

## ABSTRACT

KNEPPER II, PETER ALEXANDER. Does Racial/Ethnic Diversity, Racist Ideology, and Economic Hardship Shape Social Trust and Civic Engagement?: A Critique and Extension of Putnam's "Hunkering Down" Thesis. (Under the direction of Dr. Martha Crowley.)

The effects of increased racial/ethnic diversity and/or economic inequality on social trust and civic engagement have been tested countless times over the past twenty years. There is no established consensus on whether either of these societal trends is responsible for the observed declines in both concepts. Yet, Robert Putnam's claim that increased racial/ethnic diversity is reducing trust in neighbors, other racial/ethnic groups, and their own racial/ethnic group, and causing widespread downward trends for a plethora of civic engagement measures remains to be one of the most prominent arguments within the literature. Others have critiqued his theories and results by emphasizing other factors, like segregation, or showing that whites are alone in reporting this negative relationship. However, scholars have not addressed his use of unreported analyses in asserting these claims. He uses the 2000 Social Capital Community Benchmark Survey, matched to 2000 census-tract level data, to run a singular multilevel regression model confirming this negative relationship between increased racial/ethnic diversity and trust in neighbors. He only reports bivariate correlation analysis for the other two forms of trust he emphasizes, inter-race and intra-race trust, and provides no analyses for the civic engagement measures.

This study revisits this work by using the same data and replicating his one multilevel regression model and applying it to all of the measures he discussed. I then extend beyond replication by (1) running the same models for racial/ethnic subsamples to test for variation across different groups for the three forms of social trust mentioned above; (2) adding the percentage of Black and Hispanic populations to those four comparison subsamples to test for

whether the reaction is more in line with racist ideologies about minority groups in the US; (3) testing whether economic inequality is equally or more important in shaping civic engagement outcomes; and (4) moving beyond Putnam, and the general literature, to highlight the combined effects of racial and economic inequality in shaping social trust.

Findings confirm and contradict Putnam's original claims. Chapter 2 demonstrates that increased racial/ethnic diversity reduces both trust in neighbors and inter-race trust for the full sample, but it does not have a significant effect on intra-race trust. On further examination, white people are driving both of these negative trends. Furthermore, the proportion of Black Americans equally diminishes trust in neighbors, nullifies the effect of diversity on inter-race trust (along with percent of Hispanic population), and is the only negative indicator for intra-race trust among white people. Altogether, these results suggest that racist ideologies about Black people in particular are shaping social trust for whites, even though diversity generally speaking maintains some impact too. Chapter 3 provides mixed results for civic engagement measures as well since increased racial/ethnic diversity negatively impacts people's perceptions of their community, like lower levels of trust in local institutions and viewing their community as a bad place to live. However, broadly speaking, a person's community and political involvement, the number and quality of their relationships, or general well-being are not impacted by diversity at all. Chapter 4 builds on the previous analyses to further examine social trust among white people by simultaneously testing for the effects of racial/ethnic diversity, the percentage of Black people, and a handful of measures that account for both racial and economic inequality. The findings expose that higher rates of white male unemployment and Black poverty negatively impact social trust among whites, and that the effect is even stronger in contexts of higher diversity. However, the percentage of Black population consistently reduces social trust.

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The Combined Effects of Diversity and Economic Hardship on Social Trust and Civic Engagement: A Critique and Extension of Putnam's "Hunkering Down" Thesis.

by  
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## **BIOGRAPHY**

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

### Overview

Classical and contemporary theorists have characterized ties among individuals as foundational to societal well-being. Durkheim, in particular, regards interconnectedness and social cohesion as central to a functioning and productive society (Fenton, Reiner, and Hamnett 1984; Thompson 2004). Contemporary scholars likewise have investigated these phenomena, changes, and variations in community-level social capital – defined as the extent to which individuals trust each other, interact, and get involved in their local community (Coleman 1988; Putnam 2000; Jennings and Stoker 2004; van der Meer and Tolsma 2014). Trust and civic engagement, in turn, have been linked to positive outcomes for society, such as a vibrant civil society, healthy democracy, more volunteering, and higher levels of education and economic growth (Coleman 1988; Putnam 2000; Rupasingha, Goetz, and Freshwater 2000; Paxton 2002).

Scholars debate whether these forms of social capital are increasing or decreasing. Some analyses depict a loss of civic-mindedness and social cohesion during the twentieth century in the United States. Most notably, Robert Putnam's, *Bowling Alone* (2000), investigates changes in various forms of social capital among Americans between 1965 and 2000. He documents a decline in social trust, civic participation, religious involvement, volunteering, and informal social connections in the workplace and with friends and family – changes that he attributes to the aging of “civic” generations (those who experienced the Great Depression and WWII), the suburbanization process that transformed American communities, increased consumption of

television, and changes in work and the economy, such as longer work hours, the rise of dual-earning households, and aggregate economic distress.<sup>1</sup>

More recently, scholars have investigated other potential factors, including aggregate economic inequality (Alesina and La Ferrara 2002; Costa and Kahn 2003; Rothstein and Uslaner 2005; Uslaner and Brown 2005) and racial/ethnic diversity (Alesina and La Ferrara 2000; Alesina and La Ferrara 2002; Leigh 2006). Perhaps most notably, Robert Putnam (2007) argued in his Johan Skytte Prize lecture racial and ethnic diversity have eroded inter-racial, intra-racial, and generalized trust. His analysis of the 2000 Social Capital Community Benchmark Survey (SCCBS), linked to the 2000 Census of Population, provides support for these claims. Multilevel regression models demonstrate that heterogeneity is associated with reductions in generalized trust, controlling for individual- and aggregate-level measures, demographic attributes, and economic conditions such as poverty, income, Gini coefficient, and monthly work hours. Putnam further argues that heterogeneity causes individuals to distrust even members of their own race/ethnic group, withdraw from community life, and “hunker down” at home. He summarizes his conclusions as follows:

“Diversity does *not* produce ‘bad race relations’ or ethnically-defined group hostility, our findings suggest. Rather, inhabitants of diverse communities tend to withdraw from collective life, to distrust their neighbours, regardless of the colour of their skin, to withdraw even from close friends, to expect the worst from their community and their leaders, to volunteer less, give less to charity and work on community projects less often,

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<sup>1</sup> Some studies reach similar conclusions regarding declines in social capital (Jennings and Stoker 2004). Others, however, find that not all forms of social capital are in decline (see Paxton 1999; Clark 2014), or argue that the decline is more pronounced for women due to their increased labor force participation (Costa and Kahn 2003).

to register to vote less, make a difference, and to huddle unhappily in front of the television” (Putnam 2007: 150-151).

Although some of these claims are based on unreported analyses and bivariate correlations,<sup>2</sup> this work has been highly influential. The article based on Putnam’s work has been cited over 4,000 times and highlighted in arguments about diversity in the popular press. The conclusions are highly regarded and discussed because of his reputable history of examining social capital more generally in the US (e.g., *Bowling Alone*) and his status as one of the most notable social scientists of the past generation. The topic also gained traction in the literature due to the contentious debate surrounding immigration in American politics over the past couple of decades.

This heightened attention has served as a springboard for numerous other studies aimed at testing, extending, or critiquing Putnam’s arguments. Many studies confirm the negative association between racial and ethnic diversity and different forms of social capital (Leigh 2006; Laurence 2011; Rotolo and Wilson 2012; 2014; Gundelach and Traunmuller 2014; van der Meer and Tolsma 2014; Robinson 2016). More critical accounts, however, posit that this negative relationship is found only among whites, and that the presence or absence of co-ethnics is more important than racial/ethnic diversity generally speaking (Fieldhouse and Cutts 2010; Abascal and Baldassarri 2015). Some scholars have sought to illuminate the role of aggregate and individual economic conditions in explaining distrust and communal withdrawal. For example, studies find that economic inequality reduces volunteering, participation and membership in organizations, and social trust (Costa and Kahn 2003; Rothstein and Uslaner 2005; Uslaner and

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<sup>2</sup> He mentions that all measures of civic engagement are negatively correlated with racial/ethnic diversity, and that the same multilevel regression analyses were conducted with similar results. However, he does not provide any results of either of these analyses.

Brown 2005; Lancee and van de Werfhorst 2012). The negative effects of racial/ethnic diversity are weakened once aggregate-level poverty rates are added to the analysis, specifically for whites in the US (Fieldhouse and Cutts 2010). Others argue that individual labor status helps explain the shifts in civic engagement, such as a decline in community and political involvement stemming from long-term unemployment and shift work – particularly overnight and weekend shifts (Guigni and Lorenzini 2013; Cornwell and Warburton 2014). Conversely, labor market disadvantage can lead to more political involvement, like voting and supporting leftist parties (Emmenegger, Marx, and Schraff 2015).

Unfortunately, many of Putnam’s claims – especially those regarding more specific forms of trust (i.e., inter- and intra-race trust) and presumed behavioral manifestations of reductions in generalized trust (i.e., civic engagement or what he terms “hunkering down”) – have not been subjected to rigorous empirical examination, even in Putnam’s own research. While scholars have suggested that economic forces are at play in the relationship between heterogeneity and trust, and that Putnam’s claims are applicable mainly to whites, they have yet to attend to how the specific economic fortunes of different racial and ethnic groups account for or alter the relationship between heterogeneity and trust among whites. This dissertation fills these gaps with three articles that offer alternative theoretical frameworks and provide empirical evidence suggesting a need to discard some beliefs and refocus the discussion of heterogeneity and social trust in the US.

The first analysis (Chapter 2) critically examines Putnam’s (2007) claims by applying his model to all three forms of social trust (trust in neighbors, inter-race trust, and intra-race trust) and statistically testing for racial/ethnic variation across subsamples of whites, Blacks, Hispanics, and Asians. Moreover, I extend Putnam’s theoretical framework by incorporating

symbolic boundaries and group threat (adding the percentage of the local population that is Black and Hispanic to his models) to determine whether they account for shifts in trust. Results demonstrate that only whites become less trusting as a result of increased diversity, and the proportion of Blacks reduces whites' trust in neighbors, along with heterogeneity. Furthermore, intra-race trust among whites is no longer negatively associated with heterogeneity, yet it is reduced by the presence of Black Americans.

The second study (Chapter 3) assesses Putnam's (2007) model in relation to eighteen measures of civic engagement that he claimed (without offering statistical evidence) were eroded by racial/ethnic diversity. I examine outcomes in three distinct categories: 1) Perception of Community, 2) Political & Community Involvement, and 3) Relationships & Well-Being. I also examine whether economic inequality is more or equally as important since Putnam included the Gini coefficient in his original analysis. The models support Putnam's claim that racial/ethnic diversity diminishes individuals' assessments of the quality of their community, but they do not support his argument for weakening Political & Community Involvement or impeding one's Relationships & Well-Being. Moreover, economic inequality has no reported negative effect on any of the eighteen measures included in this analysis.

The last empirical examination (Chapter 4) moves beyond the work of Putnam and establishes the importance of a more nuanced understanding of economic circumstances of diverse racial groups in understanding the state of social trust in the United States. Instead of focusing on broad demographic and economic indicators (e.g., economic inequality) as prior studies have done, I investigate whether the effects of racial/ethnic diversity on trust among whites are conditioned by more specific circumstances of particular race/ethnic groups. Given findings from Chapter 2 (that Putnam's claims hold for whites but not other groups, and that



whites respond negatively to Black population shares), key variables include unemployment among both Black and white males as well as the poverty rates of Black and white individuals. Interaction terms with racial/ethnic diversity are created for each of these to test whether the observed negative effect of diversity among whites is greater in communities that have higher rates of male unemployment and poverty for Blacks and/or whites. Findings show that Black poverty and white male unemployment reduce all three forms of social trust in contexts of greater racial/ethnic diversity. Additionally, racial/ethnic diversity maintains a role in the overall trends, but again, the percentage of Black Americans proves to be more impactful.

## **Data and Methods**

The analyses presented in these three chapters draw from Putnam's data – the 2000 Social Capital Community Benchmark Survey (SCCBS). These data remain to be one of the most detailed datasets on social trust, despite being twenty years old. They are unique by measuring several forms of trust, including inter- and intra-race trust, that are not found in other sources. The sample size is also impressive since it consists of nearly 30,000 respondents from both a nationally representative sample (3,003) and subsamples of 41 US communities (26,730), ranging from large metropolitan areas like Chicago and Los Angeles to rural areas in South Dakota and West Virginia. Like Putnam (2007), I link the data to census-tract level data from the 2000 Census of Population. The census tract data are used to measure and/or compute the independent variables that he also used in his model as well as the additional aggregate-level economic conditions employed for the third research objective (all independent variables are discussed below).

Due to high levels of missingness in the data, multiple imputation methods are utilized in Stata. This step deviates from Putnam's (2007) original work, but offers a more robust analysis since the dataset contains a significant amount of missing values for many of the variables included in the model. I utilize the mi program in Stata and the multiple imputation by chained equations (MICE) method specifically, which provides the ability to use different forms of regression in computing the imputed values for binary and categorical variables (UCLA Institute for Digital Research & Education: Statistical Consulting). Using all of the variables included in the model, five imputed datasets were created to generate values for variables with higher rates of missingness.

The SCCBS data include multiple measures of trust and civic engagement as well as various demographic information for each respondent. Tables 1.1, 1.2, and 1.3 report variables, codes, and descriptive statistics for data used in each chapter. Following Putnam (2007) generalized trust is operationalized as *trust in neighbors* and is measured with a survey question asking, "How much you can trust people in your neighborhood," with the options of "trust them a lot," "trust them some," "trust them only a little," and "trust them not at all." The remaining trust variables are calculated from similar variables assessing trust in each racial/ethnic group (white, Black, Asian, and Hispanic). *Intra-race trust* is measured as trust in members of one's own racial/ethnic group, and *inter-race trust* is measured with an average of scores measuring trust in members of the three other racial/ethnic groups.

The civic engagement and behavioral dependent variables reflect concepts addressed in Putnam's (2007) analysis. There are 18 dependent variables analyzed in total, which I have broken up into three categories: Perception of Community, Political & Community Involvement, and Relationships & Well-Being. The Perception of Community category consists of six

variables. *Trust in local government* is constructed from the following question, “How much of the time do you think you can trust the local government to do what is right?” (1 = “Just about always,” 2 = “Most of the time,” 3 = “Some of the time,” 4 = “Hardly ever”). *Trust in local news* follows a similar format, and both have a scale of options for respondents to choose from (1 = “Trust them a lot,” 2 = “Trust them some,” 3 = “Trust them only a little,” 4 = “Trust them not at all”). The next variable in the table comes from an agreement statement posed to respondents, “The people running my community don’t really care much what happens to me.” (1 = “Agree strongly,” 2 = “Agree somewhat,” 3 = “Disagree somewhat,” 4 = “Disagree strongly”).<sup>3</sup> The *perceived impact* measure is another scale question, “Overall, how much impact do you think PEOPLE LIKE YOU can have in making your community a better place to live – 1 “No impact at all,” 2 = “A small impact,” 3 = “A moderate impact,” 4 = “A big impact?” The *cooperation* variable is based on the following question, “If public officials asked everyone to conserve water or electricity because of some emergency, how likely is it that people in your community would cooperate – would you say it is very unlikely (1), unlikely (2), likely (3), or very likely (4)?” *Community rating* comes from, “Overall, how would you rate your community as a place to live – poor (0), only fair (1), good (2), excellent (3)?”

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<sup>3</sup> This variable is reverse coded compared to all other dependent variables in this analysis.

**Table 1.1: Descriptive statistics of all variables from Chapter 2**

	Mean	Standard Deviation
<i>Dependent Variables</i>		
Trust in Neighbors	2.26	0.87
Inter-Race Trust	2.1	0.67
Intra-Race Trust	2.2	0.68
<i>Community characteristics</i>		
Herfindahl Index of Ethnic Homogeneity (ct)	0.71	0.2
Percent Black population	14.14	21.56
Percent Hispanic population	8.76	13.15
Percent renters (ct)	35.51	22.12
Percent living in same MSA five years ago (ct)	70.99	13.94
Percent population 65+ (ct)	13.15	6.17
Percent US citizens (ct)	90.44	11.11
Percent individuals in poverty (ct)	12.15	9.87
Percent Bachelor's degrees (ct)	16.98	10.08
Aggregate commute time (hrs.) (ct)	915.16	508.61
Gini coefficient (ct)	0.44	0.02
Violent crimes per capita (county)	799.54	2,036.64
Nonviolent crimes per capita (county)	1,679.89	3,223.52
Population density (ct)	3,231.47	6,733.93
Midwest	0.31	0.46
South	0.3	0.46
West	0.24	0.43
<i>Respondent characteristics</i>		
Age	45.13	16.84
Female	0.59	0.49
Owens home	0.7	0.46
Years of education	3.64	1.82
US citizen	0.95	0.22
Interviewed in Spanish	0.04	0.19
Years in community	3.59	1.49
Commute time (hrs.)	0.27	0.4
Monthly hours worked	131.63	105.91
Economic satisfaction	0.84	0.37
Household income	3.33	1.55
White (ref.)	0.76	0.43
Black	0.12	0.33
Hispanic	0.09	0.29
Asian	0.02	0.15
Homogeneity*Black	0.08	0.22
Homogeneity*Hispanic	0.05	0.18
Homogeneity*Asian	0.01	0.1

Note: ct = census tract

**Table 1.2 Descriptive statistics of all variables from Chapter 3**

Variable	Scale	Mean	Standard Deviation
<i>Perception of Community</i>			
"How much of the time do you think you can trust the local government to do what is right?"	1 = "Just about always," 2 = "Most of the time," 3 = "Some of the time," 4 = "Hardly ever"	1.39	0.75
"We'd like to know how much you trust different groups of people." -- "The local news media"	1 = "Trust them a lot," 2 = "Trust them some," 3 = "Trust them only a little," 4 = "Trust them not at all"	1.58	0.91
"The people running my community don't really care much what happens to me." *	1 = "Agree strongly," 2 = "Agree somewhat," 3 = "Disagree somewhat," 4 = "Disagree strongly"	2.15	0.96
"Overall, how much impact do you think PEOPLE LIKE YOU can have in making your community a better place to live"	1 "No impact at all," 2 = "A small impact," 3 = "A moderate impact," 4 = "A big impact"	2.1	0.84
"If public officials asked everyone to conserve water or electricity because of some emergency, how likely is it that people in your community would cooperate?"	1 = "Ver Unlikely," 2 = "Unlikely," 3 = "Likely," 4 = "Very Likely"	2.35	0.68
"Overall, how would you rate your community as a place to live?"	0 = "Poor," 1 = "Only Fair," 2 = "Good," 3 = "Excellent"	2.24	0.74
<i>Political &amp; Community Involvement</i>			
"Are you currently registered to vote?"	1 = "Yes," 0 = "No"	0.83	0.38
"How interested are you in politics and national affairs?"	1 = "Not at all interested," 2 = "Only slightly interested," 3 = "Somewhat interested," 4 = "Very interested"	1.91	0.97
"Could you tell me the names of the two U.S. Senators from your state?"	1 = "Failed to name either," 2 = "One is close," 3 = "One is correct or both are close," 4 = "One is correct & one is close," 5 = "Both are correct."	1.47	1.67
"Participated in any demonstrations, protests, boycotts, or marches?"	1 = "Yes," 0 = "No"	0.08	0.27
"Did any of the groups that you are involved with take any LOCAL action for social or political reform in the past 12 months?"	1 = "Yes," 0 = "No"	0.2	0.4
"Which of the following things have you done in the past twelve months: Worked on a community project?"	1 = "Yes," 0 = "No"	0.4	0.49
Charity and volunteering index: whether the respondent contributed to church or other religious causes, contributed to non-religious charities, number of times they have volunteered in the past year, and whether they volunteered for several types of causes (e.g., "culture-arts," "health," "needy," "neighborhood-civic," "religion," "youth-school").		5.14	4.3
<i>Relationships &amp; Well-Being</i>			
"Right now, how many people do you have in your life with whom you can share confidences or discuss a difficult decision?"	1 = "Nobody," 2 = "One," 3 = "Two," 4 "Three or more"	2.54	0.8
"Number of close friends"	1 = "No close friends," 2 = "1-2 close friends," 3 = "3-5 close friends," 4 = "6-10 close friends," 5 = "More than 10 close friends"	2.33	1.08
"All things considered, would you say you are happy?"	0 = "Not happy at all," 1 = "Not very happy," 2 = "Happy," 3 = "Very happy"	2.33	0.6
"How many hours per day do you spend watching TV on an average weekday, that is Monday through Friday?"	Valid range = 0-12	2.98	2.67
"Television is my primary form of entertainment."	1 = "Disagree strongly," 2 = "Disagree somewhat," 3 = "Agree somewhat," 4 = "Agree strongly"	1.02	1.08

\* Note: This variable is reverse coded

**Table 1.3 Descriptive statistics of all variables from Chapter 4**

	Mean	Standard Deviation
<i>Dependent Variables</i>		
Trust in Neighbors	2.26	0.87
Inter-Race Trust	2.1	0.67
Intra-Race Trust	2.2	0.68
<i>Key Independent Variables</i>		
Percent Black Population (ct)	14.02	21.57
Herfindahl Index of Ethnic Homogeneity (ct)	0.71	0.2
Percent Unemployed Black Males (ct)	11.56	6.11
Percent of Unemployed Black Males * HHI	8.31	5.81
Percent Unemployed White Males (ct)	4.44	1.38
Percent of Unemployed White Males * HHI	3.22	1.46
Percent Black Individuals in Poverty (ct)	20.38	21.42
Percent of Black Individuals in Poverty * HHI	14.51	17.43
Percent White Individuals in Poverty (ct)	10	10.11
Percent of White Individuals in Poverty * HHI	6.91	7.53
<i>Community characteristics</i>		
Percent living in same MSA five years ago (ct)	70.01	14.24
Violent crimes per capita (county)	766.61	2,031.49
Nonviolent crimes per capita (county)	1,617.11	3,210.35
South	0.3	0.46
Population density (ct)	3,231.44	6,733.94
<i>Respondent characteristics</i>		
Employment Status: Working (ref.)		
Employment Status: Laid off	0.02	0.13
Employment Status: Unemployed	0.03	0.16
Employment Status: Retired	0.17	0.37
Employment Status: Disabled	0.03	0.18
Employment Status: Homemaker	0.07	0.25
Employment Status: Student	0.03	0.18
Economic satisfaction	0.84	0.37
Household income	3.31	1.55
Years of education	3.64	1.82
Owns home	0.7	0.46
Age	45.13	16.84
Female	0.59	0.49
Years in community	3.59	1.49
US citizen	0.95	0.22
Interviewed in Spanish	0.04	0.19

Note: ct = census tract

The Political & Community Involvement category consists of seven dependent variables that correspond to standard measures used to capture community-level social capital. *Registered to vote* is a simple binary outcome variable to the question, “Are you currently registered to vote?” *Interest in politics* is deduced from the following, “How interested are you in politics and national affairs? (1 = “Not at all interested,” 2 = “Only slightly interested,” 3 = “Somewhat interested,” 4 = “Very interested”). *Knowledge in politics* is constructed from the respondent’s ability to answer, “Could you tell me the names of the two U.S. Senators from your state?” and then converted to this scale: 1 = “Failed to name either,” 2 = “One is close,” 3 = “One is correct or both are close,” 4 = “One is correct & one is close,” and 5 = “Both are correct.” *Activism* is a binary variable based on the following yes/no question, “Participated in any demonstrations, protests, boycotts, or marches?” The *reform* variable is another binary outcome stemming from, “Did any of the groups that you are involved with take any LOCAL action for social or political reform in the past 12 months?” The *community project* measure is another binary variable with a yes/no response to whether the respondent has engaged in the following in the past twelve months, “Worked on a community project?” The *charity and volunteering* measure is derived from an index of the following various items: whether the respondent contributed to church or other religious causes, contributed to non-religious charities, number of times they have volunteered in the past year, and whether they volunteered for several types of causes (e.g., “culture-arts,” “health,” “needy,” “neighborhood-civic,” “religion,” “youth-school”).

