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Mommy Groups as Sites for Deliberation in Everyday Speech

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Mommy Groups as Sites for Deliberation in Everyday Speech

Abstract

This study advances our knowledge of the role of metaphor in deliberation in everyday speech (with an emphasis on the role of competition, cooperation, and connection metaphors), which up to now has not been studied as an important discursive strategy in deliberation. Furthermore, the study contributes to our understanding of the discursive practices that happen *during* deliberation, as opposed to measuring, for example, deliberation's effects. After all, scholars, more and more, are writing about deliberative communication as a means to understand how communities can improve the quality of their communication and decision-making to work through problems. Language strategies, such as metaphor, help deliberators resolve what scholars have referred to as "wicked problems" or problems that are negotiated across time and are latent with competing values and social identities. One example of a citizen-led, localized context, where community members work to address a "wicked problem" is the Salem Kids Group. In this paper, we argue that in the Salem Kids Group's online and face-to-face discussions, three dominant family metaphors, competition, cooperation, and connection, work to structure and define parameters for the group's everyday talk and hold important implications for everyday speech in deliberation.

Keywords

everyday speech, deliberation, metaphors, competition, cooperation, connection, wicked problems, online, discussion.

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Increasingly, scholars are writing about deliberative communication as a means to understand how communities can improve the quality of their communication and decision-making to work through problems (Black, 2012; Carcasson & Sprain, 2012; Gastil, 1993; Lawrence, 2007; Pearce & Littlejohn, 1997; Ryfe, 2006). Notably, the language choices we use in our deliberations affect the quality, and yet little of our scholarly research has focused on these types of discursive “moves” that happen when we communicate together in our communities to make decisions (Black, 2012). Rather, a lot of literature has focused on the deliberative “ideals” that groups might strive to attain, but fall short of, when deciding together (Button & Mattson, 1999) or the effects of deliberation (for a review, see Black, L. W., Burkhalter, S., Gastil, J. & Stromer-Galley, J., 2010; see also Mulbureger, 2006). A smaller literature has examined language strategies used in deliberation. For example, studies have looked at the role of storytelling (for a review, see Black, 2010; see also Black, 2008, 2009, 2013; Polletta, & Lee, 2006; Polletta, 2008; Ryfe, 2006; Smith, 1999; Stromer-Galley, 2007; Walmsey, 2009), disagreements (Jacobs, Cook, Delli Carpini, 2009; Price & Capella, 2002; Smitth, 1999; Stromer-Galley, 2007), and the use of identity statements (Black, 2008, 2009; Burkhalter, Gastil & Kelshaw, 2002; Gastil, Black, Deess & Leighter, 2008; Hart & Jarvis, 1999; Hartz-Karp, Anderson, Gastil, & Felicetti, 2010; Ryfe, 2006; Svensson, 2008) as a means to better understand what comprises deliberations in action. However, another important language strategy that warrants study is the role of metaphor in our deliberations. Because thinking is inextricably linked to speaking, the metaphors used to describe and influence how community members see and work together are critical. Morgan, a cognitive linguist, writes about three metaphor clusters, including those of competition, cooperation, and connection (Morgan, 2008). She explains, “each of the three groups” makes assumptions “about how the different elements of the world fit together” (Morgan, 2013).

Language strategies, such as metaphor, help deliberators resolve what scholars have referred to as “wicked problems” (Carcasson & Sprain, 2012; Rittel & Webber, 1973). These types of problems do not have technical solutions only and are not ones in which we can solve and eradicate from our agendas. Rather, these problems are negotiated across time and are latent with competing values and social identities. For example, Carcasson and Sprain write that wicked problems “represent a basic reality of diverse democracies that attempt to involve a broad range of people and perspectives in decision making and continually must address problems that are value laden.” Increasingly, scholars are writing about deliberative communication as a means to understand how communities can improve the quality of their communication and decision-making around wicked problems (Black, 2012; Carcasson & Sprain, 2012; Gastil, 1993; Lawrence, 2007; Mansbridge, Hartz-Karp, Amengual, & Gastil, 2006; Pearce & Littlejohn, 1997; Ryfe, 2006). Much of the current research on deliberation focuses on understanding what happens in more structured forums (Black, 2012; Carcasson & Sprain, 2012; Gastil, 1993). Gastil, for example, has looked at the norms by which facilitators judge small group deliberative events, discussing “general

standards,” including “maintaining a positive ‘group atmosphere’” and “making progress on the group’s task” (1993, p. 12). And, more recently, Black has written an insightful chapter on the communication ideals that can be found within deliberative events, arguing the need for scholars to further consider analytic and social interaction processes of forums (2012, p. 5). But, as Button and Mattson remark, “not enough has been said about how deliberation actually works among citizens in localized contexts” (1999, p. 610). Even a decade later, a paucity of research exists on the norms and ideals that we hold for deliberation around wicked problems that goes on outside of structured forums in more citizen-led, everyday contexts. One example of a citizen-led, localized context, where community members worked to address a “wicked problem” is the Salem Kids Group. In this paper, we argue that in the Salem Kids Group discussion, three dominant metaphor clusters, competition, cooperation, and connection, work to structure and define parameters for the group’s everyday talk and hold important implications for every day speech in deliberation. Specifically, this paper will: (1) explain methods, (2) discuss metaphor and its relevance to deliberation, (3) provide a metaphorical analysis of the Salem Kids Group, looking specifically at the metaphor clusters of competition, cooperation, and connection, and (4) discuss the implications of this paper for deliberative theory and practice.

Methods

Case Description

The Salem Kids Group is an online group composed of over 1,000 families who live in a neighborhood in a U.S. Gulf Coast, metropolitan city. The site, moderated entirely by volunteers who are also parents in the area, is predominantly used as a vehicle to, among other activities, encourage social relationships in the neighborhood around parenting and community, through such activities as age-based playgroups, a book club, a mother’s night out, holiday events, and other family events. One of the most used features of the site, however, are the online discussion boards, which average approximately 20 posts per day, with an average of 100 participants a day, on topics that range anywhere from recommendations for home owners’ insurance or good hair stylists to parenting advice on sleeping, eating, potty training, and a number of additional topics. In May of 2013, 22 women engaged in an online discussion entitled, “Zoned to Emerson ES (Elementary School) and Considering Other Options.” The thread, started by a woman seeking advice on where to send her kids to school, lasted several days and centered on the feasibility of improving Emerson Elementary School, a local, neighborhood school. As a result of this online discussion, many of the women decided to meet face-to-face to continue the discussion.

Analytic Approach

In order to examine the language strategies happening in this context, applied rhetorical criticism is used as an analytical approach. As a method, applied rhetorical criticism draws on diverse textual fragments for analysis and considers the symbolic activity of shared meaning through micro and macro moves located

within the text. Textual analysis of the discourse is conducted in three specific stages, including open coding, axial coding, and theoretical sampling (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

Applied rhetorical criticism is useful because it allows for a rich analysis of a particular case study. Condit and Bates discuss:

Compiling diverse textual fragments through experiments, surveys, individual and group interviews, bibliometrics, and participant observation ..., and combining these fragments with monumental texts in close textual analysis, allows for a greater selection of the contextual reality in which rhetorical acts occur. The use of several methods of data collection under the aegis of a critical referent derived from the rhetorical tradition can greatly expand and enrich the analysis (2009, p. 121).

