2001).   Friendship segregation among students is an indication of the racial segregation that still exists in American society at large.

Researchers have used any number of methods to examine friendship segregation based on race. In order to isolate friendship indicators, Pettigrew and Tropp (2011) in a meta-analysis identified categories such as number of cross-group friendships, percentage of out-group members in a person's friendship network, reported feelings of closeness to out-group friends, reported self-disclosure to out-group friends, and amount of time with out-group friends. While these friendship indicators are useful if someone has an out-group friend, the problem of racial friendship segregation has many levels: one of them being that cross racial friendships will only form within the opportunities and situations that occur in any given school day (Moody, 2001). Moody's (2001) research, which gathered data from over 90,000 students in 112 different schools, reported that when creating a list of their ten closest friends, the odds of a student nominating a same race friend were about 1.8 times more likely than of a student nominating a cross-race friend.

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Equally as telling were Moody's (2001) conclusions on friendship patterns where race is a factor. If race manifests as an integral condition for friendship choice, then the social circles that grow around an initial friendship will also be race-based. In other words, social balance will shed light on the importance of race when building cliques (Moody, 2001). Moody (2001) concludes his research with the observation that concentrating minority students within large setting may actually increase friendship segregation instead of decreasing it. This is the unfortunate paradox of diverse schools, that they don't automatically generate more cross-race friendships (Bronson & Merryman, 2009a). At the conclusion of Moody's (2001) research he notes that "Schools that succeed in mixing students by race in extracurricular activities have lower levels of racial friendship segregation. … Schools where extracurricular activities are integrated likely provide an environment that supports interracial friendship." (p. 709).

Cross group friendships are the basis of intergroup contact theory. Pettigrew and Tropp's (2011) meta analysis suggests that while intergroup contact usually reduces prejudice, truly effective change happens when that contact produces cross-group friendships (p. 117). Lower levels of friendship segregation also indicate that contact theory has been correctly applied to a situation with cross-racial exposure (Moody, 2001). Even though contact theory has been shown to produce cross-group friendships, there is also evidence to suggest that those friendships are harder to maintain over time. This difficulty reflects some additional barriers to cross-group friendships; societal and situational norms (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2011). All things being equal, studies show that when people have the opportunity to choose relationships within their own race, they will (Moody, 2001).

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Race and Ethnicity

Next, I would like to take a look at how the concepts of race and ethnicity have come to occupy their present forms. The concept of race is recent, barely over a century old (Allport, 1954). The roots of the concept go back to the natural scientists of the 18th and 19th centuries who developed classifications for every living creature; animals, plants, and so it follows logically, humans (Wander, Martin, & Nakayama, 1999). The most simplistic definitions were based on visible characteristics like skin color and shape of the eyes. These physical markers gave those who believed in the fiction of racial superiority easy targets for their prejudice. If race could just be reduced to biology, then it was considered final and spared people from examining the complex cultural, social, political and economic powers at work in group relations. This finality allowed for a permanent oppressor/victim hierarchy, where once a group was labeled, there would be no escape (Allport, 1954). Social scientists, however, were not content with the biologically based definition of race and began to change how the term was conceptualized. Thus race has come to represent a complex social construct which is difficult to define.

People often confuse racial with ethnic traits, which can have serious consequences for intergroup bonding (Allport, 1954). A person's ethnicity refers to membership in a group that shares a common ancestral heritage (Buriel, 1987). A psychological ethnicity can also exist if a person self identifies as a member of a particular ethnic group, even without the biological heritage (Buriel, 1987). In addition, an individual can develop what Allport (1954) calls a reference group; which is a group to which the individual wants to be included (p.37). For most people, however, ethnic

socialization begins at birth and they are not aware of the options until much later in life. Ethnic socialization is the process by which children learn the behaviors, values, attitudes, and perceptions of an ethnic group and come to see themselves as a part of that group (Phinney & Rotheram, 1987b). This ethnic identification is a slowly increasing awareness as group attributes are gradually added to a person's self-description. Eventually an ethnic self-identification emerges that is a "sense of oneself as a member of an ethnic group" (Aboud, 1987). Since U.S. adolescents follow such different paths culturally, it may take participation in varied social settings before they understand their ethnic self-identification (Diggs, 1999).

As this study will deal with adolescents, it is important to remember that these individuals are in the process of either reinforcing or reinventing their self-identities, part of which includes ethnicity (Buriel, 1987). Allport (1954) noted that there is a tendency to acquire ethnic attitudes that match whatever self-image an individual has (p.318). Aboud and Katz define a healthy ethnic identity as a positive attitude towards other ethnic groups as well as feeling good about your own group (Phinney & Rotheram, 1987b). Some researchers promote the idea that, even more than gender or class identity, ethnic identity is especially relevant in societies, like the United States, where multiple minority groups co-exist with a dominant social group (Rosenthal, 1987).

Racial Attitude Development

During childhood and adolescence experiences are gained that affect adult group communication, including the sophistication level and social significance of later conversations about race (Socha & Socha, 1994). Children are taught to categorize food, toys, and even people at a young age. Developmentally youths can cognitively only

attach one label to each group, at least until more abstract reasoning skills have formed (Bronson & Merryman, 2009a). The thoughts youngsters have around the topic of prejudice, however, do change quickly through the years (Aboud, 2005). As early as age three, North American children begin to express negative attitudes towards out-group members (Baron & Banaji, 2006). By age five children want to know the social rules and regularities of their social world so they intently observe the adults around them for emotional cues (Aboud, 2005). For example, Hispanic children as young as five have shown in-group preferences for Hispanic over Black, but they also show no preferences for Hispanic over White (Baron & Banaji, 2006). This suggests to researchers Baron and Banaji (2006) that children who have minority status absorb quite early the intergroup attitudes expressed by the adults around them (p. 57). Aboud (2005) also found that children four to six years of age tended to express pregeneralized emotions that they picked up from adults (p.312). By ages six to seven explicit negative attitudes towards out-group members begin to decline, but implicit attitudes towards various social groups can be detected (Baron & Banaji, 2006).

Throughout the elementary school years racial attitudes continue to solidify. Children are able to detect significant social groupings on their own without the use of labels, but if adults give a social group special significance, this can lead to intergroup bias (Bigler, 1999). In other words if a particular group is referenced as being "better than", even if this referencing is implicit, children are going to notice. In a study of a Mid-west class of second graders, who were 95.2% White, Davilla (1999) notes a clear distinction between "us" and "them" (p.97). The belief that groups should remain separate prohibits intimate knowing and understanding of peoples who are racially,

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culturally, or physically different. If separateness between groups is maintained then so is the status quo and security and certainty are preserved. To be on familiar terms with other races and cultures entails risks that even seven and eight year olds are keenly aware of (Davilla, 1999). At this developmental phase it is common to overgeneralize the emotions that are attached to labels and even to stereotype all the people with a particular label (Aboud, 2005). Racial stereotyping occurs frequently among children and children can be opposed to changing their views (Bigler, 1999). After age ten the early and sometimes forceful preference for one's own in-group settles down and levels off to an equal in-group and out-group preference by the time one reaches adulthood (Baron & Banaji, 2006).

Adolescence is a time of complexity and this includes intergroup relations. According to Allport (1954) because social learning is an intricate process, it is not until adolescence that children are "able to handle ethnic categories in a culturally approved way…" (p.312). Attitudes learned during childhood get refitted to match an individual's self-image, status, and values, which may or may not conform to the prevailing attitudes of one's in-group. Young adolescents are looking for meaningful identities within their social circles and conformity to in-group peer norms may be more influential with this age group (Aboud, 2005). Explicit negative attitudes towards out-group members disappear around age 12 for most children (Baron & Banaji, 2006). Teens understand that they do not want to be seen as "racist" or called a bigot for their views. At the same time the desire to form small groups and cliques increases as adolescents with similar interest areas begin to band together. This trend is reinforced by the prevailing American ideology of individualism and the promotion of "being yourself" (Bronson & Merryman,

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2009a). Once an adolescent's values and self-identity become stable, he or she will adapt

a level of prejudice that is compatible with her or his personality. Children who have

been raised with open and democratic values may encounter others' stereotypes and

prejudices first hand during adolescence, but choose to reject those views as incompatible

with their own self-identity choosing instead to maintain the values of their parents

(Aboud, 2005).

"Since the 1960's, greater emphasis has been placed on how children and

adolescents are influenced by social input from parents and peers…" (Aboud, 2005,

p.313). Parental input into the formation of racial preferences cannot be underestimated.

Young children must have a family and friendship network before they can comprehend

the differences between "us" (in-group) and "them" (out-group) (Allport, 1954).

Families are key sites for discussions on the topics of race and culture. It is in the home

that early learning on "who we are" begins and individual social groups are placed within

the broader valenced social categories of U.S. society (Moon, 1999). Discussions within

the family about friendship choice will affect behavior outside the home. In recent

scholarship, studies have demonstrated how powerful the family is in shaping racial

attitudes, even accounting for the influences of school and media (Asante, 1999).

Interactions in the home are foundational to shaping a child's beliefs and these beliefs

define who a child is at school (Davilla, 1999; Slavin & Cooper, 1999). The racial

intolerance and hostility that some students bring into the school environment are

prompted by the teachings of family and community members, mirroring what is

believed by the surrounding populace (Slavin & Cooper, 1999). And of course, while at

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school students talk about concepts such as "race" informally amongst themselves (Socha & Diggs, 1999).

Even when no explicitly racist teachings are present in a home, children are masters of inferential learning. How the community is organized through housing, working conditions, and social divisions are all observed by children who conclude that there must be some meaningful difference between groups of people (Bigler & Liben, 2007). In addition to answering direct questions from children, family members show approval or disapproval of a social class through as simple an interaction as a White parent speaking to a Black store manager (Socha & Diggs, 1999). The people that children see on television, among their parents' friends, and in their neighborhoods (as well as those they do not see at all) indicate who is valued and who is not in American culture. Much of what is learned prior to adolescence is not directly taught. Vocal inflections, body language, and never talking about a particular group all communicate attitudes that children assimilate. As Davilla (1999) states so eloquently "children are … consumers of social practices" (p.92).

Racial Composition of the Mid-Willamette Valley

Previous research has failed to address multi-ethnic social contexts, such as those prevailing in the mid-Willamette Valley of western Oregon. Because racial patterns in this area are rapidly shifting, this is clearly a valuable place to collect input in order to see if intergroup contact theory's tenets still apply.

Hispanics are the fastest growing ethnic minority in the Mid-Willamette Valley. Over a span of thirty years and on a national level, Latino households have grown faster than other ethnic groups (Casas, Frye, & Arce, 2004). Unlike states such as California

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and Texas, Oregon has only recently experienced significant numbers of Latino immigrants (Martinez, McClure, Eddy and Wilson, 2011). Hispanic households tend to be larger than the general population and immigration from Mexico, Central and South America has increased in recent years (Casas, Frye, & Arce, 2004). Accounting for 43 percent of the 419, 000 residents that Oregon gained between the census years of 2000 and 2010, Hispanic population growth is especially noticeable in Marion County. From 2000 to 2010 Hispanics jumped from 17.1% to 24.3% of the total population of Marion County (Hannah-Jones, 2011). Of that 24.3% of the population who identify as Hispanic, 21.8% self identify as Mexican (United States Census, 2010b).

Casas, Frye and Arce (2004) have divided the Hispanic culture into subgroups by the length of time people have lived in the United States, thus creating three distinct groups: Newcomers, Settled immigrants, and US-born Hispanics. Newcomers are very recent immigrants "whose social lives, economic activity, residential patterns and primary identities place them in very different and separate worlds than the average American" (Casas, Frye, & Arce, 2004, p. 3). At the other end of the spectrum are US-born Hispanics whose lives are not substantially different from Whites, Blacks, or Asians whose roots in foreign countries go back two or three generations (Casas, Frye, & Arce, 2004). A pertinent question related to this study is how quickly will Latino youth create cross-ethnic friendships? Martinez et al (2011) found that most Hispanic youth appear "to quickly embrace Anglo behaviors, practices, attitudes and peer groups within their first few years of residency…" (340). But overall biculturalism is the most commonly adopted method of acculturation, meaning that school aged immigrant children retain a

strong orientation towards Latino cultural practices even as they try to balance the input of non-Hispanic peers and Latino parents (Martinez et al, 2011).