The category of Relationships & Well-Being includes five measures about the respondent’s social connections and quality of life. The *confidants* variable comes from the following question, “Right now, how many people do you have in your life with whom you can share confidences or discuss a difficult decision – nobody (1), one (2), two (3), or three or more

(4)?” *Close friends* is based on a scale reporting the respondent’s number of close friends: 1 = “no close friends,” 2 = “1-2 close friends,” 3 = “3-5 close friends,” 4 = “6-10 close friends,” or 5 = “more than 10 close friends.” *Happiness* is derived from the question, “All things considered, would you say you are – not happy at all (0), not very happy (1), happy (2), very happy (3)?” *Hours of TV watched* is based on the prompt, “How many hours per day do you spend watching TV on an average weekday, that is Monday through Friday?” *Television is my primary form of entertainment* comes from an agreement statement posed to the respondent (1 = “Disagree strongly,” 2 = “Disagree somewhat,” 3 = “Agree somewhat,” 4 = “Agree strongly”).

The individual-level independent variables also mirror the measures used by Putnam (2007). The respondent’s *age* is treated as a continuous variable. *Gender*, *citizenship status*, and *home ownership* are treated as dichotomous variables with male, not a US citizen, and not owning one’s home as the reference categories respectively. The racial/ethnicity responses of Black, Hispanic, and Asian are treated as separate distinct controls with white used as the reference category to account for the effect of *race or ethnicity*. The respondent’s *native language* is measured by whether the interview was conducted in English or Spanish (Eng. coded as ref.). *Tenure in community* is a scale of options for the number of years that the individual lived in their community. Several socioeconomic attributes about the respondent are also included: *education* is measured as the total number of years completed, *average monthly work hours*, *commute time* in hours, *economic satisfaction* as a dichotomous variable, and *household income*, which is a series of six different income categories.

All other variables are measured using census-tract data from the 2000 census of population. The *Herfindahl-Hirschman Index of ethnic homogeneity* (HHI) is interpreted as the likelihood that any two individuals randomly selected from a given community will be from the



same race/ethnic category. The HHI uses the four racial/ethnicity categories found in the SCCBS (white, Black, Hispanic, and Asian) and is a scale between 0 and 1 with higher values denoting more homogeneity. Thus, a positive value in the model actually represents a negative association between the dependent variable and the effect of racial and ethnic diversity. The percentage of Black and Hispanic Americans, used in the first analysis, comes from the 2000 Census of Population. The *Gini coefficient* for household income inequality, used as part of replicating Putnam's (2007) models as well as serving as a key factor in the third chapter, is produced by coding each household income category from the census at its midpoint (e.g., \$10,000 to \$15,000 was coded as \$12,500), except for the final open-ended category (\$200,000 and up), which was coded at \$250,000 (see Abascal & Baldassarri 2015). The remainder of independent variables are the *percent of individuals living in poverty*, *percent population with Bachelor's degrees*, *percent renters*, *average commute time*, *percent US citizens*, *percent individuals living in the same town as five years earlier*, *percent over 65 years old*, and *county-level violent and non-violent crimes per capita*<sup>4</sup>.

The fourth chapter extends beyond Putnam and includes additional census-tract level variables drawn from the 2000 Census. *Percent Black* comes from the 2000 Census of Population and is measured as the proportion of Black individuals within each census tract. The four race/class measures also come from the 2000 Census of Population. *Percent of unemployed Black males* is calculated as the proportion of the population that is sixteen years or older that is Black, male, and unemployed. *Percent of unemployed white males* is created using the same criteria but for white males. *Black poverty* is derived from the percent of Black individuals that are living in poverty out of the total Black population. *White poverty* is the percent of white

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<sup>4</sup> The county is the smallest geographical level at which crime rates are reported consistently.

individuals living in poverty out of the total white population. Lastly, there are four separate interaction terms comprised of the HHI and each of the race/class variables just mentioned. This analysis also includes an additional individual-level control from the 2000 SCCBS not used in the previous two chapters. *Employment status*, which consists of several options with employed as the reference point (laid off, unemployed, retired, disabled, homemaker, and student). Please refer to Table 1.3 for the full list of variables used.

The data are grouped hierarchically with individual respondents nested within their corresponding census tracts. Multilevel regression modeling techniques are used to predict individual responses based on spatial/contextual conditions, employing multilevel mixed-effects linear models. These hierarchical or multilevel models allow for the estimation of group averages and group-level effects, similar to interaction effects, but in a less complicated and noisy fashion by using standard interaction effects in linear regression models (Gelman and Hill 2007). Logistic multilevel regression is utilized for the handful of binary outcome variables discussed above from chapter three. All analyses are conducted after the multiple imputation process described above was performed. Stata's mi program provides the ability to run separate models for each of the imputed datasets, five in this case, takes the average of the slope coefficients, and adjusts the standard errors to account for model uncertainty due to missingness.

### **Summary of Three Analytic Chapters**

*Chapter 2: "Is Social Trust a Gauge of whites' Fear of 'the Other?': The Role of Group Threat and Symbolic Boundaries in Understanding the Effects of Racial/Ethnic Diversity"*

The study of effects of racial/ethnic diversity on social trust has been examined in the US extensively. Some of this research confirms Putnam's (2007) claims but other results contradict

the observed negative relationship by highlighting mediating factors and differences among racial groups. A national study of the country finds that living in a racially mixed community reduces social trust (Alesina and La Ferrara 2002), but conversely, a specific study on Detroit finds that individuals who live in more racially diverse neighborhoods have higher levels of trust when compared to those that live in racially homogeneous neighborhoods (Marschall and Stolle 2004). Similar patterns are demonstrated for generalized trust since the negative effects are mediated by having diverse social networks or stronger ties with neighbors (Stolle, Soroka, and Johnston 2008). More specifically, ethnic and racial diversity appears to only reduce social trust among white individuals (Fieldhouse and Cutts 2010; Abascal and Baldassarri 2015).

This chapter first revisits Putnam's (2007) theoretical considerations. His analysis tests whether increased racial/ethnic diversity boosts social trust, or "contact" theory (see Allport 1954), or that individuals become less trusting, which he coins as "conflict" theory. He argues that, instead, all individuals "constrict" in response to increased racial and ethnic diversity since they become less trusting and less engaged in their community (addressed in the next chapter). I test for these three arguments by replicating his models. Findings demonstrate that diversity does negatively affect trust in neighbors and inter-race trust but only has a marginally significant effect on intra-race trust for the full sample. However, whites appear to be the sole racial/ethnic group responsible for this pattern.

I then expand upon his premises by applying insights from the group threat and symbolic boundaries literatures by testing whether the presence of minority groups is more impactful for whites than diversity in general terms and examining racial and ethnic subsamples to identify variations in how each group defines themselves in relation to the other groups. Group threat theory, broadly speaking, emphasizes that whites perceive groups of color as a threat to existing

social arrangements (e.g., social, political, economic), which produces hostility and prejudice among the white population, especially as the proportion of minority groups increases (Blumer 1958; Blalock 1967). The primary research question based on these arguments is that whites will become less trusting in communities with greater percentages of Black and/or Hispanic populations, which is generally confirmed in the results. The symbolic boundaries theoretical perspective of race and ethnicity argues that groups are delineated by conceptual similarities and differences that shape how these groups interact and how they perceive each other (Lamont and Molnar 2002). Similarly, race and ethnicity are considered to be products of the interplay of individual identity, culture, and structural forces that then shape how society is structured and how stereotypes become embedded at the macro-level and within the minds of individuals (Nagel 1994; Brubaker, Loveman, Stamatov 2004; Omi and Winant 2015).

Empirically, these processes manifest in how whites express racist ideology towards Blacks as being culturally inferior (Lamont 2000) or how boundaries become blurred between white Americans and certain immigrants when they become more assimilated, but they perpetuate strict boundaries for Black immigrants *and* natives since they are seen as fundamentally dissimilar (Schachter 2016). Interestingly, these racial/ethnic boundaries are even observed for Hispanics and Asians since they intentionally try to distance themselves from Black Americans, either physically or culturally in the United States (see Charles 2006; Marrow 2011). A handful of research questions stem from this literature (which are discussed more fully in the chapter), but generally speaking, one would expect that the different racial/ethnic groups in this sample (white, Black, Hispanic, and Asian) will not report uniform levels of social trust as diversity increases. Moreover, there is evidence that whites (and perhaps Hispanics and Asians) will be most affected by changes in diversity. Results confirm that whites are the only group that

becomes less trusting as racial/ethnic diversity increases and that none of the other groups are affected in these contexts. Furthermore, the proportion of Blacks specifically dictates whether whites become less trusting of others in their communities. These results confirm ideas from group threat theory and demonstrate that symbolic boundaries are most rigid along the Black-White divide in America.

*Chapter 3: “Are Americans ‘Hunkering Down’ in Response to Increased Racial and Ethnic Diversity?: Revisiting Putnam’s Analysis on Civic Engagement”*

As mentioned above, Putnam (2007) presented his influential and contentious claim that racial and ethnic diversity reduces not only various forms of social trust, but also a multitude of measures for civic engagement. However, this portion of his analysis relies on *unreported* analyses to bolster his overall claim. He tests for a long list of varying measures of civic engagement, including different facets of political involvement, community cohesion, donating, volunteering, informal social relations, etc. His conclusions have sparked a slew of studies that evaluate his arguments by testing for this relationship in various countries, using different data sources, or testing whether economic conditions, primarily inequality, are the actual culprit.

The two competing theoretical camps either emphasize racial/ethnic diversity or economic inequality as being the primary factor behind a loss of civic engagement in the US. For instance, both income inequality and racial/ethnic diversity are negatively correlated with participation in local organizations (Alesina and La Ferrara 2000). Similarly, economic and racial inequality leads to communities having lower levels of social capital, and the decline is more severe for Black Americans (Hero 2003). Interestingly, a study using the SCCBS confirms the negative effect of diversity, but that it is weakened when the poverty rate of the

neighborhood is added to the model (Fieldhouse and Cutts 2010). A meta-study of the literature suggests the importance of local contextual factors since it only finds support for the “constrict theory” on the neighborhood level, especially in the United States (van der Meer and Tolsma 2014). Research also shows that income inequality leads to a decline of volunteering and membership to community associations (Costa and Kahn 2003), as well as a drop in social trust, which in turn, leads to fewer communal actions like giving to charity or volunteering (Uslaner and Brown 2005).

The literature is full of conflicting results that do not clearly illustrate whether racial/ethnic diversity and/or economic inequality reduces civic engagement. Thus, subjecting Putnam’s (2007) claims to more rigorous multivariate analyses (he mentions he ran these tests, but did not report the results) can bring more clarity to this complicated narrative. I replicate his single model used to examine trust in neighbors discussed above to look at three distinct categories of civic engagement: 1) Perception of Community, 2) Political & Community Involvement, 3) Relationships & Well-Being. His original model includes the Gini coefficient so testing for the effects of both key independent variables is possible without altering his methodology. The results support his claims by showing that racial/ethnic diversity diminishes one’s assessment of the quality of their community. However, there is generally no evidence suggesting a link between diversity and a withdrawal from Political & Community Involvement or diminishing a person’s Relationships & Well-Being. Interestingly, economic inequality has very little impact on any of the outcomes in this study, which suggests a need to expand the literature beyond these two phenomena.

*Chapter 4: “Economic Hardship, Racial Oppression, and Trust among whites in the United States”*

Similar to the discussion above, the primary theories for why social trust has declined in the US remains rooted in a discussion of racial/ethnic diversity and income inequality. There is evidence that racial/ethnic diversity is to blame (Alesina and La Ferrara 2002; Putnam 2007; Van Der Meer and Tolsma 2014), but as mentioned before, white people may be driving this trend (Marschall and Stolle 2004; Fieldshouse and Cutts 2010; Abascal and Baldassarri 2015). On the other hand, economic inequality has been shown to reduce social trust in the United States (Uslaner and Brown 2005; Rothstein and Uslaner 2005), and a few studies, in the US and abroad, show that both conditions appear to be equally impactful in shaping outcomes of social trust (Alesina and La Ferrara 2002; Gereke et al. 2018; Ziller and Heizmann 2019).

Even though the literature addresses both economic and racial/ethnic disparities, it has not fully considered the combined effects of class and race, which both lie at the heart of American society. Major economic shifts have occurred in the US over the last forty to fifty years that have led to weakened worker protections, deregulation, increased part-time and temporary work, long-term unemployment, and a general trend towards an economy dominated by low-quality jobs (Kalleberg 2009; 2011). Uncertainty and risk have even become common in historically safe and stable occupations, like managers and professionals, since they are also experiencing higher rates of job loss and unemployment (Smith 2001; Jacobs and Newman 2008). These negative trends are even more pronounced for men in the US (see Bernhardt et al. 2001; Blank and Shierholz 2006). Black men, in particular, have experienced sharp declines in employment rates from the 1960s to 2009 (Wagmiller and Lee 2014). Similar structural shifts have made it more difficult for them to secure good jobs, or a job at all, in many American cities,

which has further exacerbated levels of poverty (Wilson 1987; 1996). Residential segregation has played a crucial role in maintaining this system of persistent poverty and subordination for Black Americans (Massey and Denton 1993), which has dramatically increased the chances of entire neighborhoods being trapped in a cycle of poverty (Sampson 2009).

These economic realities point to the need to consider the effects of both unemployment and poverty rates for different race/ethnic groups in this literature. Specifically, this chapter centers the analysis on male unemployment and poverty rates for both whites and Blacks, while also testing for the role of racial/ethnic diversity separately and by creating interaction effects of diversity and these economic measures. The sample only includes white respondents and the percentage of Black Americans is added to the model in order to incorporate findings from the literature as well as results from earlier chapters. Findings show a consistent negative effect of both white male unemployment and Black poverty in contexts of higher racial/ethnic diversity for the three forms of social trust examined: inter-race, intra-race, and trust in neighbors. The diversity measure on its own is most impactful for trust in neighbors, but not for the other two forms of trust. The percentage of Black Americans also has a negative effect across all models, suggesting that the presence of this minority group affects whites' social trust more than any other form of demographic distribution.

### **Contribution to the Literature**

My concluding chapter will summarize my findings and contribution to the literature. First, the analyses that relate to Putnam's (2007) original work provide a more nuanced understanding of the effects of racial/ethnic diversity on social trust. Whites are the sole racial/ethnic group driving the reduction in social trust as a result of increased heterogeneity in



the US, with the strongest effect being observed for trust in their neighbors. Adding the percentage of Black population to the model demonstrates that the presence of this specific group is equally as important as general diversity (as opposed to Hispanics since they did not have an effect on any form of trust). Trust in neighbors is negatively impacted by both measures of diversity. Inter-race trust is only reduced by diversity. Intra-race trust, conversely, decreases as the proportion of Blacks increases. These findings demonstrate that group threat theory may be fundamental to this discussion, specifically studies that show whites expressing more prejudice as a result of a growing presence of Blacks as opposed to all minority groups (Taylor 1998; Dixon 2006). Additionally, symbolic boundaries are relevant since whites appear to be most concerned with maintaining the rigid boundaries of the Black-white divide (see Lamont 2000; Lamont and Molnar 2002; Miller 2015; Schachter 2016) and appear to engage in the “oppressive othering” (Schwalbe et al. 2000) of Blacks specifically. It also relates to Black exceptionalism since this literature emphasizes the persistent and unique experiences of stratification, oppression, and economic exploitation that Black Americans face, as compared to other racial/ethnic minority groups in the US (see Gans 2005; Feagin 2006). Moreover, the three other racial/ethnic groups are not affected by diversity, which suggests that boundaries are not as strongly demarcated for Hispanics and Asians.

Second, the civic engagement analysis both confirms and contradicts Putnam’s (2007) conclusions. Measures for individuals’ Perception of Community uphold the negative relationship that he alleged. People become less trusting in their local government and local news, feel that people running the community do not care about them, believe that the community would not cooperate to save water or electricity, and are more likely to rate their community as a bad place to live. However, the measures associated with Political &

Community Involvement and Relationships & Well-Being are not impacted in the same way. Only two of the twelve variables that make up these two categories are negatively affected: the respondent's self-reported happiness and whether they belonged to a group that took local action for reform. These findings suggest that the deleterious effects of racial/ethnic diversity pertain mostly to symbolic features of the community but not behavioral or interpersonal measures of civic engagement.

Third, and perhaps most importantly, these studies suggest that the literature needs to push beyond the simple investigation of racial/ethnic diversity or economic inequality. The third analysis demonstrates that social trust among whites is not only negatively affected by the presence of Blacks and/or increased racial/ethnic diversity, but that the combined effects of economic and racial/ethnic inequality are more central to the story. The interaction terms uncover that all three forms of trust among whites are reduced by white male unemployment and Black poverty in contexts of greater diversity. These results suggest that whites in the US are most affected by the increased economic insecurity among "people like them" and a fear of poor Black people, stemming from stereotypes and racist ideology. This analysis provides new insight to the state of social trust in the US, but it also points to the need to delve deeper into these more intricate mechanisms of economic structural shifts and racial/ethnic oppression that have shaped this country.

## **Chapter 2: “Is Social Trust a Gauge of whites’ Fear of ‘the Other?’: The Role of Group Threat and Symbolic Boundaries in Understanding the Effects of Racial/Ethnic Diversity”**

### **Introduction**

Scholars have tracked a steady decline in generalized trust from the 1960s until the end of the twentieth century but have yet to reach consensus on the origin of this trend. A leading theory stresses the role of increased racial and ethnic diversity, which is most famously accredited to Putnam’s (2007) analysis of dozens of US cities. He posits that in the short term, diversity upends social cohesion where all individuals of an increasingly diverse community “hunker down” and disengage from social and political life. Other scholars find similar results (Alesina and La Ferrara 2002), while others depict that the deleterious effects stem from issues pertaining to cultural diversity, nationality, and linguistic variation, as opposed to general racial and ethnic diversity (Leigh 2006; Gundelach and Traummuller 2014; Robinson 2016). Additionally, others argue that the relationship is attributable to racial segregation (Uslaner 2010; Rothwell 2012), or is limited to whites, who react negatively to racial and ethnic diversity (Marschall and Stolle 2004; Abascal and Baldassarri 2015). Research also points to mediating factors between this relationship since diverse social networks shrink the negative effect of heterogeneity on trust (Stolle, Soroka, and Johnston 2008; Glanville 2016).

One of the most prominent and oft-cited works making the case for a negative relationship between racial/ethnic diversity and trust is Robert Putnam’s (2007) address following receipt of the Johan Skytte Prize, a prestigious award given annually to acknowledge remarkable achievements of political scientists. Putnam makes the case for his *constrict theory*, which states that individuals of all races become less trusting and disengage from their community in contexts with more racial/ethnic heterogeneity. He establishes this theory as a

third alternative to the long-standing theoretical discussion that he labels “contact” vs. “conflict,” which he briefly discusses respectively as people either becoming more tolerant of different racial and ethnic groups with more contact (see Allport 1954) or that “the more we are brought into physical proximity with people of another race or ethnic background, the more we stick to ‘our own’ and the less we trust the ‘other’” (Putnam 2007: 142).

Putnam supports his new theory with findings derived from analysis of the 2000 Social Capital Community Benchmark Survey (SCCBS), which was administered in roughly 40 American cities and linked individual-level data to aggregate data for individuals’ census tracts. Using multilevel linear regression and controlling for various individual and community characteristics, Putnam provided evidence that racial and ethnic diversity is associated with lower levels of trust in neighbors (his measure for generalized trust). He bolstered this narrative by reporting on bivariate correlations that demonstrated parallel effects for inter-race and intra-race trust, albeit with less robust statistical methods. Overall, he concludes that individuals of all racial and ethnic groups become less trusting, at least in the short term, as their community experiences more ethnoracial heterogeneity:

inhabitants of diverse communities tend to withdraw from collective life, to distrust their neighbors, regardless of the color of their skin, to withdraw even from close friends, to expect the worst from their community and its leaders, to volunteer less, give less to charity and work on community projects less often, to register to vote less, to agitate for social reform *more*, but have less faith that they can actually make a difference, and to huddle unhappily in front of the television (Putnam 2007: 150-151).

The argument is built on the assumption that a community is most stable when its inhabitants are the same, which has problematic ramifications and is based on unrealistic circumstances,

whether you consider racial identities or other cultural and ethnic signifiers like religion, nationality, or norms. Despite his intentions, the implication that diversity is detrimental to society has been used by far-right groups to justify their racist ideologies (see Dalmia 2017).

Other scholars have critiqued this work, but due to the growing rates of xenophobia in the current political discourse, revisiting this work directly is more important than ever. More recent studies, using the same or different data, document conflicting results. A common pattern across various countries suggests that the negative effect of racial/ethnic diversity is weakened when individuals have more diverse social networks (Stolle, Soroka, and Johnston 2008; Laurence 2011; Stolle and Harell 2013; Glanville 2016); whereas other studies find no relationship between diversity and generalized trust (Hooghe, Reeskens, Stolle, and Trappers 2009; Ariely 2014). Some of these discrepancies might relate to different data sources, contexts, and methods, but studies that utilize the 2000 SCCBS find that racial segregation, and not racial/ethnic diversity, undermines generalized trust (Uslaner 2010) or that whites specifically become less trusting as diversity increases (Fieldhouse and Cutts 2010; Abascal and Baldassarri 2015). The literature suggests that Putnam's (2007) conclusions about the negative relationship between racial/ethnic diversity and social trust is not as clear cut and deserves further examination. Moreover, no one has assessed the methodology he used in forming these arguments (largely bivariate correlation analysis) or directly applied these newer insights to his original analytical framework.

This study replicates Putnam's methods, subjects his conclusions to more rigorous analysis and interpretation, and extends his models to take advantage of new developments in the literature to test competing hypotheses regarding causality underlying his key findings. I begin by replicating Putnam's main multilevel linear regression model on trust in neighbors and tests

its applicability to inter-race and intra-race trust. I then use interactions and subsamples to investigate potential variations in relationships across race groups (white, Black, Hispanic, and Asian) for all three forms of trust: trust in neighbors, inter-race trust, and intra-race trust. In doing so, I revisit Putnam's propositions regarding what he labels as "contact," "conflict," and "constrict" theories, and incorporate two rich sociological literatures that may help to explain observed outcomes: group threat and symbolic boundaries. The former asserts that whites fear the presence of subordinate groups will upset the existing social order and their position of privilege (Blumer 1958; Blalock 1967), and that these tensions become heightened when the relative size of minorities generally, or even Blacks particularly, increases (Quillian 1995; Taylor 1998; Dixon 2006). The latter addresses how racial and ethnic group identities are created and maintained through stereotypes and cultural conceptions of difference (Lamont 2000; Lamont and Molnar 2002; Charles 2006; Miller 2015; Schachter 2016), which helps explain why observed outcomes are not consistent across different race groups. Overall, results suggest that whites are most negatively impacted by increased racial and ethnic diversity, but on further inspection, the presence of Black Americans proves to be an important piece of this puzzle. Results for Blacks, Hispanics, and Asians are markedly different, suggesting the importance of considering how rigid or flexible symbolic boundaries are between these different groups.

## **Background**

The investigation of the deleterious effects of racial and ethnic diversity on social trust predates the work of Putnam (2007) and has transitioned into more nuanced discussions of what factors drive this relationship specifically. An early study of the US documents that living in a racially mixed community leads to lower levels of trust (Alesina and La Ferrara 2002). Other

national contexts point to alternative phenomena as the main culprit. Prior research finds that cultural diversity reduces social trust in Germany (Gundelach and Traunmuller 2014), nationality and ethnicity in Malawi emerge as important factors in understanding trust (Robinson 2016), and linguistic diversity in Australia affects localized and generalized trust more than ethnic diversity (Leigh 2006). In Sweden, the proportion of foreign-born individuals is negatively associated with social trust (Gustavsson and Jordahl 2008).