Furthermore, Condit and Bates note that applied rhetorical criticism is a useful, applied approach to examine “texts.” While the subject of study in rhetorical criticism has often been “great speeches,” they explain that a “text” in applied rhetorical criticism can include “any cultural product” (2009, p. 109). They suggest that when we only focus on “great speeches” we lose the importance of ideas expressed in “common discourse” (p. 109) or what Ernest J. Wrage refers to as “idea-centered” speech (1947, p. 454). Robert Asen (2011), for example, uses rhetorical criticism as an insightful methodology to compare the legislation of federal policy makers to local, more everyday school board deliberations in order to determine the practices that allow for wider, more inclusive deliberation. Deliberation in everyday speech is an essential “communication practice” by which participants foster relationships, discuss ideas, and make decisions collectively. These speeches are not, however, simple information or viewpoint sharing; they are dialogic moments in which individuals seek to bring others to their opinions even as they make themselves open to the influence of others. In deliberation, the relationship between speaker, speech, and audience is fluid. Participants in one moment speak and, in the next moment, listen; the roles between speaker and audience are constantly in flux and, in this way, in a deliberation, the speech is co-constructed, with each participant’s speech “move” influencing the shape and the interaction patterns of the speech. Each participant, in a deliberation, impacts preceding comments, making utterances important at a micro level. Additionally, deliberation creates a “synergistic” text, whereby the sum of the whole is greater than the individual parts. In this “synergy,” symbolic meaning is shared and co-constructed, and warrants a look at the overall discursive structure at a macro level. For this particular case study of the Salem Kids Group, applied rhetorical criticism is useful because it serves as a method to explore rhetorical exigencies, or problems that invite communication, inherent in “wicked problems.”

The Salem Kids Group constituted a deliberative event in an everyday context as their speech arose organically from an online mother's discussion site and continued with further invitations to talk around one mother's kitchen table. The women did not hold any titles of authority in the community other than they were concerned about their children and their neighborhood schools. Further, there was no formal organizing structure or "leader" who organized their talks. Rather, the deliberation was instigated by one woman simply posing a question to the group. Those who chose to engage in this everyday speech, did so because of a perceived interest or ability to contribute. They also exchanged ideas as a means to understand how they might act and decide either individually or as a group. Yet, their casual, deliberative speech had a tremendous impact on how the neighborhood began to understand education in their community. Gerald Hauser's writings on "vernacular rhetoric" looks at "the ways in which the conversations within and between publics shape society" and argues the importance of discourse in everyday speech (1999, p. 35). Indeed, the Salem Kids Group is an instance of everyday speech that is significant in its implications.

In this project, our texts are comprised two main texts, including an early Salem Kids Group Online thread entitled "Zoned to Emerson Elementary School and Considering Other Options" and a transcription of the two-hour, face-to-face meeting that occurred between five women following the tour observations of the school tour that many of the women took. These two texts were supplemented with field observations of a discussion that took place after a school tour with the principal and subsequent posts in the Friends of Emerson online discussion group. Because this case study spans between both online and face-to-face environments, obvious discursive differences occur in different mediums (Joinson, 2005; Leininger, 2011; Black 2012). For instance, online communication is more asynchronous than face-to-face because of participants' ability to respond when they want instead of needing to wait for their talk turn (Black, 2009). However, these two texts were selected *because* they represented both online and face-to-face formats, as it is becoming an increasingly more common for online discussions to work *with* more traditional, face-to-face deliberative formats (Leininger, 2011). In addition, these two texts were also selected as a case study because they offered what Yin (2003) refers to the benefits of a longitudinal case study that allow consideration of two different points in time, providing more of an in-depth understanding of the ways in which people deliberate in every day speech. Finally, the case study was selected because the discourse involves a "wicked problem," or an issue that involves inherent conflicting values and that cannot be solved by technical solutions alone (Carcasson & Sprain, 2012).

Due to the private nature of these forums, IRB approval was secured along with signed consent forms from every participant in any thread analyzed. In addition to consent forms, any identifying information has been changed, including names for all of the participants, the name of the online site, neighborhood names, school names, and names of local leaders.

Analytic Constructs: Metaphors of Competition, Cooperation, and Connection

The central pattern that guided the data sets was the use of metaphor. Copious studies have analyzed the role that metaphors play in shaping our social and political reality (Giddings, 1992; Henry, 1988; Ivie, 1987; Lawrence, 2007; McMillan & Cheney, 1986; Schiappa, 2007; Zarefsky, 1986). Indeed, metaphors are powerful vehicles that create categories for our thinking and our ideas (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Lakoff and Johnson (1980), for instance, explain that metaphors often influence and characterize our everyday talk: “When we give everyday descriptions, for example, we are using categorizations to focus on certain properties that fit our purposes.” Lawrence (2007) explains that community actors’ use of metaphors, in fact, structure our experiences, frame our understanding, and set expectations about how we should act within our social and political world. Zarefsky, for example, argues that Lyndon B. Johnson’s use of the war metaphor influenced the long-term failure of the “War on Poverty” in the U.S. as there existed no clear “enemies” to blame or decided “victories” to be won in his campaign. Similarly, Schiappa (1989) contends we need to change the language of nuclear weapons away from metaphors “games” or “strategy” if we want to reduce the likelihood that they will be used. Metaphors shape our social and political reality because they encapsulate and frame our perspectives on the world.

Deliberation, because it ideally deals with diverse groups of people, often must grapple with multiple frames and views. As such, the ways in which individuals use words and language – and the ways in which these frames cooperate, collide, and clash are important to understand. Lakoff writes:

We also know frames through language. All words are defined relative to conceptual frames. When you hear a word, its frame (or collection of frames) is activated in your brain. Reframing is changing the way the public sees the world. It is changing what counts as common sense. Because language activates frames, new language is required for new frames. Thinking differently requires speaking differently (Lakoff, 2004, xv).

In the Salem Kids Groups, the three metaphor clusters, cooperation, competition, and connection, are prevalent in their discourse and hold differing approaches to deliberation, which will be explored as they unfold in the discourse.

Competition Metaphor Cluster in the Salem Kids Group

The first metaphor cluster that is prevalent in the online and face-to-face discussions is that of competition. Competition metaphors set up particular expectations and as Makau and Marty (2013) explain, “pit people against one another to accomplish goals” (p. 36). Further, they note that these metaphors “structure human experience around the basic assumption that there are only two sides to a particular situation; moreover, one side is right, and the other is wrong” (2013, p. 36). If people abide by these assumptions, they are encouraged “to

engage in power struggles to determine who is right and to “win” (Makau & Marty, 2013, p. 36). Competition cluster metaphors include genres of words, such as, military, sports, games, leadership, or force (See Appendix 1 for further development). Indeed, the competition metaphor families emphasize perspectives of “right” and “wrong” people or groups over the need for multiple perspectives in decision making. Further, competition metaphors emphasize values of all players working hard to compete and win, perhaps for a common team goal over the need to work hard for one’s own selfish gain. In addition, competition metaphors privilege the need for team leaders to guide and direct. Finally, these metaphors imply certain solutions for decisions, such as ones that emphasize accountability and removing or silencing people who are “wrong.” All of these elements of the competition metaphors are present in the mommy’s online and face-to-face discussions about Emerson Elementary (See Appendix 2). Examples of conversational moves within this metaphor cluster include using the experience of only a team member to the exclusion of other perspectives to inform decision-making, using expertise to “win” a case, or asking for a vote to determine what the team believes is the “right” decision (see Appendix 3 for further development).

Key Perspectives Highlighted by Competition Metaphors

In the online and face-to-face discussions, the parents draw upon the competition metaphors to talk about how they want to make change in their community, and in this talk, key perspectives arise. In their use of these metaphors, community members tend to highlight right and wrong directions for change and diminish the need for multiple perspectives in making decisions. For example, in the online forum, Danielle puts forth questions to the community, asking, “is it possible for the neighborhood” parents to get involved and “push to institute change” at Emerson Elementary? In this query about whether more parental involvement is possible, she draws on competition metaphors by suggesting that parents must “push” for change. By utilizing this force metaphor of “push,” she implies that the parents must be the ones that make change happen and paints a picture that does not include other members in the community, including the principal, administrators, students, or teachers being part of leading this direction. In essence, her model for community change, couched within the competition metaphor, excludes the importance of other key perspectives.