Part of acculturating is forming friendships outside of one's ethnic group. According to Anzaldua (1999) Mexican Americans who do not successfully acculturate suffer hardships. Anzaldua (1999) writes about the difficulty of living in a country where your first language is not the "reigning tongue" and the duality of daily life in more than one culture. Her description of this duality includes a pecking order where commonly held Anglo beliefs conflict with beliefs of Mexican culture, and both cultures conflict with indigenous culture (Anzaldua, 1999). At home, cultural and family expectations-including parental obedience and the promotion of familial well being-may guide youth behavior and affect friendship choices. At school, however, other factors may be of greater influence. Acculturation gaps occur within families as youth and their parents adopt Anglo attitudes and behaviors at disparate rates. Usually adolescents acculturate faster and have greater integration into U.S. culture than their parents, who have stronger Latino identification (Martinez et al, 2011). Even though adolescents may assimilate White culture traits, it is still difficult to form friendships outside of the Hispanic in-group.

Hispanics in the Mid-Willamette Valley *can* be viewed as an in-group. The common bond of ethnic heritage and values of the Mexican-descent population imply that many people who self indentify as Hispanic share similar behavior expectations. The use of Spanish as the primary language further delineates the social boundary that defines this ethnic group. Additionally, unlike the immigrant groups from European countries who can blend in physically with the rest of the Euro-American population, the Mestizo

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features of the Mexican-descent population mark this group as visibly different (Buriel, 1987). The need for in-group support may be intensified for Latinos due to immigration stress. Because many of the immigrants or first-generation Mexican Americans are struggling financially, identification with an in-group is an important psychosocial resource. Choosing friends from this in-group can have lasting results. For some Latino males, acting Latino includes being in a gang, not finishing high school, having children early, and dropping out of school to support a family. For other Latinos, choosing to associate with school focused peers has resulted in better grades, better class behavior, and more involvement with school activities (Oyserman, Brickman, Bybee, & Celious, 2006).

White settlers began living in the Willamette Valley over a hundred and eighty years ago and their numbers soon surpassed the indigenous population making Whites the majority ethnic group.   Oregon's White population is still increasing; it gained five percent between 2000 and 2010 and Whites make up 78.2% of the population of Marion County (Hannah-Jones, 2011, United States Census, 2010,). Changing demographics can be seen in the statistic that twenty years ago more than nine out of ten Oregonians were White, while today the number is less than eight out of ten (Hannah-Jones, 2011).   For the purpose of this study White is based on skin tone and self identification, but White is also a cultural norm, which generally remains unspoken (Nakayama & Krizek, 1995). Whites tend to not identify themselves as a racial group, so frequently "White" does not appear as a self-or group identification for many White Americans (Kochman, 1987). This situation has developed in part from the historical position of power Whites have occupied in this country, since Whites occupied the "naturalized" position, they just "are"

(Martin, Krizek, Nakayama, & Bradford, 1999). According to Nakayama and Krizek (1995), "The invisibility of whiteness has been manifested through its universality" (p. 293). People who are White end up having the dominant cultural power because whiteness is the un-named norm (Nakayama & Krizek, 1995). For example if you are White you would not talk about your "White" friend, but you might speak of your Black, Asian or "colored" friend. Even though White has remained invisible and uncharted, the racial category has exhibited considerable influence on both those who are and are not White.

For White children, achieving camaraderie with children of other races can be hard. In Davilla's 1999 study of a second grade class of children (95.2% White), the solution to having better understanding of people of different cultures was to have those other people learn English, because learning the other person's language would be too difficult (p. 97). Whites place a high positive valence on being White, which has been measured by the 80% in-group preference White Americans display on the IAT (Implicit Association Test) (Baron & Banaji, 2006; Aboud, 2005) . The outcome of this situation is that "the odds of a White high-schooler in America having a best friend of another race is only eight percent" (Bronson & Merryman, 2009a). Growing up White in a White dominated culture means that knowing and understanding another race and culture is taking a risk, which may have dubious outcomes (Davilla, 1999).

As previously mentioned, the predominance of Whites in Oregon is a steadily changing percentage. People identifying themselves as more than one race, or bi-racial, is one of many demographic categories on the increase in Oregon. From the 2010 Census data, the bi-racial category grew 33 percent, making this multiracial category, which

includes 110,000 people, larger than both Black and Native American combined

(Hannah-Jones, 2011). The increase in the bi-racial category can be traced to an increase

in multi-racial marriages. Since the landmark 1967 decision in the case of *Loving vs.*

State of Virginia the number of interracial marriages has greatly increased (Orbe, 1999).

Going from being illegal, to taboo, to merely unusual, interracial marriages are

continuing to be viewed more positively. Roughly fifteen percent of marriages in the U.S.

in 2010 were between individuals of a difference race or ethnicity, more than double the

rate of 1980. Statistics show that Hispanics and Asian Americans marry outside their race

at the highest rates and that mixed couples are more likely to live in the Western states

(Jordan, 2012). 3.9% of the population of Marion County identifies as being of two or

more races (United States Census, 2010b). As children of these unions grow they are

sometimes labeled as having a bicultural identity. This could mean they have bicultural

competence, which is the ability to function in two different cultures by switching back

and forth between two different sets of values and attitudes. It also may mean that

individuals are able to combine two cultures, showing attributes of each (Phinney &

Rotheram, 1987b). We will see how these attributes, attitudes, and values affect

friendship formation.

Unique to this research setting is the concentration of Pacific Islanders.

According to the Micronesian Islander Community in the city of Salem, Oregon,

members can be from the Commonwealth of the No. Mariana Islands, the Republic of

Palau, the Federated States of Micronesia (Chuuk, Kosrae, Pohnpei, Yap), and the

Republic of the Marshall Islands. Located halfway between Hawaii and Australia, the

Marshall Islands have a population of around 67,000 with another 22,000 or so people of

Marshallese descent living in the United States. Of those 22,000, just less than 1,000 of those people live in Oregon, and more than half of those 1,000 live in Marion County. (Hagan, 2012). Marion County's rate of Pacific Islander population increase was 4650 percent in the years 1990 to 2003 (de Carbonel, 2003). Marshallese wasn't a category in the 2000 census, but Marion County still had the highest concentration in the state of "Other Micronesian" (Hagan, 2012). Encouraged by a strong U.S. economy during the 1990's, hundreds of Pacific Islanders moved to the West Coast. Tight family relationships and looser immigration rules have made migration easy. Limited English skills, low employment rates, not understanding worker's rights, and a lack of knowledge about resources, however, have made the transition to life in Oregon difficult for some Pacific Islanders, especially for Marshallese speakers. Newcomers have to adjust to foreign concepts like paying your relatives rent and private ownership of vehicles (de Carbonel, 2003). Even with these difficulties, the strong family ties are easily visible to out-group members when the Pacific Islander ethnic groups

gather together in public spaces.

The final two racial categories of Asian and Black are diverse, yet share a common history of finding it difficult to live in the Mid-Willamette Valley. Statewide the Asian population increased 41 percent in the last ten years, but Asians are just 1.9% of the total population of Marion County according to the 2010 Census. This percentage was higher in the past when several hundred Chinese Americans lived in the downtown area of Salem, the state capital. Several generations of Japanese Americans also lived in the Lake Labish area just north of Salem, until the outbreak of World War II when they were sent to detainment camps. Most of these families did not return to the Willamette

Valley. Ethnic diversity in Salem increased in the 1980's and 1990's with growth in the Asian communities as stores and restaurants catering to these immigrants opened for business (Salem Online History, 2006). Equally small in number is the region's Black community. Recorded at 1.28% of Salem's population in 2000, the category grew to 1.8% by 2010 (United States Census, 2010a). There never has been a large Black population living in Oregon and today they only account for about 2% statewide (Peterson, 2010). African American settlers in the 1800's were only offered menial and poorly paid jobs, and slavery was not unheard of, although technically illegal. Legally African Americans were not even supported to be living in the state until after a 1926 law overturned the 1844 ban on Blacks taking residence (Salem Online History, 2006). With no strong community support, Blacks in recent years have chosen to reside in other communities. When looked at on the national level, the outcome of these segregated communities is that 85% of Black kids' best friends are also Black (Bronson & Merryman, 2009a).

The mid-Willamette Valley is a particularly suitable place for this research to be conducted. Because of the growing Hispanic and bi-racial populations, this allows data to be collected from previously underrepresented demographic groups and fills in some of the gaps of preceding research. Finding out how adolescents talk about cross-racial and cross-ethnic friendships needs to happen in a context where multiple races and ethnicities co-exist and the mid-Willamette Valley provides the circumstances desired for this project.

Research Justification

Some adolescents are capable of, have already, and continue to form cross-racial friendships. These adolescents have developed healthy ethnic identities and further research is needed to understand how this situation has come into existence (Diggs, 1999). Many of the methods used in the past to assess children's ethnic identities and cross racial perceptions have used a multiple choice or survey format. This forced-choice format yields virtually no insights as to the cognitive processes behind youngsters' choices (Ramsey, 1987). Having a conversation, on the other hand, gives amply opportunity for the revelation of the thinking processes leading to friendship choice.

Socha and Socha (1994) pointed out that since many research projects use college aged students, scholars do not know enough about the nature of group communication among other age groups (p. 245). An overlooked fact is that group communication is part of the entire human lifespan and yet few studies are directed toward understanding group communication among children (Socha and Socha, 1994). In a meta-analysis of intergroup contact theory Pettigrew and Tropp (2011) coded children and adolescents as the smallest number of participants: children (12 years or younger, $n=82$), adolescents (13-17 years, $n=114$), college students (18-21 years, $n=262$), or adults (older than 21 years, $n=238$) (p.58). These results show a need for further research in the twelve to fourteen year old stage of human development. Middle schoolers have not been a target group for researchers, but this age between childhood and adulthood is fertile with insights. Because this study focuses on adolescents in the twelve to fourteen year old age category, an age group that is underrepresented in the literature, it will help to fill a gap in the knowledge about the application of intergroup contact theory.

Not only is the age group being studied particularly underrepresented but past research has primarily captured the White experience (Aboud, 2005, Baron & Banaji, 2006, Davilla, 1999). Being a member of the majority culture allows Whites to be insulated from issues relating to race and ethnicity, but the changing demographics of western Oregon state mean that issues of race and ethnicity can no longer be ignored (Phinney & Rotheram, 1987a). At this research site Whites are not the majority, but instead the largest minority in a multi-ethnic setting. In order to be part of the solution to racial segregation within the community, conversations about cross-racial friendship formation need to take place in order to avoid reproducing the racism that already exists in our society

Intergroup contact theory needs to be integrated into research that has "more discursive, comparative, and qualitative analysis that would support a richer description of actual intergroup contact and how people commonly view their everyday contact experiences" (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2011, p.168). Recording student conversations and analyzing those texts for the tenets of intergroup contact theory does just that. Greater attention needs to be given to the balance of power, actions, and content of cross-group friendships (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2011). Aboud (2005) has stated that intergroup contact in a school setting has become the most informative context for examining prejudice (p.321), since public schools are institutions where the entire texture of American diversity can be experienced and discussed (Slavin & Cooper, 1999). Over a decade ago Slavin and Cooper (1999) noted how improving intergroup relations was becoming a priority for educators. With some schools becoming more diverse and school violence becoming a national issue, there is increased concern that school sites "not become the

battlegrounds for the next wave of racial unrest in this country" (Slavin & Cooper, 1999, p.647).

Another reason for my research to take place in an academic setting is a growing body of research that suggests when intergroup contact theory's basic premises are present in the learning structure, then intergroup tensions are reduced. When teachers are using cooperative learning methods, students are asked to complete tasks with others in a heterogeneous setting. The intent of these cooperative work groups is not only to enhance academic performance, but also to provide opportunities for discussion and learning about each other, two key points in Allport's framework. Additionally, cooperation across racial lines, when there are equal status roles for students, and reinforcement through teacher support also satisfy the conditions necessary for positive group contact outlined by Allport (Slavin & Cooper, 1999). As an example of bolstering intergroup contact theory's main tenets in an elementary school setting, cross-race study group participants were found to form more cross-race encounters on the playground (Bronson & Merryman, 2009a). When instructors set up projects designed to have different races or ethnicities work together, students are sent a basic message about positive cross-group interaction. Although the curriculum may not have multiethnic contact as a stated learning objective, students will pick up on the undercurrent of tolerance that permeates the learning environment (Slavin & Cooper, 1999). School administrators have control over organizational features that will affect student behavior, especially issues such as friendship segregation. How many opportunities students have to mix, school policy and cultural setting will all affect friendship structures (Moody, 2001). Moody (2001) claims that the strongest effect a school's organization can have is

in the extracurricular setting. When races were mixed during extracurricular activities lower levels of friendship segregation occurred (p.709). Moody (2001) concludes that:

> The problem of racial friendship segregation is complex. At the individual level, there is a long history of research demonstrating that people prefer people like themselves…. The effect of cross-group exposure is complicated by the situational status and hierarchy of groups within the school, making it unclear whether acquaintance-level, non-interactive exposure will lead to friendship formation. To succeed in meeting the ideal expressed in *Brown*, the rate of cross-race friendship should equal the opportunity for such contact; however, when race remains salient for friendship formation, schools remain substantively segregated. (p. 688).

