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AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF Stephanie A. Limoncelli for the
Master of Science in Sociology presented November 4, 1993.

Title: Women's Interracial Friendships: Nonlocal Determinants of Everyday
Experiences.

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This research is an exploratory step toward identifying how social inequality affects interracial friendship among women and opportunities to develop such relationships. By considering the nonlocal determinants of individual experiences and the ways in which structural variables may influence and operate in friendships, this research attempts to illuminate how micro-level action is actually rooted in "macro-level" social processes.

In keeping with feminist standpoint epistemology, this research begins with the subjective experiences of 15 pairs of African-American/white friends. The women's descriptions of their same-race and cross-race friendships provided a starting point from which to identify the ways in which racial/ethnic and class inequality shape and operate in these relationships.

Social inequality creates economic, ideological, and experiential divisions among African-American and white women. Opportunities for friendship were affected by the proximity of African-American and white women, and long-lived interracial friendships developed among women of similar classes in settings that fostered interracial contact and discussion of racial issues. Group position may also have contributed to the interviewee's desire to make friendships across race. Cross-race friendships were non-threatening and unique to the white interviewees, while African-American interviewees stressed the primacy of same-race ties.

The voices of the women participants provided many examples of the ways in which interracial friendships reflected the dynamics of institutional racism and caused difficulties in their friendships across race. Racial/ethnic inequality was exemplified by a lack of common base from which the women could understand each other, problems resulting from white racism and privilege, African-American interviewees' ambivalence over interracial dating, and different beliefs about the importance of racial/ethnic identity.'

The divergent standpoints of African-American and white women created barriers to disclosure in friendships across race. African-American interviewee's

experiences of everyday racism caused them to believe that their white friends could not understand their experiences and limited the kinds of information that African-American interviewees felt that they could share with white friends. The standpoint of some white women enabled them to ignore racism and downplay the importance of racial identity. The need for African-American women to educate whites about racism and aspects of African-American culture sometimes obstructed interracial friendships. While African-American and white women may form affectionate ties, friendship is not exempt from, nor does it eliminate inequality.

**WOMEN'S INTERRACIAL FRIENDSHIPS:
NONLOCAL DETERMINANTS OF EVERYDAY EXPERIENCES**

by

STEPHANIE A. LIMONCELLI

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

**MASTER OF SCIENCE
in
SOCIOLOGY**

**Portland State University
1993**

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To Anna Maria

**May you gain strength from the women friends
who will someday touch your life**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iii
CHAPTER	
I INTRODUCTION.....	1
Literature Review.....	2
Sociology and Friendship	
Meaning and Characteristics of Friendships	
Friendship Formation	
Race/Ethnicity and Friendship	
Class and Friendship	
Gender and Friendship	
Feminist Critique of Previous Literature	
The Contribution of This Research.....	14
II THEORETICAL APPROACH.....	16
Toward a Marxist Phenomenology of Friendship.....	16
The Intersection of Gender, Race/Ethnicity, and Class	
A Phenomenological Approach	
The Micro/Macro Connection.....	22
A Micro/Macro Approach to Women's Friendships	
III METHODOLOGY.....	27
Feminist Standpoint Epistemology.....	27
From Women's Voices to Sociological Analysis	

The Research Process.....	31
Interviewing	
Problematics of Cross-Race Research.....	36
Limits of the Research	
IV FINDINGS.....	41
Women's Understanding of Friendship.....	42
Definitions of Friendship	
Levels of Friendship	
Women's Voices on Race/Ethnicity, Class, and Friendship...	47
The Barrier of Experience	
Race/Ethnicity and Class	
White Racism	
The Education of Whites	
The Problem of Identity	
Expressions of Intergroup Conflict: Mixing	
Conclusions.....	61
V DISCUSSION.....	63
The Dynamics of Social Inequality.....	64
Race, Class, and Opportunities for Friendship	
Standpoint as Reflection of Power	
White Privilege	
Mixing and Identity	
Implications for Feminist Theory.....	73
REFERENCES.....	76

APPENDICES

A	INTERVIEW GUIDE.....	82
B	INFORMATION ON FRIENDSHIP PAIRS.....	88

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Sociologists have generally conceived of friendships as relationships of equality based on personal attraction and voluntary association (Allan 1989). This conceptualization privatizes friendship and limits its analysis to the "micro-level." Friendships, like other interpersonal relationships, are tied to social organization and influenced by social processes. In this thesis, I explore the connections between women's interracial friendship and racial/ethnic and class relations. I am interested in the ways that racial/ethnic and class inequality help to shape and operate in friendships between women. I hope to show that friendships are directly influenced by these "macro-level" phenomena.

Friendships in general, and interracial friendships in particular, have been under-examined topics in sociology. I have therefore used qualitative methodology to explore the friendships of 30 women. I interviewed 15 pairs of African-American and white women friends about their relationships with each other as well as their friendships with women of their same race/ethnicity. The women defined and described their experiences of friendship and I looked for patterns in their depictions that illuminated possible barriers to the formation or maintenance of interracial friendships, as well as indicators of racial/ethnic and class inequalities that were present in their relationships across these boundaries. By doing this, I have attempted

to make a contribution to the connection of "micro" and "macro" level sociological analysis.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Research on the topic of friendship has been intermittent and reflective of a wide variety of disciplines. Sociologists and feminist scholars have contributed isolated bits and pieces of research, but the literature is by no means comprehensive, nor particularly informative. It is a "mixed bag," often loosely tied to a theoretical base, and with divergent conceptualizations of friendship (Adams and Blieszner 1989; Allan 1989). In addition, there are relatively few studies that attempt either to identify the structural factors that may constrain or shape friendship, or illuminate its relation to social organization.

As a subset of friendship, nonsexual relationships between women have received very little attention (O'Connor 1992). Since the early 1980s, feminist psychologists and sociologists have begun to address this oversight, but the small amount of literature on women's friendships that exists addresses mainly the experiences of white, middle-class women. Studies on the effect of race/ethnicity and class on friendship are nearly absent. While a few studies have examined interracial friendship among children, and others have examined the class-based social networks of married couples, no study has addressed the effects of racial/ethnic and class inequality on adult women's same-sex friendships. The ways in which social inequality shapes women's friendships and influences the dynamics of interpersonal

interaction have yet to be explored.

Sociology and Friendship

Friendship has emerged only recently as a serious area of sociological inquiry for several reasons. First, sociologists have traditionally assigned personal relations, including friendship and kinship, to the private sphere of social life characterized by emotion, inhabited by women as wives and mothers, and isolated from the public sphere (O'Connor 1992). This conceptualization has placed personal relations outside of the dominant macro-level theoretical traditions of sociology that emphasize public issues, and neglects the way that personal relations may be tied to macro-level social processes (Acker et al. 1981).

The public/private conceptualization also places primary importance on women's marital relationships with men and trivializes the importance of friendship between women (Seiden and Bart 1975). Marriage has been studied far more carefully than women's friendships. Although feminist scholars have criticized the separation of public and private spheres, and outlined how such a conceptualization obscures the connections between women's everyday lives and the social organization of society (See: Glazer 1993), most sociologists still consider friendship to be a private and relatively inconsequential aspect of social life. As Allan (1989:1-2) critically notes:

...friendship is treated as being rather peripheral to the core structural properties of economic and social relations in developed capitalist societies. It is seen [by sociologists] as an extra, as something that adds a little flavour to social life, but which of itself is relatively unimportant in the nitty-gritty of economic and social organisation. In

other words, in a somewhat unsociological fashion, friendship is taken to be essentially a personal matter, rather than one which has any social interest or consequence.

Second, friendship in the United States is not "institutionalized;" there are no formal ceremonies that one must engage in to be a friend, nor are there laws or rituals governing its conduct (Jerrome 1984). Many sociologists have therefore conceptualized friendship as a freely-chosen relationship between individuals that is tenuous at best. But, anthropologists have shown friendship to have different forms depending upon its historical and cultural context. For example, in cultures where social life is channeled through the family, friendship may not be defined as an informal, private relationship between non-family members (Allan 1989). This is true of rural Greece, where women's friendships have traditionally included their kin and, if they are married, their husband's kin (Papataxiarchis 1991).

By focusing only on Western conceptualizations of friendship as short-term and intermittent, sociologists have overlooked the degree to which friendship is a patterned social relationship. They have also tended to overlook the importance of both strong and weak friendship ties in such macro-level phenomena as community organization, mobility opportunity, and the diffusion of information (Granovetter 1973).

Third, very few sociologists have attempted to piece together the sporadic bits of research that have been done on friendship. The literature on friendship has come from a variety of academic fields, each with different agendas (Bliezsner 1989). As a result, much of what we now know about friendship has emerged as an afterthought

of researchers studying topics such as community relations (See: Fischer 1982), school integration (See: Dubois and Hirsch 1990; Schofield 1982), and aging (See: Adams 1985; Cohen and Rajkowski 1982; Matthews 1986).

Social psychologists have examined how friendship, as part of social support networks, contribute to the mental health and physical well-being of the elderly in the community. Research in this area has contributed information on the patterning and composition of the friendship networks of various target populations such as elderly women or elderly African-Americans and whites (Jackson 1972; Usui 1984). Sociologists interested in aging have also contributed to a conceptualization of friendship as a social role subject to various structural constraints at different stages in a person's lifetime. For example, Hess (1972) argued that as individuals age, friendships may fuse with, substitute for, complement, or compete with family, sex, work, or community roles.

Meaning and Characteristics of Friendship

Researchers have used the term "friendship" as if it had a well-defined and commonly understood meaning, but the literature on friendship illustrates how little we actually know about the relationship. Some scholars have defined friendship as a relationship of social support (Fleming and Baum 1986), while others conceptualized friendship as primarily a relationship of intimacy and affection (Bell 1981). Cohen and Rajkowski (1982:264) have urged researchers to specify the various "components of social interaction (e.g., content of exchange, affectivity, frequency, directionality, and the like)" that may make up various conceptualizations of friendship.

The meaning of friendship to people in everyday life is just as confusing. The label of friendship may be applied to any number of interpersonal relationships, from those of distant social acquaintances to those of marital partners. Claude Fischer (1982) provided some information on the meaning and characteristics of friendship in his survey of 1,050 adults in Northern California. After asking each respondent to name and describe their associates, Fischer found that the label of "friend" was applied to an overwhelming majority of non-kin, non-neighbor, and non-co-worker associates. Respondents were especially likely to name long-time acquaintances and persons of a similar age as friends, and they described their friendships as primarily social rather than emotionally intimate or characterized by material exchange. The average respondent also called 11 people his or her friend, seven of whom were labeled "close" friends. Relations with these "close" friends were characterized as emotionally intimate relations and ones to which a person would turn if they needed to borrow money.

The literature provides us with only a glimpse into the characteristics of friendship in the United States. Further information on patterns of sociability, the strength and weakness of various friendship ties, and the stability, origin, and content of friendships is necessary before a full picture of friendship can be developed.

Friendship Formation

People are likely to have friends with social characteristics (i.e., age, sex, marital status, and socioeconomic status) that are similar to themselves (Kandel 1978; Levy 1981; Verbrugge 1977). Some sociologists have attributed this phenomenon to

the way that social context and structural determinants affect social networks and friendship choice. Huckfeldt (1983) argued that an individual's preferences and actions are influenced by the social composition of an individual's environment.

After studying friendships in a factory, Feld (1982) concluded that the social structuring of activity in the factory (e.g., the assignment of workers to specific age homogeneous departments) led individuals to develop relations with others who were of similar ages. Feld criticized studies of friendship that emphasize individual preference for friends with similar characteristics, arguing that preferences occur within a set of available alternatives that constrain friendship choices. Most relationships are organized around specific foci (i.e., social, psychological, legal, or physical objects around which joint activities are organized, such as going to school). To Feld, the neglect of these social structural factors has led to overestimating the extent to which individuals prefer to associate with others like themselves.

Race/Ethnicity and Friendship

Although sociologists have failed to consider the influence of race in the formation and process of adult friendships, there is considerable literature on racial integration and interracial friendship between children in elementary and high schools. Much of this research has examined the central tenets of "contact theory," which proposes a set of ideal conditions that foster interracial contact and minimize white prejudice. Contact theory rests on the assumption that white prejudice ceases when African-Americans and whites interact on a one-to-one basis in an environment that confers equal status on both parties. Aside from the persistent question of whether

any interracial contact in the United States can take place in a setting of "equality," contact theory is of limited use in my analysis because it presumes that problematic intergroup relations, although rooted in the problems of social inequality, ultimately rest on the prejudiced attitudes of individual whites.

I find it more fruitful to emphasize the ways that racial/ethnic intergroup conflict reflect group-level political and economic interests. Within this framework, personal prejudice reflects group-level interests and interracial friendships may be seen as a threat. As Jackman and Crane (1986:481) state, "the issue [to those with power] is how a relationship of intimacy with minority group members modifies the manner in which dominant-group members defend their privilege."