In another online post, Faye invokes competition metaphors through a story of how she helped a school turn around so that she would have a Montessori option for her child. In her post, she explains “how parents can make a great school” and how “it was a group” of “mostly Salem parents that took Weber from the brink of closing to a really wonderful public school option.” She continues, “all neighborhood schools should be good schools. But as they're not, parents have to make it happen.” Her story presents a clear lesson - that for schools to turn around, *parents must make it happen* and the metaphors imply that parents must be the ones responsible to have the right solutions and directions for school improvement and change. That is, if a school is wrong, then parents have to be the

ones that make it right. Thus, within these discussions, metaphors are prevalent within the mom's discourse and work to elevate certain perspectives. Indeed, competition metaphors, in this instance, tend to narrow public deliberation because they limit who is permitted to have the "right" solution. The metaphors not only work to paint certain pictures that revolve around key features, but they also affect the way the community understands past lessons.

Framing Community Efforts in the Past

In the Salem Kids Group, the moms' use of metaphors serve as a lens by which they view past efforts of the community to make change, and this lens acts as a rhetorical prism by which they comprehend past lessons. For instance, because competition metaphors emphasize the importance of hard work, the value of team goals over selfish goals, the need for teams to "win," and the need for good leaders, these metaphors hold particular implications for how success is measured. For example, in the online Salem Kids Group discussion, several members comment on the changes made to Weber Elementary, another elementary school in the area. Faye posts online about the importance of parental involvement: "It was a group of us mostly Salem parents that took Weber from the brink of closing to a really wonderful public school Montessori option." She ends her story, stating, "there are more students on the current Weber wait list than there were students enrolled there ten years ago, which just goes to show families want this option." Faye's citation of current increased waitlists serves as measurable outcomes and evidence of the "rightness" of her strategy. That is, the competition metaphor privileges evidence that can "prove" something as "right" or "wrong." Further, Faye attributes the change at Weber Elementary to the parents who took it from the "brink of closing." Her focus on the team of parents who had success in turning around the school, conforms to the expectations of the competition metaphor. In essence, her portrait excludes the importance of others in the community, and focuses solely on the need for parents to "win" back a school. Bateson (1972/1955) explains the psychological role that frames play in encouraging listeners to perceive some information as more important or relevant than other information. Similarly, the use of these metaphors to structure her story demonstrates the ways in which frames can have powerful effects on shared community learning and the means by which these community lessons and successes are communicated and shared with others in the community.

Similarly, Barbara, in a face-to-face meeting, also relays the same story of how parents took Weber Elementary, a failing school, to one that many parents now choose. She recounts that a group of parents in Salem "petitioned the District" for an all Montessori school. She explains, "The principal that was there at the time, and a lot of the staff, were not down with Montessori or the change. In fact, a lot of them left." In essence, in this story, if a community member does not agree with the direction the parents feel is right, then they are driven out or leave the community. Barbara's lessons are clear – that petitioning the District and parents working for what they believe is right even if the staff and principal are not on board has made positive changes. She next explains that the parents finally found

a principal “four years ago” who is “fantastic.” In this perspective, leaders who are “fantastic” are on board with the “right” perspectives, or in this case, the parents’ perspectives.

Next, Barbara explains that though, in this instance, the parents made change from outside of the school, that typically schools start “from this inside” and that there is “a bit of a coup.” Here, we see Barbara speak to the lessons that parents have had to form “coups” in the past to affect change, relaying a lesson of competition to the women in the meeting. “Coups,” generally defined, happen when militaries gets rid of the properly appointed executive. Coups are take-overs and are fundamentally antidemocratic processes. If we look at the example of Weber Elementary, for instance, the principal and staff left because they did not agree with the parents’ direction. So in this narrative, anyone who does not agree with the parents’ goals is driven out of the community entirely. In other words, these metaphors, in this case, has a limiting affect on public deliberation because anyone who doesn’t agree with the parents is viewed as having an unworthy perspective in the decision-making.

Competition Frameworks

When community actors engage in decision-making together, they ultimately must decide on directions for action. When community members choose to draw upon competition metaphors to frame solutions for action, they set the parameters in three important ways. First, competition metaphors frame leadership as a critical component of discussions about solutions. That is, within this metaphor cluster’s guidelines, the leader is expected to have the most experience and knowledge, and therefore, whether their leadership is positive or negative is a reflection on their skill set. In this featured perspective, parents should work as hard as they can, but ultimately the leaders are supposed to know better. Thus, if the leader is found to be incompetent, competition metaphors privilege frames that revolve around concerns about leadership. If a leader gets a community to a wrong place, then the solution is to replace the leader with one that is more competent (as opposed to other possible solutions such as inviting more perspectives to the table that might be missing). Second, because of the importance placed on leadership for a team, competition metaphors lend themselves to hierarchical solutions. In essence, in discussing solutions, those using competition metaphors to understand choices for action tend to focus on who is in charge to make decisions for the direction of the group. As such, frames for solutions generally include “chains of command” and consist of spoken or unspoken team rules about how these chains should be followed. Finally, competition metaphors emphasize the importance of “right” solutions and “wrong” solutions (see appendix 4). Within the framework of the competition metaphor, “right” and “wrong” directions are privileged. In essence, a team or a group is best suited to “win” if it heads in the right directions.

Solutions, framed competition metaphors, are prevalent in the Salem Kids group discussions. For instance, in an online post, Gretchen comments on some of the

parents' suggestions that the Emerson principal is responsible for holding the school back in past efforts to turn the school around. She recommends, "perhaps some of the parents/volunteers with experience at the school should share it with a higher up at SISD (Salem Independent School District)? If the principal is holding the school back, perhaps it's time to find someone like Dr. Schmidt instead?" The principal is positioned in this discussion as working in the wrong direction by "holding the school back" and working against what is good for this group's interest. Thus, Gretchen conforms to the parameters set by the metaphor by recommending the community follow the chain of command in their work for his removal.

Similarly, in another post, Quinn evaluates the Emerson principal's leadership negatively due to his failure to "capitalize" on the "efforts" of "neighborhood parents." She explains, "It's pretty clear to me that he's an obstacle to success at Emerson. I guess endless test prep is enough to get the school's scores up, and keep his job security." Quinn measures the performance of the school leader negatively because he seems concerned with personal goals and not team goals and has not served as a leader for the community parents. She next asks if anyone knows the Chief School Officer at Emerson Elementary. She also comments: "I wonder if he is aware of the principal's shortcomings, and if he would be open to get involved in encouraging the principal to ramp it up, or move along." Here, Quinn emphasizes the principal's shortcomings, the need for him to be held accountable and frames the solutions for the community as his either needing to put in more effort and hard work or for him needing to leave.

Finally, Quinn frames action in line with the competition metaphor, "What about a petition indicating the community's vote of 'no confidence' in the leadership of Emerson's current principal?" Again, the team must "vote" together for the removal of incompetent leaders, a move that is in line with the rules of the game, which privileges following team goals. She notes: "He needs to be held responsible for the mass exodus of kids transferring away from Emerson, and not just the test scores of his students, who've evidently endured way too much test prep at the expense of actual learning?" Quinn draws upon the competition metaphors of "mass exodus of kids transferring," which paints a warlike picture of the principal as the enemy. Further, Quinn suggests that the evidence of a "mass exodus" supports that children are not doing any "actual learning" at the expense of the principal's need to increase school test scores. In essence, Quinn's use of the competition metaphor elevates the "vote" of the parents in the chain of command one must follow to have a leader removed. Her solution emphasizes holding bad leaders accountable for not being responsive to their teams. And finally, her framing assumes right and wrong – and therefore a need to elevate those people with the right ideas and to exclude those people with the wrong ideas.