How do adolescents in the mid-Willamette Valley talk about cross-racial and cross-ethnic friendships and are the tenets of Allport's intergroup contact theory mentioned? Without explicit conversations on the merits of cross-racial friendships youth today may not even consider the reasons behind their friendship selections. Using the lens of intergroup contact theory to assist in analyzing the recorded conversations made it possible to recognize how cross-racial and cross-ethnic friendship formation and maintenance is talked about among adolescents.

Chapter 3: Methods

The research question for this study is "How do early adolescents talk about cross-racial and cross-ethnic friendships, and how are the tenets of Allport's theory reflected in their talk?" To answer this question I decided to collect conversations about friendship and analyze them using a qualitative approach. Such an approach allows for the examination of authentic conversation in context. According to Patton (2002), "Qualitative designs are naturalistic to the extent that the research takes place in real-world settings and the researcher does not attempt to manipulate the phenomenon of interest…" (p.39). According to Diggs (1999), "more research should use actual participants and participants' interethnic interactions", thus stressing the importance of studying adolescents in a setting that is their everyday reality (p. 141). The literature shows how dynamic talk can contribute to changes in perspectives and attitudes (Cameron, 2007; Cameron & Deignan, 2006). Therefore it is my position that, for this study, it is not only appropriate but also necessary to use a research method which does not require removing the adolescents from their context, but rather allows studying them *in* their context, through naturally occurring conversations.

The focus of my research is to understand how adolescents speak with each other on the topic of cross-racial friendships. The participants were recruited from Parrish Middle School in Salem, Oregon. By virtue of my occupation as a teacher, I am allowed access to this otherwise restricted population. As a researcher I carried into this project several assumptions: one-student friendship dyads, in my observations, tend to be mono-ethnic; two-as an authority figure in the lives of these students I can provide for them a safe and trustworthy space in which to discuss potentially controversial topics; and three-

my social position as a White middle aged female would impact the outcome of the data collection. Because of these assumptions I wanted to capture the students' own words and by the use of small, informal peer group conversations, which were recorded, data was collected and later analyzed in order to answer the research question.

Peer Group Conversation

Peer group discussions were initially developed as a data collection method by Gamson (1992) and later Sasson (1995) in order to record how ordinary citizens converse about complex social issues such as politics, racism, and crime (Ritchie, 2011b). People in peer discussion groups meet together at a home or other familiar setting and talk with a facilitator about a predetermined topic (Gamson, 1992). According to Ritchie (2011b), conversations "held in the peer-group format can at best approximate a naturally-occurring conversation" (p.11). Sasson (1995) finds that peer group technique minimizes the sample partiality by drawing out through conversation the common values of a subculture. Since discussion is a collective process among participants, thoughts that are considered marginal tend to be discouraged and ideas that fall in the mainstream are encouraged. While outliers, "individuals with idiosyncratic views" can still voice their opinions, peer group participants can respond to those outliers in a way that does not allow one voice to skew the research results (Sasson, 1995, p.23). One significant difference, however, between peer group conversations and what would be overheard during participant observation, is the length of time that the topic is explored, as most adolescents do not expound on an idea with friends or acquaintances for extended periods of time. Taking into account that the peer group format may not exactly reflect a

conversation that would spontaneously occur, researchers can still gain insight from recording these types of discussions (Gamson, 1992).

Peer group conversations are a variant of the widely used and popular qualitative technique of focus groups. Focus groups and group interviews have become particularly respected amongst qualitative researchers as means for exploring a phenomenon of interest (Patton, 2002). The variation of focus groups for this research project uses smaller groups, consisting of four to five participants, which meet in familiar space, my classroom, and involve friends or people who have at least face recognition of each other. Smaller groups allow for greater spontaneity amongst group members and more reaction to each others' ideas. Acquaintanceship or friendship outside of the research setting allows for an increased intensity of interaction and less reserve amongst the participants. This familiarity allows the facilitator to minimize his or her involvement with the conversation, thus yielding richer transcription data (Sasson, 1995). The greatest advantage to this peer group arrangement of speaking is "that it allows us to observe the process of people constructing and negotiating shared meaning, using their natural vocabulary (Gamson, 1992, p. 17).

Metaphors and Storytelling

In addition to the tenets of Gordon Allport's intergroup contact theory the data collected was also coded for metaphors and storytelling. Metaphors can be identified as words or phrases being used contextually in a different manner than their dictionary definition or customary meaning. People use metaphors to enhance description and help listeners connect with what is being said. A metaphor can produce a better feel for a situation than a prolonged account of all five senses. During a research session a

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participant may use metaphors to create connections or bring to mind contrasts (Patton, 2002). Previous studies on metaphor usage show that speakers use metaphors to "structure their talk, explain unfamiliar ideas, and to carry affect, including values, emotions, and attitudes" (Cameron, 2007, p.200). In interactional speech situations, metaphors are even created and reused amongst conversational group members (Cameron, 2007).

Metaphors can both appear in stories, and a story in itself can be a metaphor (Ritchie, 2011a). Stories are sequences of causally related events designed to form a narrative that, in this study, will be given through spoken language (Ritchie, 2011a, Norrick, 2000). The students recruited for this study may not even be aware of the reoccurring instances of metaphors surrounding friendship, friendship formation, or cross-racial/cross-ethnic friendships, but through coding the transcription, patterns emerged that revealed common themes, images, or emotions surrounding the discussion topics. Since no discussion question begins with "Tell me a story about…." any stories that emerged in the data were completely spontaneous and unsolicited. These are the natural story forms that shape everyday conversations (Norrick, 2000). Real-life passages have "a genuine personal validity lacking in carefully authored and edited texts" (Norrick, 2000, p.19). Since authentic narrative is produced through interaction with others, peer conversation groups are ideal for capturing storytelling in a tangible conversational context. Capturing the actual language used by research participants through the audio recordings and written transcriptions honors the emic perspective of the adolescents being studied (Patton, 2002).

Sample

    Participants.

From Parrish Middle School current students in seventh and eighth grades were recruited to participate in the low-structure conversations about cross-racial friendship formation. Data collection from these students was well suited for analysis for three reasons. First, adolescents from twelve to fourteen years of age are at a pivotal developmental stage between unquestioning acquiescence to parental guidelines and the development of personal bias and preferences and therefore excellent sources of information about friendship formation. Early adolescents can speak beyond concrete operational terms and begin to express abstract concepts with delicacy and unashamed honesty. Second, my experience as a fifteen year veteran of middle school teaching allowed me access to this population, which is unflinching when discussing controversial topics. Students were comfortable talking with each other and with me about racial topics based on past positive experiences with classroom discussions on sensitive issues. Third, at this age students are able to self reflect on friendship choices as well as identify societal factors influencing their decisions. Younger children do not yet have these capacities and older adolescents become preoccupied with face saving gestures when talking with their peers. In addition, Parrish students provided a unique research population not frequently found in the literature dealing with students and race; the majority race in the overall culture, White, is not the majority within the school. Another unique characteristic of these research participants is the relatively level social status between the races represented. All students, whether Hispanic, White, Bi-racial, Islander, Asian or Black, come from working class families where the adults are involved

in landscaping, construction, small business ownership, working for the State of Oregon, or receiving public assistance. Many of the students have attended the same schools since kindergarten, so at this point they have had the opportunity to form cross-racial or inter-ethnic friendships for eight or nine years.

Participants for this study were recruited by the researcher via targeted recruitment techniques. In order to have representation of all the ethnic groups in the school, some students were specifically asked to join a discussion group. Since the students were known to the researcher, a judgmental sample was created as selection was based on the researcher's own judgment about which students will be most useful or representative (Foss & Waters, 2007). Due to time restrictions and the low level of interest from current students, I turned to a specific population, Junior National Honor Society members, to gain participants for my groups. While this set of students was ethnically and racial diverse, there was a common denominator of a grade point average of 3.5 or above and an explicit desire to participate in community service. In fact, community service hours were awarded to those who participated in this study.

Being able to include all the racial and ethnic groups present at Parrish was difficult for several reasons. During the spring when data collection was taking place track and field had practices four days a week and band and orchestra were running sectionals for spring concerts and competitions. There were individual time conflicts as well, like having to complete court ordered community service or not having a bus pass in order to get home after the recording session. One Asian student could not contribute because of family coming in from out of state and one White student was lost to the study because of being grounded from all after school activities by a parent. Despite these

difficulties eighteen students were able to participate, with a racial breakdown of one Islander (5.5%), two Bi-racial (11.1%), five White (27.7%), and ten Hispanic (55.5%) voices being heard. The gender breakdown was two males (11.1%) and sixteen females (88.8%).

Data

Site of Study.

The data used in this research was primary data, collected at Parrish Middle School in Salem, Oregon during May and June of 2013. Operated by the Salem-Keizer School District, Parrish is one of eleven public middle schools in the second largest school district in the state (Salem-Keizer Public Schools, 2012). Parrish serves approximately 700 sixth, seventh and eighth grade students a year and has been in operation since 1924 (Salem Online History, 2006). Throughout the 2011-2012 school year 254 students were added and 283 were dropped, making Parrish a highly migrant population. During the 2012-2013 school year 81% percent of all students who attended Parrish qualified to receive free breakfast and lunch, so the whole student body did not have to pay for meals during the school day. The ethnic/racial breakdown of the school in January of 2013 was as follows: Hispanic or Latino-60.5%, White (non Hispanic or Latino)-30.2%, Multi-racial- 4.5%, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander-1.6%, American Indian/Alaska Native-1.3%, Asian-1.0%, and Black or African American-0.5%. Spanish is the primary language in the homes of forty nine percent of the students. Boys outnumber girls in eighth and seventh grades, but there are more girls than boys in the sixth grade. The school day is organized into six fifty-five minute periods and most

classes are single grade, with some blending of grades occurring in P.E. and elective classes.

Data Collection

In the present study, following the methods pioneered by Gamson (1992), participants were encouraged to be as comfortable as possible during the data collection. Discussion questions were passed out to participants in advance of the meeting date in order to give an overview of the issues that were going to be discussed. By seeing the questions in advance, adolescent participants who may need a longer time to formulate verbal responses were on an even playing field with those who are able to quickly verbalize their thoughts. "Questions for Friendship Discussion Groups" (Appendix A) served as prompts and talking points, but the goal of peer group conversations is to capture everyday talk in a natural setting (Gamson, 1992; Ritchie, 2011b). By meeting at the end of the school day, in a familiar space, with people from the same setting, the awkwardness of the research mechanism could be minimized. Video recording was rejected as a data collection option as it can be intrusive and it is not generally part of the participants' lived experience during the school day. The presence of a tape recorder produced a level of consciousness that, while not inhibiting conversation, made adhering to social norms more prominent (Gamson, 1992). The facilitator's positional authority within the school may have changed the language used by the students, thus reducing idiomatic expressions, slang, and swear words.

First, I made announcements in all of my classes and at the Junior National Honor Society meetings explaining the research opportunity. Next, I contacted interested or targeted students in a face to face request during student contact hours, explained in detail

the research parameters, sent home a permission slip (Appendix D), and when the parental permission slip was returned, scheduled a day to meet. "Questions for Friendship Discussion Groups" (Appendix A) on a single sheet of paper along with a separate "Friends Sheet" (Appendix B) were distributed to all the members of a peer group meeting on the same day and requests for snacks were collected. Students did not have to write out anything in advance, but some chose to and then read aloud from their papers. Students who forgot to bring their discussion questions or Friends Sheet were issued another copy and allowed to write on it as they saw fit during the recording session.

The facilitator's role in data collection cannot be overlooked. In order to foster an environment where students were talking to each other instead of to their teacher, as a facilitator I purposefully restrained myself from giving comments on what was being discussed. When someone finished a comment, I would look around the group for the next speaker, so as to keep the attention off of myself as an authority figure. This follows Gamson's (1992) and Sasson's (1995) protocol for facilitators in order that they might not influence the course of the conversation. Prior to starting the recording I compared the event to a Socratic Seminar, a teaching technique where students lead discussion, in which several students had participated during class times. This gave students a framework for how the discussion would proceed, and a reduced expectation that I would be "leading" the conversation (Patton, 2002).