A handful of sociologists interested in children's interracial friendships have elaborated on contact theory by investigating how school or classroom characteristics may foster or hinder interracial sociability. Maureen T. Hallinan has examined the effects of classroom racial composition, the organization of classroom instruction, the size of the class, and the classroom climate created by the teacher on interracial friendship formation and stability (Hallinan and Smith 1985; Hallinan and Teixeira 1987-a, 1987-b; Hallinan and Williams 1987).

In her first study, Hallinan (1982) found: (1) both African-Americans and whites integrate in classrooms with a majority of white students; (2) segregation by whites decreases over the school year; and (3) African-American students had a strong tendency to segregate regardless of the racial composition of the classroom. Hallinan argues that several factors may have contributed to these findings. First,

more integration may occur in majority white classrooms because African-American children find it easier to adapt to dominant culture than vice versa. Second, because white children in a majority white classroom are not threatened by the social power of a minority group, they may choose African-American friends. Finally, the tendency for African-American children to segregate may be due to African-American children's lower status in the classroom, which may contribute to their turning to each other for social support, or the cultural imperative for African-American children to maintain racial identity.

Class and Friendship

Few researchers have examined how class relations may be related to friendship networks. Allan (1989) offers a unique perspective on friendship by relating changes in capitalism to the patterning of social networks in England. He describes a series of studies from the 1950s and 1960s that looked at inner-city, working-class English communities with sub-standard housing and a declining economy. The traditional industries were declining, populations were decreasing, and many working-class residents had moved from their communities. Those who remained were poor, long-term residents, employed as semi-skilled or unskilled workers, with social networks confined to the area in which they lived. The dominant form of friendship was "mateship," or friendship defined by specific activities and settings. "Mateship" was framed around three distinctions: (1) between public and private spheres of activity; (2) between family or non-family ties; and (3) according to gender, with men socializing with other men and their wives socializing

with each other.

Changes in employment and housing caused some working-class families to migrate to new areas with increased likelihood of obtaining work. This resulted in more diffuse forms of friendship among relocated working-class men and women. Their friendship networks were no longer confined to their immediate neighborhoods. They bought modest homes, began to entertain there, and consequently, women and men began to share friendship networks. Thus, Allan illustrates the way that variances in friendship patterns stemmed from changes in the local economy and the resulting material conditions of life for those who remained in the community as opposed to those who moved to new areas.

Another illustration of what might be termed the political economy of informal relations is provided by an anthropologist. Wellman (1985) considers how the involvement of men and women in paid and unpaid domestic work affects the composition, structure, and operations of their "personal community networks." This approach rests on the assumption that friendship ties are at least partly shaped and constrained by the configuration of social and material conditions that characterize people's lives. Wellman examines how the structural location of individuals in large scale divisions of labor (i.e., their involvement in paid work and unpaid domestic labor) affects the kinds of personal community networks of which they are members, and the kinds of resources that flow to and from them in these networks.

Gender and Friendship

A few sociologists and psychologists have found women's friendships to be

affectively richer and constructed differently than men's, and have attributed these differences to structural factors (Allan 1989), socialization (Bell 1981), or the uniqueness of women's psychology (Eichenbaum and Orbach 1988). It is unclear, however, whether there are differences in the number of friendships that men and women have. Rubin (1985) found that women between the ages of 25-55 have more friendships than men, but Fisher and Oliner (1983) noted that married men under 36 have more friends than do married women of the same age. Other studies have shown that men have more extensive sociable ties than women, but do not consider these to be "friendships" (O'Connor 1992). Comparisons across studies are difficult because it is often unclear what researchers and subjects consider to be "friendship" versus sociable ties. This lack of clarity reinforces the need to study women's friendships and analyze their subjective experiences of the relationship.

Becker (1987) conducted a phenomenological study of women's friendship to determine how women define and understand the relationship. Becker asked two pairs of white, single, middle-class, heterosexual women friends to describe their experiences of friendship. From their comments, Becker identified a definition of women's dyadic friendship: a loving relationship in which a shared world is continuously created, with attributes of caring, sharing, commitment, freedom, respect, trust, and equality. Friendship enables each woman to discover and affirm herself and share in her friend's experiences and interests.

Although this definition reflects only the views of four white, middle-class women, Becker has at least attempted to define friendship. It is from this kind of

starting point that my research on how individuals interpret the meaning of friendship, assess the basis for commonality with others, and define themselves and others in terms of the relationship may unfold.

Using a more macro-level approach, two sociologists have considered the ways in which gender inequality affects women's friendships. Allan (1989) has discussed how gender inequality may shape the patterning and organization of women's friendship. For example, responsibilities for paid work and unpaid domestic labor or caretaking may help to structure married women's lives so that they have less leisure time, including time for friendships. Yet, responsibility for childcare may also help to expand women's social networks by placing them in regular contact with other mothers. Allan has criticized the assumption that female friendship has no inherent instrumental aspect (unlike male friendships, which have been recognized, for instance, as a means of promoting the "old boy network"). Women's friendships may provide them with cooperative relationships which support domestic labor and social reproduction; women both advise and help each other with such work.

O'Connor (1992) has reiterated Allan's concern with the extent to which women's friendships are shaped by gender inequality. Women's friendships are likely to be affected by lack of time, responsibilities for paid work, unpaid domestic labor and caretaking, and fears about sexual harassment and assault that may prevent them from socializing in public unless they are part of a large group or accompanied by a man. While these constraints may not prevent women from developing social networks, O'Connor has called for an examination of the ways in which they affect

the dynamics of women's same-sex relations.

Feminist Critique of Previous Literature

Feminists have consistently critiqued sociological neglect of the "personal as political." Twenty years ago, Seiden and Bart (1975) criticized the trivialization of women's same-sex relationships, which they pointed out, reinforces women's dependence on men. After conducting a study with 12 women, Seiden and Bart found that the majority had always had female friends, and that the women had experienced their friendships as valuable.

Acker et al. (1981) noted that sociologists still view women's same-sex relationships as secondary to the marital relationship. After interviewing 28 women returning to school or adopting a feminist ideology, Acker et al. found that women's nonsexual relations with other women were central in their lives, providing support, affection and resistance to sexism, as well as sources of commitment and obligation. Feminist ideology and female-female friendships produced a sense of self-worth and integrity for women experiencing life changes.

Other feminists have affirmed the supportive benefits of women's friendships as well. Smith-Rosenberg (1989), a historian, emphasized the socio-historical context in which women formed romantic friendships in Victorian times. She found women's friendships to be long-lived, intimate, loving, and characterized by strong emotional ties. Rubin (1985) found that women's friendships are based on shared intimacies, self-revelation, nurturance, and emotional support. These friendships helped to sustain marriages, by meeting needs that a mate cannot and providing a sense of

separateness that helps each person to retain a sense of self. Like other feminist scholars such as Oliker (1989), Rubin emphasized that friendship relations provide a sort of interstitial institution that bolsters marriage.

Yet, even feminist scholars have neglected the effects of race/ethnicity and class relations on women's friendships. In attempting to combat the trivialization of women's same-sex ties, feminist scholars have painted a harmonious picture that overlooks racial/ethnic and class inequality. The voices of women of color and working-class women are virtually nonexistent in the literature, and the effects of racial/ethnic and class inequality have been ignored.

THE CONTRIBUTION OF THIS RESEARCH

This research is a starting point from which to address the effects of race/ethnicity and class inequality on women's interpersonal relations. Given the paucity of sociological research on women's friendship in general, and interracial friendship in particular, this research is a step toward exploring friendship as a patterned social relationship shaped by social inequality. From a sociological perspective, I am interested in the nonlocal determinants of individual experience and the structural variables that may influence and operate in friendships.

From a feminist standpoint, I am concerned with problematics in women's relationships due to racial/ethnic and class inequality. Although the divisions between African-American and white women in the women's movement have been well-documented, there has been no scholarly attempt to consider such divisions in

women's everyday lives. Women's interracial friendships remain a virtually unexplored area that should be of interest to feminists attempting to develop an integrated feminism (Smith and Nickerson 1986) and to sociologists attempting to understand the relationship of friendship to social organization.

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL APPROACH

My thesis addresses the problematics of women relationships across conflicting social groups, defined here by race/ethnicity, and examines the roots of these dilemmas in institutional racism. More specifically, I am concerned with the possible difficulties that occur for women in African-American/white friendships due to racial/ethnic and class inequality. To address the problems of managing friendships across these lines, I use a phenomenological approach in which women describe their interracial friendships. By considering women's experiences in the context in which their friendships develop (i.e., the larger socioeconomic systems of the community, the workplace, marriage, schools, and family), I hope to illuminate how racial/ethnic and/or class inequality affect relations between women.

TOWARD A MARXIST PHENOMENOLOGY OF FRIENDSHIP

Allan (1989) proposes a sociology of friendship that recognizes the relationship as a social construction, partly patterned and structured by social and economic factors outside of an individual's immediate control, including class and gender relations. In Allan's perspective, it is not simply opportunities for developing friendships that are socially structured, but also the content of sociable ties.

Allan's work provides a basis for a political economy approach to friendship:

the nature of people's friendship networks may be patterned by the social and economic relationships in which they are involved. Using this approach, one could analyze whether involvement in paid work or unpaid domestic labor, or both, affects the kinds of individuals who become part of a social network and the types of emotional or practical aid that network members send to and receive from each other. The composition of married working-class women's social networks, for example, may be affected by their responsibility for paid work and unpaid domestic labor. These women are likely to be part of a social network including their husband's family and friends as well as their own kin, and their involvement in paid work exposes them to co-workers as well.

Yet, responsibility for both family and paid work can restrict the time and energy that these women have to develop ties with non-family members. The double day may give women structural possibilities for engaging in social circles outside of the family or the husband's networks, but may place such demands on women that they are not able to capitalize on this contact (Wellman 1985). This could result in women's friendship networks being composed primarily of family, with relatively few non-family members. Single women, on the other hand, may have different types of social networks, depending upon their involvement in paid work, whether they have been divorced, and whether they have children.

The content of women's ties may be affected as well. Friendships could be considered to be relationships that include tangible forms of support and exchange, such as emotional aid, companionship, and services (e.g., babysitting, loaning

money). While their friendships may still involve these kinds of support, married women might not need them as much as single women, or may have less time to give such aid (Wellman 1985). Single women who are casually tied to the workplace may be more likely to depend upon their social networks, including family and non-family members, for these kinds of aid, whereas low-income elderly women might receive support primarily from other sources such as formal organizations.

Using Allan's framework as an outline, this research is focused on the ways in which institutionalized racism and class relations affect friendships that cross racial/ethnic lines. A scarcity of interracial friendship, for example, may reflect the lack of proximity that people of various races have due to the physical segregation of racial/ethnic groups in cities created by institutional racism and class subordination. African-American women are more likely than white women to be living in inner-city communities and working in subordinate jobs (Franklin 1991). Both African-Americans and whites spend much of their time in segregated settings (Hacker 1992).

A cautionary note, however. I am not proposing a deterministic theory of human behavior in which individual agency is nonexistent. I am proposing that humans operate within structural constraints that shape their lives in innumerable ways that are not readily apparent. But structural factors are not unchangeable. On the contrary, they are created by and through social relationships, and therefore, may be altered.

The Intersection of Gender, Race/Ethnicity, and Class

I use the terms gender, race/ethnicity and class as socially constructed classifications that differentiate between individuals or groups. *Gender* and *race* refer to socially constructed categories for supposed biological differences between women and men, and between different racial groups, respectively. I use the terms *African-American* and *white* to reflect the existence of diverse racial/ethnic groups who have developed distinct cultural patterns and identities in the United States. The term *racial/ethnic* refers not only to the racial characteristics, but also the shared cultural identity of a social group based on a collective sense of distinctive history. *Class* refers to the economically determined divisions of society based on one's relation to the means of production, and incorporates the dimensions of property, based on ownership of the means of production; authority, based on control over organization in production; and skill or expertise, based on the ownership of scarce skills (Wright and Cho 1992).

The interplay of race/ethnicity, class and gender is articulated in everyday life. It affects the position of African-American and white women, the income status of the middle and working classes, the housing market, and occupational and physical segregation (Franklin 1991). Race/ethnicity, class and gender interact simultaneously, yet must be separated analytically to better understand the ways in which they shape and differentiate women's lives. For this reason, an approach which isolates only race/ethnicity, class or gender is incomplete.

Many class-first approaches emphasize the elimination of class-based

exploitation and often suggest that gender and racial/ethnic subordination will be minimized or eliminated as a result, although socialist feminists have emphasized the interaction of capitalism and patriarchy in creating the unique subordination of women today (See: Hartmann 1976). While this literature has yielded several useful frameworks for beginning to examine the dialectics of gender and class, the role of race/ethnicity (though acknowledged) is not explicated.

On the other hand, many race-based approaches argue that racism is the primacy cause of the continued oppression of African-Americans in the United States (Franklin 1991). Dill (1983) argues that the inclusion of the concept of class permits a broader perspective on the similarities and differences between African-American and white women than does a purely racial analysis. Dill also notes that the race/class literature gives little attention to women.