In another post, Gabrielle draws on the competition metaphor to query about the "process/chances of a getting a new principal?" In her question, Gabrielle calls on

others to explain the unspoken rules that must be followed in the chain of command that is followed for change. Here, the competition metaphor creates a framework whereby rules are an expected part of the “game.” Similarly, in another post, Quinn, posts, “Did anyone ask Lisa Westman re: the possibility of reassigning Emerson's principal somewhere where he won't be an impediment to his school, and, more importantly, to the children who go there? They deserve better.” Again, this participant is querying if anyone has followed the chain of command in an attempt to have the principal removed. The discussion to remove the principal clearly marks an “us” versus “them,” creating a situation whereby either the principal wins by getting to stay as Emerson's leader or the parents win by having the principal removed. In essence, it's a zero sum game that encourages a power struggle. Furthermore, the parents' discussion of solutions highlights a perceived trade-off between getting the school test scores up and actual learning. In a sense, there is a perceived different sense of what it means to win within this community. On one hand, the principal sees the team as winning when the schools scores go up and, on the other hand, the parents see the school as winning when there is actual learning going on. In essence, there are incompatible visions for judging success in this community. Most striking, is the narrowing affect the competition metaphors have for public deliberation, as actors within the community are not able to engage in mutual learning in their decision-making and instead must compete to have their solution advanced for the community.

Cooperation Metaphor Cluster in the Salem Kids Group

The second metaphor cluster that was prevalent in the online and face-to-face discussions is that of cooperation. Cooperation metaphors, as Morgan suggests, also involve “two entities and a goal, but in this model the entities choose to work together to gain the goal” (2013, p. 36). Cooperation metaphor clusters include words that connote, for example, helping, understanding, openness, or courtship (see appendix 1). Cooperation metaphors emphasize certain perspectives that emphasizes the importance of friends, helpfulness, open-mindedness, understanding, and working cooperatively to affect change (see appendix 2). Conversational moves might include such actions as using perspective to empathize with other individuals or groups, acknowledging another perspective to demonstrate your understanding, or defining another individual as cooperative or uncooperative (see appendix 3 for further detail). Illustrations of these features can be found in the mom's online and face-to-face discussions.

Key Perspectives Highlighted by Cooperation Metaphors

In the online and face-to-face discussions, the parents of the Salem Kids Group also draw upon metaphor clusters of cooperation to talk about how they want to create difference, and in this everyday speech, key perspectives arise. In their use of the cooperation metaphors, actors highlight the values of open-mindedness, working together in a helpful manner, and working to understanding others. For example, Olivia comments in a face-to-face meeting, “And short-term goals, going back to that, I would like to see a lot of parents go tour in the hall.”

Agreement is heard as Olivia reminds the group, “because other people that were part of the group two or three years ago said – I mean, they were against it [trying to cooperate with the principal]. And I understand the cynicism, because they did – they put a lot of work into it.” Gabrielle agrees and Olivia continues, “But they also – people need to go and look at the school with an open mind. And I think that’s what we did ...” Here, Olivia enacts understanding by indicating that she understands why others were against trying to work cooperatively with the principal. Furthermore, Olivia emphasizes the importance of open-mindedness by insisting that other parents “need to go and look at the school with an open mind.” Drawing on values of open-mindedness and understanding, Olivia’s comments mark a notable tension going on in this group. On one hand, there is a group of people who are more interested in a confrontation with the principal as a means to make social change and, in another group, they are arguing for cooperation. Interesting to note, however, is the subtle “we” versus “them” that happens when Olivia notes that they toured the group with an open mind and that others also need to do this who have not. In essence, just as pronouns have been found to create exclusionary groups in other studies (Black, 2009), Olivia’s use of the pronoun “they” creates an “othering” effect. “Othering,” of course, delegitimizes those in deliberation who do not conform to the “cooperative” model and limits the capacity for more democratic discussions.

Framing the Community Efforts of the Past

In addition to featuring key perspectives, the metaphor of cooperation is also used to evaluate and understand the lessons of the community’s past efforts improving neighborhood schools. In fact, the metaphor of cooperation, much like the metaphor of competition, holds particular implications for how successful or unsuccessful efforts are measured. In particular, successful efforts are measured by how cooperative a person is with others and how willing individuals within groups are willing to work together to share their resources. Conversely, unsuccessful efforts are measured by a lack of motivation or cooperation by one of the entities. For instance, Barbara replies online to another discussion participant who suggests that the group should try and reach out again to the principal, “This group that you are referring to is the SECOND group to reach out to him. I was a part of a small group that met with him about 6 years ago at Virginia Jin’s house.” Barbara explains that the group has tried to cooperate several times to no avail and that they therefore need to take different action. In essence, she uses the cooperation metaphor to define the principal as uncooperative and to exclude him as an important actor who can help with change.

In the face-to-face meeting, the metaphor of cooperation also frames the perceived success of past efforts. Barbara relays her story of meeting with the Emerson principal and other neighborhood parents and her past efforts to help Emerson, “I had a big meeting with the principal ... And it just sort of didn’t really go anywhere. And it wasn’t for lack of trying by the group. It just was a lack of interest from the school. I think there were a lot of attempts made to get

more involved, and they were not welcomed.” Again, Barbara’s rendering of past efforts relies on the cooperative metaphor as she recognizes that both the parents and the principal had resources they needed to share. She recounts how the parents attempted to offer their resources, but that their help and time were not “welcomed.” In essence, the group tried to make change, but the “school” lacked “interest” and the efforts failed because the school did not cooperate. Again, Barbara positions “the school” as uncooperative and in so doing shares a lesson with the group that Emerson is an unworthy venture of their time and energy.

In response to Barbara, Gretchen interrupts with a question:

... a lot of the comments that were made by the second group was that Mr. Hamrick said, "Yes, come in, but the school doesn't have any resources to give you." And they were frustrated because the school wouldn't back them up with any kind of financial or staff support. Does that sound right? Is that what everybody else read into that?

Here, we see Gretchen utilize the metaphor of cooperation to judge past efforts, but she introduces a different standard by which the community might judge cooperation. She points out that the principal did, in fact, *cooperate* because he welcomed the group to come into his school. Rather, she contends, the parents were frustrated because the principal did not “back them up” with any financial resources.

Gretchen continues speaking to Barbara about her belief that “progress has been made” since she last checked it out, but that her “thought process” is that, “we know now the school does not have any resources to give. ... I think that's a really high expectation to have for the school. It's extremely unrealistic.” Gretchen, different than Barbara’s rendering, argues that past effort have indeed been successful as progress had been made. Rather, she notes that parents held “unrealistic” expectations as the principal simply did not have the resources to give the parents the support they needed. After Gretchen’s comment, several women affirm her understanding of past efforts. For example, Xavia comments, “Yeah. And that, I think, is important to know, because that shapes our perspective on how we approach it.” Xavia acknowledges that how they move forward and understand past efforts is critical because they shape future relationships with the school. Further, this community group’s face-to-face discussion that parents in past attempts held unrealistic expectations is notable as it shows how the cooperation metaphor cluster allows for multiple interpretations within its parameters and demonstrates the means by which different community members compete for valid interpretations of community wisdom. In other words, the cooperation metaphor, while not constraining a number of interpretations, *does* constrain the parameters of the discussion. Such narrowing makes processes focused on democracy and tolerance for difference much more difficult.