Data were collected from four discrete groups. The first group was interethnic, with one White and four Hispanics, and consisted of only girls. The second group was mixed both ethnically and by gender. Data from this group was recorded, but saved in an irretrievable format, so it is not included in data analysis. The third group was a single

ethnicity, Hispanic, but was again a mixed gender group. The fourth group had only girls, but was the most racially diverse with two Bi-racial and two White students, allowing for viewpoints from the Islander, Hispanic, and Black perspectives. Students from group two graciously agreed to meet a second time and rerecord. This group changed in demographics for the second meeting, one White female had to drop out and one Islander female was added. In total, one of the groups was composed of a single grade level (seventh) and three groups were a mix of seventh and eighth graders. The recordings all took place after the school day ended, in the room where I teach.

In addition to the group interviews one other piece of data was collected, the Friends Sheet (Appendix B). Each participant identified himself or herself by name, age, grade, gender, and race/ethnicity and then listed ten people who were to be considered "good friends". Some participants completed this before the recording session and the rest were allowed time during the peer conversation for completion. The reason behind this exercise was to see if the listed friends matched the writer's ethnicity. At either question three or four of the discussion participants were asked to draw a vertical line on their paper and record with which ethnicity or race their friend would most closely identify. Time for informal analysis of this individual list was given during peer group discussion and the Friends Sheets were also collected by the researcher for later analysis.

The conversations themselves took on a variety that reflected the maturity and social awareness of the participants. The average peer conversation for this study was 21 minutes and 41 seconds and the conversations ranged in length from eight minutes and 54 seconds (8:54) to 37 minutes and 23 seconds (37:23). The shortest recording was with Group One which had the youngest member, she was only twelve, and this group of girls

seemed hesitant to expand on their ideas. The mid-length groups (Two and Four) were characterized by lots of laughter and back and forth exchange of ideas. There was also lots of overlap as students did not hesitate to interrupt each other or have side conversations. The longest recording was from the most racially diverse group (Three), where each person spoke in succession with very little overlap. This produced longer blocks of text for each speaker when compared to the other three groups.

During the group peer conversations the researcher documented the event by recording the conversation with an audio recording device and fulfilling the role of facilitator. For consistency between groups the same introductory script (Appendix C) was used before each taping session. Facilitator expertise on open-ended questioning techniques improved as the series of conversations progressed, allowing for more participant input. An additional question was added and asked by the researcher without reprinting the "Questions for Friendship Discussion Groups". After group one had concluded, it was apparent that the theme of cross-racial and cross-ethnic friendship formation needed to be more fully explored, so the question "How did/do your cross racial friendships form?" was included before the end of the recording session for the next three groups. Furthermore, the flow of conversation was improved when self identification of ethnicity or race (question 4) was introduced before the analysis of the ethnicities and racial composition of those listed on the Friends Sheet. This change happened in groups Three and Four. Overall, when compared with other available research on friendship segregation, which generally uses survey format, scaled inventories, or one-on-one interviews (Baron & Banaji, 2006; Moody, 2001); this conversational data holds the potential of "detailed, thick description; inquiry in depth;

interviews that capture direct quotations about people's personal perspectives and experiences" (Patton, 2002, p.40).

Data Analysis

The full discussion from each of the groups was recorded and transcribed for analysis. The final data set yielded 86 minutes and seven seconds of audio recording. Since the research question deals with how adolescents talk about cross-racial friendships and this conversation needs to be imbedded in context, partial transcription would not have been appropriate. Therefore, each of the peer group conversations were transcribed verbatim, netting a total of 57 pages of data. All of the transcripts were identically formatted in 14 point font; double spaced with one inch margins and averaged 14.25 pages in length. Two transcripts were 18 pages long, one was 14 and the shortest was only eight pages. All of the transcription was done by the researcher. To preserve anonymity, all participants were given a pseudonym either by the transcriptionist or by the participants themselves during the recording session.

A thematic analysis of the data was conducted, in which the transcripts were read through in multiple stages. The transcribed data was analyzed using a combination of "top-down" and "bottom-up" analysis (Cameron, 2007; Ritchie, 2011b). A top-down approach is a type of analysis that moves from the whole to the specific. With this in mind, the first stage consisted of creating an overview of each conversation's content, taking notes on potential themes and flagging possible themes with color coded highlighters.

The themes with priority during the analysis were those from Gordon Allport's intergroup contact theory tenets. In addition to the basic premises of interdependence and

common goals, extensions to intergroup contact theory, such as peer group influences (Aboud, 2005) and dual identity (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2005) were also coded. After multiple readings additional themes emerged, such as parental influences and an adolescent-centric definition of friendship. Through this process, the participants' perspectives and attitudes on cross-racial friendships and friendships in general became evident. Audio and transcribed data were combed through several times as the elements mentioned were identified.

Next I moved on to the bottom-up analysis where instances of metaphor or storytelling were isolated from the overall context. I looked for commonalities and differences among the usage of these metaphors and stories. Because, "Metaphor is seen as linguistic, cognitive, affective and socio-cultural." (Cameron, 2007, p. 200) these speech phenomenons can reveal how adolescents think and feel about cross-racial friendships. Some passages ended up being coded in multiple colors of highlighter as they contained both a thematic element, such as social desirability, and a metaphor. Multiple copies of those sections were reprinted and rehighlighted so that each bit of data could be accounted for separately, following the data analysis technique suggested by Foss and Waters (2007). The data collected using this top-down and bottom-up method produced several themes which work to answer the research question. Once the coded data were organized into themes, then an explanatory schema was produced in order to coherently organize the findings.

Finally, the theoretical validity of this study was addressed by the strategy of theoretical triangulation: the data, as described above was analyzed and interpreted using both Gordon Allport's (1954) intergroup contact theory and Cameron's (2007) discourse

dynamics of metaphor use. These theoretical perspectives look at very different things, thus allowing me as a researcher to note different information from the data in order to understand how adolescents talk about cross-racial friendships.

Chapter 4: Findings

Given that the goal of this research is to better understand how early adolescents discuss their friendships, especially those friendships which are cross-racial and cross-ethnic, this chapter outlines the way in which the themes from the data serve to support Gordon Allport's intergroup contact theory and reveal the use of stories and metaphors. Specifically, in the following pages four major themes are described in detail and enhanced with several quotations before being explicated by the researcher. To preserve the privacy of the participants, all names of individuals used in the results and discussion are fictional.

The benefit of the group interview method was clear from the data set. Having discussion questions to follow and a moderator to ask the questions allowed students to articulate and expand on their friendship experiences. Not every researcher would have common background experiences with the research participants in order to establish a foundation of trust, however, for this study prior knowledge of the student population was instrumental during both recruitment and peer group discussions.

The result for the research question unpacks the way in which the Parrish Middle School students construct their ideas about friendship. This question – "How do early adolescents talk about cross-racial friendships and how are Allport's tenets reflected in their talk?" - drew on descriptions from the participants, who articulated the principles of Allport and extensions to intergroup contact theory without being aware of it. The assumption on the part of the researcher that most friendships are mono-ethnic and do not cross racial lines was upheld through analyzing the data collected on the Friends Sheet. Four overarching themes emerged from the data: Tenets from Allport, Extensions on

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Allport, Friendship Segregation, and Discourse Formats. Participants discussed each of these themes or used the discourse formats as a way to describe their experiences and interpretations of the friendships in their own lives or the social groupings they observe at school.

Tenets from Allport

Common Goals vs. Common Interests. One of the first themes to be coded for was instances where students spoke about common goals, but the data revealed that students articulated much more about common interests than common goals. Allport (1954) described common goals as "the cooperative striving for the goal that engenders solidarity" (p. 276); however, he does say that common interests are also important to increase positive cross-racial contacts. I would like to differentiate between common goals, like getting a good grade in math class, from common interests, participating on the Math Olympics team, by saying *goals* reveal an objective whereas *interests* reveal a preference. Overwhelmingly students referenced common interests as a way of making both cross racial and same race friends, while common goals were limited to the educational setting.

For instance, when participants were asked how their friendships formed one eighth grade Hispanic male said, "Umm I don't know. You just.. got along. Had class together. So, team up sometimes. Do the best work we can." This quote indicates that the common goal of a good class grade promoted friendship. Another eighth grader, a White female, said cross-racial friendships were formed through mixed grade level math classes, "Especially when you are in advanced math and there are only like seventh graders around. You're in sixth grade and so you only have a small group of sixth graders,

you just kind of become friends with them". Students mentioned the common goal of

class work completion as the deciding factor in who to work with.

(Group 3-lines 448-449)

Latoya: It [race] doesn't really cross my mind. I try to work with people who will

get things done, not, you know, race.

Students expressed that common goals can promote both same race and inter-

racial/inter-ethnic friendships; however, they had much more to say about common

interests.

(Group 2-lines 337-338)

Babushka: One of the most important things. Have things in common. Be cool.

(13 year old Hispanic female)

(Group 3-lines 27-28)

Bonnie: Common interests.   People who kind of have similar styles of tastes to

you. (14 year old White female)

When asked about the people on their Friends Sheet, the members of the Hispanic

only group replied,

(Group 2-lines 169-171)

Fat Amy: They're all in [band]

Bob: [Band] (*laughter)*

Fat Amy: They are!

This quote reveals that even the students hadn't realized the common interest of

playing in the band was what tied their friendship group together.

In contrast to the comments above, further data shows that students do understand how common interests are integral in a friendship, especially in friendship formation.

(Group 3-lines 177-178)

Bonnie: I realized that we were into similar stuff and so I kinda confronted her about that and talked to her and now we always hang out together at lunch (14 year old White female)

(Group 3-lines 189-190)

Danielle: … you know you have the same things in common and you kinda form a friendship. (13 year old White female)

Participants mentioned common interests in both the formation of current friendships and as a necessary ingredient for future friendship formation. Consider these quotes from two White 13 year old, seventh grade girls, the first one about how their friendship formed:

(Group 4-lines 122-124)

McNarwal: And then, then we figured out how we knew most of each other's music…

McTurtle: And that we actually had a lot in common..

McNarwal: Yah..

McTurtle: And we were weird together for the rest of the year.

The second quote is about how students can form friendships in the future:

(Group 4-lines 318-323, 325-327)

McTurtle: Maybe like, umm.. Like one of your.. like one of my interests is music like if I joined like a music club, if that's even a thing, like maybe you can make friends in that club.

McNarwal: Or maybe there's people that like the same band as you. and uhh maybe, they have their own group that hangs out at lunch or something and you're like you could listen to it.... Umm, you got to go over and be like 'Hey..that band. I like it!' And they'll be like 'Oh yeah, me too!' and you're be like 'Oh, let's be friends.' 'OK'.

As the above excerpts show, participants indicated that common goals may promote cross-racial and cross-ethnic friendships in a classroom situation. And yet, a common interest that can transcend the immediacy of goal accomplishment during the school day may be more important to the long term relationship. In the above example, McNarwal and McTurtle had formed a strong friendship around a passion for the same bands and musical style. As a result of this experience, these students could envision how that same musical context could lay the groundwork for new friendships in the future. These quotations suggest that Allport's tenet of common goals may need to be interlaced with common interests in order for friendships to form among early adolescents.

Interdependence vs. Friendship Chaining. The next theme to be coded was the tenet of interdependence. Allport (1954) does not use the term "interdependence", but instead writes about "common humanity between members of the two groups" (p.281). Allport (1954) believed this was a necessary feature to reducing prejudice so that cross-racial and cross-ethnic friendships could form. While the data revealed limited examples

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of interdependence leading to friendship formation, participants from this data set did speak more often of friendship chaining as a method for cross-racial and cross-ethnic friendship formation. Friendship chaining is where person A introduces person B to person C, and because person A and person C are already friends, the likelihood of person B and person C becoming friends increases (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2011). While the interdependence of Allport's "common humanity" may have promoted cross-racial and cross-ethnic friendships in the past, today's youth seem to rely on already established relationships in order to expand their social circles.

When coding for interdependence I was looking for examples of when students spoke about sharing and cooperation from both members of a friendship dyad. Most references given by students carried heavy emphasis on an emotional interdependence that would transcend the school day encounters. Consider the following quote which also includes this group's definition of friendship.

(Group 2-lines 28-43)

Babushka: No. Friendship is when you have a friend and you can trust them and they..you can trust that they will be loyal to you. And that you'll… that you'll be nice and they'll be there to support you.

Laquisha: Good, any other comments?

{throat clearing}

Laquisha: So basically it's a relationship between two people that care about each other..

Babushka: [Yes]

Fat Amy:[Yeah]

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Laquisha: That will be there for each other

Bob: And who'll pick you back up when you're down.

Laquisha: When you fall.

Bob: [And will kick you].

Laquisha: [After laughing at you]

(*laughter)*

Bob: After laughing at you, of course. That's real friendship right there. (*laughter*)

This humorous exchange by all the group members makes light of what came out in several other student references as to the importance of emotional interdependence in friendships.