Recent debates among race-first or class-first theorists have focused on the relative importance of race or class in explaining the historical and contemporary status of African-Americans in the United States. Some scholars writing in this vein have argued that the racial division of labor in the United States began as a form of class exploitation which was shrouded in an ideology of racial inferiority. Through the course of U.S. history, racial structures began to take on a life of their own and cannot be considered merely reflections of class factors. (Wilson 1987).

Like Dill (1983), I argue that we must look carefully at the lives of women, including women of color, to define the peculiar interactions of race/ethnicity, class, and gender at particular historical moments. Combining these analyses, rather than

weakening the political intent of each approach, actually furthers the possibility for meaningful social change. As Childers and hooks (1990:80) note:

The most exciting political and theoretical implications of expanding the category of gender so that it gives expression to reality--of the ways race and class converge--is that understanding this link has the potential to give us the base to begin to work towards inclusive feminist movement.

Rather than adhering to one approach, perhaps the experiences of women can best be understood as a result of the interplay of gender, race/ethnicity and class as they are employed to make meaning out of women's everyday experiences.

A Phenomenological Approach

Although the approach I have described thus far provides a sociological framework from which to begin a study of friendship, a purely structural analysis would lack the voices of women. It only begins to hint at the way in which African-American and white women's individual interests, experiences, and everyday lives are affected by their position in the social structure. And it is these experiences and interests that may be a key determinant in hindering women's interracial friendships. The purpose of this research, therefore, is to suggest how "micro-level" action is actually rooted in "macro-level" social processes.

Berger and Luckmann's *Social Construction of Reality* (1966) posits that what is "real" to one person in a social relationship may be very different from the taken-for-granted reality of the other(s) in the same relationship. A phenomenological approach illuminates the way in which these realities are created. As Jerome (1984:698) comments:

Dialogue with friends is a source of concepts and categories describing the world: in common with friends one attaches certain meanings to events and relationships, a process which has implications for all areas of social life. Social roles are learnt and reinforced and social boundaries are maintained.

What is needed is an approach which takes into account both the way that consciousness influences an individual's view of the world as well as the way that an individual's social position helps to shape that consciousness.

By beginning with the subjective experiences of women, and looking for their origin in macro-level social processes, I hope to go beyond a purely phenomenological approach to a feminist sociology of knowledge that takes into account material reality. Furthermore, I am approaching the research with an eye toward preserving the various voices and experiences of women from different racial/ethnic and class backgrounds.

THE MICRO/MACRO CONNECTION

Dorothy Smith's (1987-a; 1990) critique of current sociological approaches provides a means of investigating the connections between women's lived experiences and the "macro world" which helps to shape them. Smith begins with the "particularistic" world that women live in and work in on a daily basis and uses Schutz to discuss the consciousness of women in a particular (immediate) locality: women's bodily situation in the world.

The subject is located by her bodily situation in the world, and her coordinates shift in relation to her as the center, changing as her position changes, changing as her "position" in time changes. It is consciousness located materially and in activities that enter the world of

working. (Smith 1987-a:70)

Smith locates women's experiences in the concrete and immediate world which they inhabit (e.g., bathing children, cooking meals) and contrasts this with the abstracted and ideological world that has been constructed by men and presented to women as indicative of their experiences. Smith argues that this ideological world is presented in the media, in academia, and in the written word; women are excluded from its production. Smith is concerned about where social forms of consciousness come from and looks for their origins in the ideology supplied by the ruling apparatus.

Smith uses the term "relations of ruling" to refer to the intersection of the institutions organizing and regulating society with their gender subtext and their basis in a gender division of labor. "Ruling" refers to a complex of organized practices, including government, law, business, professional organization, and educational institutions:

The practice of ruling involves the ongoing representation of the local actualities of our worlds in the standardized and general forms of knowledge that enter them into the relations of ruling...forms of consciousness are created that are properties of organization...rather than of individual subjects. (Smith 1987-a:3)

Smith locates women's experiences in the social relations that organize and determine the "line of fault" along which the consciousness of women must emerge. Smith's sociology starts with the rupture between people's lived experiences and the ideological "structure" created by the ruling apparatus for interpreting it. Sociological inquiry therefore begins in actual experience as embedded in the particular historical forms of social relations that determine the experience (Smith 1987-a:49). It begins

in the everyday world, the one we experience directly, locally, and historically.

Smith does not stop there, but instead considers it essential that the everyday world be seen as organized by social relations not observable within it. Thus, "an inquiry conferring itself to the everyday world of direct experience is not adequate to explicate social organization" (Smith 1987-a:89). To aim at the everyday world as an object of study in and of itself is to constitute it as a self-contained universe of inquiry; it divorces the everyday world of experience from the larger social and economic relations that organize it. To Smith:

...the local and directly known world is extensively and increasingly penetrated by these processes of material and social organization...The processes of social relations at the abstracted level can be viewed as generating the organization of the everyday world. The relations among the men hanging around on Tally's corner, and the relations of women to those men, can be seen as organized by the development of capitalism to the level at which work for laborers is strictly casual and at which a segregated labor force organizes workers who are on call, and by the way in which the state, through its welfare agencies, regulates the relations between women and men, and women, men, and children. (Smith 1987-a:95)

Berger and Kellner (1970) provide an example of this micro-macro connection in their analysis of the marriage relationship. They understand the processes of developing a shared set of meanings and reality in the marriage relationship using a functional perspective of marriage as a private sphere of autonomy and individual choice, where self-realization and interpersonal relationships are allowed to flourish.

Dorothy Smith (1987-a) provides an alternative example using her Marxist phenomenological approach. She uses the standpoint of women as a starting point from which to locate women's experiences in processes both internal *and* external to

women. By using the standpoint of women, Smith develops a sociology that roots women's understandings of their everyday world in the larger socio-economic organization of society. Smith's research on Saskatchewan farm women in the early 1900s illustrates her "micro-macro" approach: by analyzing writings of that period, Smith ties the farm women's understanding of their relationships with their husbands and their work on the farms to the political economy of prairie development (Smith 1987-b).

A Micro/Macro Approach to Women's Friendships

I want to further Smith's approach, from an emphasis on women's experience as mediated by patriarchy and class, to also look at the intersection of race/ethnicity. I hope to show that women's understandings of, abilities to form, and interaction in friendship are mediated by larger social processes rooted in the socio-economic conditions in the United States.

What I am doing, in part, is to study friendship from women's standpoints, and not in relation to male standards of what the relationship is supposed to be about. In addition, I have attempted to begin with standpoints that may differ due to race/ethnicity in order to identify the way race relations are organized and experienced in everyday life. My theoretical approach begins with women's experiences of their friendships and addresses the ways in which friendships across race/ethnicity are shaped by the broader institutional arrangements and social organization of society. This approach will allow me to develop a detailed description of the ways that racial/ethnic and class inequality and group affiliation are

experienced by women in the social construction of friendship.

This research is a tentative step toward the exploration of micro- and macro-level social connections in women's interracial friendship. In examining how racial/ethnic and/or class inequality shape and operate in women's friendships across racial/ethnic lines, I hope to uncover the possible ways that social inequality may provide barriers to opportunities for friendships or create problematics in their development or maintenance.

Social inequality may shape the everyday lived experiences of African-American and white women in ways that prohibit contact, complicate communication and interaction, or contribute to different understandings or expectations of the relationship. Women's perceptions of their interracial friendships provide a starting point from which to address these issues. It is in their understandings and experiences that friendships are created.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This research examines the affects of social inequality on women's interracial friendship. Because the literature on adult interracial friendship is sparse, and my research exploratory, I chose an inductive methodological approach. I began with women's experiences, communicated through in-depth interviews, and searched for patterns in these experiences. These patterns illuminate the ways that race/ethnicity and class shape and operate in women's cross-race friendships with other women.

Although my focus is on relations between African-American and white women, African-American/white friendships are likely to be reflective of problems encountered in other cross-race friendships (Smith and Nickerson 1986). The inadvertent racism of white women, for instance, might complicate their relations with African-American, Asian, Hispanic, or Native American women in similar ways. However, I would not argue that my findings can be generalized to other racial/ethnic groups. Racial/ethnic and class differences affect the lives of women in complicated ways, and the experiences of African-American women are not generalizable to all women of color.

FEMINIST STANDPOINT EPISTEMOLOGY

Feminist critiques of positivism have centered on its "scientific" claim of

objectivity and separation of the "subject" from the "object" of research (Nielsen 1987). Feminist scholars have supported an interpretive approach that takes into account the voices and subjective knowledge of those being researched and works toward the emancipation of women. In this way, feminists have attempted to recreate a sociology that has emerged from the standpoint of men into a sociology for women.

Dorothy Smith (1987-a) rejects positivistic sociological frameworks and methods because they eliminate the presence and everyday lived experience of people, especially women. Sociological procedures "legislate" a reality rather than "discover" one when they take for granted the mode of constructing social reality (i.e., the actual concrete action by which people construct their social worlds). When sociologists ignore this, they obscure the subjectivities of the knower and the known as a social relationship.

There is also danger in limiting oneself to a purely inductive methodological approach which takes subjective experience as the only focus of analysis. By confining inquiry to the world of subjective experience, the researcher fails to address the processes by which the experience occurs. Women may be able to clearly describe and articulate their direct experiences, but may not be aware of their relative privilege over and difference from other women. Also, they may not be aware of the underlying structure of oppression because of the internalized ideologies that are a part of everyday life (Gorelick 1991):

Marx and Engels' account of ideology... provides a method enabling us to see how ideas and social forms of consciousness may originate outside experience, coming from an external source and becoming a forced set of categories into which we must stuff the awkward and

resistant actualities of our worlds. Marx and Engels held that how people think about and express themselves to one another arises out of their actual everyday working relations. (Smith 1987-a:55)

Instead of relying on a purely inductive method, Smith proposes a sociology of women that begins with the location of women and addresses the problem of how their everyday world is put together in relations that are not wholly discoverable within that world. To attempt to *do* a sociology for women, the sociologist must try to make clear the social organization of the experienced world. They must aim to clarify the ways in which participant's experience passes beyond what is immediately and directly known to them.

A sociology for women attempts to preserve the standpoint of women and the presence of participants. Instead of reinterpreting what women experience, the researcher must try to uncover the social processes that led to those experiences. By using this methodological approach, I am attempting to include both the participant's accounts and my own explanation of the women's experiences.

I have tried to keep the voices of the women interviewees intact as much as possible throughout my analysis. This is sometimes difficult, as people do not always communicate in ways that fit with theoretical analysis. They jump from one topic to another, stop in mid-sentence, use non-verbal gestures instead of words, and leave out details that the listener is supposed to "know." Whenever verbatim accounts of the women's comments were confusing, I added clarification, and wherever information might identify a participant, I changed it.

In addition, as a white woman attempting to understand the experiences of

African-American women, I was concerned about whether my examples and analysis would "ring true" to many African-American women. As a modest beginning to the exploration of this difficult methodological dilemma, I asked two female African-American acquaintances to critique a draft of this thesis. Both women punctuated sections of the findings and discussion chapters with corroborative examples from their own experiences. I hope that this research has succeeded as a step toward a sociology for women, and as such, asserted itself as part of a feminist approach that not only illuminates the oppression of women, but also challenges it.

From Women's Voices to Sociological Analysis

Bigus et al. (1982) provide us with a means of developing theory from phenomenological data through what they term "process" sociology. "Process" sociology involves developing concepts to account for the organization of social behavior over time. This allows us to look at the basic social processes through which friendships occur and the ways in which racial/ethnic and class inequality may help to shape them.

I looked for similarities in the women's experiences of their interracial friendships that reflect racial/ethnic and class factors. For example, friendship may involve a process of reaffirming social identity. If the women that I interview consistently tell me of the difficulty of reaffirming each other's identity in interracial friendships compared to same-race friendships, then I have uncovered a potential property of friendship, as well as an example of how it might be hindered under a particular set of conditions (i.e., racial/ethnic inequality). In this way, I've attempted

to find patterns in the women's experiences from which to build a dynamic theory of interracial friendship that addresses both phenomenological and structural characteristics.

THE RESEARCH PROCESS

Standpoint epistemology requires a methodology that begins with women's everyday experiences. Thus, the starting point for this research is in the lived experiences of African-American and white women in interracial friendships. Using data collected through in-depth interviews with 15 African-American and 15 white women friends, I looked for patterns in women's experiences of friendship that are constructed by and around racial/ethnic and class inequality and intergroup conflict. Following Glaser and Strauss (1967), I continued interviewing until no new information was forthcoming and "saturation" was achieved.

The interviews were conducted from February 1992 through June 1992. Because of the difficulty in finding pairs of African-American and white women friends, I obtained my sample of 30 women through a variety of referrals from associates in my workplace, school, and personal life. I contacted each African-American referral first to determine if they had a "close" white friend who would also agree to be interviewed. This worked in most cases, but twice I received the names of both the African-American woman and her white friend from a third party. In these instances, I ended up interviewing women who did not consider themselves to be "close," but still considered themselves to be friends. In two other cases, an

African-American woman first identified a close white friend who was not available to be interviewed, and then named another white woman to whom she felt less close.