Cooperation Frameworks

The Salem Kids Group is not only illustrative of the ways that cooperation metaphors help community actors understand past lessons, but its demonstrative of the means by which metaphors frame understandings of possible actions. Solutions within its framework hinge upon trying to work with others and trying to understand other people's perspectives. However, much like the competition metaphor, the cooperative metaphor frames entities, groups, and actors as distinct units in this model of change (see appendix 4 and 5).

Danielle, in an online post, gives one of the clearest examples of how the use of the cooperation metaphor works to set the parameters for community action. In her reply to an online participant interested in working to remove the principal, she contends: "I think your ideas are great but I do have a concern about getting the neighborhood ramped up to oust the principal right now." Danielle demonstrates understanding by affirming that the participants' ideas are great, but then utilizes the word, "oust," rife with its competitive, military connotations, to take issue with the solutions being framed in the competition metaphor. Instead, she proffers a cooperative metaphor: "From my understanding it has been a few years since any attempts at improving the school have been made, I think it would help the cause if a group once more extended its hand to the principal in an effort to get him on board for change." By asking the group to extend "its hand" she utilizes a cooperative metaphor and thereby presents a different frame for the group to consider action. She next reasons: "If he still doesn't seem interested (which sadly seems the case) then I would move forward with a neighborhood movement and petitions, contact the school board and such." Danielle, affirms the experiences of the group members who see solutions wrapped in the competitive metaphor, such as petitioning and following a chain of command, and demonstrates her understanding, even her agreement, with the metaphor as a long-term strategy. In essence, she acknowledges that it may be that group needs to frame the community solutions in a more competitive way, but that for now she thinks the group needs to remain cooperative. She contends that trying to cooperate with the principal first is a smart move, otherwise "he might have a leg to stand on if the neighborhood started asking for his head" but "not made a recent effort to get him involved." Using phrases such as "asking for his head," Danielle sets up the contrasting competition trope to the cooperation metaphor she is advocating. Notably, she does not argue that cooperation is better than competition or that those who seek confrontation are wrong, but rather, that cooperation should come *before* competition. By framing the need for cooperation *before* competition rather than instead of cooperation, she effectively navigates the two metaphors competing for legitimacy in the online discussion *without* telling any of the participants that their ideas are wrong solution. Notably, Danielle's conversational move also illustrates the ease with which the cooperation metaphor can switch to the competition metaphor. That is, if someone will not cooperate, then one must find a different strategy, often a more competitive one, in order to affect change.

Danielle next suggests *future action* for the community to “talk to those who have worked on this before, find out what they have done, talk to parents who have changed their schools, then gather the names of those who are interested in getting involved and go from here.” Here, she demonstrates a willingness to get “involved” with the school, but her solution still largely rests on recommending that the group talk to and find community parents that will cooperate with the other entity (Emerson Elementary School). While ultimately discussion between the parents and the school will be needed, her comments demonstrate the ways in which the groups are seen as separate entities within the framework of the cooperation metaphor. Her concluding remarks affirm this notion when she suggests, “starting a new Big Tent forum for Emerson” is a “good start.” In essence, she recommends that the parents create a private space where only parents can talk about improving the school (see appendix 3). Thus, her suggestions for action conform nicely with the parameters defined by the cooperation metaphor, because they hinge on understanding and working with others, but also frame groups as separate entities (see appendix 5). While sometimes it may be the desired goal to have groups defined separately, in many instances it may have the same unintended consequence of the competition metaphor of ultimately pitting groups against each other when one side or both sides finds the other uncooperative. In essence, cooperation metaphors can move the deliberation away from a more connected understanding of an issue to a framing about choosing to work or not work with the other.

Connection Metaphor Cluster in the Salem Kids Group

The third metaphor cluster, connection, is prevalent in the online and face-to-face discussions. Connection metaphors are word groups that suggest interdependence. Morgan (2013) suggests that what makes the connection metaphor cluster unique:

... is the sense of *equality* that is *built into it*. All of the subparts, no matter how similar or distinct are equally important to the stability or function of the system. Remove one part and the system fails: it comes apart, or it stops working. That equality of parts that form the whole is the basic form or idea of this metaphor family.

These metaphors, different from the competition and cooperation metaphors, focus on the interdependence of an “ecological” system, where the whole is much greater than the individual parts – and all of the parts are seen as necessary to create the whole (Capra, 1996). Connection cluster metaphors draw upon words that emphasize systems, such as community, living creatures, natural objects/events, or constructed objects (see appendix 1). Conversational moves within this metaphorical frame might include actions such as using perspective taking to show how others are all connected and part of a solutions, using expertise along with other perspectives, to collaborate about possible directions for change, or welcoming communication within affinity groups, but also

encouraging cross communication between affinity groups that encourages more connected thinking and planning (See Appendix 3 for further detail).

Connection metaphors, better than competition or cooperation, are better at embracing different metaphors. Makau and Marty (2013) explain the connection metaphor's uniqueness, noting that connection metaphors can interact with the "messages framed by competition and cooperation, with equal regard." They continue, "in contrast to the argument culture's cynicism, connection metaphors give greater weight to constructive information, to the possibilities of integrating self and communal interest" (p. 36). Connection metaphors emphasize perspectives that center on the importance of interdependence, perspective-taking, and community. Illustrations of these features can be found in the mom's online and face-to-face discussions (see appendix 2).

Key Perspectives Highlighted by Connection Metaphors

In the online and face-to-face discussions, the moms utilize the connection metaphor cluster to talk about how they want to go about change, and in so doing, key perspectives arise. In particular, these community members highlight the values of interdependence, community, multiple perspectives, and working with difference (see appendix 2). In the online deliberation, for example, Xavia points to key perspectives highlighted by the connection metaphors when she states to the group, "it's so important to have that neighborhood school for other families, but also for the current families, too." Xavia reminds people that they are not just working on behalf of their group but on behalf of all groups. She continues, "because ... we're living here; this is the community. I mean, you could stay in your house, but this is your community. Your kids end up walking down the streets with them." Xavia draws on the metaphor of community and paints pictures with her words of neighborhoods filled with houses that are connected by streets that *everybody* walks. She ends her comments, "... it's a trite example, but do you want them being in school being engaged, or do you want them wandering the streets, you know?" Xavia suggests the need for engaging schools for all families, including the families that currently attend Emerson Elementary School. She argues that schools need to be good for everyone because it makes a better community for everyone. In the rendering of her argument, she draws on the notion that people – all people in their neighborhood – are connected and need to be engaged for the good of everyone. In essence, she appeals to values of both individualism and community in her assertion that both are inextricably linked.

In another online post, Olivia draws upon connection metaphors and endorses the community transforming the school not only for those who have choices like private schools, but also for "the kids who don't have other choices." She argues for her plan by demonstrating its practicality through enumeration of other examples in the community that have been transformed. She writes:

I would LOVE to see another neighborhood school make the transformation that we've seen at Yale and DuBois!! In my

opinion, Rogers is on its way (I am really impressed with the parent involvement and motivation there), and Lakely and Emerson - provided the schools' administrations can be motivated too - could turn the corner as well. This neighborhood just seems to have that right mix of intrinsic enthusiasm, and parent interest in education and community, to inspire this GROWTH.

Olivia points to a number of neighborhood examples that have been transformed as reason that more can also be transformed. Olivia stays within the parameters of the connection metaphor by framing the school administration and the principal as important actors, who need *motivating* not removing and thereby constrains her solutions for community action to rest within the connection metaphor (see appendix 3 and 4).