(Group 3-lines 16-17

Angie: Yeah, like people you can just like be around and you tell your secrets to and everything. (14 year old female Hispanic Islander)

Angie picks up this theme again later on in the conversation:

(Group 2-lines 456-459)

Angie: We have to have a certain bond, because I have a certain bond with people where I can tell a relationship problem to one of my friends, but then the other one 'Oh yeah. He's just my ex, he's just my past'. But then the person I can tell my problem, my problem with the relationship. (14 year old female Hispanic Islander)

Participants used the idea of interdependence when they spoke about what constitutes a friendship.

(Group 2-lines 22-24)

Bonnie: I think you can still be friends with acquaintances but I think you are more likely to have or make a best friend and that's going to be the person you can tell anything to.   (14 year old White female)

In this passage Bonnie is referring to the idea that self disclosure, which can be part of emotional interdependence, plays a role in strengthening existing friendships, which is in line with findings from Pettigrew and Tropp (2011).

This theme of interdependence was also mentioned briefly in conjunction with friendship or group formation. Pablo, a thirteen year old Hispanic male, spoke about interdependence in a bullying situation when he said, "I mean…sometimes one… someone may come and then back you off and protect you and after that they you know…". Rosita, a thirteen year old Hispanic female, describes interdependence during classroom work group formation when she said, "If there's someone alone, then you can call them over". Although interdependence can cause new social groups or friendships to form, students spoke more often about friendship chaining.

In contrast to a few instances, friendship chaining was mentioned by all the groups as a way to make new friends. For example, this first quote incorporates exactly how friendship chaining works.

(Group 2-lines 364-371)

Babushka: It's because when you have a friend, and then they might end up introducing you to someone else, and then you become friends with that people, that person.

Bob: Like me and you.

Fat Amy: I knew her because of her-

Babushka: Through me.

Fat Amy: And then like I know more people through E_____. I mean.. Bob.

At this period of social development, adolescents feel more comfortable meeting new people through existing relationships. The next quote shows awareness on the part of students of how friendship chaining can foster cross-racial and cross-ethnic friendships:

(Group 4-lines 271-274)

Pablo: Yeah, I mean I give for example if you're trying to get friends who are cross racial, maybe some of your friends who are, you know, the same race as them will help you, you know, get to know them, so you don't struggle too much, to become their friend.   (13 year old Hispanic male)

This is a clear example of how aware students are that friendship chaining is a method of establishing cross-racial and cross-ethnic relationships. Additionally, students could talk about friendship chaining helping them establish new friendships in the future:

(Group 4-lines 304-306)

McNarwal: …end up finding a best friend like you did in middle school or maybe some friends from middle school might like, be in that high school and they might help you make new friends. (13 year old White female)

Students felt confident when talking about friendship chaining as a method of establishing friendships because many of the participants had positive friendship chaining experiences in the past:

(Group 3-lines 199-201, 204-206)

Angie: Yeah, umm.. my best friend now, we became friends from her best friend,

which was my friend.. and then like..every since the last day we've been friends,

(14 year old Hispanic Islander female)

Danielle: Yeah, umm, you know some, some of my old, old friends kind of

introduced me to new people and then those people they introduced me to are

now my friends.   (13 year old White female)

(Group 4-lines 261-263)

McTurtle: Basically, I few of them I met through other friends. Like my friend

John, who goes to the high school, I met through my friend that her grandpa

knows my dad. So I met through her. (13 year old White female)

All three of these students gained important friendships through an established

friend or extended family connection and could articulate their recognition of how

friendship chaining provided friendship opportunities that otherwise might not have

occurred. The last example shows how friendship chaining even helps to break down

racial barriers:

(Group 1-lines 119-122)

Patricia: And like..this happened to me, personally. My best friend here made

friends with this new girl. Honestly I didn't like her. But then when I started to

get to know her, like she was a really nice person. It's just that she was a different

race than us. So…   (13 year old Hispanic female)

While students spoke about emotional interdependence being an important

component of friendships, when it came to discussions on friendship formation,

especially cross-ethnic and cross-racial friendships, friendship chaining were the

examples most often given. For these students, developing Allport's "common humanity" between groups is easier if there is already a friend who can bridge the gap between the familiar and the unknown.

Extensions on Allport

   Dual Identity and Difficulties of Cross-Racial Friendships. In reminder, Gordon Allport's intergroup contact theory has been impacting social science research for nearly sixty years. The theory however has been extended to account for social variances that Allport did not consider. One of these variances is the idea of dual ethnic or racial identity. A unique variation on identity came when, as the facilitator, I asked students to select a name that they would like to be known as during the recording and transcription process. While Group One and Group Three members were content to let me select names for them later, Group Two quickly adapted name aliases which crossed gender and racial lines. The only male of Group Two chose a name, "Laquisha", which is traditionally associated with a Black female. A thirteen year old Hispanic female chose the name "Bob", which is generally a given name for a White male. "Babushka" refers to both an ethnicity and age category which disguise the thirteen year old Hispanic female who chose this name as her pseudonym. And lastly "Fat Amy" was chosen as a metaphorical reference to a fictional character portrayed in the movie *Pitch Perfect*. The speaker had no physical resemblance to the character either through ethnicity or body type. The final group had three members willing to self select nom de plumes. Shanikquwa McNarwal and Shananay McTurtle, names chosen by thirteen year old White females, may have had significance outside the research setting as use of the names was exaggerated throughout the conversation and frequently punctuated by

laughter. Only "Pablo Sanchez", the name chosen by a seventh grade Hispanic male, matched his own ethnic heritage. The students' willingness to disguise not only their true given names, but also their natural born ethnicities may show the fluidity of their self concept, common to this age group.

Nowhere in *The Nature of Prejudice* did Allport discuss the concept of dual identity, however, the union of several of Allport's ideas "suggests the potential value" of holding this unique position (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2005, p.80). In fact, Gaertner and Dovidio (2005) advocate that "a dual identity may be effective for reducing intergroup bias and maintaining harmonious relations between groups" (p.80). As adolescents, these students haven't been forced to choose a single identity and do not see their own duality as a burden. But these students are interested, as most adolescents are, with belonging and they are still struggling with identity formation. Part of that identity formation is looking for the strengths of their own ethnic backgrounds (Mora, 2001). Therefore in order to collect data on this extension to Allport, I targeted the recruitment of two specific students with multi-ethnic backgrounds. First there is Angie:

(Group 3-lines 72-75)

Angie: So like I was saying..my mom is Hawaiian and Filipino and also my dad umm..is like full Mexican, so like ..most of it is kind of Mexican, 'cause I have half Hawaiian and half Filipino also. But like, I can relate with like the Hispanics and the Islanders in some point of way. (14 year old Hispanic Islander female)

The second is Latoya:

(Group 3-lines 93-94, 96-99)

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Latoya: Umm..I ..My mother is like many, many races. 'Cause umm..she's White and so like.. and my dad's from Belize. So he's full Belizean…. I'm American, Belizean, English, Irish, Dutch, Romanian, German, Sioux Indian, and French and Caribbean. So..umm.. race isn't really an issue with me.   (*laughter*)

Uhh…so..yeah. I'm mostly Belizean or Black and American.   (13 year old Bi-racial female)

Latoya's disavowal of the importance of race on her identity is just as important as her detailed list of ethnic origins. As individuals, these girls have chosen to embrace all parts of their heritage and not identify solely as Black or White, Islander or Hispanic. They have concluded that "we all have multiple identities" (Mora, 2001, p. 138). Angie was one of the few students who, when considering the ethnicity of her friends as recorded on the Friends Sheet, noted many cross racial friendships. She stated that "sometimes like for me because I'm both" she has the ability to move between ethnic and racial groups at school. To that same end Latoya says:

(Group 3-lines 502-506)

 Latoya: Yeah, to all the schools that I've been to it's never really been a problem because there's not, you know, a lot of Black people. There's always been a lot of like White people or Hispanic people. So you know cross-racial friend ships have never really been a problem 'cause you know there's not really a lot of my race to be friends with (*laughter*). (13 year old Bi-racial female)

For Latoya her dual identity signals her uniqueness and yet does not make her an outcast. She points out the irony of her situation; due to the rareness of her racial and ethnic background there is no way for her to fill a Friends Sheet with other people of the

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same racial and ethnic makeup. Living in this situation has caused her to foster cross-ethnic and cross-racial friendships.

Both Angie and Latoya talk positively about having inter-racial and inter-ethnic friendships:

(Group 3-lines 32-33, 39-40)

Angie: Yeah, like, umm. Like different people from… it's kinda good to make from different races 'cause we get to know part of them. (14 year old Hispanic Islander female)

Latoya: Uh.. I just.. I like have friends of like every kind. I have guy friends, I have umm..girl friends. Umm. every race really…(13 year old Bi-racial female)

Here it is clear that Angie's and Latoya's awareness of their diverse ethnic and racial heritage has assisted them with cross-racial and cross-ethnic friendships. This state of affairs was anticipated and in line with the findings of Gaertner and Dovidio (2005).

In contrast with what were projected findings on dual identity were the depth of insights students offered on the difficulties of cross-ethnic and cross-racial friendships. Every single group mentioned the difficulty of crossing the language barrier. Whether it was with one word, "communicating" or through personal narratives, all four groups talked about how not speaking the same language has a huge impact on friendship formation, especially in a bi-lingual school such as Parrish. Both sides of the English/Spanish divide spoke about how complicated friendships become due to the language issue.

(Group 3-lines 256-260)

Bonnie:…Because I've had friends, mostly Hispanic friends, and we'll be sitting there and someone walks up that they know and so they just like go into this full blown conversation and it's like 'I'm still here you know. So I'd appreciate it if you would speak something like I could understand'. (14 year old White female) (Group 2-lines 216-219)

Fat Amy: Or they might just not like get along 'cause maybe like… if we talked in Spanish and they didn't know Spanish then we would have…like-

Babushka: Difficulties.

Fat Amy: Yah. In communicating. Yeah. (13 year old Hispanic females) (Group 4-lines 165-168)

Pablo: Yah.. I mean..maybe some, you know.. maybe some friends would still wouldn't like you because you speak a different language, you know like I could speak the same language too, like they wouldn't like it that I have another language. (13 year old Hispanic male)

Besides the language issue, students also elaborated on a wide variety of issues that keep or could keep cross-racial and cross-ethnic friendships from forming. Groups three and four mentioned that there could be family issues. Bob, a thirteen year old Hispanic female, said, "'cause maybe their parents don't agree with the relationship of being friends with other people with different races". Group three gave several examples of how racial profiling, specifically of assuming that two people of the same ethnicity or race must be related, was "insulting". Ironically, Latoya said that she could hang out with her biological brother and never be asked if they were brother and sister, but when

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hanging out with a friend who is also Black, she got asked "all the time" if they were related. This stereotyping has a negative impact on cross-racial relations.

Group Two also gave an example of stereotyping that could make cross-racial and cross-ethnic friendship challenging when Bob said, " Like say that like..this specific race does something a lot , and so they might not want to talk because of what they hear. But they don't really know." Bob is suggesting that in addition to issues around language and family input, the assumptions carried around in peoples' minds and spoken even in casual conversation can be roadblocks to relationships.

In the following quotation McNarwal bravely confronts the issue of racism.

(Group 4-lines 162-164)

McNarwal: Umm..Your friends might not approve of it if they are really

judgmental. And they might be like 'Hey you're friends with a Black person?

That's messed up' and you're just like 'Bro, there's nothing wrong with that.' (13 year old White female)

The participants indicated that cultural differences could also be a deterrent to cross-racial and cross-ethnic adolescent friendships.

(Group 4-lines 169-173)

McTurtle: Sometimes like some cultures have like different holidays than you and

they might not have to school on that day and you can be like 'Hey you want to

hang out?' or they can be 'Hey you want to hang out? and you can be like 'I

can't I'm in school today but err..or tomorrow' but whatever you know. That

can be a problem…   (13 year old White female)

Isabel from Group One said that "stuff they believe and we don't believe" and "religion and stuff" can be troubling to a friendship with a person from another race or ethnicity. These examples show that students are highly cognizant of the factors that keep cross-racial and cross-ethnic friendships from forming.

Peer Group Influence and Self Selected Groupings. A second extension to the original work done by Allport (1954) is the inclusion of the peer group as a source of influence over in-group formation. While Allport noted how parents were the primary teachers for children as they learn to conform to societal rules, he did little to account for the sway that peers at school, especially in a multiracial school, have over adolescents (Aboud, 2005). The theme of peer group influence surfaced through the peer group conversations, but so did the power of the self-selected groupings. First, when coding for references to peer group influences I listened for instances where adolescents described themselves acting in conjunction with a group, not solely as an individual. Another way to account for peer group influence was when an individual talked about gaining the approval of their in-group. These group experiences varied widely, with some examples showing open inclusion and other examples displaying open hostility.