The sample included 15 pairs of African-American and white women friends, from a variety of social networks. Six of the 15 pairs of friends had been acquainted for only one to two years at the time of the interview and six other pairs had been acquainted for six or more years. All interviewees were adult women aged 22 to 89 and just over two-thirds of the women were between 23-40 years old. With the exception of two, all had at least some college education. Nearly two-thirds of the women lived in Northeast Portland, and all but seven women were single (never married, divorced, or widowed).

The annual household income of the participants varied. Equal numbers of women had annual incomes of either \$9,999 or under, \$10-\$19,999, \$20-\$29,999, and \$50,000 or more (N=6 in each category). Three women had incomes of \$30-\$39,999, and the same amount reported incomes of \$40-\$49,999. Nearly two-thirds of the women were involved in professional work in the areas of education, hospitality, social work, state government, community service, mental health, or nursing. Eleven women were involved in or retired from service work as clerical workers, food servers, paid domestic workers, or health care aides. One woman was a full-time student. (For more detailed information on friendship pairs, see Appendix B.)

Interviewing

The women I contacted were overwhelmingly supportive of my research and

very interested in being interviewed. Of all the women I contacted, only two (both African-American) declined the interview because they did not have any white female friends. Each African-American woman was offered a choice of an African-American or white interviewer, and only one requested an interviewer of the same race.

In-depth interviewing was chosen because it allowed me access to the women's ideas, thoughts, and experiences in their own words. This approach produces information that allows the researcher to make full use of differences among the people studied (Reinharz 1992). I would have preferred that each interview unfold with the comments of the interviewee, conducted without a list of prepared questions, but I chose to conduct the interviews with the use of a guide (See Appendix A). The rationale for this was two-fold. First, I was not the only interviewer. I had the help of an African-American woman in interviewing seven participants, and therefore wanted to ensure some consistency in the process of the interviews. Secondly, after asking several of my associates to describe their friendships to me, I realized the extent to which the relationship is taken for granted. I did not want to discuss only abstract or idealized versions of friendship, and it was readily apparent that without some type of prepared questions, the descriptions of friendship given by the interviewees would be short and "pat."

I researched the literature on racial/ethnic relations and women's friendships to obtain a starting point from which to construct an interview guide with very general questions. An interview guide used by sociologist Sarah Matthews (1986) in her study of friendships through the lifecourse provided examples of the kinds of

questions an interviewer might ask to obtain a full picture of the friendships in a person's life. Although Matthews did not ask about cross-race friends in her study, she included questions about cross-gender friendships and ex-friends that I considered before constructing my interview guide around the following topics: the interviewee's background, definitions of friendships (e.g., "What is a friend?"), current and previous same-race friendships (e.g., "Tell me about how you became friends."), current and previous cross-race friendships (e.g., "Was/is this friendship different from being friends with someone of your own race?"), and friendships across race that never fully developed (e.g., "Are there any African-American/white women that you wanted to become friends with but didn't?"). I also included several specific questions about possible racial/ethnic group pressure, racial differences, and differences in incomes, in case these topics were glossed over in discussions of particular friends. After conducting two initial interviews, I made minor revisions to the guide, mainly to eliminate leading questions and allow the women to more freely describe their friendships.

Each woman was interviewed separately rather than in a joint interview with her cross-race friend. Although separate interviews eliminated any chance to observe interaction between the two friends, they allowed me to ask about possible problems or conflict in the relationships. The interviews were conducted wherever the respondent suggested, as long as we had a quiet and private place in which to speak. The interviews occurred mainly in the women's homes, although I also conducted interviews at a community center, a university, and at a few places of business. The

interviews lasted anywhere from 40 minutes to two hours, depending upon the time constraints of the interviewee and the amount she wanted to disclose about her friendships. Each interview was recorded on audio tapes to free the interviewer from having to write and allow more "natural" discussion.

At the beginning of each interview, I encouraged the participant to tell me a little about herself. This technique often helped me to gain rapport with the women, and it gave me some information about her background. Usually, the women did not ask me about my background, but if they did, I told them about myself. Only after the ice was broken did we begin to discuss the woman's definition and experiences of friendship. It was generally after this point that I asked the woman to describe specific friendships, beginning with same-race friends and moving to cross-race friends. I constructed the interview guide in this way to try to ease any anxiety the women may have felt about discussing racial issues. During the interviews, I encouraged women to talk about both current and previous relationships.

Sometimes the women wanted to begin the interview with their definition of friendship, or they wished to tell me about their closest friend. In all cases, I let the women direct the course of the interview, and used the guide as a kind of checklist to ensure that we discussed everything I wished to cover. I tried to make the interview more like a conversation than an inquiry, and because I was dealing with the life history and relationships of the participants, I frequently asked questions of the women to confirm that I had understood their stories. I also readily answered any questions that the women had for me.

I asked each interviewee not to discuss the content of the interview with the participating friend until I had completed interviews with both women in a pair. In most cases, both women were interviewed within two weeks of each other. After completing all 30 interviews, I transcribed the audio tapes, assigned pseudonyms to the women to protect their identities, and began my analysis.

A feminist approach seemed to foster some equality in the interview situation. Instead of a situation in which interviewees give their time and trust while the researcher gives only slight nods of the head and softly muttered "uh-hums," both the African-American interviewer and myself talked with the women. The women participants responded positively to the interviews. Only one expressed any dissatisfaction after completion of the interview ("I've answered this stuff [about racial issues] before."). Overwhelmingly, the women expressed enjoyment of the interview, and quite a few mentioned the emotional catharsis they felt from being interviewed.

PROBLEMATICS OF CROSS-RACE RESEARCH

I have argued that illuminating the root of women's experiences is the work of the sociologist, but as a white woman from a working-class background, I am faced with some contradictions in the use of feminist standpoint methodology. Ideally, an analysis dealing with racism should come from the standpoint of a woman of color, and feminist research would certainly benefit from the viewpoints of women from diverse racial/ethnic and class backgrounds (Gorelick 1991). Like the white women

that I interviewed, I am caught in a contradictory location: I have experienced (and understood) gender and class inequality, but as a white woman, I have not experienced racial oppression. I bring to the research my own limitations due to my social position, but I wish to minimize the biases that they may bring to my analysis.

To this end, I took several steps to address the issue of doing research across race: (1) I had no hidden agendas when interviewing and clear communication of what I was interested in understanding; (2) I used an African-American interviewer for seven of the interviews with African-American women, and compared my interviews with hers to see if my race was affecting my cross-race interviews; and (3) I asked two women familiar with Black studies critique my analysis.

These steps were suggested by Robert Blauner (1973) in his article on "decolonizing research" by closing the gap between the researcher and the researched. Blauner also suggests that researchers actively place their concerns within a historical context, taking into account racism and institutional conflict, so that they can minimize their biases.

Limits of the Research

The research on friendship so far has often focused on a small number of close or best friends. This has resulted in an idealized portrayal of friendship, emphasizing its emotional supportiveness, and making it difficult to locate friendship in a social context. Such portrayals of friendship downplay conflict within the relationship, as well as the practical use of friends.

Although my emphasis on close friends may mask the role of other sociable

ties in social organization and may obscure the social utility of friendship, I chose to interview pairs of African-American and white women friends due to my concern with the ways in which racial/ethnic inequality operates in friendships between them. My approach may have cost me some information on the problematics, including racism, that may have been present in the women's current friendships. By approaching each woman before interviewing her and clearly articulating that I was interested in the problems women have in their interracial friendships, I hoped to avoid an over-idealized portrayal of friendship in my research.

Despite my precautions, women often described their friendships as near-perfect relationships. Many of the participants claimed that they never lost a friend, once a friendship had solidified, and most of the women denied arguing with each other. Yet, as I probed each woman about their friendships during the interview, they would inevitably reveal a variety of complicated dynamics that occurred in their friendships.

Several factors may have influenced the degree to which conflict was disclosed: (1) the "closeness" a woman felt to her friend, the less likely she was to acknowledge any dissatisfaction with the relationship or admit anything that made the friendship appear one-sided or problematic (e.g., the women were *more* likely to tell me about problems with people who were no longer friends, or with whom they were not close); (2) despite my assurances that I would not disclose the comments of one friend to the other, clearly some women may have been afraid of my "leaking" damaging information; and (3) the degree of rapport I gained with the participant may

have influenced the degree to which she disclosed problems to me.

The issue of disclosure across race was another potential limitation of my research. In comparing my interviews to those of the African-American interviewer, I found that she achieved a rapport that I could not, but the content of what the women disclosed was very similar. For example, as the African-American women talked with the African-American interviewer, they felt as if they shared a common ground from which to discuss their friendships. They would preface their descriptions with statements such as, "You know how it is....." or "As you well know, being a Black woman....."

The African-American participants shared the same types of information with the African-American interviewer and myself. They discussed both personal problems (marital affairs, betrayals, etc.) and racist incidents that were painful for them (being mistaken for a prostitute by cops, having a white friend tell racist jokes in front of them, etc.) However, my race may have limited the detail with which some African-American women wished to discuss racist incidents or their feelings about race relations in the United States.

Discussing racism with the white participants was also difficult in some cases, as a few white women seemed uncomfortable discussing racial issues. The interviews with white women vacillated between expressions of guilt over racism, total denial of racism and differences in experiences, and complete relief in having someone with whom to discuss the racial implications of the friendship. For me, the research was a learning process, causing me to continually re-assess the connections between gender,

race/ethnicity and class. Although I advocate a perspective that examines the interplay of these relations, the effects of racial/ethnic inequality are so striking that it is sometimes hard to see beyond them.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

The women in my study came from a variety of social networks, but were very similar in a number of respects: most were single or divorced, nearly all had at least some college education, and many were involved in professional female-typed work. Where did these women find their friends? They most often mentioned meeting friends in college- or high school-related activities or the workplace, and less often through church-related activities, their children, their husband's networks, or their neighborhoods.

Eighteen of the women had been involved in schooling, work, church, or support groups that created contact among people of different racial/ethnic backgrounds and discussion and awareness of racial/ethnic relations. These included college classes in the areas of Black studies and women's studies, work in fields such as affirmative action or multicultural diversity, community service in low-income areas with high populations of people of color, churches with philosophies of diversity, and interracial family support groups. Two white women were also active members of the local lesbian community and mentioned a high degree of support among their friends and lovers for interracial relationships.

Eleven of the African-American interviewees named one or two white women as close friends, and 12 of the white interviewees identified one or two close African-

American friends. When asked why they did not have more cross-race friendships, nearly all of the white women and at least half of the African-American women responded that lack of contact and time hindered their ability to develop friendships across race. Some African-American women felt that they did not have more friendships with white women because whites were uninterested in African-Americans or hesitant to approach them. Several of these women were not necessarily interested in developing closer friendships with white women. African-American women who were integrated into white social networks through professional work or marriage to white men mentioned the need to associate with more same-race rather than white friends.

WOMEN'S UNDERSTANDING OF FRIENDSHIP

Definitions of Friendship

When asked to define friendship, both the African-American and white women participants described friendship as an emotional relationship involving trust, honesty, reciprocity, and disclosure of feelings. At this general level, understandings of friendship did not differ according to the racial/ethnic or class background of the interviewee. All of the participants felt that their close friendships with other women were an arena for sharing personal problems, feelings, worries, and joys. This kind of intimate exchange characterized friendship for the women. Cynthia, a married African-American woman in her thirties, offered a definition typical of the interviewees:

[A friend is] someone I can depend on, someone I can trust, someone I can share my most intimate secrets with, and also...some of the bad things... (Appendix B:Pair #1)

At least half of the women also provided examples of the supportive nature of friendship. They described their friendships as including the exchange of money or favors, such as treating a friend to a meal, babysitting, letting a friend live with them during times of transition, and loaning friends money, clothing, or other personal items. One woman expressed a desire to care for an elderly friend who was experiencing health problems. Another woman often paid for her friend's lunch because she was aware that her friend "has it rough financially." One white woman, Valerie, was separated from her husband at the time of the interview. She described her hectic life as a parent, college student, and professional. Not surprisingly, she defined her friendships in terms of their support:

[A friend is] someone who's there for you...probably even, if necessary, physically supportive in lots of ways...so [I] know that they would be there if I needed someone to pick up the kids on the spur of the moment, or would fix dinner for me if things are falling apart, or...if I was unable to complete the tasks of motherhood, in particular...they would be there to fill in the spaces. (Appendix B:Pair #11)

All of the women described the emotionally supportive nature of friendship (e.g., listening, "being there," giving advice). Such emotional exchange or disclosure of personal information is dependent upon feeling that the other person will not judge what you say or share confidential information with others. In fact, when asked what could break up their friendships, at least 13 women responded that a betrayal of trust (e.g., revealing their secrets to others, or emotionally hurting someone that they care

about, such as their children or husbands) could end a friendship.