In his Johan Skytte Prize lecture, Putnam (2007) expands upon this analysis by arguing that racial and ethnic diversity have negatively affected community-level measures of inter-racial, intra-racial, and generalized trust. He uses the 2000 Social Capital Community Benchmark Survey (SCCBS), linked to census-tract data from the 2000 Census of Population, to create a single multilevel regression model to demonstrate that racial and ethnic diversity reduces trust in neighbors with controls for individual- and aggregate-level measures of demographic and socioeconomic information as well as other community characteristics (see data and methods section for discussion of full list). He supports this negative relationship by presenting bivariate correlation results of inter-racial and intra-racial group trust, suggesting that individuals in heterogeneous communities distrust those of other racial and ethnic groups as well as members of their own racial or ethnic group. This work has become highly influential – cited over 4,000 times and appears in the popular press – and has sparked a long line of research testing these claims, mostly with other data and in different geographic contexts. The remainder of this section discusses this rich and varied literature and establishes the need to refocus the discussion on Putnam’s (2007) original work by replicating and extending his original analysis to account for issues in his methodology and apply more rigorous theoretical consideration to the findings.

Subsequent investigations testing this relationship produced conflicting results. For example, the negative relationship in the US reverses when an individual has diverse social networks or stronger ties with neighbors (Stolle, Soroka, and Johnston 2008). Furthermore, involvement in voluntary associations increases an individual's network diversity, which positively influences their trust in others (Glanville 2016). The United Kingdom reports comparable results; social trust is most sensitive to changes in racial and ethnic diversity, but those with bridging ties experience a much weaker negative effect (Laurence 2011). Similarly, younger Canadians report higher levels of generalized trust when their networks are more diverse (Stolle and Harell 2013). Cross-national studies of European countries uncover a negative relationship between ethnic diversity on specific dimensions of social cohesion, belonging and social solidarity, but *not* interpersonal trust (Ariely 2014), and that both migration and ethnic diversity are not related to measures of generalized trust (Hooghe, Reeskens, Stolle, and Trappers 2009). Likewise, in countries that accommodate cultural and racial minorities, the negative effects of immigration are mitigated or even reversed (Kesler and Bloemraad 2010).

More critical accounts on this topic emphasize the role of racial segregation and racial oppression as the ultimate driver in this narrative, and moreover, find that the negative relationship between racial/ethnic diversity and social trust is only observed among white people. For instance, metropolitan-level racial residential segregation, a measure of racial inequality, decreases trust in the United States, whereas the effect of community-level diversity is not significant in the same model (Rothwell 2012). Similar results are found in a comparison of the United Kingdom and the United States (using the SCCBS), where segregation, as opposed to increased racial/ethnic diversity, reduces generalized trust (Uslaner 2010). Another study using the SCCBS comparing the US and UK finds that increased racial diversity negatively affects



several dimensions of social capital for whites in both countries but not for ethnic minorities (Fieldhouse and Cutts 2010). Data from Detroit confirms higher levels of generalized trust among African Americans as heterogeneity increases but not for white respondents (Marshall and Stolle 2004). Abascal and Baldassarri (2015) test this hypothesis using the SCCBS data and find that only whites report lower levels of trust in communities with higher proportions of out-group members.

A common thread emerging from this complex array of studies is the suggestion that increased racial and ethnic diversity *can* erode social trust, but that these negative outcomes are diminished by individual-level processes such as increased quality and quantity of inter-racial contact and having more diverse social networks. More importantly, there is sufficient evidence that this negative relationship does not hold true for all people, but rather, individuals in specific spatial and cultural contexts and, in some cases, the ramifications are only witnessed for the majority racial group (i.e., whites).

Such studies thus call into question Putnam's (2007) conclusions regarding the relationship between heterogeneity and trust. Others have critiqued Putnam's methods and models by calling into question the use of the Herfindahl-Hirschman Index (HHI)<sup>5</sup> as the sole measure for racial and ethnic diversity and built upon his original model by adding other individual- and community-level considerations, like additional ethnoracial characteristics and measures for residential stability and economic conditions (Abascal and Baldassarri 2015). However, scholars have not established whether his conclusions hold up to further scrutiny by replicating his own models for the three main forms of social trust he highlighted, considering

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<sup>5</sup> The HHI is the probability that two people randomly chosen from a community are the same (in this case, the same racial or ethnic group). Abascal and Baldassarri (2015) point out that this ignores the racial and ethnic composition of the communities, including whether the majority population is in-group or out-group, and ignores the effects of the racial/ethnic stratification system.

variation across race groups, or whether the real culprit in this story is a fear of a growing proportion of racial minority groups specifically. Thus, this paper refocuses the discussion to this popularized and contentious study by (1) replicating his analysis, (2) applying his original model to inter-race and intra-race trust (he only reports bivariate correlation analysis for these two forms of trust), (3) replicating the model to test for variation across race groups for these three forms of trust, and (4) testing for the effects of different forms of diversity (e.g., percent Black and Hispanic population)<sup>6</sup>.

In the following section I review theories that influence this framework and establish hypotheses based on these insights. First, I consider the theoretical discussion Putnam (2007) utilized. He frames the question around “contact” vs. “conflict,” but ultimately suggests that a *constrict* theory is most representative since all individuals of a community “hunker down” and disengage from their community as they encounter higher levels of racial and ethnic diversity. Thus, I briefly introduce these three different perspectives. Then, I expand upon this framework by emphasizing group threat theory more specifically and incorporate the importance of symbolic boundaries in shaping how individuals of different racial and ethnic groups perceive those like themselves and, more importantly, those that are deemed as different. Both of these theoretical perspectives help contextualize why other researchers are finding variations across racial/ethnic groups, specifically for whites, and additionally, have the potential to expand upon Putnam’s original findings and claims.

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<sup>6</sup> Abascal & Baldassarri (2015) use the SCCBS to conduct analyses comparing results for different race groups, but they do not replicate Putnam’s (2007) models. Their analysis critiques the HHI and tests for the percentage in-group vs. out-group as a more appropriate measure of diversity, so their race subsamples include the percentage of the race group (e.g., white respondents include the percentage of whites in the census tract). Fieldhouse and Cutts (2010) implement the same interaction effects using the SCCBS, but they do not replicate the original model and look at different dependent variables (an index for attitudinal social capital comprised of trust in neighbors, community rating, and neighborhood belonging).

## **Theoretical Implications**

### *Contact, Conflict, or Constrict?*

Putnam (2007) centers his analysis around the two perspectives he refers to as “contact” and “conflict.” Contact theory supposes that interactions between different racial and ethnic groups would reduce prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination (Allport 1954). This theoretical logic has been observed within the social trust literature where interethnic contact and/or diverse social networks moderate the negative impact of contextual ethnic diversity (Stolle et al. 2008; Laurence 2011; Stolle and Harell 2013; Glanville 2016). Thus, this research assumes the hypothesis that *all* members of a community will become more trusting in heterogeneous communities. The opposite hypothesis is encapsulated in the so-called conflict perspective where, in Putnam’s (2007) words, “above all, contention over limited resources – diversity fosters out-group distrust and in-group solidarity” (142). His discussion of this perspective is minor so I elaborate on it below by including specific hypotheses and results. Putnam’s ultimate contribution to the literature refutes both viewpoints in favor of his constrict theory. He concludes that individuals of all races “hunker down,” which is best summed up by the following quote: “Diversity does *not* produce ‘bad race relations’ or ethnically-defined group hostility, our findings suggest. Rather, inhabitants of diverse communities tend to withdraw from collective life, to distrust their neighbours, regardless of the colour of their skin...” (Putnam 2007: 150-151). Thus, individuals of all racial and ethnic groups become less trusting of those around them, including their neighbors as well as members of their own and other racial and ethnic groups. This paper considers these three distinct hypotheses since, at its core, the analysis is a replication of his original work: (1) whether his “constrict” theory is upheld where all individuals become less trusting of all members of their community; (2) that individuals will become less trusting of

other racial and ethnic groups but more trusting of their own group, according to what he terms “conflict” theory; (3) that all individuals become more trusting as racial and ethnic diversity increases, which lines up with “contact” theory. These hypotheses are most directly tested by replicating his own multilevel regression model to assess outcomes for trust in neighbors and then applying the same model to intra-race and inter-race trust since those were two forms of social trust he emphasized using bivariate correlation analysis.

### *Group Threat*

Group threat theory can help contextualize Putnam’s findings since, at its core, his discussion centers on racial/ethnic social relations. This theory emphasizes the power differentials and inequalities between racial and ethnic groups and suggests that inter-race contact produces tensions and threats that transpire primarily between racial/ethnic majority and minority groups. Blumer (1958) introduces this perspective by positing that the dominant group fears that inferior groups will upset existing social arrangements and their position of privilege, which leads to feelings of prejudice and hostility. Racial threat theory (Blalock 1967) similarly argues that the majority race group perceives a threat to their economic well-being and political power as the relative size of racial and ethnic minority groups increases. These parallel notions have been furthered in more recent decades by showing that the economic context of a country and the relative size of racial and ethnic minority groups are associated with higher levels of negative attitudes towards minorities (Quillian 1995; Taylor 1998). Research has advanced this literature by showing that the negative effects are more attributable to the presence of Black individuals specifically, as opposed to all minority groups (i.e. Hispanics, Asians), since whites express more prejudice (Taylor 1998; Dixon 2006).

Elements from this theoretical tradition are observed in the study of social trust as well. For instance, social trust in Denmark is only negatively affected at the “micro-context” when racial and ethnic diversity increases, but the effect diminishes at larger aggregate levels (Dinesen and Sonderskov 2015). More importantly, whites appear to be the most affected by increased diversity (Marschall and Stolle 2004; Fieldhouse and Cutts 2010; Abascal and Baldassarri 2015).

This project tests this theory more directly by including race subsamples (white, Black, Hispanic, Asian) with the addition of the percentage of Black and Hispanic population to the overall model to assess the effect of the proportional size of minority groups in these communities. These models also test if these nuanced forms of diversity are more impactful than the HHI used by Putnam (2007). The main hypotheses stemming from this body of work are as follows: (1) Whites will become less trusting in communities with greater percentages of Black and/or Hispanic populations; (2) social trust among non-whites (Black, Hispanic, and Asian) will not be affected by the percentage of racial and ethnic minorities. These hypotheses provide an alternative perspective to the discussion, but they also test Putnam’s claims indirectly by determining whether certain racial/ethnic groups react differently to the distribution of minority groups in their community, as opposed, to *all* individuals becoming less trusting as a result of increased heterogeneity.

### *Symbolic Boundaries*

Sociology has a rich history of highlighting the cultural basis for the creation and maintenance of racial and ethnic groups, which can be applied to the study of trust across and within different race groups. Although there are variations within this subfield of sociology, a common priority is to explore the connections between cultural processes of meaning-making

and the organization of social relationships and institutions (Neto 2014). Omi and Winant's (2015) classic work on racial formation encapsulates this idea within critical race theory:

“The theory of racial formation suggests that society is suffused with racial projects, large and small, to which all are subjected. This racial ‘subjection’ is quintessentially ideological. Everybody learns some combination, some version, of the rules of racial classification, and of their own racial identity, often without obvious teaching or conscious inculcation. Thus are we inserted in a comprehensively racialized social structure. Race becomes ‘common sense’ – a way of comprehending, explaining, and acting in this world” (127).

Ethnicity has also been conceived as a product of the interplay of individual identity, culture, and structural forces (e.g. Nagel 1994), and scholars more recently have posited that race, ethnicity, and stereotypes are shared cognitive interpretations of social artifacts that exist both at the macro-level and within the minds of individuals (Brubaker, Loveman, and Stamatov 2004). Similarly, “oppressive othering” is a symbolic process that emphasizes the micro-level strategies used by dominant groups to justify and perpetuate racial/ethnic hierarchies by defining entire groups as inferior (Schwalbe et al. 2000).

The study of boundaries is a leading theory within sociology that incorporates this cultural understanding of race and ethnicity. Lamont and Molnar (2002) make distinctions between symbolic and social boundaries where the former represents the conceptual categorizations made by individuals to generate feelings of similarity and difference between groups and the latter are the objectified forms of symbolic differences that result in unequal access to resources and opportunities. Symbolic and social boundaries have been applied to numerous subjects and contexts but a principal implementation focuses on the boundaries

between different racial and ethnic groups. For instance, white working-class males in the US express racist ideology about primarily African Americans in the form of moral inferiority, like lacking a work ethic, being lazy, using drugs, and being poor (Lamont 2000). Another qualitative study finds that wealthy whites in New York City maintain firm boundaries of race, class, and nationality, even when they are in regular contact with minority immigrant service workers (Miller 2015). Quantitative results show similar patterns where white Americans blur social boundaries towards immigrants that have assimilated (e.g., friendships and neighbors), but perpetuate strict symbolic boundaries for Black immigrants *and* natives by viewing them as dissimilar (Schachter 2016). Similarly, Hispanics in North Carolina have been embraced by white natives, but have tense relations with Black natives where they distance themselves from their culture as a way to position themselves higher in the social order (Marrow 2011). In Los Angeles, whites, Latinos, and Asians all report an aversion to Black neighbors based on racial stereotypes, as opposed to perceived social class differences or in-group attachment (Charles 2006).

The symbolic boundaries literature helps contextualize results within the investigation of social trust. Scholars have observed that outcomes are not similar across different racial groups, especially that whites are most negatively impacted and that Blacks can actually become more trusting in racially and ethnically diverse communities (see Marschall and Stolle 2004; Fieldhouse and Cutts 2010; Abascal and Baldassarri 2015). Therefore, this study revisits Putnam's (2007) claims by replicating his models for race subsamples (white, Black, Hispanic, and Asian) and includes an interaction term for race and the HHI for the full sample to uncover any variations across the different race and ethnic groups found in the SCCBS. This literature also offers a unique understanding of results for inter-race and intra-race trust among the four

different race and ethnic groups. The hypotheses based on this literature are as follows: (1) All racial/ethnic groups will report lower levels of generalized trust and inter-race trust as racial and ethnic diversity increases; (2) intra-race trust among all racial and ethnic groups will not be affected by racial and ethnic diversity; (3) Hispanics and Asians do not report significantly different trust levels compared to whites as racial and ethnic diversity increases. The first two hypotheses stem from the same logic that symbolic boundaries will influence how a person views someone of a different racial/ethnic group, thereby affecting the trust levels of those around them that are unlike them, and that people will not lose trust of those within their racial/ethnic group. The last hypothesis relates to the premise that Blacks are distinctly seen as “the other” based on stereotypes where other racial/ethnic minority groups, Hispanics and Asians, report similar responses to increased diversity as whites.

## **Data and Methods**

The primary data source for this analysis is Putnam’s (2000) Social Capital Community Benchmark Survey (SCCBS). The sample size consists of nearly 30,000 respondents from both a nationally representative sample (3,003) and subsamples of 41 US communities (26,730), ranging from large metropolitan areas like Chicago and Los Angeles to rural areas in South Dakota and West Virginia. Like Putnam (2007), I link the data to census-tract level data from the 2000 Census of Population to account for measures of community-level conditions (See Table 1 for full list and discussion below).

Due to high levels of missingness in the data, multiple imputation methods are utilized in Stata. This step deviates from Putnam’s (2007) original work, but offers a more robust analysis since the dataset contains a significant amount of missing values for many of the variables



included in the model. I utilize the mi program in Stata and the multiple imputation by chained equations (MICE) method specifically, which provides the ability to use different forms of regression in computing the imputed values for binary and categorical variables (UCLA Institute for Digital Research & Education: Statistical Consulting). Using all of the variables included in the model, five imputed datasets were created to generate values for variables with higher rates of missingness.

Table 2.1 reports variables and descriptive statistics for all variables included in this analysis. Following Putnam (2007) the primary dependent variable is *trust in neighbors*, which is computed from a survey question asking, “How much you can trust people in your neighborhood,” with the options of “trust them a lot,” “trust them some,” “trust them only a little,” and “trust them not at all.” I expand on this replication by using the two other key social trust measures Putnam analyzed through bivariate correlation and helped inform his overall conclusions: *inter-race trust* and *intra-race trust*. Both variables use the same scale as discussed above and are calculated from separate questions asking about the individual’s trust levels for the four different racial and ethnic groups included in the sample (e.g., “How much you can trust Asian people”). *Inter-race trust* is a composite mean based on trust reported for the different racial and ethnic groups, excluding the respondent’s own identified race/ethnicity. *Intra-race trust* is simply the level of trust expressed in one’s own racial/ethnic group.

The multivariate models mirror Putnam’s (2007) original work. The key independent variable is the *Herfindahl-Hirschman Index of ethnic homogeneity* (HHI), which is interpreted as the likelihood that any two individuals randomly selected from a given community will be from the same racial/ethnic category. The HHI uses the four race/ethnicity categories found in the SCCBS (white, Black, Hispanic, and Asian) and is a scale between 0 and 1 with higher values

denoting more homogeneity. Thus, a positive value in the model actually represents a negative association between the dependent variable and the effect of racial and ethnic diversity.

Subsequent models incorporate additional independent variables designed to move beyond the singular focus on generic racial and ethnic diversity. I create interaction terms consisting of the respondent's race and the HHI in order to assess variations across race and ethnic groups more directly. This study also incorporates two separate measures devised to address insights from the group threat literature: the *percentage of population that is Hispanic or Black*. These two variables are calculated at the census-tract level and are derived from the 2000 Census of Population.

**Table 2.1 Descriptive statistics of three forms of trust and independent variables**

	Mean	Standard Deviation
<i>Dependent Variables</i>		
Trust in Neighbors	2.26	0.87
Inter-Race Trust	2.1	0.67
Intra-Race Trust	2.2	0.68
<i>Community characteristics</i>		
Herfindahl Index of Ethnic Homogeneity (ct)	0.71	0.2
Percent Black population	14.14	21.56
Percent Hispanic population	8.76	13.15
Percent renters (ct)	35.51	22.12
Percent living in same MSA five years ago (ct)	70.99	13.94
Percent population 65+ (ct)	13.15	6.17
Percent US citizens (ct)	90.44	11.11
Percent individuals in poverty (ct)	12.15	9.87
Percent Bachelor's degrees (ct)	16.98	10.08
Aggregate commute time (hrs.) (ct)	915.16	508.61
Gini coefficient (ct)	0.44	0.02
Violent crimes per capita (county)	799.54	2,036.64
Nonviolent crimes per capita (county)	1,679.89	3,223.52
Population density (ct)	3,231.47	6,733.93
Midwest	0.31	0.46
South	0.3	0.46
West	0.24	0.43
<i>Respondent characteristics</i>		
Age	45.13	16.84
Female	0.59	0.49
Owns home	0.7	0.46
Years of education	3.64	1.82
US citizen	0.95	0.22
Interviewed in Spanish	0.04	0.19
Years in community	3.59	1.49
Commute time (hrs.)	0.27	0.4
Monthly hours worked	131.63	105.91
Economic satisfaction	0.84	0.37
Household income	3.33	1.55
White (ref.)	0.76	0.43
Black	0.12	0.33
Hispanic	0.09	0.29
Asian	0.02	0.15
Homogeneity*Black	0.08	0.22
Homogeneity*Hispanic	0.05	0.18
Homogeneity*Asian	0.01	0.1

Note: ct = census tract

The rest of the model Putnam (2007) designed includes a variety of individual- and aggregate-level controls. The individual-level information comes directly from the SCCBS and includes detailed demographic characteristics. The respondent's *age* is treated as a continuous variable. *Gender*, *citizenship status*, and *home ownership* are treated as dichotomous variables with male, not a US citizen, and not owning one's home as the reference categories respectively. The racial/ethnicity responses of Black, Hispanic, and Asian are treated as separate distinct controls with white used as the reference category to account for the effect of *race or ethnicity*. The respondent's *native language* is measured by whether the interview was conducted in English or Spanish (Eng. coded as ref.). *Tenure in community* is a scale of options for the number of years that the individual lived in their community. Several socioeconomic attributes about the respondent are also included: *education* measured as the total number of years completed, *average monthly work hours*, *commute time* in hours, *economic satisfaction* as a dichotomous variable, and *household income*, which is a series of six different income categories.

Community contextual factors round out the rest of the controls used in his model. The *census tract population density* is included in the SCCBS dataset as well as the *region*, which is based on the classification system from the US Census where South, Midwest, and West are treated as separate variables in the model (Northeast used as reference category). The 2000 Census of Population is used to calculate the *percent of individuals living in poverty*, *percent population with Bachelor's degrees*, *percent renters*, *average commute time*, *percent US citizens*, *percent individuals living in the same town as five years earlier*, and *percent over 65 years old*. The *Gini coefficient* for household income inequality is also produced by coding each household income category from the census at its midpoint (e.g., \$10,000 to \$15,000 was coded as \$12,500), except for the final open-ended category (\$200,000 and up), which was coded at

\$250,000 (see Abascal & Baldassarri 2015). The county-level violent and non-violent crimes per capita<sup>7</sup> come from the 2000 Uniform Crime Reporting Program Data.

The data are grouped hierarchically with individual respondents nested within their corresponding census tracts. Multilevel regression modeling techniques are used to predict individual responses based on spatial/contextual conditions, employing multilevel mixed-effects linear models in order to match Putnam's (2007) methodology. These hierarchical or multilevel models allow for the estimation of group averages and group-level effects, similar to interaction effects, but in a less complicated and noisy fashion by using standard interaction effects in linear regression models (Gelman and Hill 2007). These analyses are conducted after the multiple imputation process described above was performed. Stata's mi program provides the ability to run separate models for each of the imputed datasets, five in this case, takes the average of the slope coefficients, and adjusts the standard errors to account for model uncertainty due to missingness.

This study consists of various models to both replicate Putnam (2007) directly and to expand upon his framework by including more methodologically and theoretically nuanced analyses. First, I replicate the same model he reported for *trust in neighbors* using the full sample. I then use the same model to investigate both *inter-race* and *intra-race trust* for the entire SCCBS sample. Then, I create a series of models to account for variations across the different race groups for all three forms of trust. The first for each form of trust is the same full sample model above with the addition of interaction effects between respondent's race and the HHI. Race subsamples are also included to further investigate differences for each racial and ethnic group for the three distinct social trust dependent variables. Insights stemming from the

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<sup>7</sup> The county is the smallest geographical level at which crime rates are reported consistently

group threat literature are addressed by running three separate replication models that include the following additional independent variables: (1) percent population that is Black, (2) percent population that is Hispanic, and (3) both of these community race demographic measures together. These three separate models are administered for each of the four racial/ethnic groups and for *trust in neighbors*, *inter-race trust*, and *intra-race trust*.