Maggie, a fourteen year old Pacific Islander female, said that her friends "Sometimes they just like hang out with each other, they don't care. About the race..umm..yeah." Angie, a fourteen year old Hispanic Islander, also gave an example of her group being inclusive: "But then we go up to, sometimes we go up to like random people and just make friends. Like 'Oh that's fun'. Like 'Let's have more people'". She explained that "…having a lot of people from different race in our group would be kind

cool and interesting." The influence from these peer groups is to move towards inclusion and away from biased behavior.

Not all peer influence leans towards inclusion. Latoya talked about the social formations that she sees at Parrish:

(Group 3-lines 296-302)

Latoya: I also agree. A lot… I see a lot that races seem to hang out with each other, like they'll sit all together and there might be one other, like a group of White people will be sitting together and there might be one Mexican.

Danielle: [Yeah]

Latoya: And like vice versa and maybe like a Black kid, but mostly umm..I see a lot of the same race. (13 year old Bi-racial female)

Bonnie described a negative encounter her group had with another group in the cafeteria.

Bonnie: …like me and my friends we had to go to a different table and a lot of Hispanics were sitting there and they asked us to move because we were White. And they literally told us that too, because we were White we didn't hav..we weren't supposed to sit at that table. And so they kept on asking us to leave until they finally got up and left all in a big group and now they don't sit there anymore, we sit there, but now I guess you could say it is very segregated 'cause even looking back at the group I sit with, like maybe four Hispanics all at the end part of the table that we hang out with. (14 year old White female)

Here, though she does not say so explicitly, Bonnie is describing the pressure that one group can put on another group or individual to follow along with segregation. Friendship formation is impacted by this type of peer pressure, especially if the peer group does not approve of a cross-racial or cross-ethnic friendship coming into the larger group. This same phenomenon was noted by Hewitt (1986) when he found that when the majority of an individual's friends were of one race, "the need to comply with group pressures was strongly felt" (p.41).

Conversely, if the peer group is open to a friend that is not of the same race, then integration can start. When asked about the reactions of existing same race friends to a new member who is not of "your" race, Group Two responded:

(lines 263-269)

Babushka: Hmm..They might feel weird in the beginning, but once they get used to, her or him, they will think they are pretty cool.

Bob: They will get along with them as well.

Laquisha: I don't think my friends would really care because we're actually different types of race.

Babushka: They would respect it. Like if they are your true friends they will respect what you want to do. Want to be friends with someone else. (13 year old Hispanic females, 14 year old Hispanic male)

This passage emphasizes that existing peer groups do impact new friendship formation and can either encourage or discourage cross-racial and cross-ethnic friendships.

Though group influence can be strong, choices are still made by the individual as to who will be in his or her group. Participants in the peer conversations made observations on the groups that formed through individual choice while at school.

(Group 4-lines 102-107)

McTurtle: Since the majority of the population is either White or Hispanic that's the uhh yeah.. the friends that ..I don't know how to explain it.

Rosita: Like.. White hang out with White…with ..[Hispanic with Hispanic]

Pablo: [Yeah] I mean they can both hang out, but normally [both]

Rosita: [Yeah] They normally hang out with their own race.   (13 year old White female, Hispanic male and Hispanic female)

This quote acknowledges that students have the freedom to hang out with whoever they choose, but that self-segregation still exists within the school walls. Students may have a hard time explaining the phenomenon, but they are well aware that it exists. The cycle of same race selection continues when students are allowed to choose their own work groups, they choose their friends, and their friends are the same race as themselves. While students may not verbalize that race is a factor, it becomes a hidden criteria when self selecting work groups:

(Group 1-lines 145-153)

Facilitator: Alright. So the last ones kind of like about being in a classroom. Say your teacher says you can pick your own work groups, like who you want to work with to get an assignment done. What are the things that go through your mind and does it, does race or ethnicity kinda factor into that situation?

Maria: [No]

Patricia: [No] Your friends just pop up like people-

Isabel: Like the people you know

Maria: Yeah   (13 year old Hispanic females)

The students don't realize that they are perpetuating the cycle of segregation when
they select their friends to work with in class, but if the majority their friends are the
same race as they are, which data from the Friends Sheet confirms, then they
inadvertently create racial and ethnic schisms and decrease opportunities for cross-racial
and cross-ethnic friendships to form. Based on how they talked about these issues,
students appear to have no consciousness of the long term impact of what appears to
them to be a choice based on comfort and familiarity. Group Four answered the same
question as above this way:

(lines 235-247)

Pablo: Honestly I don't think that really matters. Ehh uhhh,.. Yeah, I don't think
that would really matter…

McNarwal: I don't think it matters, but normally people like to go and find their
friends or people they know better in classrooms, because they may be afraid that
other people might not like them or something like that. So.. I don't know, it
just doesn't really affect it, it just depends if you know them or not.

McTurtle: Yeah, I've noticed that like if ummm..if I see a certain group hanging
out in the hallway maybe..and they're all in the same class together, or some of
them at least, they'll be in the same group together ..'cause like Shanikquwa said
they're like all friends and know each other.

Maggie: I agree with them.   (13 year old Hispanic male, 13 year old White

females, 14 year old Pacific Islander)

This section of the conversation reinforced that these students don't consciously

self select a work group based on race or ethnicity, yet that is how the groups end up

being divided in some of the classes I have taught.

Throughout all four peer group conversations students addressed important

extensions to Allport's intergroup contact theory, such as dual identity and peer group

influence. In addition, they also spoke at length on the difficulties of cross-racial and

cross-ethnic friendships and the self selected groupings they observe at school. The next

prevalent theme is an addition to the self selected groupings as students had more to say

about friendship segregation.

Friendship Segregation

　　　Racial Homogeneity and the Definition of Friendship. The racial and ethnic

composition of the friends listed by research participants on the Friends Sheet confirms

the patterns seen by Bronson and Merryman (2009) and Moody (2001). For most

students the racial and ethnic profile of their friends matches or mirrors their own self

identification. Anticipating that a direct question on the racial profile of their friends

would result in skewed data, I had students fill out the Friends Sheet and then place a

racial or ethnic category next to the friends' names. In this manner the racial

homogeneity or variety of their friends would become evident without students feeling

pressured to conform to a social standard. For some students the fact that all their friends

were of the same ethnicity or race came as a surprise, because they had never analyzed

their friendships to see if any cross-racial or cross-ethnic relationships existed. Babushka,

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a thirteen year old Hispanic female, exclaimed, "We're all Hispanic" when describing her friends' ethnicities or race. Patricia, a thirteen year old Hispanic female, came to the conclusion "There's a lot of Mexicans". Two other girls from her group echoed her sentiments when they said, "Mine are mostly all Hispanic" and "Mine is too". The pattern of Hispanic students having a list of Hispanic friends continued in Group Two with FA acknowledging "They're Hispanic" and the whole group responding to the question "So does most of it [the list] match your ethnicity?"

(Group 2-lines 143-146)

Fat Amy: Mmmm Hummm

Babushka: Yeah..

Laquisha: You could say that.

Bob: Yeah

In Group One when asked if they noticed a pattern to their friends' race or ethnicity Isabel, a thirteen year old Hispanic girl said, "I know..umm..Hispanic" and Juanita, a twelve year old Hispanic female, added with a laugh, "They're all Hispanic". Group One did not have much to say about cross-racial and cross-ethnic friendships because several in that group stated that if they made a cross-racial friend their same race friends would "Be surprised". Furthermore, when asked if they had ever been in that situation, of having a cross-racial friendship, Juanita said simply "No" and Isabel elaborated by saying "I haven't encountered that yet". So in their first twelve or thirteen years of life, these Hispanic females had formed no friendships outside of their Hispanic culture. The result of this friendship pattern can be seen throughout the school. Pablo states it well when he says, "It's pretty.. it's kinda obvious, I mean the Hispanics with

Hispanics, well, White with White, Islanders with Islanders. I mean they can sometimes mix up, but normally you would see groups of the same race."

Despite the easily visible racial and ethnic segregation that occurs within adolescent combinations, no mention of race happened when each of the groups defined the term 'friendship'. Some students were incredibly broad and tentative in their definition of friendship, like Isabel, a thirteen year old Hispanic female, who said-"When you get along with everybody?" And when asked who in general their friends were, Patricia, a thirteen year old Hispanic female, responded, "Everybody".   Other students were more exacting in their definitions.

(Group 3-lines from 10 to 25)

Bonnie: Uhh..usually it's kind of like a bond that two people kind of build over time, I guess. …But true friends are ones that you can be yourself around.

Danielle: People you can trust with, other, you know, about anything really.

Angie: Yeah, like people you can just like be around and you tell your secrets to and everything.

Latoya: People who you share your feelings with and your emotions.

These students consciously articulated how friendship is something that requires trust, emotional closeness and sharing. These criteria were echoed in other groups as well.

(Group 4-lines 26-33)

McTurtle: Someone who is like there for you and umm…

McNarwal: They always have your back. And they give you advice and …

Pablo: And in the hardest times they will help you, I mean in hard difficulties, like if someone dies, it will help you get over it.

By listing out the key components of friendship, from the silly to the serious, students revealed that their standards for intimacy beyond being an acquaintance match Bonilla-Silva's and Embrick's (2007) definition of friendships containing emotional closeness, interdependence, and interaction.

When asked, in general, who their friends are, students gave descriptors that reflect their youth. Words like "nice", "funny", "crazy" and "hyper" were heard from the all Hispanic Group Two. Group Two also included some more serious qualities of friends when they used phrases like "People who go my back" and "People who correct me when I am doing something wrong and help me get on the right track again". Students had awareness that one of the most important friendship criteria is "How they treat you". But very few students could use the description that Danielle, a thirteen year old White female, gave for her friends:

(Group 3-lines 29-31)

Danielle: Uh.. I find that my friends are somewhat different than me. People who I hang out with are different than I am sometimes. Like, they act differently, they, you know whatever. They talk differently.

Here Danielle has allowed for cross-racial and cross-ethnic friendships to form by including in her friendship schema a place for differences. By their own definitions and criteria for friendships, cross-racial and cross-ethnic pairings should be able to form at least during the school day, but data from the Friends Sheet shows that those alliances for most students are rare.

Parental Influence and Social Desirability. One undeniable element in cross-racial and cross-ethnic friendship formation is the influence from each student's home environment. Research in childhood development has shown in recent years that parents are important to providing a basis for cross-group relationships (Aboud, 2005, Pettigrew & Tropp, 2011). These studies echo Allport's 1954 findings that children want to have a connection to their parents through identification. Students in this study gave one example each of how cross-racial and cross-ethnic friendships are either met with approval or disapproval at their homes.

(Group 4-lines 176-179)

McNarwal: Oh yeah… Your family probably wouldn't approve of it. Well, depending on how your family is. I know that.. I am friends.. I have a lot of Hispanic friends and my mom has no problem with that so..neither does my sister 'cause they both have Hispanic friends. (13 year old White female)

Students who have parents who are modeling cross-racial and cross-ethnic friendships are more likely to reproduce that pattern in their own lives. Conversely, if the parental modeling is hostility towards out-groups, then students are less likely to form cross-racial and cross-ethnic friendships.

(Group 3-lines 108-113)

Bonnie: [Ever] like umm.. since I was young my parents, they're not exactly like…They understand there's good people out there, but they kind of hate how like everything just in general how everything is starting to turn into Spanish and stuff and they kind of feel like it takes away from my education.

And so they kind of hate how America's turning out to be, I guess. And in that

sense and so that belief is kind of forced down onto me.

(14 year old White female)

While parental influence was not a prominent theme in the data, the attitudes of

inclusion or exclusion displayed generally by the two above students matched the

attitudes and modeling they were seeing in their homes.

Besides adopting the stance of the adults around them, the youth in this study

were also highly impacted by the desire to appear socially acceptable. Words and

phrases that would be expected when discussing race and ethnicity were present in

conversations, but perhaps more as parroting than as true personal beliefs. At the

discussion table cross-racial and cross-ethnic friendships were treated as desirable and

having a friend who is a different race or ethnicity was described as "cool", "good", and

"No big difference. It's the same." Students were careful to point out that "We don't

judge them by their race or ethnicity" (Bob-13 year old Hispanic female). The rest of the

group was quick to agree:

(Group 2-lines 201-205)

Babushka: Their personality, the way they act.

Fat Amy: Yeah.

Bob: Like how they treat us. It's really what matters.

Laquisha: I agree.

Fat Amy: It doesn't really matter what they look like 'cause we're all people.

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Participants gave credence to the norms expected in an inclusive multi-racial society, yet many of those same participants only had same race friends. Color blind statements came from Group One as well.