Perhaps the importance of emotional support in women's friendships is reflected in what they most often do together: talk. Talking helped the women to affirm their understanding of the social world. In the words of Valerie:

I think women look for validity in their relationships with other women, to say, 'Am I putting up with something that I shouldn't?' 'Am I mad about something that I shouldn't be?' 'Am I asking for more than is possible?' And I think that they do that by constantly throwing out feelers and talking and stuff... (Appendix B:Pair 11)

This kind of affirmation may be difficult to achieve in friendships across gender. Although at least half of the interviewees mentioned having close male friends, most of these women reported greater levels of intimacy in their same-sex friendships compared to their friendships with men. Even those who felt very close to their male friends would not discuss certain topics with them, such as women's health.

Several of the women also mentioned the possible problems of sexual attraction in cross-gender friendships. They were cautious with male friends who were sexually attracted to them and carefully differentiated sexual relationships from friendships with men. The complications of sexual attraction was not limited to cross-gender friendships, however. One woman voiced her concern that her sexual attraction to a female friend caused the woman to withdraw from the friendship.

Levels of Friendship

The participants distinguished acquaintances, such as co-workers or neighbors, from friends. Shirley, an African-American woman who worked for many years in

the service industry, and Alice, a widowed white woman, met a year ago at a community center. Shirley summed up the differences between her previous work relationships and her new friendship with Alice:

Now, Alice and I, we take each other on the same basis, but working for people, it's different. [They say], come this close, but no closer. (Appendix B:Pair #14)

Valerie discussed her difficulty in knowing whether to assign her neighbor to "friendship" status:

It's hard to decide, are we really good neighbors, or are we also really good friends, because we don't do some of the things that I do with my other friends, which is like, maybe going out to lunch or going over to each other's house for dinner, but, we have *really* good conversations on the sidewalk while one of us is watering the lawn...the access to each other is different than it is to friends who don't live on my block where I can't just drop in on a casual, constant basis. (Appendix B:Pair 11)

Both the African-American and white women named an average of four close female friends, and this number did not vary according to the race/ethnicity, income, or marital status of the participant. The participants' close friendships with other women were extremely important to them; aside from immediate family, these friendships were considered to be the most important relationships in their lives. The participants' friendships with women frequently outlasted their marriages and serious relationships with men. Women saw each other through divorces and break-ups with lovers, and considered each other to be "family." One woman saw an older close friend as a mother figure. Others mentioned friends who were like "sisters" to them.

Nearly all of the women made distinctions between very close friends and "good" friends based on the emotional properties of the relationships and the amount

each woman disclosed to the other. They stated that very close friends achieve a level of intimacy that separates them from other types of friends. Often, women went from being friendly acquaintances to close or best friends as they went through similar status changes and crises together (i.e., getting married, having children, divorcing, dealing with the death or illness of family members, etc.), and many were able to recount specific events that led to turning points in their friendships.

Most of the women had similar assessments of how close they were. Ten of the friendship pairs were composed of women who named each other as "close friends." In four other friendship pairs (See: Appendix B:#1, #2, #11, #14), the women named each other as "friends" or "good friends," but did not consider themselves to be "close."

In only one pair did the women differ in their assessments of whether they were "just friends" or "close friends." Andrea, a married African-American woman in her twenties, did not name her married, white friend Kelly as a "close friend." Although she had known Kelly for six years, and they had gone to college together, Andrea felt ambivalent about friendships with white women: "I don't know that I can really be a good, good friend with a white person...like I said, it's different." Kelly, however, named Andrea as one of her two "close" friends (See: Appendix B:Pair #13).

There were also several cases in which pairs of women who named each other as "close" friends had differing accounts of what that meant. Like Andrea and Kelly, in two of these instances, the white women thought that they were closer friends than

did the African-American woman. In both cases, the African-American woman felt that she could not disclose personal issues or "let down barriers" with a white friend. There was only one example of an African-American woman who felt closer to her white friend than vice versa. This difference had to do with definitions of friendship: the African-American woman's primary relationship was with her husband, and her white friend felt that the African-American woman was "about as open with [her] as she [was] with anyone other than her husband."

WOMEN VOICES ON RACE/ETHNICITY, CLASS, AND FRIENDSHIP

The Barrier of Experience

Nine of the pairs discussed racial/ethnic issues with each other, and had the opportunity to do so because: (1) they were in college-level sociology, women's studies or Black studies classes together; (2) they were in work situations that facilitated discussion of racial/ethnic issues (e.g., affirmative action offices at local colleges, or civil rights work for the state); or (3) they belonged to a support group or religious organization that promoted interracial relations.

In some of the pairs where the women did not discuss racial/ethnic issues regularly, the white women were hesitant to broach the subject for fear of offending their African-American friend. Three of the pairs did not discuss the subject at all. Kelly is in one of these pairs. She would like to talk about racial issues with Andrea, but is worried that Andrea will feel like the "elected spokesman" for all African-Americans if she were to ask her questions. A few of the other white women saw no

need to discuss racial/ethnic issues, because they claimed that their friendships were not about race and they looked beyond other people's color.

Some of the African-American women who did not discuss racial/ethnic issues with their white friends tended to stress the commonalities that they share and downplay the potential problems of racial/ethnic inequality. Others seemed to have primary friendships with women of their same race, and their friendships with white women were not very intimate. If these African-American women had no intentions of further developing their friendships with white women, sources of potential conflict, such as discussions of racial/ethnic inequality, could be ignored.

Despite the fact that many of the women pairs discussed racial/ethnic relations, most of the African-American interviewees felt that their white friends could not understand their life experiences. The African-American women often commented that their close white friends were "exceptional" or otherwise different from other whites. This stereotype of white women was clearly rooted in the African-American participants' experiences of everyday racism.

Louise and Kay have been acquainted for 11 years, since they met through a church group that promotes racial/ethnic equality. Louise, a married African-American woman in her thirties, made this comment about Kay: "I rarely have to say, 'But Kay, you think that way because you're a white female.'" And it is not only Louise that considers Kay to be different from other whites. Kay has another African-American friend, whom she also met at church, that feels the same. Says Kay: "When [my other Black friend] gripes about white people, which she does a

lot...I go, 'Excuse me, you know, hello' and [she] goes, 'You're not really white.'"

Understanding each other was clearly problematic for the women in interracial friendships. A frequent theme in the interviews was the belief that "if it's not personal experience, then people can't comprehend it." Sandra, a young African-American woman in her twenties has been acquainted with her white friend, Ann, for four years. While she feels that Ann is a close friend, she provided an example of how the barrier of experience is present in that friendship:

When I tell Ann about the things I experience, sometimes she can't imagine, or she can, but she can't feel the way I feel as a Black woman. And she knows that. And so, she's like, 'Gosh Sandra, I hear you, but I can't feel it'...My brother was in an incident in [a rural town] where he's the only Black fireman...and [some] white guys tried to get back at [him] because he's Black. It was very racist...Ann said, 'Sandra, I know what you're talking about,' but she don't feel like other Black women do. And that's where we [Blacks] have a closeness, because I feel a better closeness with you [the Black interviewer] than with Ann, because we share some of the same experiences. (Appendix B:Pair 10)

Jeanine, a divorced African-American mother, did not name any white women as close friends. Although she has known a white woman named Valerie for two years, she is skeptical about their chances of overcoming the effects of racial/ethnic inequality to become close friends. Jeanine discussed the ways in which white women lack a base from which to understand racism:

I'm more in[tune] to just having the first-hand experience of going into a store, a department store and being followed. Well, when someone tells me that, it's not farfetched. I believe it immediately because I have experienced it and even if I haven't experienced it, I believe it because I'm Black and I know what it's like to live in a racist society. But Valerie, [because she hasn't] experienced that, she may be more reluctant to believe that happens, you know, out of her not having the experience. And those are key issues in interracial relationships that, I

find, its sometimes difficult to relate because of the lack of understanding. (Appendix B:Pair #11)

White women participants were also aware of the gap between the experiences of white and African-American women. Mary, a divorced white woman with a small, close knit network of women friends, echoed the views of many African-American interviewees:

We [whites] can go anywhere and we're not going to be spotted automatically...We've never had that sense [of being the minority] unless we have some friends who can give us a picture of how that feels. And we're still not going to look the same way... (Appendix B:Pair #8)

Lisa, a divorced white woman in her thirties, wondered whether her inability to understand racism caused problems in her relationship with her African-American friend Cynthia. Lisa worried about whether her standpoint as a white woman caused her to be racist:

Cynthia knows racism...I don't even know it...I can think about it or read about it and pick up the little specifics, but I don't know the true meaning of it. And I would think that with a white friend, she is having to overcome a lot of things in me that are racist that I'm not even aware of. (Appendix B:Pair #1)

The gap in experience has direct ramifications on the disclosure and intimacy in women's interracial friendships. Thelma, an elderly African-American woman with two close white friends provided one example:

There are just some things we as Blacks are going to say to one another that I might not really say to my white friends...They are dear friends of mine, they are good friends of mine...I believe they would do anything in the world for me and I *sure* would do anything in the world for them. But...would I tell them the same thing that I would tell my best or my good Black friends? There are some things maybe I would not tell them. (Appendix B:Pair #8)

Although Thelma did not provide examples of the topics that she would be hesitant to discuss with her white friends, three other African-American interviewees did. One African-American woman would talk only to her same-race friends about her sexual relationships with African-American men. Another felt uncomfortable discussing racial issues with a woman friend whose husband was racist. A third interviewee sought understanding and comfort from her African-American friends after her husband cheated on her with a white woman. Only after coming to terms with her anger did she discuss the issue with a close white friend.

Race/Ethnicity and Class

Most of the women had no trouble recognizing the racial/ethnic differences between themselves and their cross-race friend, but the same cannot be said of class differences. When asked to describe how their class backgrounds might have affected their friendships, the participants had difficulty. Two women told me about previous relationships that had failed. Ruth is a divorced African-American woman who earns \$50,000 per year as an administrator. She wondered whether her "upward mobility" caused one of her friendships with a white woman to falter:

I have built two homes since I've [lived here]...When I started building [one of my houses]...one friend and I became distant. She came to visit and walk through the frame and we seemingly lost friendship after that. And I've often wondered if [she] had a problem with the economic gain that I was making above her, because she had never built a house, she'd had a failed marriage and she was struggling; she was hard working and she struggled. (Appendix B:Pair #7)

A white woman interviewee, Mary, discussed her feelings about a same-race friend who became less involved in her old social networks after she married:

I can think of a friend that I lost, who married into a more affluent family and said, 'Well, now I'm going to socialize with other kinds of people, so I won't be seeing you anymore.' I thought, 'Don't you remember your own roots?' (Appendix B:Pair #8)

Class similarities may have helped some of the participants to find common ground with cross-race friends. In 10 pairs of friends, the African-American woman had an annual income that was about the same or more than the white woman's income. Mary provided an example of how her class background gave her a common perspective with her African-American friend, Thelma. Both women came from rural, working-class backgrounds, and Mary felt this contributed to similar values about class:

[We're] both reverse snobs in terms of class. I mean we would do anything for the little person and...[look] askance at the people with the wealth (Appendix B:Pair #8)

Ruth provided an example of the way in which the perception of class differences can affect attitudes toward an acquaintance. At a state university, Ruth and a multicultural group of unemployed, single, female graduate students banded together as friends, but rebuffed one white woman:

[She was] always coming to classes all dressed up with her suits and her bows, and the hair always done, and the high heel shoes...We just felt she had it made...so what does she want from us? And whatever it is we had, we wanted to keep. We were not about to share, because she'd already made hers. (Appendix B:Pair #7)

Another white participant felt that her experience of being on welfare gave her some common ground with an African-American woman friend who had also been involved in the welfare system. But this was a matter of choice for the white woman. Her parents, who lived in another state, provided her with a kind of "cushion" to fall back

on if she really needed it. Her African-American friend, whose family lived in a poor, rural area, had no such option. While class similarities helped the women to share certain experiences, their commonalities were limited by the racial/ethnic inequality that affects the status of African-American and white women in the United States.

White Racism

Several women gave easily recognizable examples of how white racism thwarted the possibility of cross-race friendships. Some white women held stereotypical ideas about African-Americans, and others told racist jokes. For example, one white woman felt that African-Americans act "too proud, like they didn't want to have anything to do with [whites]." Another stated that she failed to make many friendships with African-American women because they had an "attitude," and were "stand-offish, rude bitches" [with] "a chip on their shoulders" because she is white. These types of statements are not merely examples of prejudiced thinking. They carry with them the weight of institutionalized racism and exemplify the prevalence of racial inequality in every aspect of life, including friendship.

They also exemplify the complications of interaction due to racial/ethnic inequality. At least one of the above comments was made by a white woman who dated only African-American men, and her perception that some African-American women did not want to socialize with her may have been correct (See pp. 58-60: Expressions of Intergroup Conflict: Mixing).