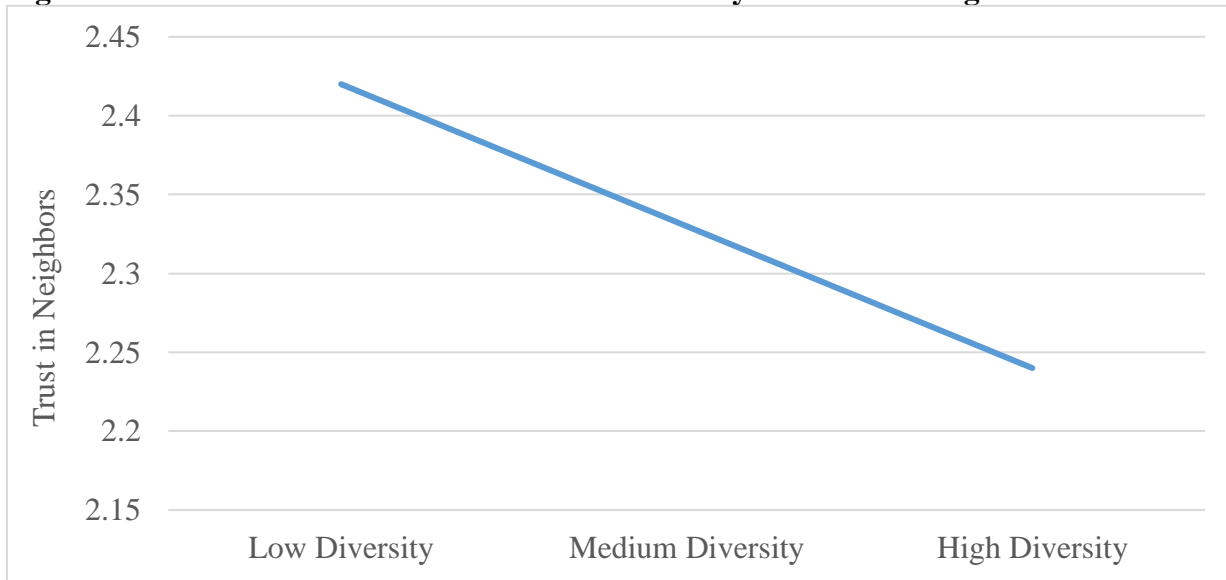
## Results

Table 2.2 presents results for outcomes of trust in neighbors, inter-race trust, and intra-race trust for the full sample. Column 1 depicts the direct replication of Putnam's (2007) model on trust in neighbors. Columns 2 and 3 extend the same model to test outcomes for both inter-race and intra-race trust. The most important variable to consider is the HHI, which is significant and negative for the first two models and only marginally significant for intra-race trust. The HHI indicates the proportion of racial and ethnic homogeneity in each census tract, and thus, a positive value suggests that a person trusts their neighbors more in communities that are more homogeneous and trusts them less in more heterogeneous contexts (see Figures 2.1 and 2.2). Thus, Putnam's constrict theory is supported since increased racial/ethnic diversity is associated with lower trust in neighbors and trust of other racial/ethnic groups. However, the results suggest that individuals become no less trusting of others within their racial/ethnic group as diversity increases. Overall, there is mixed support for the constrict theory and no evidence that either contact or conflict better explains the processes at play. Another major finding from these models rests in the comparison of respondents from different race groups. Blacks, Hispanics, and Asians all report lower levels of trust in their neighbors when compared to whites, but only Blacks and Hispanics have lower levels of inter-race and intra-race trust.

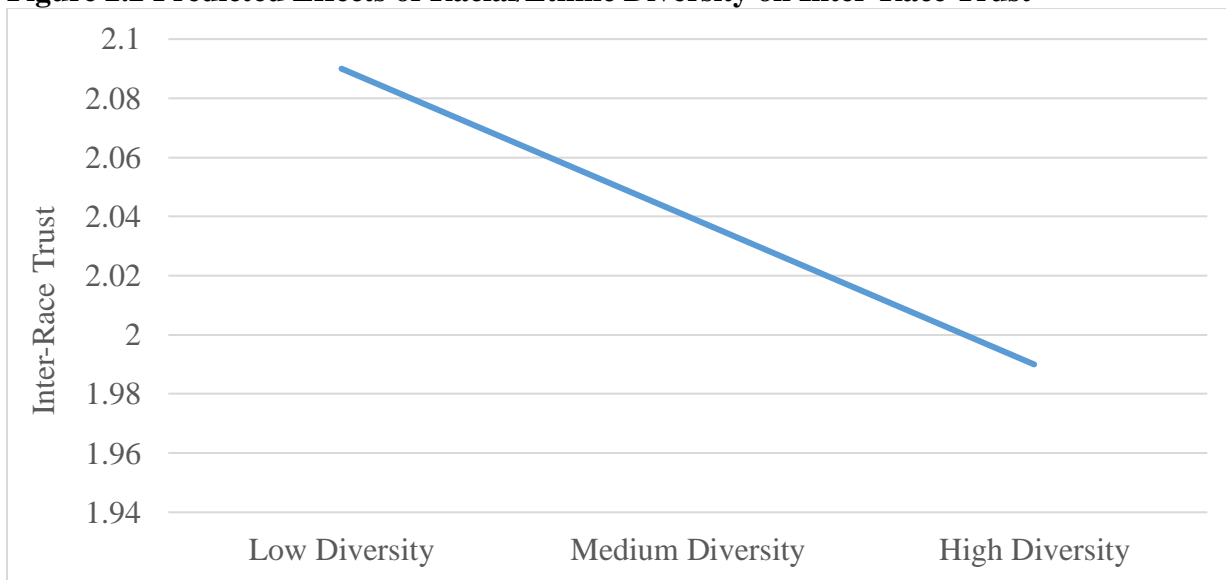
**Table 2.2 Replication of Putnam's multilevel linear regression of three forms of trust on community and respondent characteristics: Full sample**

	Trust in Neighbors	Inter-Race Trust	Intra-Race Trust
<i>Community characteristics</i>			
Herfindahl Index of Ethnic Homogeneity (ct)	0.2 **	0.11 **	0.09 □
Percent renters (ct)	-0.0008 *	-0.0002	-0.0005
Percent living in same MSA five years ago (ct)	-0.002 **	-0.002 ***	-0.002 ***
Percent population 65+ (ct)	0.002 *	0.0003	0.002
Percent US citizens (ct)	0.001	0.0003	0.0009
Percent individuals in poverty (ct)	-0.007 ***	-0.003 ***	-0.003 ***
Percent Bachelor's degrees (ct)	0.003 *	-0.00008	-0.001
Aggregate commute time (hrs.) (ct)	-0.000006	-0.0000009	-0.000005
Gini coefficient (ct)	0.32	-0.57 □	-0.22
Violent crimes per capita (county)	0.00001 *	0.00001 **	0.000007 □
Nonviolent crimes per capita (county)	-0.00001 **	-0.000007 **	-0.000009 ***
Population density (ct)	-0.000004 ***	-0.000003 **	-0.000002 *
Midwest	-0.01	-0.03 *	0.003
South	-0.03 *	-0.1 ***	-0.05 ***
West	0.02	-0.01	-0.004
<i>Respondent characteristics</i>			
Age	0.01 ***	0.004 ***	0.005 ***
Female	0.06 ***	0.05 ***	0.03 **
Owns home	0.24 ***	0.03 *	0.03 *
Years of education	0.05 ***	0.04 ***	0.03 ***
US citizen	0.04	0.14 ***	0.05 *
Interviewed in Spanish	-0.17 ***	-0.35 ***	-0.26 ***
Years in community	0.02 ***	0.0008	0.005
Commute time (hrs.)	0.003	-0.03 *	-0.03 **
Monthly hours worked	0.00004	-0.00002	-0.00004
Economic satisfaction	0.15 ***	0.15 ***	0.14 ***
Household income	0.04 ***	0.009 *	0.006
<i>Race</i>			
White (ref.)			
Black	-0.36 ***	-0.2 ***	-0.21 ***
Hispanic	-0.3 ***	-0.13 ***	-0.1 ***
Asian	-0.14 ***	-0.04	-0.0009
Constant	1.08 ***	1.84 ***	1.86 ***
n	26,211	26,211	26,211

**Figure 2.1 Predicted Effects of Racial/Ethnic Diversity on Trust in Neighbors**



**Figure 2.2 Predicted Effects of Racial/Ethnic Diversity on Inter-Race Trust**

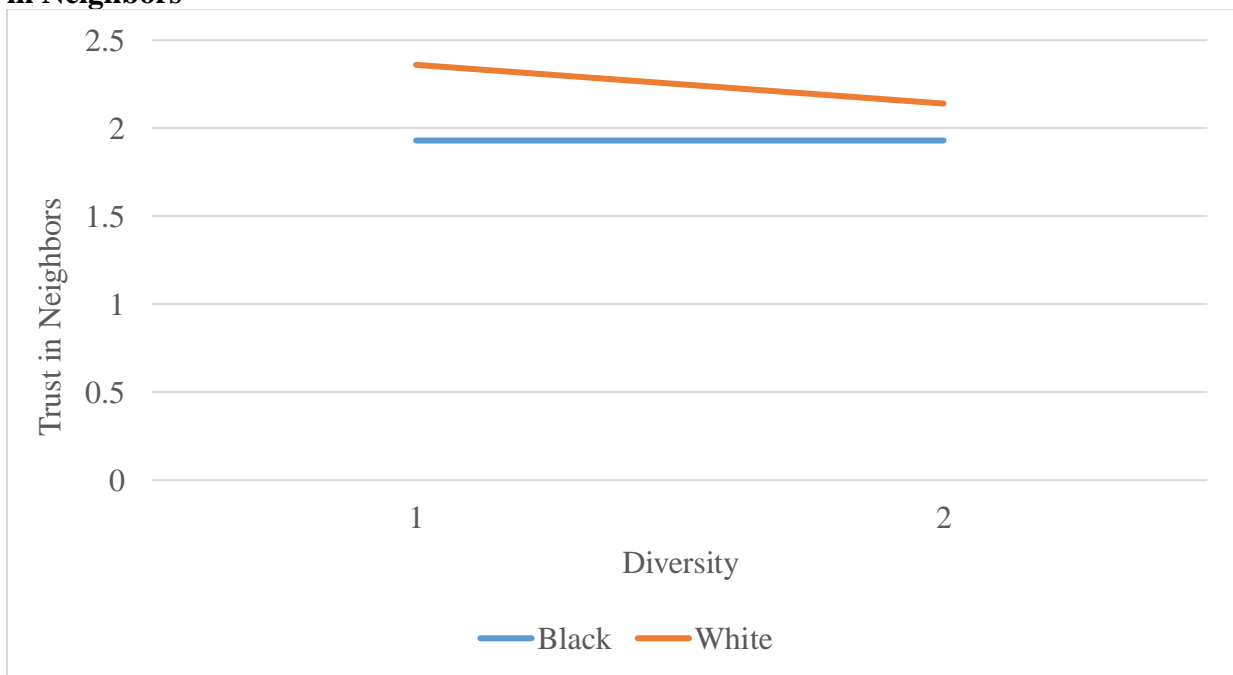


Tables 2.3-2.5 present findings of analyses focused on racial/ethnic variations. Table 2.3 contains a series of models on trust in neighbors: the full sample with the addition of interaction effects (race of respondent multiplied by the HHI) and separate models for the four different racial and ethnic groups included in the sample. The full sample mirrors the replication model discussed above, but the interactions show that Black respondents trust their neighbors *less* in



contexts of more racial and ethnic diversity when compared to whites. However, Figure 2.3 demonstrates that Blacks do not become less trusting as communities become more diverse like whites. Interestingly, the separate race models suggest that only white respondents are affected by racial and ethnic diversity with a statistically significant negative relationship. However, it is worth noting that Hispanics report a marginally significant negative relationship between diversity and trust in neighbors.

**Figure 2.3 Interaction Effects of Racial/Ethnic Diversity and Race of Respondent on Trust in Neighbors**



Tables 2.4 and 2.5 are identical in structure but display results for inter-race and intra-race trust respectively. None of the interaction effects are significant in the full sample for inter-race trust, yet only white respondents report a negative relationship between racial and ethnic diversity for this form of trust. Interestingly, the full sample model for intra-race trust with the addition of interaction terms now reports a significant negative effect of racial/ethnic diversity, and that Blacks are marginally less trusting of their own racial/ethnic group when compared to whites in more diverse communities. Further, whites are the only racial group to show a negative

relationship between the HHI and intra-race trust, even though the effect is marginal. The results are slightly murky but it appears that white respondents alone are driving the downward trend stemming from increased racial and ethnic diversity.

**Table 2.3 Multilevel linear regression of generalized trust on community and respondent characteristics: Racial/ethnic group subsamples and full sample with interaction terms for racial/ethnic diversity and race/ethnicity of respondent**

	Full Sample	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian
<i>Community characteristics</i>					
Herfindahl Index of Ethnic Homogeneity (ct)	0.25 ***	0.24 ***	-0.03	0.24 □	0.32
Percent renters (ct)	-0.0007 □	-0.001 *	0.0002	-0.0005	-0.0005
Percent living in same MSA five years ago (ct)	-0.002 **	-0.002 *	-0.002	-0.003	-0.003
Percent population 65+ (ct)	0.002 *	0.002 □	0.002	0.0008	0.001
Percent US citizens (ct)	0.001	0.0008	0.003	0.002	0.002
Percent individuals in poverty (ct)	-0.007 ***	-0.006 ***	-0.009 **	-0.006 *	-0.006
Percent Bachelor's degrees (ct)	0.003 *	0.003 *	0.0007	0.003	0.003
Aggregate commute time (hrs.) (ct)	-0.000004	-0.00001	0.00001	-0.00002	0.00007
Gini coefficient (ct)	0.31	0.82 *	-0.55	-0.79	0.77
Violent crimes per capita (county)	0.00001 *	0.00002	-0.000004	0.000005	0.00005
Nonviolent crimes per capita (county)	-0.00001 **	-0.00001 **	-0.000003	-0.000004	-0.00003
Population density (ct)	-0.000004 ***	-0.000005 ***	-0.000006 *	-4E-07	-0.000002
Midwest	-0.009	-0.01	-0.04	-0.002	-0.04
South	-0.03	-0.04 *	-0.02	0.1	-0.11
West	0.02	0.01	0.04	0.13 □	-0.11
<i>Respondent characteristics</i>					
Age	0.008 ***	0.008 ***	0.009 ***	0.01 ***	0.00002
Female	0.06 ***	0.08 ***	-0.04	0.03	-0.04
Owns home	0.24 ***	0.23 ***	0.25 ***	0.22 ***	0.32 ***
Years of education	0.05 ***	0.04 ***	0.06 ***	0.06 ***	0.09 ***
US citizen	0.04	0.07	-0.11	0.04	-0.07
Interviewed in Spanish	-0.17 ***	-0.02	0.29 □	-0.24 ***	0.05
Years in community	0.02 ***	0.02 ***	0.03 **	0.01	0.06 *
Commute time (hrs.)	0.003	-0.004	0.05	0.02	-0.07
Monthly hours worked	0.00004	0.0001 □	-0.0001	-0.0001	0.0001
Economic satisfaction	0.15 ***	0.18 ***	0.07 □	0.24 ***	-0.07
Household income	0.04 ***	0.04 ***	0.05 ***	0.05 **	0.03
<i>Race</i>					
Black	-0.2 ***				
Hispanic	-0.27 **				
Asian	-0.18				
<i>Interactions</i>					
Homogeneity*Black	-0.25 **				
Homogeneity*Hispanic	-0.05				
Homogeneity*Asian	0.07				
Constant	1.02 ***	0.85 **	1.15 *	0.97 □	1
n	26,211	19,850	3,339	2,367	655

**Table 2.4 Multilevel linear regression of inter-race trust on community and respondent characteristics: Racial/ethnic group subsamples and full sample with interaction terms for racial/ethnic diversity and race/ethnicity of respondent**

	Full Sample	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian
<i>Community characteristics</i>					
Herfindahl Index of Ethnic Homogeneity (ct)	0.13 **	0.11 **	0.06	0.11	0.04
Percent renters (ct)	-0.0002	-0.0002	-0.0002	-0.0002	-0.001
Percent living in same MSA five years ago (ct)	-0.002 ***	-0.001 **	-0.002 □	-0.003 □	0.0006
Percent population 65+ (ct)	0.0003	-0.0001	0.002	0.001	-0.0009
Percent US citizens (ct)	0.0003	0.0002	-0.00003	-0.00001	0.002
Percent individuals in poverty (ct)	-0.003 ***	-0.003 ***	-0.002	-0.003	0.001
Percent Bachelor's degrees (ct)	-0.00006	-0.00006	-0.001	-0.0002	0.002
Aggregate commute time (hrs.) (ct)	-0.000006	-0.000009	0.00003	-0.000003	0.00005
Gini coefficient (ct)	-0.57 □	-0.25	-0.8	-1.57 □	-0.32
Violent crimes per capita (county)	0.00001 **	0.000007	0.00002	0.000008	0.00002
Nonviolent crimes per capita (county)	-0.000007 **	-0.000007 *	-0.000006	-0.000006	-0.00002
Population density (ct)	-0.000002 **	-0.000003 *	-0.000006 *	-0.0000004	-0.000004
Midwest	-0.03 *	-0.02 □	-0.02	-0.11 □	-0.04
South	-0.09 ***	-0.1 ***	-0.06	-0.08	-0.09
West	-0.01	-0.01	0.008	0.007	-0.05
<i>Respondent characteristics</i>					
Age	0.004 ***	0.004 ***	0.004 ***	0.003 *	0.004 □
Female	0.05 ***	0.07 ***	-0.04 □	0.008	-0.08
Owns home	0.03 *	0.03 *	0.002	0.08 *	-0.08
Years of education	0.04 ***	0.04 ***	0.03 ***	0.07 ***	0.02
US citizen	0.14 ***	0.03	-0.08	0.21 ***	-0.04
Interviewed in Spanish	-0.35 ***	-0.04	-0.06	-0.38 ***	0.83
Years in community	0.0008	-0.001	0.003	0.002	0.06 *
Commute time (hrs.)	-0.03 *	-0.02 □	0.007	-0.06 □	0.02
Monthly hours worked	-0.000009	0.00001	-0.00006	0.00001	-0.0003
Economic satisfaction	0.15 ***	0.16 ***	0.11 ***	0.21 ***	0.03
Household income	0.01 *	0.007 □	0.004	0.02	0.05 *
<i>Race</i>					
White (ref.)					
Black	-0.16 **				
Hispanic	-0.12 *				
Asian	-0.03				
<i>Interactions</i>					
Homogeneity*Black	-0.06				
Homogeneity*Hispanic	-0.02				
Homogeneity*Asian	-0.02				
Constant	1.83 ***	1.8 ***	2.14 ***	2.08 ***	1.58
n	26,211	19,850	3,339	2,367	655

**Table 2.5 Multilevel linear regression of intra-race trust on community and respondent characteristics: Racial/ethnic group subsamples and full sample with interaction terms for racial/ethnic diversity and race/ethnicity of respondent**

	Full Sample	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian
<i>Community characteristics</i>					
Herfindahl Index of Ethnic Homogeneity (ct)	0.12 *	0.08 □	0.03	0.12	0.15
Percent renters (ct)	-0.0005	-0.0002	-0.0006	-0.002	-0.0008
Percent living in same MSA five years ago (ct)	-0.002 ***	-0.001 **	-0.003 **	-0.002	-0.0006
Percent population 65+ (ct)	0.0002	-0.0002	0.002	0.00007	-0.0009
Percent US citizens (ct)	0.0009	0.001	0.0006	0.000007	0.002
Percent individuals in poverty (ct)	-0.003 ***	-0.004 ***	-0.002	0.002	0.0007
Percent Bachelor's degrees (ct)	-0.001	-0.001	-0.002	0.003	-0.0009
Aggregate commute time (hrs.) (ct)	-0.000005	-0.00001	0.00004	-0.00006	0.00004
Gini coefficient (ct)	-0.23	-0.07	-0.87	-0.38	-1.37
Violent crimes per capita (county)	0.000007 □	0.000003	0.00001	0.00001 □	0.00003
Nonviolent crimes per capita (county)	-0.000008 ***	-0.000007 *	-0.000004	-0.00002 *	-0.00003
Population density (ct)	-0.000002 *	-0.000003 **	-0.000004	0.000002	-0.000001
Midwest	0.005	0.1	-0.04	-0.02	-0.02
South	-0.05 **	-0.06 ***	-0.03	-0.02	-0.05
West	-0.00002	-0.006	-0.01	0.06	-0.003
<i>Respondent characteristics</i>					
Age	0.005 ***	0.006 ***	0.003 ***	0.002	0.002
Female	0.02 **	0.04 ***	-0.02	-0.01	-0.11 *
Owns home	0.03 *	0.03 *	0.006	0.06	-0.0007
Years of education	0.03 ***	0.02 ***	0.04 ***	0.06 ***	0.04 *
US citizen	0.05 *	-0.04	-0.05	0.12 **	-0.11 □
Interviewed in Spanish	-0.27 ***	-0.03	-0.13	-0.26 ***	0.62
Years in community	0.005	0.003	0.01	-0.005	0.05 *
Commute time (hrs.)	-0.03 **	-0.03 *	-0.03	-0.05	-0.01
Monthly hours worked	-0.00004	0.000009	-0.00007	-0.000007	-0.0004
Economic satisfaction	0.14 ***	0.16 ***	0.09 **	0.18 ***	0.09
Household income	0.006	0.005	0.004	0.01	0.04 □
<i>Race</i>					
White (ref.)					
Black	-0.13 **				
Hispanic	-0.06				
Asian	0.01				
<i>Interactions</i>					
Homogeneity*Black	-0.12 □				
Homogeneity*Hispanic	-0.06				
Homogeneity*Asian	-0.02				
Constant	1.83 ***	1.874 ***	2.26 ***	1.87 **	2.21
n	26,211	19,850	3,339	2,367	655

The findings so far indicate that whites are distinct in losing trust in contexts of more racial and ethnic diversity. The analyses thus far confirm a few of the hypotheses derived from the symbolic boundaries literature. Intra-race trust is not negatively affected for any of the racial/ethnic groups in this sample. Furthermore, according to the interaction terms, Hispanics and Asians do not report significantly different trust levels compared to whites in more diverse communities. However, the same pattern is observed for inter-race and intra-race trust among Blacks, which complicates the theoretical implications (more on this in the conclusion). Perhaps most importantly, the hypothesis that all racial/ethnic groups will report lower levels of generalized and inter-race trust in contexts of higher diversity is false. According to the symbolic boundaries literature, it appears that whites are most likely to maintain rigid distinctions between themselves and other racial/ethnic groups in contexts of higher diversity. The only result that complicates this conclusion is that whites become less trusting of other whites as well, even though the negative effect is marginal.

The remaining tables, 2.6-2.9, display identical models as those above for each racial/ethnic group along the separate measures of trust with the addition of the percent of population that is Black and Hispanic to further account for insights from the group threat literature.<sup>8</sup> The negative effect of HHI for whites becomes less significant for all three forms of trust in the models that include the percent of Blacks. The models that only includes the additional measure of percent Hispanic population show no relationship between the proportion of this ethnic group with each measure of social trust. The HHI remains highly significant for trust in neighbors and inter-race trust for these particular models. However, the effect on inter-race trust is nullified when the model includes both the percent of Black and Hispanic

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<sup>8</sup> Model 1 includes the addition of percent Black, model 2 only adds percent Hispanic, and model 3 includes both.

population. Interestingly, percent Black is the only diversity measure that negatively affects intra-race trust for whites. Overall, the results in Table 2.6 appear to support the group threat thesis by suggesting that whites have more adverse reactions towards Blacks, even though diversity maintains a significant relationship for two of the three models. These results parallel other research that shows white individuals view Blacks (immigrant and non-immigrant) as dissimilar but do not hold the same negative perception of other minority or immigrant groups (Schachter 2016). However, the negative effect on intra-race trust adds another layer of mystery to this story since whites are becoming less trusting of their own racial group as a result of an increased proportion of Black individuals in their communities.

Results for Blacks, Hispanics, and Asians are markedly different. Black and Asian respondents in this sample are not affected by either racial and ethnic diversity or the percentage of the population that is Black or Hispanic for all three forms of trust. The same is mostly true for Hispanics, except the HHI has a marginal negative effect on trust in neighbors. Overall, the hypothesis that social trust among non-whites will not be affected holds true across the board and further demonstrates the importance of including the group threat hypothesis to this discussion.