(Group 1-lines 84-92)

Facilitator: Good description, OK. Alright so what's it like to ^have^ a friend who is a different race or ethnicity than you are?

Maria: Well I take it the same, because we're all the same.

Patricia: We're all people but different.

Isabel: Different cultures and stuff

Stephanie: (xxxxxxx).. different races

Juanita: It's the same   (12 and 13 year old Hispanic females, 13 White female)

These statements would indicate that making and maintaining cross-racial and cross-ethnic friendships was normal, yet the data from the Friends Sheets and the observations I have made in the classrooms and hallways of Parrish show racial friendship segregation still exists for most students. It is clear from the data that students recognized racial and ethnic friendship segregation as part of the school landscape, but failed to comprehend how it is part of their own personal narrative as well.

Discourse Format

Stories and Metaphors. The final theme to be explored is the vehicles in which the substance of these conversations was carried. Two specific conversational tools were coded discretely, stories and metaphors.   Stories are recreated memories of past events, fanciful plots of sheer imagination, or life lessons wrapped in dialog and description that

are told orally to fit the present situation. Storytellers reconstruct their remembered events through words their audience can understand, allowing the storyteller to fulfill a purpose like entertaining or educating (Norrick, 2000). Ritchie (2010) notes how storytelling is a central way that humans organize their social worlds and how telling a story has both cognitive and social-interactive elements. To answer the research question on how adolescents talk about cross-racial and cross-ethnic friendships, the emphasis of this study is on the social-interactive method of storytelling, with principle examples of collaborative stories. Collaborative stories, or co-narrations, are told by multiple speakers who all can relate to the same event in some manner (Norrick, 2000).

From the data two qualifying examples of collaborative storytelling emerged. The first was from Group Two. Bob had mentioned early in the conversation that her relationship with Babushka was based on family contact. "Umm…our mom's like came back…came here from California together and so they've been friends and so we grew up together." This prompted the facilitator to ask at the end of the conversation session for more details on how the friendship emerged. The answer to this probe was told not only in collaborative style between Bob and Babushka, but also includes a collaborative fantasy that was initiated by Laquisha. A collaborative fantasy involves two or more people weaving a tale of what might have occurred in the past or what might occur in the future. The fabrication usually carries in it an element of unreality used for humor (Norrick, 2000) as seen in the example here:

(Group 2-lines 377-401)

Facilitator: So can you ever remember ^not^ being her friend or have you just known each other since you were like so little?

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Bob: [So little]

Babushka: [Pretty much]

Facilitator: Wow.

Laquisha: They were born together…

Babushka: Hmmm Humm

Laquisha: Just the two of them.

(*laughter*)

Bob: Hey baby where did you come from?

(*laughter*)

Facilitator: So same elementary school-

Babushka: No

Facilitator: Oh, no?

Bob: We just go to the same church, our families are close, and we've traveled together. To Mexico. It's pretty cool.

Facilitator: But you didn't actually start going to school together until Parrish?

Babushka: Yeah

Bob: Yeah. And in kinder. Half of kinder and first grade

Babushka: Oh and band,

Bob: And band.

Babushka: Fifth grade band

….(5 second pause)

Facilitator: Cool.

Babushka: Yeah, it is.

The details of this long term relationship come out from both Bob and Babushka. Each one prompts the other to remember more or to clarify what has already been said. Laquisha interjects his take on how the girls were together at birth, a humorous image that Bob builds upon when she says, "Hey baby where did you come from?" Through the use of a collaborative story the participants answered the facilitator's prompt on friendship development. The co-narration and collaborative fantasy were constructed socially and were part of the naturally developing conversation, and not as a reaction to a request to tell a story.

The second example was given during Group Four's recording. Remember, Group Four had previously recorded their peer conversation, but the data was irretrievable. During both recording sessions seventh grade girls McNarwal and McTurtle collaboratively recounted how their friendship formed.

(Group 4-lines 116-129)

McNarwal: The way Shananay and I met, we kinda hated each other for most of the year last year in language arts but like…

McTurtle: We both thought each other was really, really annoying.

McNarwal: And umm, like Shananay was kinda humming a song and I started singing the words to it and we're kinda like..

McTurtle: 'Hey you know that song?! Wow!'

McNarwal: And then, then we figured out how we knew most of each other's music…

McTurtle: And that we actually had a lot in common..

McNarwal: Yah..

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McTurtle: And we were weird together for the rest of the year.

McNarwal: We like disrupted the class to many times. You don't know how many times I almost got sent out. (*laughter*) I was so loud last year, like even louder than this year.

In this example, which the girls got to tell more than once, each participant gives her view on the past events in a way that intertwines with the other. There was no pausing or hesitation during the second recording as the co-narration worked well for them the first time and they continued to refine the collaborative method during the second taping session. Each storytelling partner was supportive of the other and through their joint efforts a picture of the past emerged. A co-narration can both demonstrate and build solidarity, as is seen in this example. Solidarity is also built through the exaggerated naughtiness mentioned at the end of the story to emphasize the "specialness" of their relationship. These examples show how adolescents can have the same sophistication level as adults when it comes to recounting as a pair or trio significant past occasions.

In conjunction with the collaborative stories were many instances of individual storytelling, with friendship formation being the most common story topic. McNarwal told a story about how her friendship with "Ashley" formed in much the same way as her relationship with McTurtle, but since only McNarwal was present, the story could not be told collaboratively. Pablo recounted when he met one of his friends during a bullying situation where Pablo was being picked on and his friend helped him and through that encounter their companionship formed. Pablo also told a story that revealed his personality and how his shyness impacts friendship formation:

(Group 4-lines 110-113)

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Pablo: Uhh..It started for me like in sixth grade. Uhh. It took me up to the fifth week of the first six weeks because I get shy too easily sometimes. Now honestly I'm not that shy anymore. So yeah I got… When I met him… he's pretty much now my best friend…uhh… after that.

Further, the examples of friendship formation were constructed by Maggie through two separate stories, each one about a specific ethnic group.

(Group 4-line 133-135, 284-289)

Maggie: OK ummm, I met my friends 'cause I didn't have any friends when I came and then I saw umm my Islander friends and they're all… and then we started hanging out with each other.

Maggie: A lot umm well… my Mexican friends I umm… I met them in fifth grade, some of them.

Facilitator: Uhh Humm

Maggie: They wanted to be my friend and it.. I thought I wasn't going to have any friends in fifth grade when I was new and then they came and they're like 'Do you want to be my friend? Uhh yeah.

Maggie views her friends in two distinct groups categorized by ethnicity and race. This was discovered through the stories that she shared. As an Islander Maggie is a minority within the total school demographics and in the community at large. In contrast, Bonnie is a minority within the school because she is White, but not a minority within the broader community context. This has produced in her some feelings of resentment, which came out through her stories.

(Group 3-lines 315-318)

Bonnie:…For instance one thing I've taken very much note of is that a lot of times you'll be standing in line and there'll be a big group of Hispanics and they'll just try and cut in line and you can't do much about it because you're just one person compared to a group.

Bonnie's stories tell of how her daily face-to-face interactions with the majority group within the school have left her with feelings of defensiveness.

(Groups 3-lines 83-89)

Bonnie:…Umm and honestly because of my color I do get put down a lot because I am whiter than even most White people..and so I do get put down a lot for that... For instance, like girls I know will be sitting there and they'll be saying 'Why are you happy being White? I mean wouldn't you rather be Mexican and be pretty like us? Wouldn't you rather be like this?' And honestly I can only tell them no, because I like being my color.

As a public school, Parrish is a place where the participants' discourse is impacted by the encounters each person has with members of a different race or ethnicity. The above story is a telling example of group dynamics were in-group preferences for a certain skin color lead to out-group exclusion. The stories about these encounters ranged from negative, Bonnie's, to very positive, as Danielle's examples show:

(Group 3-lines 118-123, 396-405)

Danielle: I used to think that when I first came to this school this year. When I was brand new. It was a lot of people that I kind of felt outnumbered. And.. but then you know, when I got to know the people more and I picked friends that,

Danielle: you know, weren't.. that were nice to me, you know..it wasn't that ^big^

of an issue for me. So I kind of felt differently later on. But…yeah.

When I lived..you know back.. you know ..whenever..Anyways umm. when I

first came here most of my friends were like me.. you know, they were White like

me. And when I first came here I started making more friends that were more a

different race. And really people didn't care that much because it was at a

different school, you know?   But if I thought about it, and you know the people

that I was friends with..were friends with, whatever, ummm then you know, I

you know think that they might act a little bit differently. Just because at my old

school we were all kind of…

Angie: Same race?

Danielle: Yah, same race. So, but truthfully I don't have an issue with it.

Danielle's stories told of her unique position as a new White student in a school

that is 60% Hispanic. Her story confirms that at first this was intimidating, but as she got

acquainted with other students and carefully selected who to have as friends, her

perspective changed. Because of Parrish's demographic makeup, students who are in the

majority when in the community have the opportunity to change places and understand

what being part of a minority is like, when they are at school. The stories students told

exposed how some students take exception to this role reversal, others embrace the

situation as a cross cultural learning experience.

(Group 3-lines 234-236)

Latoya: I think it's kinda cool 'cause you know, you'll be like talking and they'll

say something like 'Oh what is that?' and then you know, they explain it and you

learn about like their culture and vice versa you know?

In addition to using stories as a means of communicating about their cross-racial

and cross-ethnic experiences, participants also employed metaphors in order to express

their thoughts. Metaphor usage was not as frequent as storytelling and no metaphors

crossed peer group sessions, but within some of the groups metaphor use was picked up

and expanded upon to solidify group agreement on an issue. For example, Group One

used a metaphor to express how they felt getting to know someone was an integral part of

building a friendship.

(Group 1-lines 123-126)

Isabel: You have to get to know people.

Maria: Don't judge a book by its cover.

Isabel: Don't judge the cover without reading it.

Juanita: Don't judge a book by its cover.

The exchange began with a common statement, which was followed by a stock

metaphor "Don't judge a book by its cover", and then the stock metaphor was modified.

This modification allowed for elaboration on the same idea and the exchange ends with a

new speaker repeating the truism in its original form. The passage was spoken rapidly

and speakers may not have been listening closely to each other, and yet they all expressed,

through metaphors, the same ideal. The use of this particular metaphor reflects

ideological viewpoints of the larger society when it comes to prejudice.

Repeating an already heard metaphor was how Group 4 also expressed some of their ideas on friendship formation. It started with McNarwal who said, "…you know, you might get lucky…" when discussing future friendship formation. Another reference to 'luck' was then used by Pablo when he said, "If you're not lucky and not getting any friends, I mean sometimes there's a chance for it…" Use of this metaphorical phrase renders visible the adolescent mindset that friendships are not a product of individually selected actions or choices, but instead formed at random and with no individual control. Danielle in Group Three also reinforced this idea when she said, "And it just kinda happens".

When communicating about cross-racial and cross-ethnic friendships, adolescents in this study made statements that supported both Gordon Allport's main theoretical tenets to intergroup contact theory and extensions to that theory. The communication from the peer groups that was captured as data also addressed friendship segregation and revealed the use of refined discourse formats such as metaphors and stories. The following chapter discusses the findings gathered from the data and considers the theoretical and practical implications of these results.

Chapter 5-Discussion

The underlying purpose of this research was to understand more fully how adolescents speak about cross-racial and cross-ethnic friendships and to see if the basic tenets of intergroup contact theory would enter into the adolescents' talk about friendship in any way. While scholars have used intergroup contact theory in a variety of research settings in the past, it is underutilized with adolescents and in qualitative studies (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2011). Allport's original work relied on observational studies and limited conclusions can be drawn from that type of research (Aboud, 2005). Thus, this research undertaking was designed to hear from adolescents themselves and then analyze their conversations for instances when they spoke of interdependence or common goals, as well as discriminating for the discourse elements of stories and metaphors. Therefore, the following section will summarize the findings related to the research question and then discuss how these findings have implications for educators, parents, and adolescents.

Summary

Given the high rate of racial friendship segregation found in racial integrated schools in America, I became interested in learning more about the nature and formation of friendships amongst the adolescents where I teach. I wondered if their conversations would provide insight into why obvious racial segregation occurs between members of the same grade who live in the same geographical area and attend the same school. For that reason, I developed an open ended research question "How do early adolescents talk about cross-racial friendships?" and proceeded to collect data to answer this question.

The method I used was discourse analysis of peer group conversations because it allows for conversations to be recorded in naturally occurring settings and then analyzed for themes that are both general and specific. Discourse analysis allows the researcher to understand language as it flows from one speaker to the next because "What is said both reflects and affects thinking" (Cameron, Maslen, Todd, Maule, Stratton, & Stanley, 2009, p.73). To practice discourse analysis the researcher collects participants, in this case students of Parrish Middle School, assembles them in peer groups and facilitates a recording session on the topic that needs exploring.