Some white women who acknowledged everyday racism grappled with the

implications of being white. Linda is a divorced, white professional who has known her African-American friend, Patricia, for 12 years. She describes her defensiveness when she and Patricia discuss racism:

It's hard to talk about [racism], because I'm the oppressor. I'm a white person...it's a very sensitive subject for me, because I feel like Patricia wants me to admit that I'm a racist. I don't like calling myself a racist. I would prefer that she say to me, 'That comment is racist' rather than call me a racist...when she uses those terms...my defenses go up and Patricia sees that as a way to deny my bigotry. (Appendix B:Pair #5)

Michelle, a single, young white woman, illustrated her attempts to acknowledge and deal with the inequality in her friendship with an African-American woman named Cheryl:

...it is such a matter of will for [whites] whether we will acknowledge the reality of racism or not...[Whites] are always placing [African-Americans] in the position of saying, '[Racism] does exist, it's my life!'...When Cheryl and I are going to go somewhere, and I pick a place that she definitely doesn't want to go, for issues of her vulnerability and safety...I can [say], 'Oh, come on,' you know, 'What's the big deal?' and put her in that position, or I can understand the necessity of that bridge between us staying intact...and I can listen. (Appendix B:Pair #6)

As Michelle implies, white women who ignore everyday racism are, in effect, participating in its reproduction.

The Education of Whites

Just as white women can ignore racism, they may also ignore racial/ethnic differences and/or expect their African-American friends to educate them about racial/ethnic issues. The education of whites was often mentioned by the African-American participants. As one interviewee stated, African-Americans "constantly

have to educate [whites]...it's frustrating." The issue of safety provides a clear illustration. Many African-American women were fearful of their safety in rural Oregon or city neighborhoods in which racist skinheads have harassed and even murdered people of color. They appreciated that their white friend had some awareness about racial issues, although they were irritated with their white friends for not having the insight, for example, to know that an African-American woman might not be interested in camping out in rural areas because she feared for her personal safety.

In the friendships that the interviewees felt were closest, the white women were aware of myriad issues facing African-American women on a daily basis. For example, a white respondent mentioned that she and her African-American friend are "...cautious about...[going] to a restaurant or a show in the southeast" because of racist skinhead activity there. African-Americans, from their viewpoint as an oppressed racial/ethnic minority, know all about whites, but the reverse is not true.

Michelle has three close friendships with women of color:

People of color know more about [whites] than [we] know about [ourselves] and...it's time for [us] to start learning...What happens between Black women and white women is that [whites] have the room to refuse to do that. (Appendix B:Pair #6)

Even when white women do attempt to understand the experience of being African-American and female, they face complications. Mary is a divorced white woman who met her African-American friend, Thelma, 17 years ago. She explains:

Figuring out how to talk to one another, understanding little differences in cultural curtesies...requires that someone is patient with you and explains some stuff to you, requires that you're listening enough to

realize you're not quite getting it, and that you feel comfortable enough to ask a question. (Appendix B:Pair #8)

Valerie and Jeanine provide a clear example of how misunderstanding could become a barrier to interracial friendships. When Valerie, a white woman, and Jeanine, an African-American woman, had animated conversations in a school lunchroom, Valerie thought: "Oh, I'm being attacked [by Jeanine]." Valerie was afraid that people nearby would think, "Why is [that Black woman] yelling at that [white] woman?" What Jeanine thought was simply talking or expressing herself, Valerie interpreted as "a major fight."

But she and I, even just our own styles of speaking are so different, that at the end of a conversation, I would really not know if she would ever talk to me again. I mean really different from any other friendship I've ever had...And so, the next time, I would always be really surprised when she would come up and talk to me again...She's is not conciliatory at all. When she says something, she says it...[and] she wouldn't stop to save me while she was saying what she was saying. (Appendix B:Pair 11)

White women may also speak in an animated or unyielding manner, but in Valerie's attempt to understand the possible racial/ethnic differences between herself and Jeanine, she attributed Jeanine's style of speaking to racial/ethnic characteristics.

White women attempting to learn about African-American women can also appear as if they want to "rescue" African-Americans or integrate themselves into the African-American community. Mary, cautioned:

The experiences of Black people are going to make them be more private, [and they'll] assess you, see if you're for real. They don't need a rescuer, they don't need somebody to speak for them. (Appendix B:Pair #8)

Women who appeared too eager to learn about African-American culture alienated

some of the African-American interviewees. Andrea, a young, married, African-American woman in her twenties has some "good" white friends from college, but does not consider them to be "close." Andrea recently met a white woman through a male African-American friend and was immediately wary of her. Says Andrea: "She seems to me to be the type...that she's going to come in and 'save the poor Black people.'" "

Jeanine is more direct:

...I cannot stand a pushy white person...[who presents an attitude of] 'Let me make everything right for you, you poor, Black unfortunate soul'...The fact that they're overwhelmed with guilt or whatever...until they're not seeing who I am or what I'm saying, what I'm telling them. It's still that choosing not to see and I have no tolerance for that.
(Appendix B:Pair #11)

The Problem of Identity

In the interviews with white women, the importance of their own race/ethnicity was often downplayed. Although some of the white interviewees spoke of being white and the ways in which this may have interfered with their interracial friendships, other interviewees downplayed the importance of race. Most of the white women interviewees had Northern European backgrounds, and when asked about their ethnic background, a typical interviewee would seem surprised by the question.

The issue of racial/ethnic identity was frequently brought up by African-American women during the interviews. African-American women spoke of liking white women who had their own identity and did not try to "act" African-American. This was an important issue to African-American women who felt that white women

"negate themselves from their men" and have difficulty defining their own identity.

Louise is an African-American woman with a small group of male and female friends who share the same religious beliefs. Louise believes that white women are primarily concerned with gender rather than racial/ethnic identity:

A lot of...white women are still in denial about who they are...and still grappling with issues of self-esteem and confidence...and their relationships with their male counterparts. (Appendix B:Pair #9)

The importance of racial/ethnic identity was a familiar theme in many of the African-American participants discussions of interracial dating or marriage. Jeanine was particularly bothered by a white woman whom she felt was trying to adopt an African-American identity through her marriage to an African-American man:

A lot of problems that I have with a lot of white women, that they're so adamant about being your friend, but they don't even know who you are. And on top of that, they're trying to become Blacker than you are. That is just too tired. (Appendix B:Pair #11)

A few white women were aware of the dangers in overstepping this boundary and trying to "become" African-American. One white woman, Denise, occasionally used African-American slang around her African-American friends, but always in a joking manner. She'd say something like "Hey homechickens," rather than "homegirls" but was careful not to imitate her African-American friends.

Expressions of Intergroup Conflict: Mixing

African-American women who wanted to bring together their same-race and white friends had to consider others' reactions to mixing. Doris, an African-American woman, has four same-race friends and one white friend. She mentioned

some concerns about mixing her African-American and white friends:

You have to make some choices about, if I bring this person into my home, and by bringing them into your home, you're talking about bringing them into your society, into your community. Are you committed to doing that? (Appendix B:Pair #4)

Other African-American women felt that they had to shield their white friends from African-American friends who disapprove of mixing. Sandra, who met her white friend Ann four years ago, described her response to such a situation:

I told [my Black friends]... 'She's my friend, and I don't care what you have against white people. Yes, true enough, I hate some white people, but she's my friend and I feel as though she's a good person. But I tell [Ann] in the process, too, if they say something, don't get offended because you know how I feel... (Appendix B:Pair #10)

The feelings of African-Americans who disapproved of mixing was made clear to African-American women through comments such as, "See, you're over there on that side [of town]," which meant that the African-American woman was not "in tune with what was going on in the African-American community," or "She's hanging out with her white friends again." The African-American women's racial identity was open for questioning when they socialized with white friends. When Cheryl socialized with white friends in high school, she received scornful looks from other African-Americans "...like I wasn't really cool..I wasn't down for the cause or [was] a traitor."

The experience was quite different for white women. Although they worried about introducing their friends to racist acquaintances or family members, they often wished to include their African-American friend in their immediate and most intimate group of friends. They invariably spoke of how their white women friends would

welcome the opportunity to meet and befriend an African-American person. This led to problems for several of the white women who believed that their African-American friend was being used as a "token" so that other friends could show how "politically correct" they were. Also, it was exhausting for the African-American women, because they were queried from all sides, with constant demands for their opinions on racial/ethnic issues and answers to questions about various aspects of African-American culture (e.g., how African-Americans style their hair).

The problematics of mixing became much more salient when African-American women socialized with white women who dated African-American men. One friendship between Sandra and a white woman ended when Sandra attempted to give the white woman advice on dating an African-American man. Because the woman did not hold Sandra's comments in confidence, Sandra's racial loyalty was open for question by her same-race friends. She explained:

This was woman to woman, this wasn't a Black against these Black guys....I hated seeing her get hurt and I hated for them to talk about her. So she went back and told one [Black] guy in particular what I had said....You just don't go behind a Black woman's back and... tell this Black man what she just said! (Appendix B:Pair #10)

Other African-American interviewees were not comfortable with their close white women friends dating African-American men. Lynn, a divorced mother, professional, and student, had ambivalent feelings about a white friend who dated only African-American men. Although she had given the white friend advice about interracial dating, Lynn was concerned about a lack of eligible African-American man: "Black males are so limited [in numbers], and on top of that, you have to

compete with white females for them." Some of Lynn's same-race friends were so strongly against interracial dating that they questioned Lynn's motives for remaining in a friendship with a white woman. This kind of pressure about racial loyalty, which reflects the dynamics of intergroup conflict, was a common experience of many African-American participants.

CONCLUSIONS

In many respects, the women's responses reflected an idealized view of friendship. Several participants remarked that they never lose a "true" friend, once the friendship has developed; they claimed that physical separation and racial/ethnic and class differences did not affect their friendships.

Even when asked about interracial friendships in their lives that had failed to thrive, both African-American and white women tended to attribute the causes directly to a lack of time on their part to pursue the friendship, lack of repeated contact with the person, the tendency for the friendship to be "one-sided," or to differences in age, religious beliefs, or education that led to a lack of common interests. The women did not relate these causes to be related to racial/ethnic inequality. Yet, as the women interviewees talked about their friendships, they gave examples of actions that ended past relationships, talked about betrayals of trust and provided illustrations of the ways in which racial/ethnic inequality strained their relationships.

Jackman and Crane (1986) have asserted that racial inequality is embedded in interracial sociability. They argue that, although intergroup friendship may increase

affection between African-Americans and whites, it does not undercut the discrimination that defines the unequal relationship between the two groups. The interviewees' descriptions support this claim.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Social inequality affects the everyday lives of women in their friendships, just as in their paid and unpaid work, in school, and in the family. The women interviewees gave numerous examples of the reproduction of racial/ethnic inequality in their friendships: in a lack of a common base from which to understand each other, problems due to white racism and privilege, African-American women's ambivalence over interracial dating, and African-American protection of racial/ethnic identity. Their friendships reflected the dynamics of institutional racism and the resulting difficulties of building friendships across race.

To understand these dynamics, it is necessary to consider the women's friendships in connection with other social relations. As Dorothy Smith (1987-b) advised, the key to understanding women's personal experiences as a relation of inequality is to consider the ties between the personal dimensions of relations (e.g. friendships or family) and those relations that are organized as economic and political ones. The personal relations of power between women of different races can be viewed as a product of how friendships are organized by and in the economic and political relations of capitalism in the United States.

THE DYNAMICS OF SOCIAL INEQUALITY

Race, Class, and Opportunities for Friendship

Most of the participants named three to five close female friends whom they met in work or school settings. Although Allan (1989) and Wellman (1985) have suggested that class helps to pattern friendship, the number of close friends that the interviewee's named did not vary according to their income, involvement in professional or service work, or unpaid domestic labor. These findings may be a result of: (1) the relative class homogeneity of the interviewees in that they were mostly professional women with at least some college education; and (2) asking only about "close" female friends (excluding family and lovers). Without further information on the women's broader social networks, including their more distant friends and acquaintances, it is difficult to determine how class relations may have helped to pattern the size or composition of their social networks, and in turn, the opportunities for friendships developed in such networks.

Based on the women's responses to the question of why they do not have more cross-race friends, however, it appears that racial/ethnic and class inequality sometimes prevented women from making contacts across race. This is one manner in which the nonlocal determinants of women's everyday experiences is manifest. The proximity of African-American and white women is unmistakably affected by racial/ethnic and class relations.

Capitalism and institutionalized racism have created conditions that result in the occupational, residential, and social segregation of African-Americans and whites

(Franklin 1991). The likelihood that African-American women are working in lower-waged jobs than white women and living in inner city communities affects the chances of making contacts with white women. African-Americans spend more of their lives in segregated settings than do even recent immigrants (Hacker 1992).

The experiences of many of the interviewees reflect this. Seven of the African-American women and nearly all of the white women grew up in segregated neighborhoods and had little contact with people of other races while they grew up. Many of the women now live in more integrated settings. They attend multicultural religious organizations, or work in fields that require knowledge of racism and the promotion of specific institutional actions to combat it. These organizations may help to provide contact between white women and African-American women who are aware of racial/ethnic inequality.