**Table 2.6 Multilevel linear regression of all three forms of trust on community and respondent characteristics: White sample with percentage of Black and Hispanic populations added**

	Trust in Neighbors			Inter-Race Trust			Intra-Race Trust		
<i>Community characteristics</i>									
Herfindahl Index of Ethnic Homogeneity (ct)	0.17 **	0.24 ***	0.15 **	0.09 *	0.11 *	0.09 □	0.04	0.08	0.03
Percent renters (ct)	-0.001 *	-0.001 *	-0.001 *	-0.0002	-0.0002	-0.0002	-0.0001	-0.0002	-0.0002
Percent living in same MSA five years ago (ct)	-0.002 □	-0.002 *	-0.002 □	-0.001 **	-0.001 **	-0.001 **	-0.001 **	-0.001 **	-0.001 **
Percent population 65+ (ct)	0.002 □	0.002	0.001	-0.0002	-0.0002	-0.0003	-0.0002	-0.0003	-0.0004
Percent US citizens (ct)	0.002	0.0005	0.001	0.0004	0.00005	0.0002	0.002	0.0009	0.001
Percent individuals in poverty (ct)	-0.006 ***	-0.006 ***	-0.005 ***	-0.003 **	-0.003 ***	-0.003 **	-0.003 **	-0.004 **	-0.003 **
Percent Bachelor's degrees (ct)	0.003 *	0.003 *	0.003 *	-0.00005	-0.0001	-0.0001	-0.001	-0.001 □	-0.001 □
Aggregate commute time (hrs.) (ct)	-0.00001	-0.00001	-0.00001	-0.000009	-0.000009	-0.000009	-0.00001	-0.00001	-0.00001
Gini coefficient (ct)	0.85 *	0.83 *	0.85 *	-0.24	-0.25	-0.24	0.08	0.07	0.09
Violent crimes per capita (county)	0.00002 □	0.00002	0.00002 □	0.000007	0.000007	0.000007	0.000004	0.000003	0.000004
Nonviolent crimes per capita (county)	-0.00001 **	-0.00001 **	-0.00001 **	-0.000007 *	-0.000007 *	-0.000007 *	-0.000007 *	-0.000007 *	-0.000007 *
Population density (ct)	-0.000005 ***	-0.000005 ***	-0.000005 ***	-0.000003 *	-0.000003 *	-0.000003 *	-0.000003 **	-0.000003 **	-0.000003 **
Midwest	-0.01	-0.01	-0.01	-0.02 □	-0.02	-0.02	0.01	0.01	0.01
South	-0.03 □	-0.04 *	-0.03 □	-0.1 ***	-0.1 ***	-0.1 ***	-0.06 **	-0.06 ***	-0.05 **
West	0.004	0.02	0.01	-0.02	-0.02	-0.02	-0.01	-0.004	-0.009
<i>Respondent characteristics</i>									
Age	0.008 ***	0.008 ***	0.008 ***	0.004 ***	0.004 ***	0.004 ***	0.006 ***	0.006 ***	0.006 ***
Female	0.08 ***	0.08 ***	0.08 ***	0.07 ***	0.07 ***	0.07 ***	0.04 ***	0.04 ***	0.04 ***
Owns home	0.23 ***	0.23 ***	0.23 ***	0.03 *	0.03 *	0.03 *	0.03 *	0.03 *	0.03 *
Years of education	0.04 ***	0.04 ***	0.04 ***	0.04 ***	0.04 ***	0.04 ***	0.02 ***	0.02 ***	0.02 ***
US citizen	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.02	0.02	0.02	-0.04	-0.04	-0.04
Interviewed in Spanish	-0.02	-0.02	-0.02	-0.04	-0.04	-0.04	-0.03	-0.03	-0.03
Years in community	0.01 ***	0.02 ***	0.01 ***	-0.001	-0.001	-0.001	0.003	0.003	0.003
Commute time (hrs.)	-0.004	-0.004	-0.004	-0.02 □	-0.02 □	-0.02 □	-0.03 *	-0.03 *	-0.03 *
Monthly hours worked	0.0001 □	0.0001 □	0.0001 □	0.00001	0.00001	0.00001	0.000009	0.000009	0.00001
Economic satisfaction	0.18 ***	0.18 ***	0.18 ***	0.16 ***	0.16 ***	0.16 ***	0.16 ***	0.16 ***	0.16 ***
Household income	0.04 ***	0.04 ***	0.04 ***	0.007 □	0.007 □	0.007 □	0.005	0.004	0.005
<i>Community Racial/Ethnic Composition</i>									
Percent Black	-0.002 **		-0.002 **	-0.0005		-0.0005	-0.001 *		-0.001 *
Percent Hispanic		-0.0007	-0.001		-0.0003	-0.0004		-0.0004	-0.0007
Constant	0.79 **	0.88 **	0.86 **	1.79 ***	1.82 ***	1.81 ***	1.71 ***	1.77 ***	1.76 ***
n	19,850	19,850	19,850	19,850	19,850	19,850	19,850	19,850	19,850

**Table 2.7 Multilevel linear regression of all three forms of trust on community and respondent characteristics: Black sample with percentage of Black and Hispanic populations added**

	Trust in Neighbors			Inter-Race Trust			Intra-Race Trust		
<i>Community characteristics</i>									
Herfindahl Index of Ethnic Homogeneity (ct)	-0.03	-0.04	-0.03	0.08	0.07	0.08	0.04	0.02	0.04
Percent renters (ct)	0.0002	0.0002	0.0002	-0.00003	-0.0001	-0.00002	-0.0004	-0.0007	-0.0004
Percent living in same MSA five years ago (ct)	-0.002	-0.002	-0.002	-0.002	-0.002 □	-0.002	-0.003 *	-0.003 **	-0.003 *
Percent population 65+ (ct)	0.002	0.002	0.002	0.001	0.002	0.002	0.002	0.002	0.002
Percent US citizens (ct)	0.003	0.002	0.002	0.0003	0.0008	0.0009	0.001	0.0005	0.0007
Percent individuals in poverty (ct)	-0.009 **	-0.009 **	-0.009 **	-0.002	-0.002	-0.002	-0.001	-0.002	-0.001
Percent Bachelor's degrees (ct)	0.0007	0.0004	0.0004	-0.001	-0.0006	-0.0009	-0.002	-0.002	-0.002
Aggregate commute time (hrs.) (ct)	0.00001	0.00001	0.00001	0.00003	0.00003	0.00003	0.00004	0.00004	0.00004
Gini coefficient (ct)	-0.55	-0.54	-0.54	-0.82	-0.81	-0.83	-0.9	-0.87	-0.89
Violent crimes per capita (county)	-0.000004	-0.000004	-0.000004	0.00002	0.00002	0.00002	0.00001	0.00001	0.00001
Nonviolent crimes per capita (county)	-0.000003	-0.000002	-0.000002	-0.000006	-0.000006	-0.000006	-0.000004	-0.000004	-0.000004
Population density (ct)	-0.000006 *	-0.000006 *	-0.000006 *	-0.000006 *	-0.000006 *	-0.000006 *	-0.000004	-0.000004	-0.000004
Midwest	-0.04	-0.05	-0.05	-0.01	-0.01	-0.01	-0.03	-0.04	-0.03
South	-0.02	-0.02	-0.02	-0.05	-0.06	-0.05	-0.01	-0.03	-0.009
West	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.01	-0.0002	0.005	-0.009	-0.01	-0.004
<i>Respondent characteristics</i>									
Age	0.009 ***	0.009 ***	0.009 ***	0.004 ***	0.004 ***	0.004 ***	0.003 ***	0.003 ***	0.003 ***
Female	-0.04	-0.04	-0.04	-0.04 □	-0.04 □	-0.04 □	-0.02	-0.02	-0.02
Owns home	0.25 ***	0.25 ***	0.25 ***	0.004	0.002	0.004	0.009	0.006	0.009
Years of education	0.06 ***	0.06 ***	0.06 ***	0.03 ***	0.03 ***	0.03 ***	0.04 ***	0.04 ***	0.04 ***
US citizen	-0.11	-0.1	-0.1	-0.08	-0.08	-0.08	-0.05	-0.04	-0.04
Interviewed in Spanish	0.29 □	0.29 □	0.29 □	-0.06	-0.06	-0.06	-0.13	-0.13	-0.13
Years in community	0.03 **	0.03 **	0.03 **	0.003	0.003	0.003	0.01	0.01	0.01
Commute time (hrs.)	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.008	0.007	0.008	-0.03	-0.03	-0.03
Monthly hours worked	-0.0001	-0.0001	-0.0001	-0.00007	-0.00006	-0.00006	-0.00008	-0.00007	-0.00008
Economic satisfaction	0.07 □	0.07 □	0.07 □	0.11 ***	0.11 ***	0.11 ***	0.09 **	0.09 **	0.09 **
Household income	0.05 ***	0.05 ***	0.05 ***	0.004	0.004	0.004	0.005	0.004	0.005
<i>Community Racial/Ethnic Composition</i>									
Percent Black	-0.00002		-0.0001	-0.0006		-0.0005	-0.0008		-0.0008
Percent Hispanic		-0.001	-0.001		0.001	0.001		-0.0002	-0.0008
Constant	1.15 *	1.22 *	1.21 *	2.08 ***	2.05 ***	2.03 ***	2.18 ***	2.27 ***	2.23 ***
n	3,339	3,339	3,339	3,339	3,339	3,339	3,339	3,339	3,339



**Table 2.8 Multilevel linear regression of all three forms of trust on community and respondent characteristics: Hispanic sample with percentage of Black and Hispanic populations added**

	Trust in Neighbors			Inter-Race Trust			Intra-Race Trust		
<i>Community characteristics</i>									
Herfindahl Index of Ethnic Homogeneity (ct)	0.24 □	0.24	0.23 □	0.11	0.12	0.12	0.09	0.1	0.1
Percent renters (ct)	-0.0004	-0.0004	-0.0004	0.0002	-0.0003	-0.0003	-0.002	-0.002	-0.002
Percent living in same MSA five years ago (ct)	-0.003	-0.003	-0.003	-0.003 □	-0.002	-0.002	-0.003 □	-0.003 □	-0.003 □
Percent population 65+ (ct)	0.0007	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.0005	0.0004	-0.0001	-0.001	-0.001
Percent US citizens (ct)	0.002	0.002	0.002	-0.0001	-0.0009	-0.0008	-0.00004	-0.001	-0.001
Percent individuals in poverty (ct)	-0.006 *	-0.006 *	-0.006 *	-0.003	-0.002	-0.002	0.002	0.003	0.003
Percent Bachelor's degrees (ct)	0.003	0.003	0.003	-0.0002	-0.0009	-0.0009	0.002	0.001	0.001
Aggregate commute time (hrs.) (ct)	-0.00002	-0.00002	-0.00002	-0.000003	-0.000003	-0.000003	-0.00003	-0.00003	-0.00003
Gini coefficient (ct)	-0.79	-0.78	-0.77	-1.57 □	-1.6 □	-1.59 □	-0.36	-0.39	-0.39
Violent crimes per capita (county)	0.000005	0.000005	0.000005	0.000007	0.000007	0.000007	0.00001	0.00001	0.00001
Nonviolent crimes per capita (county)	-0.000004	-0.000004	-0.000004	-0.000006	-0.000005	-0.000005	-0.00001 □	-0.00001	-0.00001
Population density (ct)	-0.0000004	-0.0000004	-0.0000004	-0.0000004	-0.0000003	-0.0000003	0.000001	0.000002	0.000002
Midwest	-0.004	-0.003	-0.004	-0.11 □	-0.11 □	-0.11 □	-0.007	-0.009	-0.007
South	0.1	0.09	0.09	-0.08	-0.07	-0.07	-0.03	-0.02	-0.02
West	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.008	0.02	0.02	0.07	0.08	0.08
<i>Respondent characteristics</i>									
Age	0.01 ***	0.009 ***	0.01 ***	0.003 *	0.003 *	0.003 *	0.002	0.002	0.002
Female	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.008	0.008	0.008	-0.01	-0.01	-0.01
Owns home	0.22 ***	0.21 ***	0.21 ***	0.08 *	0.08 *	0.08 *	0.06	0.07 □	0.07 □
Years of education	0.06 ***	0.06 ***	0.06 ***	0.07 ***	0.07 ***	0.07 ***	0.06 ***	0.06 ***	0.06 ***
US citizen	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.21 ***	0.21 ***	0.21 ***	0.13 **	0.13 **	0.13 **
Interviewed in Spanish	-0.24 ***	-0.25 ***	-0.25 ***	-0.38 ***	-0.38 ***	-0.38 ***	-0.26 ***	-0.26 ***	-0.26 ***
Years in community	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.003	0.003	0.003	-0.004	-0.004	-0.004
Commute time (hrs.)	0.02	0.02	0.02	-0.06 □	-0.06 □	-0.06 □	-0.05	-0.05	-0.05
Monthly hours worked	-0.0001	-0.0001	-0.0001	0.00001	0.00001	0.00001	0.000006	0.000004	-0.000004
Economic satisfaction	0.24 ***	0.24 ***	0.24 ***	0.21 ***	0.21 ***	0.21 ***	0.18 ***	0.18 ***	0.18 ***
Household income	0.06 **	0.05 **	0.06 **	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.01	0.01	0.01
<i>Community Racial/Ethnic Composition</i>									
Percent Black	-0.0003		-0.00009	0.0002		-0.0001	0.0007		0.0003
Percent Hispanic		0.0006	0.0006		-0.001	-0.001		-0.001	-0.001
Constant	0.95 □	0.91 □	0.91 □	2.08 ***	2.17 ***	2.17 ***	1.89 ***	2 ***	2 ***
n	2,367	2,367	2,367	2,367	2,367	2,367	2,367	2,367	2,367

**Table 2.9 Multilevel linear regression of all three forms of trust on community and respondent characteristics: Asian sample with percentage of Black and Hispanic populations added**

	Trust in Neighbors			Inter-Race Trust			Intra-Race Trust		
<i>Community characteristics</i>									
Herfindahl Index of Ethnic Homogeneity (ct)	0.32	0.31	0.3	0.04	0.04	0.05	0.17	0.15	0.18
Percent renters (ct)	-0.0006	-0.0005	-0.0005	-0.002	-0.001	-0.0001	-0.0008	-0.0009	-0.0009
Percent living in same MSA five years ago (ct)	-0.003	-0.003	-0.003	0.0005	0.0005	0.0003	-0.0008	-0.0008	-0.001
Percent population 65+ (ct)	0.001	-0.0003	-0.0004	-0.001	-0.0002	-0.0002	-0.0009	-0.00003	0.0001
Percent US citizens (ct)	0.002	0.001	0.001	0.002	0.002	0.002	0.002	0.002	0.002
Percent individuals in poverty (ct)	-0.006	-0.006	-0.005	0.0008	0.0009	0.0006	0.0004	0.0006	0.0003
Percent Bachelor's degrees (ct)	0.003	0.002	0.002	0.002	0.002	0.002	-0.0009	-0.0001	0.00007
Aggregate commute time (hrs.) (ct)	0.00007	0.00006	0.00006	0.00005	0.00006	0.00006	0.00004	0.00004	0.00004
Gini coefficient (ct)	0.75	0.86	0.88	-0.34	-0.31	-0.37	-1.42	-1.38	-1.46
Violent crimes per capita (county)	0.00005	0.00005	0.00005	0.00002	0.00002	0.00002	0.00003	0.00003	0.00003
Nonviolent crimes per capita (county)	-0.00003	-0.00003	-0.00003	-0.00002	-0.00002	-0.00002	-0.00003	-0.00003	-0.00003
Population density (ct)	-0.000002	-0.000002	-0.000002	-0.000004	-0.000004	-0.000004	-0.000001	-0.000001	-0.000001
Midwest	-0.04	-0.04	-0.04	-0.04	-0.04	-0.04	-0.03	-0.02	-0.02
South	-0.11	-0.1	-0.1	-0.09	-0.09	-0.1	-0.06	-0.05	-0.06
West	-0.11	-0.1	-0.1	-0.05	-0.06	-0.06	-0.001	-0.01	-0.01
<i>Respondent characteristics</i>									
Age	0.00004	0.0002	0.0001	0.004 □	0.004 □	0.004 □	0.002	0.002	0.002
Female	-0.04	-0.04	-0.04	-0.08	-0.08	-0.08	-0.11 *	-0.11 *	-0.11 *
Owns home	0.32 ***	0.32 ***	0.32 ***	-0.08	-0.08	-0.08	-0.001	-0.0005	-0.0006
Years of education	0.09 ***	0.09 ***	0.09 ***	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.04 *	0.04 *	0.04 *
US citizen	-0.07	-0.07	-0.07	-0.04	-0.04	-0.04	-0.11 □	-0.11 □	-0.11 □
Interviewed in Spanish	0.06	0.06	0.05	0.84	0.83	0.84	0.63	0.62	0.63
Years in community	0.06 *	0.06 *	0.06 *	0.06 *	0.06 *	0.06 *	0.05 *	0.05 *	0.05 *
Commute time (hrs.)	-0.07	-0.07	-0.07	0.02	0.02	0.02	-0.01	-0.009	-0.009
Monthly hours worked	0.0001	0.0001	0.0001	-0.0003	-0.0004	-0.0004	-0.0004	-0.0004	-0.0004
Economic satisfaction	-0.07	-0.07	-0.07	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.09	0.09	0.09
Household income	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.05 *	0.05 *	0.05 *	0.04 □	0.04 □	0.04 □
<i>Community Racial/Ethnic Composition</i>									
Percent Black	0.00009		-0.0004	0.0004		0.0006	0.0007		0.001
Percent Hispanic		-0.002	-0.003		0.001	0.001		0.002	0.002
Constant	1.01	1.03	1.02	1.6	1.54	1.57	2.25	2.17	2.22
n	655	655	655	655	655	655	655	655	655

## Discussion

The results both confirm Putnam's (2007) original conclusions on one hand, and on the other, expose the underlying importance of whites' perceptions of both diversity generally and Blacks specifically. Contrary to the "contact" or "conflict" theories, the replication models for trust in neighbors and inter-race trust corroborate Putnam's (2007) "constrict" thesis since increased racial and ethnic diversity erodes both forms of trust for the full SCCBS sample. However, the same is not true for intra-race trust since the effect is only marginally significant.

When accounting for racial variations, whites are clearly the only group driving these relationships for all three forms of social trust since Asians and Hispanics are not affected positively or negatively by diversity, but Blacks actually report lower levels of trust in their neighbors when compared to whites, no matter how diverse the community is. Furthermore, the percentage of Black population appears to be equally as important as the HHI in shaping whites' reported trust in neighbors, and it is the only negative indicator shaping intra-race trust. However, while racial/ethnic diversity is negatively associated with inter-race trust for whites, the effect is nullified when the model includes both the percentage of Black and Hispanic populations. Consequently, the presence of Black individuals, as opposed to general racial/ethnic diversity, is apparently the driving force behind whites reporting lower trust, especially for individuals of their own racial group, and to a lesser extent, their neighbors and people of other racial/ethnic groups. Results for Blacks, Hispanics, and Asians further demonstrate the constrict hypothesis falls short of explaining the nuances involved in patterns of social trust. All three groups report no effect of racial/ethnic diversity or the percentage of Blacks and Hispanics in shaping all three forms of trust. However, it is worth noting that Hispanics show a marginally negative effect for the HHI on their trust in neighbors.

Taken together, these analyses confirm the group threat hypothesis and importance of symbolic boundaries in shaping race relations, which also provides necessary reflection on Putnam's (2007) claims. The group threat perspective helps contextualize the results for whites since the presence of Blacks is equally or more impactful than general diversity, suggesting that whites fear an upending of the current social arrangements (i.e., their position of privilege) and negative attitudes towards minorities, in this case Blacks specifically, become more pronounced as the proportion of this racial/ethnic group grows (Blumer 1958; Blalock 1967; Quillian 1995; Taylor 1998; Dixon 2006). Conversely, the three racial/ethnic minority groups in this sample are not affected by the presence of other minorities. According to the symbolic boundaries literature, whites are also most concerned with maintaining rigid distinctions between themselves and non-whites in contexts of higher diversity, especially when it comes to the Black-white divide (see Lamont 2000; Lamont and Molnar 2002; Miller 2015; Schachter 2016). These results also support the "oppressive othering" process where whites perpetuate the racial hierarchical system by classifying certain groups as inherently inferior and different from the dominant group (Schwalbe et al. 2000). These results help contextualize Putnam's findings by pinpointing the source of distrust that originates from increased racial and ethnic diversity. A loss of social trust in American communities stems from racist ideologies among whites, specifically in regards to Black Americans.

## **Conclusion**

Scholars have assessed the relationship between increased racial and ethnic diversity and social trust thoroughly over the past twenty years. The primary theory stresses that there is a negative relationship between the two (Alesina and La Ferrara 2002; Putnam 2007) while other

studies find that specific factors associated with racial/ethnic diversity like culture, nationality, linguistic variation, or segregation are actually driving down social trust (Leigh 2006; Uslander 2010; Rothwell 2012; Gundalch and Traunmuller 2014; Robinson 2016). The literature also reports more nuanced processes where the negative effect of diversity is mediated or reversed for individuals with more diverse social networks (Stolle, Soroka, and Johnston 2008; Glanville 2016) and that whites are specifically to blame for the declining rates of social trust (Marshall and Stolle 2004; Abascal and Baldassarri 2015).

Regardless of the multitude of conflicting results, Putnam's (2007) assertion that all individuals in communities with higher rates of racial and ethnic diversity "hunker down" and become less trusting of their neighbors, other races, and people of their own racial/ethnic group remains one of the central focal points of the literature. Using the 2000 SCCBS, he performs a single multilevel linear regression model to demonstrate this negative relationship between diversity (measured using the Herfindahl-Hirschman Index) and trust in neighbors, but the bulk of his discussion rests on results from bivariate correlation analysis that show inter-racial and intra-racial trust are similarly deteriorating from increased diversity. More recent studies critique his methods using the same data by calling into question the use of the Herfindahl-Hirschman Index (see Abascal and Baldassarri 2015), but no one has revisited his original analyses and subjected them to more rigorous analysis and interpretation.

This study re-evaluates Putnam's (2007) conclusions both methodologically and theoretically. I reproduce his singular regression model for trust in neighbors and apply it to inter-race and intra-race trust, investigate potential variations across race groups (white, Black, Hispanic, and Asian) for all three forms of trust, and consider the more direct effect of percentage of minority groups (e.g., percent Black and Hispanic population) to test whether this

relationship is better explained by the logic of group threat theory. Theoretically, I reassess his discussion of the contact, conflict, and constrict theories through the replications discussed above. The analysis of differences for each racial group are subjected to the symbolic boundaries literature since this research highlights how racial and ethnic groups are created and maintained through stereotypes and cultural conceptions of difference (Nagel 1994; Lamont 2000; Lamont and Molnar 2002; Charles 2006; Miller 2015; Schachter 2016). The presence of minority groups stems from insights of the group threat hypothesis since dominant race and ethnic groups become more fearful and tensions flare as the relative size of minorities increases (Blumer 1958; Blalock 1967; Quillian 1995; Taylor 1998; Dixon 2006).

The results suggest the need to bring both of these theories to the forefront of this literature, but of course, more detailed data would enable a better understanding of these processes. For instance, scholars suggest that the changing “color line” of America is more complex than the simple categorization of whites and Blacks (Bonilla-Silva 2004; Lee and Bean 2007; Frank, Akresh, and Lu 2010). Research on the color line has demonstrated how Asians and Latinos are experiencing more freedom in identifying as either multiracial or white, helping blur the racial boundaries for those groups with the majority group in the US, which is not afforded to Black Americans (Lee and Bean 2007). Similarly, the Black exceptionalism literature highlights the unique experience of persistent stratification and disadvantage for Black Americans, as compared to other racial/ethnic minorities (see Gans 2005), which compels other minority groups to intentionally distance themselves from Blacks in America (see Marrow 2011; Parisi, Lichter, and Taquino 2011). Based on these insights, data asking for non-white respondents to report their own racialized identity to assess whether, for example, Hispanics actually self-identify more closely to a white racial identity as opposed to a Black identity. Conversely,

panethnic movements in the US to create the Asian and Hispanic racial/ethnic group identities intentionally drew similarities between themselves and Black Americans in order to highlight their experiences of disadvantage and discrimination (Mora and Okamoto 2020). In order to better address the issue of Black exceptionalism, an analysis of the Black/Non-black divide could be utilized, but the distribution of racial/ethnic groups in this sample make that difficult. The SCCBS falls short of providing these options since it consists of substantially fewer Blacks, Hispanics, and especially Asians in the sample so having more representation can enable researchers to parse out variations like these *within* these different non-white groups.