Finally, during the face-to-face meeting, the women, after much deliberation, agree that the parents of the first and second wave of efforts at Emerson Elementary have been unrealistic in their expectations of the Emerson principal. And as such, they begin to discuss the ways in which they want to work with the school going forward. Xavia asks a question about the groups' approach to change, "You know, are we approaching it as part of the community? Or are we approaching it as, 'Okay, we are the parents and this is what we expect and demand.' And that, you know, I guess would shape our relationship." Xavia asks this question – but it's clearly rhetorical – and she is making an argument that they need to, in fact, approach change as being part of a community instead of coming in as a separate group with their own expectations (a feature of the competition metaphor). In essence, she depicts their relationships with each other as interdependent, while acknowledging other metaphors by which to view this relationship. She then turns to Barbara, who had just relayed a more negative rendering of her experience working with the principal, and states: "And I think in talking and doing the tour, it made me think, you know, Mr. Hamrick started seven years ago, and you're experience at that time -- I think probably what you experienced was appropriate, or what you encountered." Xavia not only acknowledges Barbara's different perspective in this conversation, but she gives it legitimacy. She then continues by taking the perspective of Mr. Hamrick:

But I think with him coming in, he came in as the principal after someone being there for 30 years. So, after 30 years, coming in, maybe his first two years, he was still looking around, figuring out what's going on --who is who, who's -- you know, what's teaching, what's going on. So I think he probably didn't have the capacity at that point to even [deal] with an outside group, even though it's supportive. So I think with him saying -- you know, this year they've gotten seven new teachers. He's started to clean house and - -I found that to be great.

Xavia next reminds the group that when the principal took over seven years ago he was following a principal that had been at Emerson for 30 years and that the principal needed time to figure out the school and the culture. In essence, Xavia utilizes perspective taking, an important feature of the connection metaphor, and expands the interpretations of the community narratives that place the principal in the role of an uncooperative antagonist. This particular dialogue demonstrates how perspective-taking works within the framework of the connection metaphor and is an important strategy for communities who are faced with the alternative metaphors of competition and cooperation. Ultimately, the use of the connection metaphor to help facilitate the group's ability to see the challenges that the principal faced in the past works to reorient them to a more connected, ecological framing of the issues at hand (see Capra, 1996). Indeed, connection metaphors certainly, in this case, widen the opportunities for deliberation with their emphasis on embracing both values of individualism and community, their focus on inclusive processes, their privileging of frames of interdependence, and their encouragement of perspective taking.

Framing Community Efforts in the Past

In addition to the key elements of the connection metaphor, it behooves a critic to consider these metaphors as a lens by which community members understand the lessons of past community efforts. Connection metaphors emphasize certain aspects of success, like agendas developed by the whole community and long-term relationships and energy for sustained, systemic change (see appendix 3). For instance, Gretchen discusses her lessons from past efforts in the community in the face-to-face meeting:

And a big part of what derailed a lot of community involvement at Love was – to go back to the issue of race – a bunch of white parents went in and said to the mostly non-white PTO, “Here we are. We’re going to save your school.” And they were like. . .
“So.”

Gretchen shares a community lesson about failed efforts in the past that involved identity groups that formed around race and identity as well as people coming in with their own agenda as opposed to seeing themselves as one entity. Additionally, Gretchen posits, “I think that we should -- instead of even asking the school, “What do you need?” we should ask the -- we should start with the PTO ... and say, “What do you need?” Right here, the women demonstrate a desire to work as one collective whole instead of two separate parent organizations. Xavia agrees, “Yeah. Because I think -- this is a long-term relationship, and also we want to have the energy and the drive and the time.” Xavia cites the benefits of many people working on behalf of the community, which include more energy and drive to be successful with change (see appendix 5). The women agree and she continues, “We really have to figure out, ‘Okay, who is there? Who is involved? And who can we work with and have that cooperative relationship?’” Xavia continues, “I mean ... the PTO might even say,

"You know what? We've really been wanting to do a fundraiser for A, but we don't have the manpower." And she concludes, "You know, I think that's better than riding in on our white horses." Using words like "Riding in on our white horses," Xavia warns of creating a paternalistic courtship. Again, one of the unique features of the connection metaphor is that it tends to embrace the cooperative and competitive metaphors more easily, so we hear elements in this speech about figuring out ways to have a "cooperative relationship" with the existing PTO, which privileges both seeing the PTO as a parent group that cooperates with the school, but also seeing all people as one entity that need to work for the good of school change. Communication processes that emphasize the importance of relationships and inclusiveness offer wider possibilities for public deliberation.

Connection Frameworks

The Salem Kids Group not only illustrates the role of connection metaphors in facilitating community members' understanding of past lessons learned, but an analysis of this groups' conversation also serves to illustrate how connection metaphors work to frame possible actions for a community. Solutions within the framework of a connection metaphor impinge on seeing all members as one entity, continuous and two-way communication, and focusing on change as an interconnected system, which often holds positive aspects that can be built upon (see appendix 4). For instance, in an exchange between several mothers, they reinforce the importance of working with the PTO in their discussion of solutions and action goals. Xavia states, "an overarching goal that I think starting off with - you know, we can work with the PTO, do a book drive or a fundraising event for the school year." And Gretchen follows, "We don't need to be two different entities ... basically we need to join a PTO." And Xavia follows, "[the parents currently at Emerson Elementary School] have been at the school and they have an idea of what their needs might be." In essence, these ladies discuss the notion that they should not be a separate group from the current PTO that is in place at Emerson Elementary, nor should they come in with their own agenda. Rather, they comment on the need for all of the parents to be connected and to assume a communication strategy that reflects this type of wholeness.

Next, the women draw upon connection metaphors as they discuss the need for focusing on the positive aspects of Emerson they can build upon. Andrea states, for instance, "... so if there are things that they [Emerson Elementary School] did have that we can maybe talk about?" With her question, Andrea focuses the conversation on the positive attributes about the school that they can build upon. In fact, during this discussion, the parents come to common ground that one of the problems they can fix is the neighborhood's perception of Emerson. For instance, after Barbara speaks awhile about the programs at Weber Elementary, Gretchen remarks:

The thing that's shocking to me, or whirling around in my head, is that it [Weber's program] sounds so much like Recipe for Success

[at Emerson]. So here's Weber, a highly coveted school. Here's Emerson, where no one will go. We both have Writers in the Schools. We both have a SPARK park, although yours has recently been redone. We both have these food/nutrition/garden programs.

Gretchen demonstrates listening by acknowledging the programs that Barbara has discussed, but she also focuses on the similarities between the school programs instead of the differences – and thus focuses on their connectedness. Olivia agrees, “it goes back to the public opinion,” and Gabrielle concurs, “yes – public opinion.” Gretchen confirms, “Yes, perception versus the reality of what the school is.” The women deduce that the community has not been focused on the positive aspects of what Emerson offers and therefore Emerson is experiencing a perception problem. In essence, by deemphasizing differences between Weber kids and Emerson kids and instead focusing the need for better public perception, they frame the issue as being part of a larger community that may need to collaborate together in order to connect.