Using Wright and Cho's definition of class (i.e., one's relation to the means of production, including whether one has control over the means of production and needed skills or expertise) with the additional dimensions of income and education, the women in my study were not reflective of the larger population of the United States. The class structure of the United States is markedly differentiated along racial/ethnic lines. Whites are more likely to be better educated, less likely to be working in low-wage service and laborer occupations, and more likely to have higher incomes than whites (Smith and Seltzer 1992). This was not true of the women in my study. In ten pairs of friends, the African-American woman had an annual income that was about the same or more than her white friend. And because many of the

women made friends at the workplace, both women in a pair were likely to be involved in the same type of employment (e.g., professional). Perhaps the relative class similarities of the pairs of women friends facilitated their contacts across race and helped to provide a common understanding of certain lived experiences.

It is also important to consider how racial/ethnic group membership and differential access to social privilege may affect women's interest in developing interracial contacts when they are available. Blumer (1958) suggests that racial tolerance varies as a function of the perceived position of groups in a racially stratified system. A. Wade Smith (1981), based on Blumer's work, posits that the factors of racial/ethnic identification, a feeling of proprietary claim to certain privileges and advantages, produce a position from which members of the dominant group view their relations with members of racial outgroups.

My research supports Blumer's thesis. The white women in my sample were very "tolerant" of African-Americans, and could afford to be. The population of African-Americans in Portland compared to whites is very small. In 1990, the population of African-Americans in the Portland area was only 7.7 percent, compared to the average of 11.9 percent in the United States as a whole, or more significantly, 75.7 percent in Detroit or 66.6 percent in Atlanta (Hacker 1992). White women in Portland do not have to interact with African-Americans on a daily basis, but may choose to do so. When they encounter African-Americans, they retain the power of being part of the dominant racial group. African-Americans do not threaten their access to choice jobs, housing, or schooling.

Many of the white women participants expressed a desire to develop more or closer friendships with African-American women. Cross-race experiences were novel to them. As a corollary, some of the African-American interviewees who were integrated into white social networks through work, schooling, and religious organizations had no interest in further developing contacts with white women. These women mentioned the need to associate with other African-Americans and were more interested in developing same-race rather than cross-race ties.

Standpoint as Reflection of Power

Patricia Hill Collins (1989), like Dorothy Smith (1987-a), roots the basis of women's standpoint in material conditions. But unlike Smith, who does not refer specifically to women of color in her work, Collins emphasizes the way that racial/ethnic as well as class relations help to shape the experiences of women:

...Black women's political and economic status provides them with a distinctive set of experiences that offers a different view of material reality than that available to other groups. The unpaid and paid work that Black women perform, the types of communities in which they live, and the kinds of relationships they have with others suggests that Black women, as a group, experience a different world than those who are not Black and female...In brief, a subordinate group not only experiences a different reality than a group that rules, but a subordinate group may interpret that reality differently than a dominant group.
(Collins 1989:747)

If the standpoint of women is based in material conditions that foster social inequality, then disjunctions in the understanding and experiences of African-American and white women, as well as women of different classes, are to be expected.

Such different understandings were not apparent in the women's definitions of friendship. There was similarity in their descriptions of their friendships as emotional relationships involving disclosure of feelings, companionship, support, and exchange. Friends provided childcare, gave advice, went shopping for each other and with each other, engaged in leisure activities together, provided support during times of crisis (e.g. divorce, death, acute illness), and transition (marriage, moving, finding employment). The participants did not define or understand the meaning of friendship differently according to their racial/ethnic or class background, nor were there differences in the kinds of supports that were provided.

It was not the women's understandings of friendship, but their experiences of everyday life that created difficulties in friendships across race/ethnicity. Examples of the ways in which the African-American and white women participants had different lived experiences due to institutional racism were abundant. Even when the interviewees found common ground with their cross-race friends, these divergent experiences were present in their relationships.

Everyday racism consists of discrimination and prejudice that are experienced in countless aspects of African-American women's lives (Essed 1990). The African-American women discussed the ways in which racism affected their lives. The white women participants did not. They were mostly from Northern European backgrounds, did not discuss their ethnicity in the interviews, and did not indicate that they were discriminated against in their everyday lives on the basis of their ethnicity.

Racism structured the women's understandings of everyday life in different

ways and provided barriers to the kinds of information that African-American women chose to share with white friends. It caused some African-American women to stereotype white women as somehow different from their "exceptional" white friends. In turn, white women sometimes overestimated the closeness of their cross-race friendships. These different experiences may have undermined the building of a common base that the women needed to build closer relationships.

White Privilege

Dorothy Smith (1987-a) points out the contrast between women's experiences in the local, immediate world and the ideological world that has been constructed by men and presented to women as indicative of their experiences. Similarly, the women interviewees provided examples of a "rupture" between African-American women's lived experiences and the invisibility of institutionalized racism. Feminist scholar bell hooks (1989) writes that American women of all races are taught to think of racism solely in the context of race hatred. For most white women, the first knowledge of racism as institutionalized oppression (i.e., white supremacy) occurs through information gleaned from conversations, books, television, or movies.

White supremacy shapes perspectives on reality and informs the social status of African-Americans and all people of color (hooks 1989). The privileges that white women are afforded due to their race allows them to ignore the experiences of African-Americans. As one African-American respondent, Jeanine, expressed:

[Whites] don't know us. And I tell [Valerie] all the time, it's because [whites] *chose* not to know me. Just like I was exposed to you, you were exposed to me. I cleaned your house, I washed your children.

You don't know me because you chose not to know me. So it's on you, the burden of proof is on you, not on me. (Appendix B:Pair #11)

African-American women do not have the option of ignoring institutions dominated by whites. If they go to school or work in white settings, or turn on the television, they must deal with white supremacy on a daily basis. Like Dorothy Smith's (1987-a) contention that women's standpoint affords them both male and female ways of knowing the world, so too must African-American women know the standpoint of whites.

White women who expected the few African-American women with whom they came into contact to teach them about aspects of African-American experience were exercising the privileges of their race and were resented. They placed African-American women in the position of having to educate them. The ability of white women to ignore the everyday lives of African-Americans sometimes alienated them from African-American women and may have prevented certain friendships from becoming closer. As hooks suggests, perhaps white women could begin to fully explore the ways in which white supremacy determines how they see the world, even though their actions may not involve overt discrimination and separation (hooks 1989). Some of the white women interviewees had taken this advice. They were concerned about the ways they benefit from institutional racism and they struggled to understand their African-American friends' experiences of oppression. These women typically had long-lived and close friendships across race.

Mixing and Identity

The African-American interviewees' ambivalence over interracial dating and their emphasis on the importance of racial identity reflect widely acknowledged intergroup conflict between African-Americans and whites. African-American women in the United States are more likely to head a family and are more often single than white women (Hacker 1992). According to the U.S. Bureau of the Census (1991), 74.3 percent of white women between 35-40 are married, while only 42.5 percent of African-American women of the same age are married. African-American women from ages 25-44 are more often at work and working full-time, more often poor, and more likely to be divorced or separated (Franklin 1991).

Gender, racial/ethnic and class subordination define the status of African-American women. Their economic position, compounded with institutional racism affects the way family, neighborhood, and life circumstances reproduce themselves. Within African-American social and community life, the overcrowding of African-American males in the working class has led to family difficulties that have produced an over-representation of African-American women who head households (Franklin 1991). There are fewer employed African-American men per hundred African-American women, compared to employed white men per hundred white women (Wilson 1987). Among African-Americans in the middle- and upper-classes, there are few men eligible for marriage (Franklin 1991:130).

Within this social context we can interpret why many of the African-American women respondents expressed ambivalence about their white friends dating African-

American men. It also helps to clarify why some of the African-American women participants strongly supported racial/ethnic over gender identity. African-American women suffer the effects of both gender and racial/ethnic oppression, and their identity as African-Americans may be questioned by members of their racial/ethnic group if they socialize primarily with whites or support white friends who date African-American men.

Whites do not assess their own experiences or attitudes about being white in western society (Carter 1990). Ignoring race and denying its importance, can, in itself, be racist. In not recognizing that African-Americans and whites have different experiences, white women may be eliminating an important aspect of their and others' racial identities.

For many African-American women, and especially those who are primarily integrated into white social networks, reaffirming their racial identity is an important way to resist racism. As bell hooks (1989:114) writes:

Black people who work or socialize in predominately white settings, whose very structures are informed by the principles of white supremacy, who dare to affirm blackness, love of black culture and identity, do so at great risk.....Resisting the pressure to assimilate is a part of our struggle to end white supremacy.

The sense of being a part of a collective community and part of a movement towards liberation has historically been a part of African-American women's lives (Dill 1983), and it is this strong sense of racial/ethnic identity that complicates alliances with white women who attempt to find a common understanding based primarily on gender.

White feminists have found this to be true when they have emphasized sexism and

overlooked the advantages they are accorded by racial/ethnic inequality (Palmer 1987).

Many feminist scholars, including bell hooks (1989), urge feminist thinkers to talk about identity in relation to culture, history, politics, and to challenge the notion of identity as static and unchanging. To explore identity in relation to strategies of politicization, feminist thinkers must examine how we are gendered critically and analytically from various standpoints.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FEMINIST THEORY

Social inequality generates important economic, ideological, and experiential cleavages among women that lead to differences in perception of self and their place in society (Dill 1983:138). Studying these interactions through an examination of women's described experiences is complicated by the fact that many women may not view their everyday lives as connected to gender or class inequality. Also, white women, in particular, may not consider how their lives are shaped by racial/ethnic relations.

Commonalities of class or gender may cut across racial/ethnic lines and provide the conditions for some types of shared understanding, but further research must be done so that feminist theorists can identify the ways that micro-level interactions among women are actually affected by racial/ethnic and class relations. We must examine the ways in which the structures of class, race/ethnicity and gender enter into women's lives, but at the same time, attempt to understand individual and

group perceptions, descriptions and conceptualizations of their lives. This research is a small exploratory step in that direction.

Future research could more easily identify the influence of racial/ethnic and class inequality by actually observing women's interracial contact in particular settings, such as a school or workplace. A participant-observation approach would allow the researcher to observe the interaction of African-American and white women and look for social conditions that foster or hinder friendship. If the researcher socialized with an integrated network of African-American and white friends, she could also observe the process of friendship in informal settings. This would allow the researcher to consider both the close and more distant ties in women's friendship networks.

Such research could build upon feminist scholarship that outlines the ways in which racial/ethnic inequality has affected the relationships of women in the feminist movement. The experience of racial oppression can make African-American women strongly aware of their group identity and suspicious of women who define feminism in terms that ignore race/ethnicity:

This commitment to the improvement of the race has often led Black women to see feminist issues quite differently from their white sisters. And, racial animosity and mistrust have too often undermined the potential for coalition between Black and white women since the women's suffrage campaigns (Dill 1983:134).

Dill suggests a feminist "sisterhood" that recognizes and accepts the objective differences between women and at the same time, moves beyond a limited focus on "women's issues" to ally with those addressing other aspects of race and class

oppression.

If more white women rethink their relations to African-American women and the greater privileges they are afforded based on their race/ethnicity, perhaps more interracial friendships will thrive (Collins 1989). These privileges, such as being able to learn only about the history of whites, being hired for well-paying jobs, or choosing to live in any area of a city, have been overlooked by many white women. Although African-American and white women cannot erase the barriers that are implicit in their interaction due to racial/ethnic inequality, they can at least acknowledge that they exist. On this basis, some white and African-American women, at least, are endeavoring to build affectionate and supportive relationships.

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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW GUIDE

INTERVIEW GUIDE

I am interested in finding out the kinds of problems women face when they form interracial friendships with other women. I want to find out if African-American and white women experience the same kinds of problems, so I'd like to talk to you about your close friendships with both African-American and white women. If you don't have best or close friendships with (African-American/white) women, we'll talk about the friendships that you do have.

Are there any questions you'd like to ask me before we begin?

I want to assure you that everything you say will be completely confidential. I will not use your name, comments, or personal information in any way that might identify you.

I. Background - First, I would like to find out a little bit about your background:

TELL ME A LITTLE ABOUT YOUR HISTORY: WHERE WERE YOU BORN?
WHERE DID YOU GROW UP? HOW LONG HAVE YOU LIVED IN OREGON?

WHAT AREA OF PORTLAND DO YOU PRESENTLY LIVE IN?

WHAT DO YOU DO FOR A LIVING?

ARE YOU MARRIED? (IF SO, HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN MARRIED?)

DO YOU HAVE ANY CHILDREN? (HOW OLD ARE THEY?)

HOW OLD ARE YOU?

WHAT IS YOUR ETHNICITY?

DID YOU GRADUATE FROM HIGH SCHOOL? COLLEGE? (IN WHAT FIELD?)

CAN YOU GIVE ME A ROUGH ESTIMATE OF YOUR HOUSEHOLD INCOME FOR 1991?

DO YOU BELONG TO A CHURCH OR REGULARLY ATTEND SERVICES?

DO YOU BELONG TO ANY OTHER COMMUNITY GROUPS?

II. Definitions of Friendship - Now, we're going to talk about friendship:

WHAT IS A FRIEND? WHAT IS YOUR DEFINITION OF FRIENDSHIP?

IF I ASKED YOUR ADVICE ON HOW TO BE A FRIEND TO SOMEONE, WHAT WOULD YOU TELL ME?