Recruitment for participants in this study was deliberately targeted. As discussed in the literature review, the demographic composition of Parrish Middle School does not mirror the demographic composition of the surrounding city, county or state. Instead, Hispanics occupy the largest group membership at 60% with Whites making up 30% of the population. The remaining 10% is divided between Multi-racial, Pacific Islanders, Native Americans, Asians, and Blacks. The groups I assembled attempted to follow the same demographic breakdown so that the views represented would include voices from each ethnic and racial group at the same rate they are present within the school community. While recruitment did not yield a large number of study participants, the goal was to hear from students in their own words to see the extent to which Allport's tenets would be discussed. This small convenience sample cannot answer all the questions about language usage for adolescents, but it can contribute to growing body of work around metaphors and stories in this understudied age category. In this final chapter, I state the implications of the data discussed in the findings.

Implications

Gordon Allport's intergroup contact theory. This research reveals Gordon Allport's intergroup contact theory still has relevance when discussing how to facilitate cross-racial and cross-ethnic friendships. Not only did the findings uphold the basic tenets that common goals and interdependence can lead to reduced interracial tensions, but they also showed that extensions to Allport such as dual identity and peer influence can promote cross group relations as well. Further, this research supports Allport's position that contact which puts adolescents in the same place (a school) at the same time will not automatically produce cross-racial or cross-ethnic friendships. Through their conversations students demonstrated that they do not yet developmentally recognize that friendships are a result of deliberate individual choices given to them within a broader context. Having common goals did produce friendships, but those friendships may not carry out of the classroom. More important for today's youth are common interests such as music or fashion, however, these common interests can be difficult to generate when language is a barrier. As students interact throughout the school day, academic interdependence must transform into emotional interdependence in order for friendships to solidify.

More likely than not, a student is going to form a cross-racial or cross-ethnic friendship through friendship chaining. Thus, the results of this study are in line with the ideas put forth in Pettigrew and Tropp's (2005, 2011) research on anxiety. As adolescents are introduced to new people who may not be of the same race, and if this introduction is facilitated by a known and trusted friend, then anxiety is reduced and it is more likely that a new cross-racial friendship will form. Allport (1954) also noted that

anxiety "stains the individual's social relationships" and can hinder out group contact (p.368). By meeting someone through friendship chaining feelings of fear and uncertainty can be ameliorated and bonds can be formed and strengthened across different social groups.

This research further suggests that participants experienced peer pressure which either promoted or destroyed cross group friendships. Adolescents are most likely going to form friendships "within the strata of school age groups" and those peers are the ones making the demands to either be inclusive or exclusive to other races and ethnicities (Hewitt, 1986, p.18). Participants expressed both seeing and being members of groups that either welcomed in or avoided students of differing racial and ethnic backgrounds. In this way, this research largely supports current extensions to Allport which include peer influence as a deciding factor in friendship formation.

Being a member of more than one ethnicity or race, however, can be regarded at a benefit to cross-racial and cross-ethnic friendship formation. Participants spoke of very authentic encounters and of shifting identities that fostered cross group relations in ways that Allport had not anticipated. A Bi-racial identification is not going to automatically produce a dual identity, but for the dual ethnicity members of this study, being "both" had a positive impact on peer group relations and increased their comfort level at being able to interact with a wide variety of people.

Friendship Segregation. In line with the findings of Moody (2001) participants in this study not only showed that they could recognize friendship segregation in the broader school context, but that when it was pointed out to them, they could also acknowledge it in their own relationships. Yet students could not explain the disparity

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between their spoken statements on cross-racial friendship acceptance and their lived experience of only having same race friends. This matches Allport's (1954) foundational assumption that people prefer those who are like themselves and that in-groups form on the basis of what is comfortable and convenient. Further, students could talk about family issues, stereotyping, or language barriers as hindering cross-racial friendship formation but failed to see these elements as influencing their own friendship choices. There was no expression of these issues as possible reasons for their own lack of cross-ethnic friends.   Ironically students could talk about cross-racial friendships, withholding judgments based on looks and forming alliances around personality and behavior, and yet according to the Friends Sheet data, they didn't have any friendships that were of a cross group nature.

Stories and Metaphors. Several authors have suggested that the study of storytelling and metaphors are integral to understanding how humans form and restate their perceptions of the world (Cameron, 2007, Norrick, 2000, Ritchie, 2010). This study suggests that adolescents find metaphors well-situated to express the socially desirable phrases one expects to hear when talking about race and ethnicity. The previous research on storytelling was supported in this study by examples in which students told collaborative narratives, invented collaborative fantasies, and individually described how their friendships formed. The stories gave evidence of friendship exclusion, inclusion and identification of the social cliques found in this American middle school. Stories came from the speakers to provide humor and show the camaraderie that exists between the classmates. Co-narrations revealed the strong bonds built by common experiences and common interests that can strengthen over time. Storytelling allowed students to

agree with each other when their experiences overlapped and to frame a rebuttal when their personal experiences differed. The participants used stories and metaphors unsolicited by the facilitator and as naturally formed parts of their conversation. Thus, adolescent conversations should be considered noteworthy in terms of their use of discourse elements such as storytelling and metaphors. The following section looks at the limitations of this study, as well as directions for future research.

Limitations

Because of the unique community of Parrish Middle School and the relatively small number of students interviewed, this study has several limitations. The first is generalizability. Sasson (1995) acknowledged this limitation well when he said "the relatively small and nonrandom nature of the study sample means we ought not use it as a basis for making claims about Americans as a whole" (p. 23). Only eighteen students out of a population of nearly 700 participated in the research, so the findings can only account for the views of those willing to participate in the research. The students who did allow themselves to be recorded and analyzed could only speak concretely to their own lived experiences and had to make interpretations about their observations of the world around them. Thus, as with all studies of this nature, objectivity is sacrificed for intimacy. Finally, there is the issue of transferability. It is unlikely that the results of this study would match exactly with other similar sized middle schools, even with comparable demographics. However, this limitation is not necessarily a drawback to the study design, as the research question could be asked in a different geographical and cultural setting and still yield rich results.

Future Research

This study has laid the groundwork for future research on adolescent discourse about cross-racial and cross-ethnic friendships, especially research that is willing to use the peer group conversational method. There are, however, extensions that could be made. One area for further research would be more studies designed to understand how students talk versus what they believe versus what happens in daily life. This new study would seek to understand why there is no continuity between these arenas. The goal would be to understand how students can talk glibly about intergroup relations, but fail to match their words with actions.

A second study would not replicate the methods of this work, but instead be a longitudinal recording of the cross-racial and cross-ethnic friendships that are formed in middle school to see if those relationships last through the transition to high school and beyond. The assumption would not be that cross-racial and cross-ethnic friendships fail at a higher rate, but to understand what makes the ones that sustain show lasting power.

Conclusion

The theory that made school racial integration a reality, intergroup contact theory, still has influence nearly sixty years after its first publication in *The Nature of Prejudice.* For educators, the important findings derived from student peer conversations are that common interests and friendship chaining will promote cross group friendships, but so will arranging the classroom so that students of all ethnic and racial backgrounds have common goals and a sense of "common humanity" or interdependence. Encouraging for parents of bi-racial or multiethnic children, are the comments made that support a dual identity which allows students to relate to multiple ethnic and racial groups. Important to

the students themselves are the stories, told either collaboratively or individually, about how cross-racial, interethnic, and same race friendships have formed in the past, which in turn can be a basis for making new friends in the future. Even though "children do not often show consistency between attitudes and behavior" (Aboud, 2005, p.314), which would account for some of the socially acceptable or culturally desirable statements made by those who have no cross group friends, the results of this study show that peer group influence can still be a positive mechanism for affecting social change.

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Appendix A: Questions for Friendship Discussion Groups

1. Describe friendship.

2. Who, in general, are your friends?

3. On the attached "Friends Sheet" please list the names of ten of your "good friends".

4. Describe your ethnicity or race.

5. Explain how your friendships with your good friends formed.

6. Tell what it is like to have a friend who is a different race or ethnicity than you.

7. What difficulties might come up if you were friends with someone from another race or ethnicity?

8. What friendship patterns do you notice while you are here at school?   In other words, who hangs out with whom?

9. If you were to make a friend of a different race, how would the friends you already have react?

OR

        If you already have a cross-racial friendship, how have your same race friends reacted to that situation?

10. What is it like to pick your own work groups in a class and is race/ethnicity a factor in that situation?

Appendix B: Friends Sheet

Name_____ Age_____

Grade_____Gender_____Race/ethnicity_____

Please list the first name of ten people you consider to be "good friends". These are people you know, trust, and have contact with regularly.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

Appendix C: Introductory Script

Thank you for coming today to help me with my research. What we are going to do is simply sit around a talk about friends, friendship, and race. We will cover the topics on your Friendship Discussion sheet, but if there are other ideas you want to bring up, please feel free. Since race can be a sensitive issue for some people, please only use the formal labels like, White, Hispanic, or Pacific Islander and not slang. Because my research has to do with how cross-racial friendships are formed, we will use language that describes ourselves and others by racial categories, but we will still be careful not to stereotype people or say that all people with a certain label behave a certain way. There are no right or wrong answers and I value your abilities to express your own opinions. Please speak about your own experiences and what you have observed here at school. This conversation needs to be kept confidential, so only repeat what you personally said and do not identify other members of the group to anyone else. If your parents/guardians have any questions, have them contact me here at school.

As I turn on the recording software I need each of you to clearly state your name, age and grade into the microphone. Your names will later be changed so if there is a name you want used on the write up, you can put that on the recording too. Any questions before we begin?

Appendix D: Informed Consent

Informed Consent Document for Master's Thesis by Lana Buckholz

Dear Parent or Guardian,

As part of completing my Master's degree in Communication from Portland State University I will be conducting a study which looks at how middle schoolers talk about their friendships, particularly those friendships that cross racial or ethnic categories. This study will be conducted with small peer groups of seventh and eighth graders, holding conversations that will then be recorded, in order to later be transcribed and analyzed. The goal is to identify how adolescents speak about friendship formation and maintenance, and how race is perceived to affect these events. Your student has been invited to participate in the study by staying after school on a single day and holding a conversation with a group of his/her peers. Participation is strictly voluntary and the time commitment would be approximately an hour.

During the collection of the data (recording the conversation) opinions may be expressed that are contrary to what you student believes. Students will be asked to keep the discussion details confidential, but there is no way to prevent other participants from revealing identities by recounting what was said during the recording session. Confidentiality measures include creating a transcription copy that will not indicate speakers by their real names. Data collected may be used in future research by thesis advisor Dr. Ritchie of Portland State University, but the data received by Dr. Ritchie will not use students' real names and no personal identification will be attached. If you have further questions regarding the study please contact Lana Buckholz at 503-399-3210.

Your signature on this form means that you understand the information presented, and that you want your student to participate in the study. You understand that participation is voluntary, and that your student may withdraw from the study at any time.

Signature of parent or guardian   Signature of student

Contact information at Portland State University: Dr. David Ritchie, phone: 503-725-5384, Email: cgrd@pdx.edu   Human Subjects Research Review Committee, phone :(503) 725 4288, Email: hsrrc@lists.pdx.edu

Appendix E: Table of Transcription Symbols (Ritchie, 2008)

<u>Units</u>

Line numbers	{4 or 5 digits with leading zeros shown}
New speaker	{Capitalized}
Speaker identity / turn start	:
Speaker uncertain	X:
Intonation unit	{carriage return)
word	{space}
truncated word	-
Speech overlap	[]

<u>Transitional continuity</u>

Completion of a thought	.
Continuing	,
question, uncertainty, or appeal	?

<u>Pauses</u>

short pause	..
long pause	…
prolonged silence	…. {on a separate line}

<u>Emphasis</u>

Terminal accent	!
segment of louder speech	^ ^

segment of very loud speech	^^ ^^
segment of quiet speech	v v
segment of very quiet speech	vv vv

Tone qualities

Mark affected segment	{utterance}
Describe quality of marked segment	{description right-adjusted}

Vocal noises

Laughter	(*laughter*), or
	@ @ @ @
In-stream disfluencies and sounds	{transcribe phonetically, example: eh heh, umm}
Other sounds	{within swirly brackets below line of speech}
	{coughs}
Gestures, experessions, etc.	{within swirly brackets below line of speech}
	{smiles}
Unintelligible speech	(*unintelligible*) or (xxxxxxxxxxx)

Transcribers and coders comments

<in italics, within pointy brackets>