As such, they further discuss their need to really focus on “trying to grow those programs outside of testing.” Words such as “grow” are connection metaphors because they compare the programs to living things or systems that needs nurturing and tending to by the community. The mothers also draw upon other connection metaphors, such as “building” metaphors, when they talk about how they can “build up these programs.” Such metaphors feature strength and privilege the program as a connected and whole structure. Further, they note their inability to affect change around the testing culture but they can “do some marketing and change people's perception so we can start getting some of our kids in there and kind of just get it going.” Andrea comments, “I mean, these were the things, the glitzy things [the good programs] that we could show people.” Andrea focuses on the positive aspects of Emerson they can show people to help change their perspective. She continues, “They'd go to tours and say, ‘Okay.’ You know, the test scores are there, and that's what they're going to notice. But what they're going to see also is all these other outside” Olivia finishes her sentence, “the culture.” Olivia draws upon another connection metaphor, “culture,” emphasizing all of the many interconnected aspects of a school's environment that transcends a more simplistic focus on test scores alone.

Gretchen comments more about dealing with the negative perception at Emerson, “we're sort of looking to see what are parents looking at when we consider a school. We can think of ideas and then sort of try to focus on how does that fit in with Emerson and what we can do....” Gretchen recognizes the importance of two-way communication in her model of change. Olivia follows with a suggestion for how to “really get neighborhood parents” to consider Emerson, “I was thinking about maybe just doing an online survey, like throwing out some different ideas and like, ‘What would it take for you to look at this school?’” As such, Olivia suggests the need for community input. In essence, the conversation becomes not so much about how do we change what is going on in the school, but rather it becomes how do we communicate what is already going on that is good

in our schools. The focus is on how we get parents to take advantage of the programs that are already in place. The mothers talk about ways to draw parents in – to create connection between parents and their neighborhood school. In any of these larger connected systems, of course, there will be inputs and outputs, but also feedback loops. And so, these types of connection metaphors move the conception of change to an ecosystem approach, or an emphasis on building community. If the discussions for change slowly mutate into only discussions and actions around one-way marketing, then the connection metaphors tend to dissolve. However, conversations that continue focus and action on drawing on community and building up the school will remain squarely in the terrain of the connection metaphor. Deliberative community problem solving impinges on inclusive processes that recognize the importance of all members of a community. When individuals draw on these connection clusters, they often widen public deliberation by emphasizing the role of feedback loops in two-way communication and the need for growing and building on what works.

Implications for Deliberative Theory and Practice

The Salem Kids Group is illustrative of the means by which different community members attempted to attain validity by invoking various language strategies in their effort to solve a “wicked problem.” Metaphors offer frameworks that influence community change discussions and deliberations. If one is judging the success of past efforts using the competition metaphor, then our talk might center on whether parents succeeded in turning a school around. If, however, we are judging past efforts using the cooperation metaphor, then the discussion might focus on how we define cooperation and whether others are being cooperative. For instance, is the principal cooperating by letting parents meet at school, but not offering money? Is it reasonable to expect the principal to offer money if there is not a lot of available resources? Metaphors, in essence, frame the parameters of the discussion and therefore have implications for deliberation in everyday speech.

When diverse groups of people come together to deliberate, rarely will all participants draw from only one metaphor cluster. Rather, as is in the case of the Salem Kids Group, all three metaphors will compete for validity. Competition, cooperation, and connection metaphor clusters all highlight different perspectives. An analysis of the discourse of the Salem Kids Groups demonstrates the ways in which different metaphors bring different frames to a discussion and the means by which these frames interact. Competition and Cooperation metaphors, of the three, offer more limited frameworks for public deliberation. Competition metaphors always has a winner, but also more importantly a loser – and therefore denies important community members for full decision-making. The competition metaphor tends to emphasize failures more than the other two metaphors because its evaluation in terms of winning and losing. The cooperation metaphor may be better with its emphasis on understanding and listening, but the way it excludes and includes by labeling members as “uncooperative” is a different kind of

“othering” and is problematic. When we “other” a group, we point to their weaknesses or order to make ourselves appear better. In so doing, we create a hierarchy of legitimacy that takes away from a more democratic and shared decision making process. Furthermore, in the case of the Salem Kids Group, these metaphors can sometimes be viewed as interchangeable – where if one “approach” does not work, the other trope is invoked. For example, some individuals may perceive that they have tried cooperation as a strategy in the past and felt it didn’t go very well so they must now try competition. Again, these limited options for working with others offers narrow possibilities for more democratic and shared decision making. However, while these two metaphors offer more limited approaches, the third metaphor of connection offers a more pluralistic framework for community action.

The connection metaphors are ideal for public deliberation because they emphasize interdependence of the system, allow for growth, and tend to be less paternalistic and more inclusive of difference and multiple perspectives, including cooperative and competitive metaphor clusters. Further, they move us away from metaphors that tend to group people up and construct them as different from another group. Indeed, other scholars have alluded to the need for this type of connection metaphor. In his work on the use of metaphors during the Cold War, Ivie argues the need for some kind of “symbiosis” metaphor that encourages both a sense of “stewardship” and a legitimization of “collaboration between antagonists” (1987, p. 181). Similarly, Aiken contends that “nonadversarial metaphors” are “fitting complements” to more adversarial tropes (2011, p. 270). In essence, the Salem Kids Group’s use of the connection metaphor offers an exemplar case study of the symbiotic qualities that others have deemed critical. Furthermore, traditional modes of communication have been described a “paternalistic” (Scott, 1991, p. 201) as individuals engaged in communication often adopt a “let me help you, let me enlighten you, let show you’re the way’ approach” (Gearhart, 1979, p. 195) rather than we’re all in this together. Connection metaphors offer possibilities for individuals who wish to create conversations that offer more possibilities for pluralism. One should note, however, that the connection metaphor takes a tremendous amount of cognitive, emotional, and physical resources to create the kind of communication system that keeps this metaphor in place, though it may also set up a type of system that allows for more energy and drive for long-term sustainability.

Connection metaphors are also ideal in the way they navigate community identities. As individuals employ and work within particular language frames, they create certain understandings of themselves as actors within their community. Black, for example, writes about the use of stories in the shaping of collective identities in deliberation, noting that different stories “put forth different images of how the group members were to each other” (2012, p. 26). Metaphors, in this way, work similarly to stories, invoking frames that peoples either identify with or reject. Social identities have particular implications when we see different metaphors working within the same community. As Kenneth

Burke reminds, any time we identify with the interests of another individual, we become substantially one with that other, or “consubstantial.” And yet, Burke explains the implications of identifying with others is “to confront the implications of division” (1969, p. 22). As such, the metaphors of cooperation and competition when used in the same community deliberation do have potential to create divisive identities for the community. For instance, in the case of the participants in the Salem Kids Group discussion, cooperation and competition metaphors got us at “us versus them” and tended to alienate competing or differing views. As Black confirms in her work about exclusive identity categories, they tend “to put the other deliberative group members into a group of ‘them’ or ‘you,’ rather than ‘us,’ which emphasized an adversarial conflict management approach that furthered divisiveness in the group” (2012, p. 76). Connection metaphors, on the other hand, often can get us to “we.” And Morgan comments, “If we see a society as based on ‘us vs. them’ or even as ‘working together,’ we miss the very real conditions of ‘we’re all in this together.’” (2008, p. 511). Indeed, our use of metaphors have implications for the qualities of our deliberations with others, as a selection of a trope impacts our perceptions about what is considered and what is possible as well as what is not considered and what is not possible.

Limitations and Future Directions

This study advances our knowledge of the role of metaphor in deliberation, which up to now has not been studied as an important concept in deliberation. This study contributes to the ways in which metaphors can both narrow and widen public deliberation. Furthermore, the study contributes to our understanding of the discursive practices that happen during deliberation, as opposed to measuring, for example, its effects. However, one should be cautious of this study’s limitations as the analysis took place in the context of one city, which limits its generalizability. Additionally, only individuals with technological access to the internet could participate in the online discussion, which may create a class difference in how deliberation and language strategies are enacted. Finally, the study was highly gendered, with all of the participants being women. In particular, women might deliberate differently than men in their use of competition, cooperation, and collaboration metaphors. Additional studies are needed on the role of metaphor in general and specifically on the competition, cooperation, and connection metaphors. Furthermore, because cooperation and competition metaphors are most likely more prevalent in individualistic cultures, more understanding of the ways in which connection metaphors are utilized in deliberative contexts is warranted.