DO YOU MAKE A DISTINCTION BETWEEN HAVING A BEST FRIEND AND A GOOD FRIEND? (IF SO, WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THEM?) IS THERE A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A GOOD FRIEND AND A FRIENDLY ACQUAINTANCE?

HOW MANY BEST/CLOSE FRIENDS (EXCLUDING RELATIVES AND LOVERS) DO YOU HAVE? HOW MANY OF THEM ARE AFRICAN-AMERICAN? WHITE? OTHER?

WHAT WOULD BE ONE THING THAT A FRIEND COULD DO THAT WOULD PROBABLY BREAK-UP YOUR FRIENDSHIP?

DO YOU FEEL THAT MEN AND WOMEN'S FRIENDSHIPS ARE DIFFERENT IN ANY WAY? (IF SO, HOW ARE THEY DIFFERENT?)

DO YOU HAVE FRIENDSHIPS WITH MEN? (IF SO, ARE YOUR FRIENDSHIPS WITH MEN DIFFERENT THAN YOUR FRIENDSHIPS WITH WOMEN?)

III. Same-Race Friendships - Let's talk about your adult friendships with other (African-American/white) women. I'd like to know about at least one close friendship that you currently have and one that you no longer have. First, let's talk about a current friendship.

CAN YOU TELL ME YOUR FRIEND'S FIRST NAME?

TELL ME ABOUT HOW YOU BECAME FRIENDS WITH ____.

HOW OLD WERE YOU WHEN YOU MET?

WHAT ATTRACTED YOU TO ____?

DID/DO YOU THINK OF ____ AS A BEST FRIEND, A GOOD FRIEND, OR FRIENDLY ACQUAINTANCE? WHY?

HOW WERE/ARE YOU AND ____ ALIKE? DIFFERENT?

HOW OFTEN DID/DO YOU SEE ____?

WHAT KINDS OF THINGS DID/DO YOU DO WITH ____? WHERE DID YOU GO? WHAT DID YOU DO?

WHAT WAS THE BEST TIME YOU HAD WITH ____? THE WORST TIME?

DID/DO YOU COUNT ON ____ TO HELP YOU WITH PERSONAL PROBLEMS?

WAS/IS YOUR FRIENDSHIP WITH ____ DIFFERENT FROM OTHER FRIENDSHIPS WITH (AFRICAN-AMERICAN/WHITE) WOMEN THAT YOU HAD IN THE PAST? HOW?

IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU'D LIKE TO SAY ABOUT YOUR FRIENDSHIP WITH ____?

Now, let's talk about a close friendship that you no longer have. (Find out if the interviewee has one. If not, ask about a close friendship from the past that is still going and get specific information for the friendship mentioned.) Are there any other close friendships with (African-American/white) women that you'd like to tell me about? (Get information)

IV. Interracial Friendships - Tell me about some of the close friendships you've had with (African-American/white) women. First tell me about your friendship with ____.

TELL ME ABOUT HOW YOU BECAME FRIENDS WITH ____.

HOW OLD WERE YOU WHEN YOU MET ____?

WHAT ATTRACTED YOU TO ____?

DID/DO YOU THINK OF ____ AS A BEST FRIEND, A GOOD FRIEND, OR FRIENDLY ACQUAINTANCE? WHY?

HOW WERE/ARE YOU AND ____ ALIKE? DIFFERENT?

HOW OFTEN DID/DO YOU SEE ____?

WHAT KINDS OF THINGS DID/DO YOU DO WITH ____? WHERE DID YOU GO? WHAT DID YOU DO?

WHAT WAS THE BEST TIME YOU HAD WITH ____? THE WORST TIME?

DID/DO YOU COUNT ON ____ TO HELP YOU WITH PERSONAL PROBLEMS?

WERE/ARE YOU FRIENDS WITH ____ AT THE SAME TIME THAT YOU WERE/ARE FRIENDS WITH ____ (THE SAME-RACE FRIENDS MENTIONED IN PART III) OR OTHER (AFRICAN-AMERICAN/ WHITE) FRIENDS?

HOW DO YOUR (AFRICAN-AMERICAN/WHITE) FRIENDS FEEL ABOUT YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH _____?

HAVE YOU FELT ANY PRESSURE TO CHANGE OR END YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH _____? (IF SO, WHERE DID THIS PRESSURE COME FROM?)

WAS/IS THIS FRIENDSHIP DIFFERENT FROM BEING FRIENDS WITH SOMEONE OF YOUR OWN RACE? HOW?

DID/DO YOU EVER INCLUDE _____ IN YOUR ACTIVITIES WITH (AFRICAN-AMERICAN/WHITE) FRIENDS? IF NOT, WHY?

WHAT QUALITIES WERE/ARE IMPORTANT IN _____? (WERE/ARE THESE QUALITIES DIFFERENT THAN THOSE YOU VALUE IN (AFRICAN-AMERICAN/WHITE FRIENDS? IF SO, HOW?)

DID/DO YOU EVER DISCUSS YOUR RACIAL DIFFERENCES WITH _____?

DID/DOES _____ EVER WANT TO DO THINGS THAT YOU DID NOT FEEL COMFORTABLE DOING?

ARE YOU AWARE OF ANY TIME THAT RACIAL DIFFERENCES CAUSED A PROBLEM IN YOUR FRIENDSHIP?

ARE YOU AWARE OF ANY DIFFERENCES IN YOUR INCOME LEVELS THAT MIGHT HAVE CAUSED COMPLICATIONS IN YOUR FRIENDSHIP?

WAS/IS YOUR FRIENDSHIP WITH _____ DIFFERENT FROM OTHER FRIENDSHIPS WITH (AFRICAN-AMERICAN/WHITE) WOMEN THAT YOU HAD IN THE PAST? HOW?

WHAT KINDS OF PROBLEMS DO YOU THINK THAT AFRICAN-AMERICAN AND WHITE WOMEN HAVE WHEN THEY TRY TO FORM INTERRACIAL FRIENDSHIPS?

HOW DID/DO YOU AND _____ DEAL WITH THOSE PROBLEMS WHEN THEY CAME UP?

IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU'D LIKE TO SAY ABOUT YOUR FRIENDSHIP WITH _____?

Now, let's talk about a close friendship that you no longer have. (Find out if the interviewee has one. If not, ask about a close friendships from the past that is still going and get name and specific information for the friendship mentioned.) Are there any other friendships with (African-American/white) women you'd like to tell me about? (Get information)

V. Thwarted Interracial Friendships - I only have a couple more questions for you:

ARE THERE ANY (AFRICAN-AMERICAN/WHITE) WOMEN THAT YOU WANTED TO BECOME FRIENDS WITH BUT DIDN'T? (IF SO, HOW COME?)

WHY DO YOU THINK THAT YOU HAVE NOT HAD MORE FRIENDS WHO WERE (AFRICAN-AMERICAN/WHITE)?

LASTLY, I'D LIKE TO KNOW HOW YOU FELT ABOUT THE INTERVIEW AND IF YOU HAVE ANY SUGGESTIONS ABOUT FUTURE INTERVIEWS.

APPENDIX B

INFORMATION ON FRIENDSHIP PAIRS

INFORMATION ON FRIENDSHIP PAIRS

	African-American	White
Pair #1	Cynthia	Lisa

Age	31-40	31-40
Education	Bachelor's	Bachelor's
Income	\$35,000	\$20,000
Occupation ¹	Professional Work	Service Work
Number of Close Friends ²	3	4
Race of Close Friends	2 African-American 1 White	4 White
Marital Status	Married	Divorced

Years of Acquaintance: 2

¹*Professional Work*: teacher, education administrator, educational consultant, social worker, civil rights investigator, hotel manager, mental health provider, nurse;
Service Work: clerical worker, food server, paid domestic worker, health care aide.

²In some cases (Pair #1, #2, #11, #14), the women in a pair did not name each other as a "close" friend, but nevertheless described each other as a "friend" or "good friend." In these cases, the number of close friends does not reflect the other woman in the pair.

Pair #2 African-American White
 Renee Karen

Age	21-30	21-30
Education	Some College	Bachelor's
Income	\$19,000	\$10-15,000
Occupation	Professional Work	Professional Work
Number of Close Friends	5	3
Race of Close Friends	5 White	3 White
Marital Status	Single	Single

Years of Acquaintance: 5

Pair #3 African-American White
 Rhonda Kathleen

Age	31-40	31-40
Education	Advanced Degree	Some College
Income	\$50-60,000	\$55,000
Occupation	Professional Work	Professional Work
Number of Close Friends	3	6
Race of Close Friends	1 African-American 2 White	2 African-American 4 White
Marital Status	Married	Co-habiting

Years of Acquaintance: 2

Pair #4 African-American White
 Doris Barbara

Age	41-50	41-50
Education	Advanced Degree	Bachelor's
Income	\$42,000	\$41,000
Occupation	Professional Work	Professional Work
Number of Close Friends	7	4
Race of Close Friends	4 African-American 1 White 2 Other	1 African-American 3 White
Marital Status	Divorced	Divorced

Years of Acquaintance: 10

Pair #5 African-American White
 Patricia Linda

Age	31-40	31-40
Education	Advanced Degree	Advanced Degree
Income	\$29,000	\$70-90,000
Occupation	Professional Work	Professional Work
Number of Close Friends	3	2
Race of Close Friends	1 African-American 1 White 1 Other	1 African-American 1 White
Marital Status	Married	Divorced

Years of Acquaintance: 12

Pair #6 African-American White
 Cheryl Michelle

Age	21-30	21-30
Education	Bachelor's	Some College
Income	\$20,000	\$9,000
Occupation	Service Work	Service Work
Number of Close Friends	3	4
Race of Close Friends	2 African-American 1 White	1 African-American 1 White 2 Other
Marital Status	Single	Single

Years of Acquaintance: 3

Pair #7 African-American White
 Ruth Margaret

Age	41-50	41-50
Education	Advanced Degree	Some College
Income	\$50,000	\$100,000
Occupation	Professional Work	Professional Work
Number of Close Friends	7	5
Race of Close Friends	5 African-American 2 White	1 African-American 4 White
Marital Status	Divorced	Married

Years of Acquaintance: 17

Pair #8 African-American White
 Thelma Mary

Age	51 or over	51 or over
Education	Some College	Bachelor's
Income	\$38-40,000	\$40,000
Occupation	Professional Work	Professional Work
Number of Close Friends	4	5
Race of Close Friends	2 African-American 2 White	1 African-American 3 White 1 Other
Marital Status	Divorced	Divorced

Years of Acquaintance: 17

Pair #9 African-American White
 Louise Kay

Age	31-40	41-50
Education	Advanced Degree	Some College
Income	\$65,000	\$11,000
Occupation	Professional Work	Professional Work
Number of Close Friends	5	5
Race of Close Friends	3 African-American 2 White	2 African-American 3 White
Marital Status	Married	Divorced

Years of Acquaintance: 11

Pair #10 African-American White
 Sandra Ann

Age	21-30	21-30
Education	Bachelor's	Bachelor's
Income	\$10,000	\$4,000
Occupation	Service Work	Service Work
Number of Close Friends	2	3
Race of Close Friends	1 African-American 1 White	1 African-American 1 White 1 Other
Marital Status	Single	Single

Years of Acquaintance: 4

Pair #11 African-American White
 Jeanine Valerie

Age	21-30	31-40
Education	Some College	Some College
Income	\$8,500	\$20,000
Occupation	Service Work	Professional Work
Number of Close Friends	1	5
Race of Close Friends	1 African-American	1 African-American 4 White
Marital Status	Divorced	Divorced

Years of Acquaintance: 2

Pair #12 African-American White
 Lori Denise

Age	21-30	21-30
Education	Some College	Bachelor's
Income	\$5,800	\$20,000
Occupation	Student	Service Work
Number of Close Friends	9	4
Race of Close Friends	6 African-American 2 White 1 Other	1 African-American 1 White 2 Other
Marital Status	Single	Single

Years of Acquaintance: 2

Pair #13 African-American White
 Andrea Kelly

Age	21-30	21-30
Education	Bachelor's	Bachelor's
Income	\$23,000	\$12,000
Occupation	Service Work	Service Work
Number of Close Friends	2	3
Race of Close Friends	2 African-American	1 African-American 1 White
Marital Status	Married	Married

Years of Acquaintance: 6

Pair #14 African-American White
 Shirley Alice

Age	51 or over	51 or over
Education	Some High School	Some High School
Income	Under \$10,000	\$7,200
Occupation	Service Work	Service Work
Number of Close Friends	1	5
Race of Close Friends	1 African-American	5 White
Marital Status	Divorced	Widowed

Years of Acquaintance: 1

Pair #15 African-American White
 Lynn Rebecca

Age	31-40	21-30
Education	Some College	Bachelor's
Income	\$15,000	\$32,000
Occupation	Professional Work	Professional Work
Number of Close Friends	2	4
Race of Close Friends	1 White 1 Other	2 African-American 2 White
Marital Status	Divorced	Single

Years of Acquaintance: 8