This analysis parallels other areas of racial/ethnic studies within sociology. Research on the racist roots of neighborhood preferences similarly finds that whites prefer to live in homogeneous neighborhoods, and those that believe negative stereotypes of non-white groups are even more influenced by the racial/ethnic composition of where they choose to live (Krysan, Couper, Farley, and Forman 2009). Individuals of dominant social groups, in this case whites, use cultural logic to justify the existence of systems of oppression, which in turn, perpetuates and deepens the distributional inequalities of power, wealth, and status (see Jackman 1994). The theory of systemic racism emphasizes that racial/ethnic oppression in the US uniquely impacts African Americans since they have been systematically subjected to economic exploitation and structural oppression from the very beginning of this country (Feagin 2006). Cultural and structural realities are fundamentally intertwined when it comes to the creation and persistence of oppression. More attention needs to be placed on the inherent role of cultural artifacts like racial/ethnic stereotypes and racist ideologies when considering matters of social trust.

This study calls into question the simplified conclusion Putnam (2007) put forth in understanding how racial and ethnic diversity affects social trust, but future research can more

adequately reassess this relationship. A mixed method approach that incorporates interviews and a new survey design that includes some of these insights can dramatically uncover more illuminating processes and dynamics shaping how individuals of different racial/ethnic groups view those living in their communities. A more nuanced measurement of social trust can also help achieve this goal. For instance, Uslaner (2002) emphasizes the importance of generalized trust, as opposed to particularized trust, since it refers to viewing people different from oneself as sharing the same values and common bonds. Therefore, generalized trust has more power in fostering social cohesion and stronger communities; whereas, particularized trust is only applicable to people of the same social groups. Questions that distinguish between an individual's trust levels of their neighbors, people of their own race group, people of different racial/ethnic groups, and so on, along these distinctions can provide a better understanding of the state of social trust in the US. More importantly, this methodology can help expose the underlying social and cultural mechanisms shaping how much individuals trust one another.

The importance of generalized trust is especially notable given the observed anxiety among whites, particularly blue-collar non-college educated whites, over losing their "culture" and feeling like outsiders are ruining the country (see Green 2017). The current administration intentionally dramatizes these fears and concerns to retain power. This study helps support the notion that the prevailing political discourse did not reignite some long-forgotten fear of the "other," but rather, that racist perceptions and ideologies among whites have persisted over time and were simply lying dormant for decades. Providing more nuanced analysis and interpretations to Putnam's (2007) original work helps dispel the notion that racial/ethnic diversity has deleterious effects on communities. This rehashing of Putnam is especially important since his conclusions have been co-opted by far-right groups to justify their radical stances against



immigration (see Dalmia 2017). The observed negative relationships in this study suggest that the loss of social trust, and therefore the weakening of social cohesion, lie in stereotypes about Blacks, in particular, that whites continue to espouse. Enhancing social trust in the US, especially generalized trust, will require deeper cultural reflection aimed at eradicating racism and holistically embracing all facets of diversity.

### **Chapter 3: “Are Americans ‘Hunkering Down’ in Response to Increased Racial and Ethnic Diversity?: Revisiting Putnam’s Analysis on Civic Engagement”**

#### **Introduction**

Civic engagement is considered to be vital in maintaining a healthy society. This phenomenon is believed to produce a multitude of positive outcomes, such as a vibrant civil society, stronger democracy, higher levels of education, increased volunteering, and economic growth (Coleman 1988; Putnam 2000; Rupasingha, Goetz, and Freshwater 2000; Paxton 2002). Therefore, there has been a continued clamor among academics to diagnose why there appears to be an erosion of civic engagement in America. The popularity of this topic undoubtedly stems from Robert Putnam’s book, *Bowling Alone* (2000), which demonstrates that during the late 1900s, the US witnessed a dramatic decline in several forms of civic engagement, such as political involvement, membership in associations, volunteering, and informal social connections with family, friends, and other community members. He attributes this loss of communal activity mostly to generational differences, but also highlights the role of suburbanization, increased consumption of television, and changes in the economy. Not all agree, however, since other scholars find that several measures of civic engagement did not decline between the 1970s-1990s: associational membership, informal social interactions, and trust in institutions (Paxton 1999; Wuthnow 2002). More recently, there is evidence that group membership and time spent with neighbors have not diminished well into the twenty-first century, 2008-2011 (Weiss, Paxton, Velasco, and Ressler 2019).

Those who argue that there has been a decline disagree over the source of this downward trend. One of the leading theories stresses the importance of economic inequality. Some studies

on this topic find that income inequality is most responsible for the decline of social trust, volunteering, membership to community associations, and giving to charity, but not political involvement (Costa and Kahn 2003; Uslaner and Brown 2005), while others show that it is responsible for a decline in political participation and organizational membership (Lim and Sander 2013). Another perspective attributes this weakening of the civic spirit in the United States to increased racial and ethnic diversity. Studies have shown that both increased income inequality and racial/ethnic diversity have negative impacts on participation in community associations and lower levels of civic engagement broadly speaking (Alesina and La Ferrara 2000; Hero 2003). Interestingly, others find that racial and ethnic diversity does reduce community engagement, but that the negative effect is nullified once neighborhood poverty rates are added to the analysis (Fieldhouse and Cutts 2010). A more recent study examines this relationship across several countries, and finds that the negative impact of racial and ethnic diversity is only observed in the US, suggesting contextual factors like a history of racial oppression could driving this pattern (Van Der Meer and Tolsma 2014).

One of the most cited works on the relationship between racial and ethnic diversity and civic engagement comes from Robert Putnam's (2007) address following receipt of the Johan Skytte Prize, a prestigious award given annually to acknowledge remarkable achievements of political scientists. The research he presents is derived from analysis of the 2000 Social Capital Community Benchmark Survey (SCCBS), which was administered in roughly 40 American cities and linked individual-level data to aggregate data for individuals' census tracts. He uses multilevel linear regression controlling for various individual and community characteristics to show that racial and ethnic diversity is associated with lower levels of trust in neighbors. Further, he claims that the data indicate that individuals residing in places with more racial/ethnic

diversity withdraw from social and civic life, as evidenced by lower levels of community well-being and cohesion, such as voter registration, activism, volunteering, giving to charity, number of friends, happiness, and consumption of television.

Significantly, Putnam's claims are based on unreported analyses.<sup>9</sup> Yet they have influenced scholarly and popular discourses pertaining to racial and ethnic heterogeneity. Interestingly, studies using other data contradict his claim (Rothwell 2012; Van der Meer and Tolsma 2014). Even studies that do verify this negative relationship in the US usually only witness it for certain forms of civic engagement (Costa and Kahn 2003; Uslaner and Brown 2005), while others argue that aggregate declines in civic engagement reflect economic inequality rather than racial/ethnic heterogeneity (Alesina and La Ferrara 2000; Hero 2003; Fieldhouse and Cutts 2010).

In this study, I revisit Putnam's own data to determine whether his claims withstand more rigorous, multivariate analyses predicting outcomes pertaining to three categories of engagement: 1) Perception of Community, 2) Political & Community Involvement, and 3) Relationships & Well-Being. Drawing from other research, I also investigate whether and how the patterns Putnam reported are instead associated with economic inequality (his original model also included the Gini index). Although the analyses largely support Putnam's claims that racial/ethnic heterogeneity diminish individuals' assessments of the quality of their community, they generally do not support his arguments linking diversity to withdrawal from Political & Community Involvement or negatively affecting a person's Relationships & Well-Being. Furthermore, inequality likewise had very little impact on the outcomes in this study. These

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<sup>9</sup> He mentions that all measures of civic engagement are negatively correlated with racial/ethnic diversity, and that the same multilevel regression analyses were conducted with similar results. However, he does not provide any results of either of these analyses.

results suggest the need to reframe the debate about civic engagement in the United States in order to fully understand what is responsible for its decline.

## **Literature Review**

Putnam's work on the erosion of civic engagement and other measures of community-level social capital remains to be some of the most influential research over the past twenty years. His seminal book, *Bowling Alone* (2000), tracked the collapse of the American civic spirit throughout the late 1900s by showing how political participation, volunteering, and informal social connections in the workplace and with friends and family all declined, which he attributes to the aging of the "civic" generation, increased consumption of television, suburbanization, and changes in work and the economy. He helped create the Social Capital Community Benchmark Survey (SCCBS), which was administered in 2000 in about 40 American cities, in order to further this investigation. Several years later, Putnam (2007) used these data to test the relationship between increased racial/ethnic diversity and roughly twenty different behavioral and attitudinal measures of social capital.

His conclusions formed the basis of his *constrict theory*, which states that all individuals become less trusting and disengage from their community in contexts with more racial and ethnic heterogeneity. He linked census-tract data from the 2000 Census of Population to the 2000 SCCBS to perform multilevel regression on one form of social trust, trust in neighbors, with controls for individual- and aggregate-level measures of demographic and socioeconomic information as well as other community characteristics. This test confirms the negative relationship that he presented from bivariate analyses for the other forms of social trust (e.g., inter-race and intra-race) as well as a full list of civic engagement measures: reduced confidence

in local government and local news media, lower political efficacy, declining voter registration, more interest and knowledge about politics as well as more participation in protests and reform groups, lower levels of faith that those in the community will cooperate to solve problems (e.g., conserving water or energy), less involvement in community projects, reduced likelihood of volunteering or giving to charity, reporting having fewer confidants and close friends as well as being less happy and lower quality of life, and spending more time watching television.

However, he did not report the findings of multivariate regression analysis for these variables, even though he states, “*Every one of the correlates of ethnic homogeneity listed above ... passes this same stringent multivariate, multilevel test*” (Putnam 2007: 153)<sup>10</sup>. Yet, these findings have become influential in the literature and were picked up by the popular press (Martin 2007; Jonas 2007; Todd 2014). The remaining section covers some of the literature on civic engagement and social cohesion in the US by highlighting the mixed results and various explanations documented over the past couple of decades, and establishes the need to replicate Putnam’s work directly and to test his assertions more rigorously.

Scholarship has documented results that conflict with Putnam’s (2007) assertions for various forms of civic engagement and social capital. For instance, research finds that trust in institutions, associational membership, and informal socializing with neighbors and friends have not declined between the 1970s-1990s (Paxton 1999). Similarly, another study documents that informal social interactions and membership in formal associations have not declined since the 1960s-1970s, but that more marginalized groups (lower levels of education, lower incomes, and/or African Americans) report less involvement in political participation, volunteering, and

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<sup>10</sup> Putnam refers to ethnic homogeneity, instead of heterogeneity, because he uses the Herfindahl-Hirschman Index, which measures homogeneity. This index is described further in the Data & Methods section. Also, it is worth noting that the italics are from the original text.

membership to associations when compared to individuals from more privileged groups during this period of time (Wuthnow 2002). There is evidence that group membership and informal socializing with neighbors have not diminished when examined from 2008-2011 (Weiss et al. 2019).

In spite of these mixed accounts about the state of social capital in the US, research continually demonstrates that economic conditions, and economic inequality in particular, are driving down different forms of civic engagement. For instance, an early study on this topic finds that income inequality is most responsible for the decline of volunteering and membership to community associations throughout the second half of the twentieth century (Costa and Kahn 2003). Income inequality also erodes social trust, which in turn, leads to people performing fewer communal actions, like giving to charity and volunteering, but it shows no effects on political engagement (Uslaner and Brown 2005). Research examining the combined effects of both income inequality and economic segregation shows that high-poverty neighborhoods become less politically active while segregated affluent neighborhoods report higher levels of voter participation and mobilization during periods of increased inequality (Widestrom 2009). The effects of recessions also impact people's trust in institutions like the federal government (Owens and Cook 2013), but other researchers find that economic inequality, as opposed to economic hardship like recessions and unemployment, negatively impact civic engagement more broadly (Lim and Sander 2013).

The other competing thread in this literature stresses the role of racial and ethnic diversity, which became more popularized, and consequently debated, with the work of Putnam (2007), even though he was not the first scholar to test for or suggest that increased racial and ethnic diversity reduces civic engagement. An early study on this topic tests for the effects of

income inequality and racial and ethnic diversity and finds that both have negative impacts on participation in community associations (Alesina and La Ferrara 2000). Similarly, research shows that a combination of economic and racial inequality leads to communities having lower levels of community-level social capital, and the decline is more severe for Black Americans (Hero 2003). A study using the SCCBS finds that racial and ethnic diversity does lead to people being less involved in their communities, but that the effect is nullified when the poverty rate of the neighborhood is considered (Fieldhouse and Cutts 2010). Race/ethnic heterogeneity, income inequality, and racial segregation all negatively affect different forms of volunteering (Rotolo and Wilson 2014). Other scholarship finds that racial segregation, and not racial and ethnic diversity, is actually decreasing both volunteering and social trust, which they argue are mutually reinforcing (Rothwell 2012). However, a meta-analysis of the literature finds support for the “constrict” hypothesis at the neighborhood level, but that there is little evidence of this relationship outside of the US, suggesting that the contextual factors matter more than racial/ethnic diversity alone (e.g., a rich history of racial oppression) (Van der Meer and Tolsma 2014).

### **The Current Study**

In this study, I apply Putnam’s (2007) singular multilevel regression model to all of the civic engagement measures he mentions in his conclusions. The primary purpose is to test, and report, the effect that racial and ethnic diversity has on an individual’s Perceptions of their Communities, their Political & Community Involvement, and their Relationships & Well-Being (all are defined in next section), while controlling for the same respondent characteristics and community contextual factors that he used in his model. Additionally, the analysis examines the



importance of economic inequality in this discussion<sup>11</sup> since this is the other leading argument for why civic engagement has declined in the US.

Revisiting Putnam's (2007) original work to officially report the results of his analysis is necessary because of the conflicting results and competing theories within this literature. His constrict theory and conclusions remain to be one of the leading narratives within this field of study, even though there is plenty of evidence that contradicts it and suggests a more complex series of factors is actually behind the lower levels of civic engagement in the US. Therefore, it is necessary to test these conclusions directly by investigating the dependent variables that he briefly skims over in his original writing. The next section discusses the data and research strategy employed in order to directly test Putnam's (2007) claims that all individuals "hunker down" as their community becomes more racially/ethnically diverse.

## **Data and Methods**

The primary data source for this analysis is Putnam's (2000) Social Capital Community Benchmark Survey (SCCBS). The sample size consists of nearly 30,000 respondents from both a nationally representative sample (3,003) and subsamples of 41 US communities (26,730), ranging from large metropolitan areas like Chicago and Los Angeles to rural areas in South Dakota and West Virginia. Following Putnam (2007), I link the data to census-tract level data from the 2000 Census of Population to account for measures of community-level conditions (See Tables 3.1 and 3.2 for full list and descriptive statistics below).

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<sup>11</sup> Putnam (2007) includes the Gini Coefficient in his model.

Due to high levels of missingness in the data, I utilize multiple imputation methods using Stata. This step deviates from Putnam's (2007) original work,<sup>12</sup> but offers a more robust analysis since the dataset contains a significant amount of missing values for many of the variables included in the model. I utilize the mi program in Stata and the multiple imputation by chained equations (MICE) method specifically, which provides the ability to use different forms of regression in computing the imputed values for binary and categorical variables (UCLA Institute for Digital Research & Education: Statistical Consulting). Using all of the variables included in the model, I created five imputed datasets to generate values for variables with higher rates of missingness.

There are eighteen dependent variables analyzed in total, which I have broken up into three categories: Perception of Community, Political & Community Involvement, and Relationships & Well-Being. The Perception of Community category consists of various elements. *Trust in local government* is constructed from the following question, "How much of the time do you think you can trust the local government to do what is right?" (1 = "Just about always," 2 = "Most of the time," 3 = "Some of the time," 4 = "Hardly ever") *Trust in local news* follows a similar logic but the scale is slightly different: 1 = "Trust them a lot," 2 = "Trust them some," 3 = "Trust them only a little," 4 = "Trust them not at all". The next variable in the table comes from an agreement statement posed to respondents, "The people running my community don't really care much what happens to me." (1 = "Agree strongly," 2 = "Agree somewhat," 3 = "Disagree somewhat," 4 = "Disagree strongly"). The *perceived impact* measure is another scale question, "Overall, how much impact do you think PEOPLE LIKE YOU can have in making

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<sup>12</sup> I first conducted the analyses before performing the multiple imputation process, and the results are mostly the same, except that *trust in local government* and the *perceived likelihood of people cooperating to save water or electricity* have a significant negative effect in the models after taking this step but were not significant in the original models.

your community a better place to live: 1 “No impact at all,” 2 = “A small impact,” 3 = “A moderate impact,” 4 = “A big impact?” The *cooperation* variable is based on the following question, “If public officials asked everyone to conserve water or electricity because of some emergency, how likely is it that people in your community would cooperate: would you say it is very unlikely (1), unlikely (2), likely (3), or very likely (4)?” *Community rating* comes from, “Overall, how would you rate your community as a place to live: poor (0), only fair (1), good (2), excellent (3)?”

The Political & Community Involvement dependent variables are more in keeping with standard measures used to capture community-level social capital. *Registered to vote* is a simple binary outcome variable to the question, “Are you currently registered to vote?” *Interest in politics* is deduced from the following, “How interested are you in politics and national affairs?” (1 = “Not at all interested,” 2 = “Only slightly interested,” 3 = “Somewhat interested,” 4 = “Very interested”). *Knowledge in politics* is constructed from the respondent’s ability to answer, “Could you tell me the names of the two U.S. Senators from your state?” and then converted to this scale: 1 = “Failed to name either,” 2 = “One is close,” 3 = “One is correct or both are close,” 4 = “One is correct & one is close,” and 5 = “Both are correct.” *Activism* is a binary variable based on the following yes/no question, “Participated in any demonstrations, protests, boycotts, or marches?” The *reform* variable is another binary outcome stemming from, “Did any of the groups that you are involved with take any LOCAL action for social or political reform in the past 12 months?” The *community project* measure is another binary variable with a yes/no response to whether the respondent has engaged in the following in the past twelve months, “Worked on a community project?” The *charity and volunteering* measure is based on an index of the following various items: whether the respondent contributed to church or other religious

causes, contributed to non-religious charities, number of times they have volunteered in the past year, and whether they volunteered for several types of causes (e.g., “culture-arts,” “health,” “needy,” “neighborhood-civic,” “religion,” “youth-school”).

The category of Relationships & Well-Being includes an assortment of measures about the respondent’s social connections and quality of life. The *confidants* variable comes from the following question, “Right now, how many people do you have in your life with whom you can share confidences or discuss a difficult decision: nobody (1), one (2), two (3), or three or more (4)?” *Close friends* is based on a scale reporting the respondent’s number of close friends: 1 = “no close friends,” 2 = “1-2 close friends,” 3 = “3-5 close friends,” 4 = “6-10 close friends,” or 5 = “more than 10 close friends.” *Happiness* is derived from the question, “All things considered, would you say you are: not happy at all (0), not very happy (1), happy (2), very happy (3)?” *Hours of TV watched* is based on the prompt, “How many hours per day do you spend watching TV on an average weekday, that is Monday through Friday?” *Television is my primary form of entertainment* comes from an agreement statement posed to the respondent (1 = “Disagree strongly,” 2 = “Disagree somewhat,” 3 = “Agree somewhat,” 4 = “Agree strongly”).

**Table 3.1 Descriptive statistics of dependent variables**

Variable	Scale	Mean	Standard Deviation
<i>Perception of Community</i>			
"How much of the time do you think you can trust the local government to do what is right?"	1 = "Just about always," 2 = "Most of the time," 3 = "Some of the time," 4 = "Hardly ever"	1.39	0.75
"We'd like to know how much you trust different groups of people." -- "The local news media"	1 = "Trust them a lot," 2 = "Trust them some," 3 = "Trust them only a little," 4 = "Trust them not at all"	1.58	0.91
"The people running my community don't really care much what happens to me." *	1 = "Agree strongly," 2 = "Agree somewhat," 3 = "Disagree somewhat," 4 = "Disagree strongly"	2.15	0.96
"Overall, how much impact do you think PEOPLE LIKE YOU can have in making your community a better place to live"	1 "No impact at all," 2 = "A small impact," 3 = "A moderate impact," 4 = "A big impact"	2.1	0.84
"If public officials asked everyone to conserve water or electricity because of some emergency, how likely is it that people in your community would cooperate?"	1 = "Ver Unlikely," 2 = "Unlikely," 3 = "Likely," 4 = "Very Likely"	2.35	0.68
"Overall, how would you rate your community as a place to live?"	0 = "Poor," 1 = "Only Fair," 2 = "Good," 3 = "Excellent"	2.24	0.74
<i>Political &amp; Community Involvement</i>			
"Are you currently registered to vote?"	1 = "Yes," 0 = "No"	0.83	0.38
"How interested are you in politics and national affairs?"	1 = "Not at all interested," 2 = "Only slightly interested," 3 = "Somewhat interested," 4 = "Very interested"	1.91	0.97
"Could you tell me the names of the two U.S. Senators from your state?"	1 = "Failed to name either," 2 = "One is close," 3 = "One is correct or both are close," 4 = "One is correct & one is close," 5 = "Both are correct."	1.47	1.67
"Participated in any demonstrations, protests, boycotts, or marches?"	1 = "Yes," 0 = "No"	0.08	0.27
"Did any of the groups that you are involved with take any LOCAL action for social or political reform in the past 12 months?"	1 = "Yes," 0 = "No"	0.2	0.4
"Which of the following things have you done in the past twelve months: Worked on a community project?"	1 = "Yes," 0 = "No"	0.4	0.49
Charity and volunteering index: whether the respondent contributed to church or other religious causes, contributed to non-religious charities, number of times they have volunteered in the past year, and whether they volunteered for several types of causes (e.g., "culture-arts," "health," "needy," "neighborhood-civic," "religion," "youth-school").		5.14	4.3
<i>Relationships &amp; Well-Being</i>			
"Right now, how many people do you have in your life with whom you can share confidences or discuss a difficult decision?"	1 = "Nobody," 2 = "One," 3 = "Two," 4 "Three or more"	2.54	0.8
"Number of close friends"	1 = "No close friends," 2 = "1-2 close friends," 3 = "3-5 close friends," 4 = "6-10 close friends," 5 = "More than 10 close friends"	2.33	1.08
"All things considered, would you say you are happy?"	0 = "Not happy at all," 1 = "Not very happy," 2 = "Happy," 3 = "Very happy"	2.33	0.6
"How many hours per day do you spend watching TV on an average weekday, that is Monday through Friday?"	Valid range = 0-12	2.98	2.67
"Television is my primary form of entertainment."	1 = "Disagree strongly," 2 = "Disagree somewhat," 3 = "Agree somewhat," 4 = "Agree strongly"	1.02	1.08

\* Note: This variable is reverse coded

**Table 3.2 Descriptive statistics of independent variables**

	Mean	Standard Deviation
<i>Community characteristics</i>		
Herfindahl Index of Ethnic Homogeneity (ct)	0.71	0.2
Percent renters (ct)	35.51	22.12
Percent living in same MSA five years ago (ct)	70.99	13.94
Percent population 65+ (ct)	13.15	6.17
Percent US citizens (ct)	90.44	11.11
Percent individuals in poverty (ct)	12.15	9.87
Percent Bachelor's degrees (ct)	16.98	10.08
Aggregate commute time (hrs.) (ct)	915.16	508.61
Gini coefficient (ct)	0.44	0.02
Violent crimes per capita (county)	799.54	2,036.64
Nonviolent crimes per capita (county)	1,679.89	3,223.52
Population density (ct)	3,231.47	6,733.93
Midwest	0.31	0.46
South	0.3	0.46
West	0.24	0.43
<i>Respondent characteristics</i>		
Age	45.13	16.84
Female	0.59	0.49
Owns home	0.7	0.46
Years of education	3.64	1.82
US citizen	0.95	0.22
Interviewed in Spanish	0.04	0.19
Years in community	3.59	1.49
Commute time (hrs.)	0.27	0.4
Monthly hours worked	131.63	105.91
Economic satisfaction	0.84	0.37
Household income	3.33	1.55
White (ref.)	0.76	0.43
Black	0.12	0.33
Hispanic	0.09	0.29
Asian	0.02	0.15

Note: ct = census tract

The multivariate models mirror Putnam's (2007) original work. The key independent variable is the *Herfindahl-Hirschman Index of ethnic homogeneity* (HHI), which is interpreted as the likelihood that any two individuals randomly selected from a given community will be from the same racial/ethnic category. The HHI uses the four racial/ethnicity categories found in the SCCBS (white, Black, Hispanic, and Asian) and is a scale between 0 and 1 with higher values denoting more homogeneity. Thus, a positive value in the model actually represents a negative association between the dependent variable and the effect of racial and ethnic diversity.