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APPENDIX 1:

COMPETITION, COOPERATION, & CONNECTION METAPHOR CLUSTERS: EXAMPLES OF WORDS

COMPETITION METAPHOR CLUSTER	COOPERATION METAPHOR CLUSTER	CONNECTION METAPHOR CLUSTER
<i>Examples of Words</i>	<i>Examples of Words</i>	<i>Examples of Words</i>
<i>Military</i> (coup, war, bomb, defend, drill and kill, oust, mass exodus)	<i>Helping</i> (support, stewardship, extending a hand, reach out, join as manpower, combine brainpower)	<i>Community</i> (ecosystem, neighborhood, “our houses are connected by streets”)
<i>Sports</i> (defend, tackle, our team, team pride, gain points, score, work tirelessly, get the ball rolling, the thrill of the hunt, “ramp it up”)	<i>Understanding</i> (I see where they are coming from, I can see their point, I think what you are saying makes a lot of sense)	<i>Living creatures</i> (Plants (“Let’s grow the program”), Animals, People, Children (“the program is in its infancy”))
<i>Game</i> (throw a curve, play by the rules, thrill of the chase, we are ahead of the game, that will win us some points)	<i>Openness</i> (open mind, open heart, free from judgment)	<i>Natural objects/events:</i> Landforms and Bodies of Water; Weather (“we have good seasons and bad seasons”); and Days and Seasons
<i>Leadership</i> (lead, direct, take responsibility, vote of no confidence)	<i>Courtship</i> (embrace, riding in on a white horse, saving someone, flirting)	<i>Constructed objects:</i> Buildings (let’s “build” the program), Machines (“that child is really wound up”), Fabrics, including “Webs” and “Networks”
<i>Force</i> (petition, protest, push for change, make it happen, adversary)		

APPENDIX 2:

**COMPETITION, COOPERATION, & CONNECTION METAPHOR
CLUSTERS: PERSPECTIVES EMPHASIZED**

COMPETITION METAPHOR CLUSTER	COOPERATION METAPHOR CLUSTER	CONNECTION METAPHOR CLUSTER
<i>Perspectives Emphasized</i>	<i>Perspectives Emphasized</i>	<i>Perspectives Emphasized</i>
Emphasize perspectives of “right” and “wrong” ideas, people or groups over the need for multiple perspectives in decision making.	Emphasizes the importance of friends.	Emphasizes the value of interdependence.
Emphasize values of all players working hard to compete and win, perhaps for a common team goal over the need to work hard for one’s own personal goal.	Emphasizes the importance of helpfulness.	Emphasizes community.
Privilege the need for team leaders to guide and direct.	Emphasizes the importance of listening, open-mindedness, and understanding.	Emphasizes multiple perspectives.
Imply certain solutions for decisions, such as ones that emphasize accountability and removing or silencing people who are “wrong.”	Emphasize the importance of sharing resources to affect change.	Emphasizes working with difference.

APPENDIX 3:

COMPETITION, COOPERATION, & CONNECTION METAPHOR CLUSTERS: CONVERSATIONAL MOVES

COMPETITION METAPHOR CLUSTER	COOPERATION METAPHOR CLUSTER	CONNECTION METAPHOR CLUSTER
<i>Conversational Moves</i>	<i>Conversational Moves</i>	<i>Conversational Moves</i>
Use the experience of only your team members to inform your decision-making.	Use perspective taking to empathize with other individuals or groups.	Use anthropomorphism in order to give concepts or systems human traits in order to define “connectedness.”
Use expertise to “win” your case.	Acknowledge another person or groups’ point of view to demonstrate your understanding.	Acknowledge the legitimacy of another person’s different perspective
Ask for a vote to determine what the team believes is the “right” direction.	Define another individual as cooperative or uncooperative.	Use perspective taking to show how others are all connected and part of the solution.
Ask others about the process or rules that must be followed to accomplish a desired goal.	Offer to work, help, or join others.	Use expertise along with other perspectives to collaborate about possible directions for change.
Focus on what your group has achieved, and exclude what other groups did as well.	Form private communication spaces for affinity groups to develop agendas and to decide and strategize how to help other groups.	Welcome communication within affinity groups, but also encourage cross communication between affinity groups that encourages more connected thinking and planning.
Form and create identity groups that can “push” for solutions based on the agendas they determine in their own groups.	Advocate for motivating leaders or working with leaders as opposed to removing leaders.	Invite and encourage the whole community to develop and frame an agenda.

Use communication to encourage “right/wrong” thinking.		
Approach others with expectations		

**APPENDIX 4:
COMPETITION, COOPERATION, & CONNECTION METAPHOR
CLUSTERS: IMPLIED RANGES OF COMMUNICATIVE ACTION &
SOLUTIONS**

COMPETITION METAPHOR CLUSTER	COOPERATION METAPHOR CLUSTER	CONNECTION METAPHOR CLUSTER
<i>Implied Range of Communicative Action/ Solutions</i>	<i>Implied Range of Communicative Action/ Solutions</i>	<i>Implied Range of Communicative Action / Solutions</i>
Privilege hierarchical structures and follow the chain of command to air concerns and make changes.	Understand where another person or group is coming from.	Recognize the validity in all perspectives to change (competition, cooperation, and connectedness).
Expect leaders to have the most experience and skill and hold them accountable when they do not.	Try to share resources with other individuals or groups to work together for change.	Create communication systems that depend upon continuous feedback loops (input and output).
Remove a people or groups who are not “right.”	Motivate others to have open-mindedness about change	Build on areas that are working.
Talk to experts and authorities to determine the right course of action.	Join with others to make incremental changes.	Approach change as part of a community, instead of separate from a community.
Change areas that are not working.	Exclude individuals or groups who are uncooperative.	See all members of a community as connected.
Focus on identity groups with the “right” solutions and perspectives that can make changes. Identity groups come to diverse stakeholder meetings with their own formulated agenda.	Invest energy and resources with groups and individuals who are willing to cooperate.	Build upon what is working.
Create spaces for identity groups to speak with each other, without the voices of different stakeholder	Try to share resources with other individuals or groups to work together for change.	

groups present.		
Determine “right” and “wrong” directions for action by measuring successes and failures.	Consider whether our understandings of others as cooperative or uncooperative is realistic.	

**COMPETITION, COOPERATION, & CONNECTION METAPHOR
CLUSTERS: CONSEQUENCES**

COMPETITION METAPHOR CLUSTER	COOPERATION METAPHOR CLUSTER	CONNECTION METAPHOR CLUSTER
<i>Consequences</i>	<i>Consequences</i>	<i>Consequences</i>
Creates zero-sum games that encourage power struggles.	Members who are not perceived as cooperative are removed or silenced from the group.	The emphasis on time and communication in this model is resource-heavy.
Efficiently distributes power.	Easily slides to the competition metaphor if cooperation is deemed to have not worked.	Creates conditions that enable long-term relationships.
Frames individuals or groups as distinct “entities” or identities.	Can be viewed as paternalistic if the attitude is that the other person needs “helping” or “saving.”	Creates conditions that optimize energy and drive, which enables long-term, sustainable change.
	Frames individuals or groups as distinct “entities” or identities.	Tends to create ecological perspectives of communities’ sense of identity (“we”) instead of more polarized, distinct identities (“us” versus “them”).