The rest of Putnam's (2007) model includes a variety of individual- and aggregate-level controls. The individual-level information comes directly from the SCCBS and includes detailed demographic characteristics. The respondent's *age* is treated as a continuous variable. *Gender*, *citizenship status*, and *home ownership* are treated as dichotomous variables with male, not a US citizen, and not owning one's home as the reference categories respectively. The racial/ethnicity responses of Black, Hispanic, and Asian are treated as separate distinct controls with white used as the reference category to account for the effect of *race or ethnicity*. The respondent's *native language* is measured by whether the interview was conducted in English or Spanish (Eng. coded as ref.). *Tenure in community* is a scale of options for the number of years that the individual lived in their community. Several socioeconomic attributes about the respondent are also included: *education* measured as the total number of years completed, *average monthly work hours*, *commute time* in hours, *economic satisfaction* as a dichotomous variable, and *household income*, which is a series of six different income categories.

Community contextual factors round out the rest of the controls used in his model. The *census tract population density* is included in the SCCBS dataset as well as the *region*, which is based on the classification system from the US Census where South, Midwest, and West are

treated as separate variables in the model (Northeast used as reference category). The 2000 Census of Population is used to calculate the *percent of individuals living in poverty*, *percent population with Bachelor's degrees*, *percent renters*, *average commute time*, *percent US citizens*, *percent individuals living in the same town as five years earlier*, and *percent over 65 years old*. The *Gini coefficient* denotes the distribution of income in a society, and in this case, is calculated by coding each household income category from the census at its midpoint (e.g., \$10,000 to \$15,000 was coded as \$12,500), except for the final open-ended category (\$200,000 and up), which was coded at \$250,000 (see Abascal & Baldassarri 2015). The county-level violent and non-violent crimes per capita<sup>13</sup> come from the 2000 Uniform Crime Reporting Program Data.

The data are grouped hierarchically with individual respondents nested within their corresponding census tracts. I use multilevel linear regression modeling techniques (and logistic for the binary dependent variables) to predict individual responses based on spatial/contextual conditions, employing multilevel mixed-effects linear models in order to match Putnam's (2007) methodology. These hierarchical or multilevel models allow for the estimation of group averages and group-level effects, similar to interaction effects, but in a less complicated and noisy fashion by using standard interaction effects in linear regression models (Gelman and Hill 2007). These analyses are conducted after the multiple imputation process described above was performed. Stata's mi program provides the ability to run separate models for each of the imputed datasets, five in this case, takes the average of the slope coefficients, and adjusts the standard errors to account for model uncertainty due to missingness.

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<sup>13</sup> The county is the smallest geographical level at which crime rates are reported consistently



## Results

Table 3.3 presents results for outcomes of the Perception of Community dependent variables. The most important variable to consider is the HHI, which is significant and negative for five of the six measures. The HHI indicates the proportion of racial and ethnic homogeneity in each census tract, which means that a positive value suggests that a person *trusts their local government*, for instance, more in communities that are more homogeneous and trusts it less in more heterogeneous contexts. Conversely, for the variable, *people running my community do not care about me*, the negative value for the HHI suggests that people are more likely to feel this way in communities that are more racially/ethnically diverse. The only outcome that challenges Putnam's constrict theory for this series of variables is, *perceived impact in making their community a better place to live*. Economic inequality, measured using the Gini coefficient, only significantly affects a person's *rating of their community as a place to live*, but this relationship is surprisingly positive. The race comparisons are informative as well since Black and Hispanic respondents are more likely to believe they can have a positive impact on their community compared to whites; whereas Asians have the inverse relationship compared to whites. Other factors that have a consistent negative effect for these dependent variables are the percentage of the population in poverty (significant in three models) and percentage of renters (significant in two models).

Table 3.4 contains the models for Political & Community Involvement. The HHI only has a significant relationship with one of the seven variables. Individuals are more likely to *belong to any group that took local action for reform* in communities that have higher levels of racial and ethnic diversity. This result can be interpreted either positively or negatively. On one hand, this suggests higher levels of civic engagement within communities, but on the other hand,

**Table 3.3 Replication of Putnam’s multilevel linear regression of civic engagement on community and respondent characteristics: Perception of Community**

	Trust in Local Government	Trust in Local News	People Running My Community Don't Care About Me*	Perceived Impact in Making Community a Better Place to Live	Likelihood of People Cooperating to Save Water or Electricity	Rating of Your Community as a Place to Live
<i>Community characteristics</i>						
Herfindahl Index of Ethnic Homogeneity (ct)	0.07 *	0.14 **	-0.11 *	0.03	0.11 *	0.18 ***
Percent renters (ct)	-0.0005	-0.0004	0.001 *	-0.0009 □	-0.0009	-0.0007 *
Percent living in same MSA five years ago (ct)	-0.001 **	-0.0008	0.0004	-0.0005	-0.0007	-0.001 *
Percent population 65+ (ct)	0.00001	0.0004	0.00008	0.0006	0.002	0.002 □
Percent US citizens (ct)	-0.0002	0.0004	-0.00002	0.0009	0.001	0.0006
Percent individuals in poverty (ct)	-0.002 **	0.0007	0.002	0.00002	-0.003 *	-0.006 ***
Percent Bachelor's degrees (ct)	0.001 □	0.0003	-0.003 **	0.001 □	0.001	0.006 ***
Aggregate commute time (hrs.) (ct)	-0.00002	-0.000001	0.00004 *	-0.00001	0.00002	0.00002
Gini coefficient (ct)	0.23	-0.15	0.01	0.3	0.29	0.61 *
Violent crimes per capita (county)	0.000006	0.000004	-0.000003	0.000005	0.000004	0.000003
Nonviolent crimes per capita (county)	-0.000006 *	-0.000007 *	0.000005	-0.000005	-0.000002	-0.000003
Population density (ct)	-0.000003 ***	-0.000001	0.000004 ***	0.0000009	-0.000002 □	-0.000006 ***
Midwest	0.01	-0.02	0.01	0.007	-0.02	-0.02
South	-0.11 ***	-0.04 *	0.03	0.03	-0.03	-0.02
West	-0.07 ***	-0.03	0.06 **	0.007	0.009	-0.009
<i>Respondent characteristics</i>						
Age	0.003 ***	0.005 ***	-0.002 ***	-0.001 **	0.004 ***	0.005 ***
Female	0.005	0.1 ***	-0.1 ***	0.12 ***	0.05 ***	0.04 ***
Owns home	0.007	-0.02	-0.09 ***	0.11 ***	0.07 ***	0.16 ***
Years of education	0.03 ***	0.02 ***	-0.05 ***	0.05 ***	0.01 **	0.02 ***
US citizen	-0.12 ***	-0.11 ***	-0.13 ***	0.1 **	-0.01	0.08 **
Interviewed in Spanish	0.13 ***	0.03	0.08 *	0.01	0.009	-0.06 *
Years in community	-0.004	-0.004	-0.002	0.01 **	-0.001	-0.001
Commute time (hrs.)	-0.03 *	-0.01	0.06 ***	-0.04 **	-0.006	-0.01
Monthly hours worked	-0.0003 ***	-0.0003 ***	-0.0001 □	0.0004 ***	0.00005	0.0002 **
Economic satisfaction	0.22 ***	0.17 ***	-0.22 ***	0.12 ***	0.08 **	0.2 ***
Household income	0.005	-0.02 ***	-0.02 ***	0.03 ***	0.02 **	0.03 ***
<i>Race</i>						
White (ref.)						
Black	-0.16 ***	-0.15 ***	0.06 **	0.14 ***	-0.02	-0.16 ***
Hispanic	0.02	-0.04	0.07 **	0.05 *	-0.04 *	-0.07 ***
Asian	0.02	0.16 ***	0.11 **	-0.19 ***	-0.007	-0.006
Constant	1.18 ***	1.4 ***	2.87 ***	1.23 ***	1.7 ***	1.14 ***
n	25,748	25,271	25,024	26,211	26,211	26,161

**Table 3.4 Replication of Putnam’s multilevel linear regression of civic engagement on community and respondent characteristics: Political & Community Involvement**

	Registered to Vote	Interest in Politics	Knowledge of Politics	Activism	Belonged to Any Group that Took Local Action for Reform	Worked on a Community Project in Past 12 Months	Give to Charity and/or Volunteer
<i>Community characteristics</i>							
Herfindahl Index of Ethnic Homogeneity (ct)	0.08	-0.05	0.04	-0.17	-0.31 *	0.2 □	-0.28
Percent renters (ct)	-0.0007	0.0001	0.0004	0.001	0.0001	0.0003	-0.005 **
Percent living in same MSA five years ago (ct)	0.001	-0.002 **	-0.002 □	-0.001	-0.002	-0.005 **	-0.006 *
Percent population 65+ (ct)	-0.009 *	0.0003	0.0006	-0.006	0.003	-0.001	0.007
Percent US citizens (ct)	0.004	-0.00005	-0.003 *	0.003	0.004	0.004	0.006
Percent individuals in poverty (ct)	0.004	0.0001	-0.002	0.007	0.007 *	0.004	0.005
Percent Bachelor's degrees (ct)	0.01 ***	0.002 □	0.006 **	0.009 *	0.01 ***	0.002	0.003
Aggregate commute time (hrs.) (ct)	-0.00007	-0.000007	-0.0002 ***	-0.0001	-0.00006	-0.00007 □	-0.00005
Gini coefficient (ct)	0.11	-0.14	-0.91	-0.56	-1.22	-0.53	-0.04
Violent crimes per capita (county)	0.00001	-0.0000005	0.00001	-0.00009	0.00009	0.00003 □	0.00006 **
Nonviolent crimes per capita (county)	-0.000007	0.000002	-0.00002 ***	0.000003	-0.00001	-0.00002	-0.00003 □
Population density (ct)	0.000005	0.000002 *	0.00001 ***	0.00002 ***	0.00001 ***	0.0000003	-0.000006
Midwest	0.14 *	0.04 □	0.04	0.04	-0.02	0.04	0.18 *
South	0.07	0.05 **	0.18 ***	-0.22 **	-0.12 *	0.13 **	0.4 ***
West	0.12 □	0.07 ***	0.4 ***	0.21 *	0.16 **	0.09 □	-0.03
<i>Respondent characteristics</i>							
Age	0.03 ***	0.01 ***	0.01 ***	-0.03 ***	0.0003	-0.004 ***	0.009 ***
Female	0.11 **	-0.11 ***	-0.39 ***	-0.06	-0.03	0.24 ***	0.57 ***
Owns home	0.39 ***	0.03 *	0.24 ***	0.07	0.06	0.26 ***	0.79 ***
Years of education	0.38 ***	0.12 ***	0.21 ***	0.17 ***	0.3 ***	0.25 ***	0.58 ***
US citizen	3.85 ***	0.22 ***	0.44 ***	0.4 **	0.85 ***	0.49 ***	1.06 ***
Interviewed in Spanish	-0.17	-0.06 □	0.13 *	-0.11	-0.24 □	-0.4 ***	-0.13
Years in community	0.14 ***	0.01 **	0.09 ***	0.03 □	0.03 *	0.08 ***	0.18 ***
Commute time (hrs.)	-0.04	0.02	0.03	0.15 *	-0.009	-0.13 **	-0.32 ***
Monthly hours worked	0.0006 *	-0.00005	-0.00002	0.0001	0.001 ***	0.001 ***	0.002 ***
Economic satisfaction	0.05	0.03 □	0.02	-0.16 *	-0.08	0.06	0.48 ***
Household income	0.09 ***	0.05 ***	0.05 ***	0.02	0.09 ***	0.12 ***	0.52 ***
<i>Race</i>							
White (ref.)							
Black	0.41 ***	0.0009	-0.47 ***	0.28 ***	0.14 *	0.04	0.47 ***
Hispanic	-0.03	-0.09 ***	-0.4 ***	0.13	-0.03	0.14 *	-0.07
Asian	-1.1 ***	-0.26 ***	-0.16 *	-0.31 □	-0.43 ***	-0.42 ***	-0.78 ***
Constant	-6.36 ***	0.69 ***	-0.1	-2.71 **	-3.66 ***	-2.83 ***	-2.17 *
n	25,993	26,172	26,085	26,192	25,810	26,167	26,200

**Table 3.5 Replication of Putnam’s multilevel linear regression of civic engagement on community and respondent characteristics: Relationships & Well-Being**

	Number of People You Can Confide In	Number of Close Friends	Happiness	Hours of TV Watched on an Average Weekday	TV is My Primary Form of Entertainment
<i>Community characteristics</i>					
Herfindahl Index of Ethnic Homogeneity (ct)	0.03	0.05	0.08 **	0.01	0.01
Percent renters (ct)	0.0003	0.0002	-0.0004	0.0006	0.0007
Percent living in same MSA five years ago (ct)	-0.0004	-0.0007	-0.0008 □	0.003 □	0.001 □
Percent population 65+ (ct)	0.0003	0.001	0.0002	0.004	0.00002
Percent US citizens (ct)	-0.00004	0.001	-0.0001	-0.002	-0.002 □
Percent individuals in poverty (ct)	-0.001	0.0001	-0.0005	-0.0007	-0.0007
Percent Bachelor's degrees (ct)	0.002 *	0.004 **	0.0004	-0.006 *	-0.002 *
Aggregate commute time (hrs.) (ct)	-0.000004	0.000008	-0.000004	0.00006 □	0.00004 *
Gini coefficient (ct)	0.36	0.1	-0.07	-2.23 *	-0.46
Violent crimes per capita (county)	-0.000002	-0.000001	0.000005	-0.00002	-0.000001
Nonviolent crimes per capita (county)	0.000002	-0.000001	0.000006	0.00001	0.0000004
Population density (ct)	0.0000008	0.000001	-0.000002 **	0.000001	-0.000002
Midwest	0.02	0.1 ***	-0.02	-0.08 □	0.02
South	-0.03	0.07 ***	0.01	0.13 **	0.1 ***
West	0.05 **	0.1 ***	0.02 □	-0.13 *	-0.006
<i>Respondent characteristics</i>					
Age	-0.002 ***	0.002 ***	-0.00009	0.008 ***	0.007 ***
Female	0.1 ***	-0.07 ***	0.07 ***	-0.11 **	-0.15 ***
Owens home	0.003	-0.05 **	0.06 ***	-0.22 ***	-0.08 ***
Years of education	0.04 ***	0.04 ***	0.02 ***	-0.21 ***	-0.08 ***
US citizen	0.11 ***	0.04	0.08 ***	0.2 *	-0.19 ***
Interviewed in Spanish	-0.25 ***	-0.02	-0.07 **	0.92 ***	0.27 ***
Years in community	0.01 ***	0.04 ***	0.003	0.03 **	-0.008
Commute time (hrs.)	-0.06 ***	-0.1 ***	-0.04 ***	-0.07	0.03
Monthly hours worked	0.0001 **	-0.0001	0.0001 **	-0.004 ***	-0.0009 ***
Economic satisfaction	0.13 ***	0.21 ***	0.27 ***	-0.17 ***	-0.08 ***
Household income	0.02 ***	0.03 ***	0.03 ***	-0.12 ***	-0.07 ***
<i>Race</i>					
White (ref.)					
Black	-0.22 ***	-0.43 ***	-0.05 ***	1.15 ***	0.1 ***
Hispanic	-0.26 ***	-0.24 ***	-0.05 **	0.72 ***	0.14 ***
Asian	-0.15 ***	-0.15 **	-0.14 ***	0.23 *	0.37 ***
Constant	1.94 ***		1.81 ***	5.05 ***	1.99 ***
n	26,151	26,148	26,116	26,026	25,873

Uslaner and Brown (2005) argue that becoming more politically active is a sign of less social cohesion since it “reinforces in-group loyalty and is likely to denigrate, if not demonize, the opposition” (875). Ironically, Putnam (2000; 2007) treats political involvement as equally beneficial as any other form of community-level social capital. Therefore, this result contradicts the constrict theory, at least according to his logic. Overall, it appears that racial and ethnic diversity does not affect a person’s involvement in politics, whether formally or informally, or their likelihood of volunteering or giving to charity. The same is true for economic inequality since this phenomenon has no observed effect for any of these measures. Comparable to the results discussed above, the race comparisons are also significantly different for the majority of these variables (more on this in the discussion).

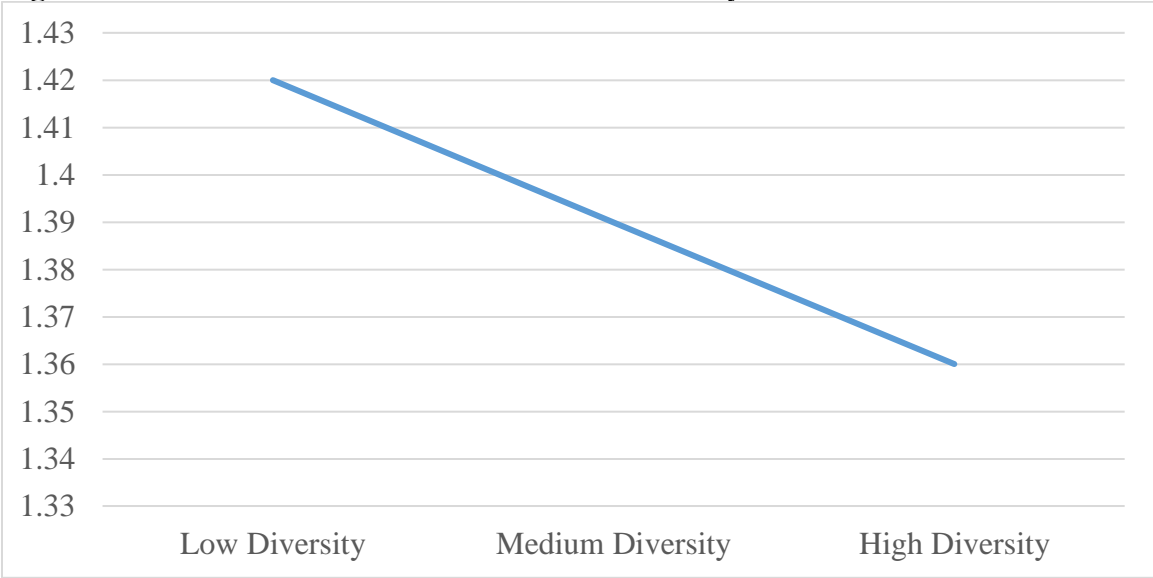
The Relationships & Well-Being dependent variables in Table 3.5 demonstrate similar patterns. Once again, the HHI has one significant relationship out of these five models, where it negatively impacts an individual’s level of happiness. Therefore, individuals report being less happy in communities that are more racially and ethnically diverse. Otherwise, these results also do not support the constrict theory since there is no observable relationship between racial and ethnic diversity and these measures. Economic inequality equally has no negative effect on these measures of community-level social capital; the only observed relationship is a decrease in the amount of television a person watches, which is a positive thing according to Putnam (2007). The respondent characteristics are much more relevant since nearly all of them are significant for each of these five models. The individual’s economic standing appears to be most crucial. For instance, those who are more satisfied with their economic situation, have higher incomes, work more hours, and have higher levels of education report outcomes that suggest higher levels of social cohesion and community involvement since they have more social connections, are

happier, and watch less TV. The race comparisons are also significant for each group for these five dependent variables.

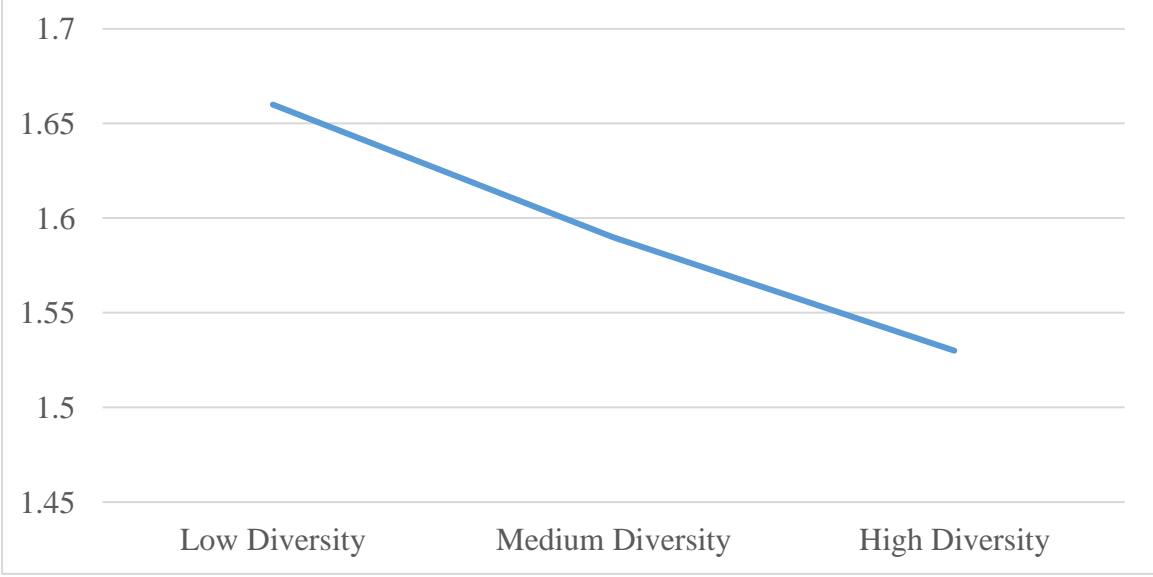
## **Discussion**

The results both confirm and challenge Putnam's (2007) constrict theory. The strongest negative impact of increased racial/ethnic diversity is observed for an individual's Perception of their Community (see Figures 3.1-3.5 for visual representations). Racial and ethnic diversity erodes trust in local government and local news outlets. It also strengthens the beliefs that the community would not cooperate for a common goal (conserving water or electricity), that their community is a bad place to live, and that *people running my community don't care about me*. For the respondent's Relationships & Well-Being, individuals reported being less happy in more racially/ethnically diverse communities, which further supports the constrict theory. For Political & Community Involvement, fewer people *belonged to any group that took local action for reform* in more racially/ethnically diverse communities. This result is not as clear cut since it suggests less civic engagement according to Putnam, but political involvement has also been theorized as being inherently confrontational (see Uslaner and Brown 2005). There is more straightforward evidence that the constrict theory does not hold true since there is no observed relationship between racial and ethnic diversity for the majority of these measures of community-level social capital. Overall, it appears that racial and ethnic diversity deteriorates the perception of a healthy community, but does not affect most forms of political involvement, giving to charity or volunteering, a person's number of social connections, or the chances that people "hunker down" in front of their television.

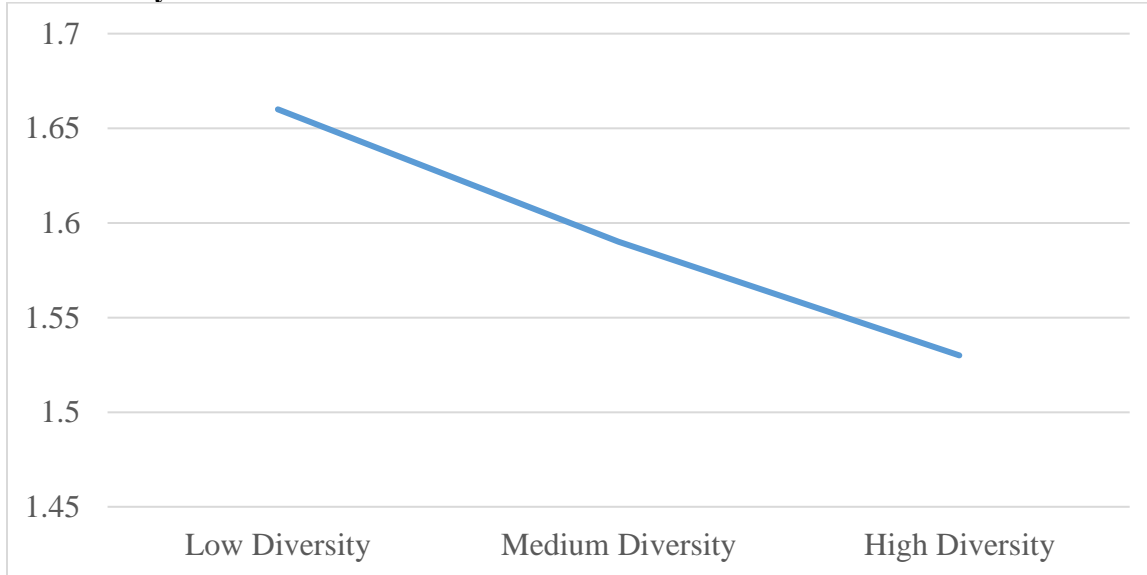
**Figure 3.1 Predicted Effects of Racial/Ethnic Diversity on “Trust in Local Government”**



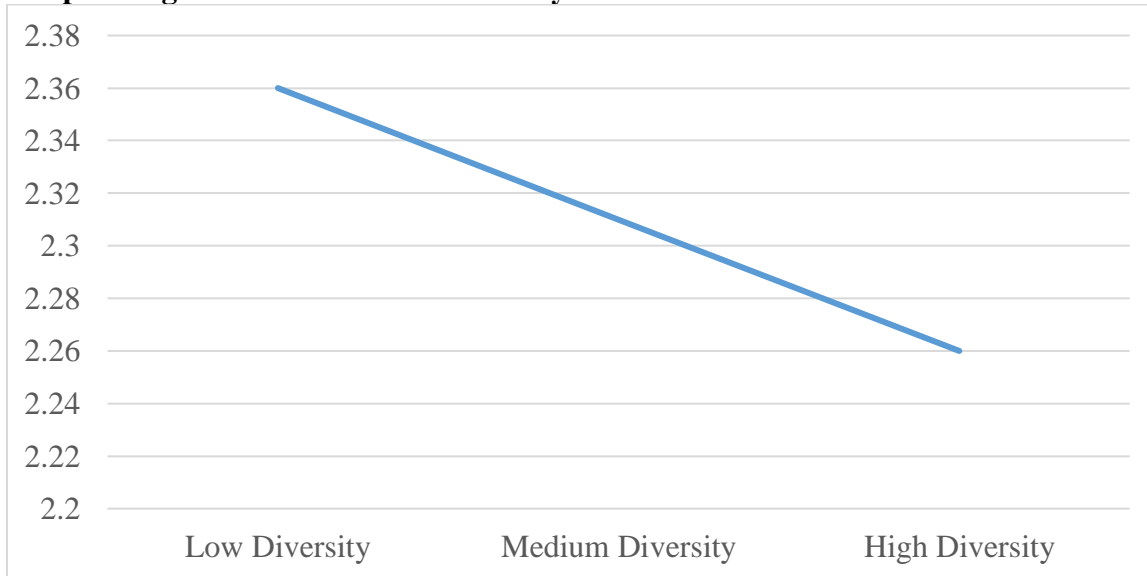
**Figure 3.2 Predicted Effects of Racial/Ethnic Diversity on “Trust in Local News”**



**Figure 3.3 Predicted Effects of Racial/Ethnic Diversity on “People Running My Community Don’t Care About Me”**

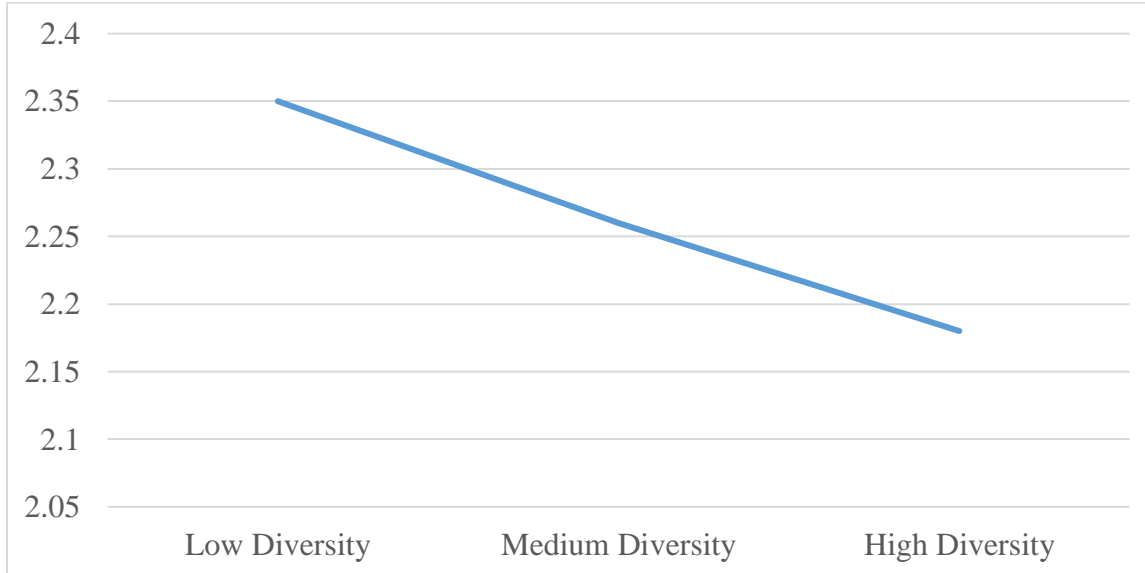


**Figure 3.4 Predicted Effects of Racial/Ethnic Diversity on “Likelihood of People Cooperating to Save Water or Electricity”**





**Figure 3.5 Predicted Effects of Racial/Ethnic Diversity on “Rating of Your Community as a Place to Live”**



These results also call into question the emphasis of income inequality in understanding the state of social capital in American communities and suggests the need to consider other aggregate economic measures. In fact, the Gini index only reports two significant relationships, and both of them show beneficial outcomes: people watch less television and rate their community as a good place to live when economic inequality is greater. Scholars have long questioned the use and accuracy of the Gini index as a measurement of economic inequality (see Atkinson 1970; Kolm 1999). These findings may support that notion and call for the need to consider other forms of economic inequality and deprivation. Along those lines, the percentage of population in poverty erodes trust in local government, strengthens the perception that the community is a bad place to live and that people in the community would not cooperate to conserve water or electricity, and increases the chance of belonging to a group focused on local reform. The percentage of the population with Bachelor’s degrees, if assumed to be a measure of more community-level economic vitality, positively impacts how people rate their community, decreases the belief that the *people running my community don’t care about me*, inflates the level

of political involvement, increases social connections, and that watching television is less prominent.

Individual-level economic characteristics are even more consequential in shaping these outcomes. An individual's level of education, number of work hours, economic satisfaction, and household income are all equally responsible for improving various measures of community-level social capital. An individual's educational attainment reinforces a positive Perception of their Community, increases their involvement in Political & Community Involvement, and bolsters their Relationships & Well-Being since it is significantly correlated with every single measure for these three broad categories. Economic satisfaction is close behind since it also positively impacts Perception of Community and Relationships & Well-Being, but is mostly not correlated with the measures for Political & Community Involvement. Household income and monthly hours of work also report positive relationships with the majority of the measures for each three categories, but appear to enhance a person's Relationships & Well-Being most. All of these factors indicate that individuals that are able to achieve higher levels of education and have steady occupations that provide higher pay engage in more community-oriented behaviors and have more favorable perceptions of their community.

The race/ethnicity of the respondent is another major part of the overall narrative. Black respondents are less likely than whites to trust their local government or news outlets, more likely to believe that *people running my community don't care about me*, have less knowledge of politics, have fewer social connections, report being less happy, and watch more television. All of these outcomes suggest a similar pattern as observed by Hero (2007) where Black Americans do not benefit from the community-level social capital like whites, which contradicts the general notion that these phenomena lead to various positive outcomes for all people (see Putnam 2000).

Hispanic and Asian respondents report the same downward trends for the Relationships & Well-Being measures. Asian respondents also demonstrate lower levels of political involvement, volunteering, and giving to charity when compared to whites; whereas Hispanics only report less interest and knowledge of politics for the Political & Community Involvement category. Both groups also believe that *people running my community don't care about me* more often than whites, but they deviate otherwise for the Perception of Community category. Hispanics rate their community more poorly and do not believe that the community could cooperate for common goals, and Asians express a negative response to whether they could make an impact in their community.

## **Conclusion**

Scholars have obsessed over the state of civic engagement in the United States for roughly over twenty years. The competing theories postulate that either racial/ethnic diversity or income inequality erodes key features of healthy communities. There is support for both relationships since income inequality does lead to lower levels of associational membership, giving to charity, and volunteering (Costa and Kahn 2003; Uslaner and Brown 2005). Some even find that both are equally driving this downward trend with less civic engagement overall (Alesina and La Ferrara 2000; Hero 2003). Cross-national comparisons suggest that the negative relationship between racial and ethnic diversity and civic engagement is unique to the US, as compared to European countries (Van Der Meer and Tolsma 2014).

Arguably the most prominent research in this field comes from Robert Putnam's (2007) assertion that communities with higher rates of racial and ethnic diversity "hunker down." He demonstrates this relationship using the 2000 SCCBS, but does not report the results of his

analysis. His main point centers on the deleterious effects racial/ethnic diversity has on social trust since he reports a multilevel linear regression model that proves this negative effect. He states that he conducted the same stringent analytical tests on over a dozen other measures he uses to encapsulate civic engagement. His ultimate contribution to the literature rests in his *constrict theory*, which asserts that “Diversity, at least in the short run, seems to bring out the turtle in all of us” (Putnam 2007: 151).

This study replicates Putnam’s (2007) singular regression model used for generalized trust and applies it to all of the other measures of civic engagement he briefly mentions. This replication offers a chance to revisit one of the most influential articles in this literature to determine whether the negative effect of racial/ethnic diversity is in fact as robust as he claims. I group the eighteen measures Putnam (2007) discusses into three broad categories: Perception of Community, Political & Community Involvement, and Relationships & Well-Being. The analysis offers some support of the constrict theory with individuals’ Perception of Community reporting the most severe results, but the measures for Political & Community Involvement and Relationships & Well-Being are not impacted in the same way. Only two variables out of these two categories (12 variables in total) demonstrate a negative effect: the respondent’s self-reported happiness and whether they belonged to a group that took local action for reform. Overall, it appears that people’s sense of community is weakened in contexts of racial and ethnic diversity, but that behavioral measures of civic engagement are largely unaffected. This finding still resonates with Putnam’s (2007) assertion, but it suggests that the story is more complicated and requires further investigation and theorizing. The other leading explanation of income inequality also comes up short since it only affects two of the measures, and interestingly, the

relationship is positive since people actually rate their community more favorably as a place to live and watch television less in contexts of greater income inequality.

Ultimately, this analysis calls for the need to consider different measurements of economic conditions and demographic attributes of American communities. First, other measures of economic well-being, as opposed to inequality, are more consistently consequential in analyzing these three broad categories of civic engagement. The percentage of the population living in poverty negatively affects a handful of measures. Individuals with higher levels of education and income, steady work lives, and greater economic satisfaction report more involvement in and more positive characterizations of their community. Second, the comparisons across race/ethnicity are equally illustrative in shaping this overall narrative. Blacks, Hispanics, and Asians report lower levels of several of these measures when compared to whites. Other research documents similarly positive effects of education (Paxton 1999; Uslander and Brown 2005), the effects of unemployment and economic recessions (Lim and Sander 2013), as well as different outcomes across racial/ethnic groups (Hero 2003) for different forms of civic engagement and social capital. However, these types of concerns are rare in the literature. More attention to other forms of economic well-being and different processes pertaining to racial/ethnic diversity need to be examined more fully. For instance, other economic conditions, like the unemployment rate of the community or the employment status of individuals, or more specific forms of racial/ethnic diversity, like the percentage of different race/ethnic groups, can possibly enhance our understanding of civic engagement of the United States.

## **Chapter 4: “Economic Hardship, Racial Oppression, and Trust among whites in the United States”**

### **Introduction**

Scholars have observed a decline in social trust in the US from the 1960s until the end of the twentieth century (see Putnam 2000), but there are competing theories for why this has occurred. The two leading theoretical perspectives emphasize increased racial/ethnic diversity or economic inequality. There is evidence that racial/ethnic diversity reduces social trust in the US, and that this relationship may be unique to this country (Alesina and La Ferrara 2002; Putnam 2007; Van Der Meer and Tolsma 2014). Research also shows that residential segregation and oppression are at the heart of the problem (Uslaner 2010; Rothwell 2012), and that white people are the sole group negatively affected by racial/ethnic diversity (Marschall and Stolle 2004; Fieldhouse and Cutts 2010; Abascal and Baldassarri 2015). Therefore, it is unclear what role racial/ethnic diversity really plays. The other most common framework is to test the effects of economic inequality. Researchers demonstrate that economic inequality, instead of racial/ethnic diversity, is undermining social trust in the US (Uslaner and Brown 2005; Rothstein and Uslaner 2005). However, several studies in the US and abroad find that both conditions appear to be equally important in determining the state of social trust (Alesina and La Ferrara 2002; Gereke et al. 2018; Ziller and Heizmann 2019).

The literature has begun moving past this bifurcated approach to understanding social trust, but it has not adequately addressed other economic realities of the past several decades or incorporated the importance of how race/ethnicity and class are inherently intersected in this country. The late twentieth century has been defined by precarious work, or jobs that have few

protections, are low-pay and low-skill, and increased rates of unemployment, due to deregulation, outsourcing, and a shift from manufacturing to service-sector jobs (Bernhardt et al. 2008; Kalleberg 2009; 2011). Men in particular have experienced more instances of unemployment and fewer job opportunities, especially those that pay comparable wages to once-held positions (Bernhardt et al. 2001; Blank and Shierholz 2006; Wagmiller and Lee 2014). Poverty, in tandem, has also risen in the US. This is true across the board, but Black communities and neighborhoods have been hit the hardest. Deindustrialization, the suburbanization of job opportunities, and the out-migration of nonpoor Black and white families from inner-city neighborhoods created concentrated poverty inflicted upon many Black neighborhoods across the country (Wilson 1987; 1996). Residential segregation compounds these negative effects and makes it more difficult for Black Americans to escape poverty and subordination (Massey and Denton 1993).

These structural circumstances and transformations of the US economy point to a new way to understand social trust by simultaneously examining the effects of racial/ethnic diversity and oppression and economic hardship. Based on the research discussed above, this study considers the effects of unemployment among both Black and white males as well as the poverty rates of Black and white individuals. A major goal of this project is to determine whether these measures for race and class also interact with racial/ethnic diversity. Specifically, interaction terms for racial/ethnic diversity and each of the four measures are tested to determine whether the negative effect of racial/ethnic diversity is greater in communities that have higher rates of male unemployment and poverty for Blacks and/or whites. The analysis also evaluates whether these race/class variables are more impactful in reducing social trust by negating the effect of

racial/ethnic diversity or the presence of Black Americans specifically.<sup>14</sup> The 2000 Social Capital Community Benchmark Survey data, along with census-tract level data from the 2000 Census of Population, are utilized to test these hypotheses. The tests are limited to white Americans from this dataset since the literature suggests that they are the primary racial/ethnic group that have become less trusting. These data provide the opportunity to test for both individual- and community-level characteristics, and this dataset includes some of the most unique measures of social trust: trust in neighbors, inter-race trust, and intra-race trust.

Findings from this research confirm some hypotheses but also depict a complicated picture. The analysis shows that both white male unemployment and Black poverty reduce all three forms of social trust in contexts of greater racial/ethnic diversity among white Americans. However, racial/ethnic diversity, on its own, continues to play a role in this overall narrative, especially when considering how white people feel about their neighbors. Furthermore, the percent of Black population is negatively associated with all three forms of social trust, suggesting that whites are more concerned about the presence of Black people in their communities, as opposed to increased racial/ethnic diversity in a general sense.

This study provides further nuance to the discussion of social trust in the US. First, the proportion of Black people in a community consistently erodes all three forms of social trust among whites; whereas the negative effects of racial/ethnic diversity on its own are only present in a few models, with the greatest impact being on trust in neighbors, which matches the main analysis of Putnam (2007). Second, and more importantly, the deleterious consequences of racial/ethnic diversity are routinely observed in contexts with higher rates of Black poverty and white male unemployment, which suggests the need to move the discourse beyond simple

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<sup>14</sup> Percent of the Black population has been shown to be more influential than racial/ethnic diversity in shaping community-level social capital (see Portes and Vickstrom 2011) and social trust (see chapter 2).



narratives of diversity or income inequality, in broad terms, and dive deeper into the ramifications of how race and class, together, shape the social fabric of this country. The US has undergone major economic shifts during the timeframe that social trust has been apparently eroding, and these structural changes have impacted specific demographic groups more than others. These results suggest that diminished social trust among American whites, in particular, is a product of increased economic insecurity for those like them and the heightened sense of fear, fueled by racist ideology, of living in communities that are increasingly impoverished and Black.

## **Background**

Social trust has become one of the major indicators for community well-being. Scholars have examined social trust in countless countries, used various data points to measure it, and framed the analysis with several theoretical perspectives. Regardless of location, the two leading theories for understanding the state of social trust are the effects of racial/ethnic diversity and economic inequality. Research has also expanded on these two theories by highlighting racial/ethnic oppression, the importance of whites' perception of racial/ethnic diversity, other economic conditions beyond income inequality, or examining a mixture of the above. This section outlines the two major strains of analysis, discusses the few studies that are moving past this bifurcation, and then lays the foundation for considering the role of economic conditions that are more closely tied to communities, like unemployment and poverty, and stresses the need to examine racial/ethnic and class inequalities simultaneously since both are endemic to this country both historically and during the current economic era of globalization and precarity.

### *Racial/Ethnic Diversity, Economic Inequality, and Social Trust*

The exploration of how racial/ethnic diversity impacts social trust has been a preeminent feature of this literature throughout the twenty-first century. An early account of the US documents that living in a racially mixed community leads to lower levels of generalized trust (Alesina and La Ferrara 2002). One of the most prominent studies on this topic argues that increased racial/ethnic diversity erodes trust in neighbors, other race/ethnic groups, and for those in the same race/ethnic group (Putnam 2007). However, a meta-study of the literature suggests that there is little evidence for this negative relationship outside of the US, suggesting that the legacy of racial oppression stemming from slavery and the Jim Crow era create this unique case of American exceptionalism (Van Der Meer and Tolsma 2014). Research in other national contexts support this notion, but point to alternative explanations for how diversity affects social trust. Cultural diversity reduces social trust in Germany (Gundelach and Traunmuller 2014), nationality and ethnicity in Malawi emerge as important factors in understanding trust (Robinson 2016), and linguistic diversity in Australia affects localized and generalized trust more than ethnic diversity (Leigh 2006). In Sweden, the proportion of foreign-born individuals is negatively associated with social trust (Gustavsson and Jordahl 2008).

The literature also reports mixed results concerning the effect of racial and ethnic diversity on social trust. For example, the negative relationship in the US reverses when an individual has diverse social networks or stronger ties with neighbors (Stolle, Soroka, and Johnston 2008). Furthermore, involvement in voluntary associations increases an individual's network diversity, which positively influences their trust in others (Glanville 2016). The United Kingdom reports comparable results; social trust is most sensitive to changes in racial and ethnic diversity, but those with bridging ties experience a much weaker negative effect (Laurence

2011). Similarly, younger Canadians report higher levels of generalized trust when their networks are more diverse (Stolle and Harell 2013). Cross-national studies of European countries uncover a negative relationship between ethnic diversity on specific dimensions of social cohesion, belonging and social solidarity, but not interpersonal trust (Ariely 2014), and that both migration and ethnic diversity are not related to measures of generalized trust (Hooghe, Reeskens, Stolle, and Trappers 2009). Likewise, in countries that accommodate cultural and racial minorities, the negative effects of immigration are mitigated or even reversed (Kesler and Bloemraad 2010).

More critical accounts on this topic emphasize the role of racial segregation and racial oppression as the ultimate driver in this narrative, and moreover, find that the negative relationship between racial/ethnic diversity and social trust is only observed among white people. For instance, metropolitan-level racial residential segregation, a measure of racial inequality, decreases trust in the United States, whereas the effect of community-level diversity is not significant in the same model (Rothwell 2012). Similar results are found in a comparison of the United Kingdom and the United States, where segregation (as opposed to increased racial/ethnic diversity) reduces generalized trust (Uslaner 2010). Another study comparing the US and UK finds that increased racial diversity negatively affects several dimensions of social capital for whites in both countries but not for ethnic minorities (Fieldhouse and Cutts 2010). Data from Detroit confirms higher levels of generalized trust among African Americans as heterogeneity increases but not for white respondents (Marschall and Stolle 2004). Abascal and Baldassarri (2015) test this hypothesis and find that only whites report lower levels of trust in communities with higher proportions of out-group members.

The other most common theory places emphasis on economic inequality. Uslaner and colleagues have spearheaded this investigation by showing that income inequality was most responsible for eroding social trust in the US from the 1970s-1990s (Uslaner and Brown 2005) and doing a cross-national analysis demonstrating that both economic inequality and a lack of opportunities reduce trust and political involvement, which are argued to be mutually reinforcing (Rothstein and Uslaner 2005). Similar results are found in Sweden where those at the bottom end of the income distribution are associated with lower levels of social trust (Gustavsson and Jordahl 2008). However, a national-level study of several European countries finds that economic inequality negatively impacts formal and informal social interactions but *not* social trust (Gesthuizen, Van Der Meer, and Scheepers 2009). Equally mixed results come from a study of the US where income inequality at the state level, but not county level, dampens social trust, but find no clear connection between increased income inequality from the 1970s-2000s with decreased social trust, suggesting that other factors are responsible (Fairbrother and Martin 2013).

Research on social trust also establishes the need to move beyond looking specifically at racial/ethnic diversity or income inequality by highlighting how race/ethnicity and class have equally important roles in this story. For instance, an early study in the literature shows that living in a racially/ethnically diverse or economically heterogeneous community drives down social trust in the United States (Alesina and La Ferrara 2002). In Germany, households with lower income levels as well as the proportion of neighbors with an immigrant background are negatively associated with trust, for both native and non-native Germans (Gereke et al. 2018). A cross-national comparison of European countries finds that an individual's income and evaluation of income are positively associated with social trust, satisfaction with the national

economy and evaluation of regional economy are negatively associated, and respondents who are foreign-born and evaluate their own income and regional economy poorly report lower levels of trust (Ziller and Heizmann 2019).

Concentrated poverty in the US also appears to have long-term effects on social trust. A study on Chicago shows that poverty levels from the 1970s predict low levels of trust three decades later, and that a reduction of poverty leads to more trust, regardless of changes in racial diversity or residential stability (Sampson and Graif 2009). Yet, a county-level analysis of the US shows that economic conditions (changes in median income, unemployment rate, poverty rate, and number of individuals who receive public assistance income) *do not* affect social trust (Danziger, Owens, and Cook 2013). The existing research has not come to a consensus on which mechanisms specifically reduce social trust in the US, but it does demonstrate that a mixture of race and class is at play. Luckily, there is a rich body of work in sociology that documents the increased economic hardship and racial/ethnic oppression that resulted from major structural shifts throughout the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

### *Economic Realities of the US since the 1970s: The Importance of Class and Race/Ethnicity*

The economic era of the past several decades is not only defined by increased income inequality, but also worsening conditions for workers, primarily less secure labor, higher unemployment, and lower wages. Kalleberg (2009) defines the period since the late 1970s as the age of precarious work, where deregulation, weakened worker protections, and outsourcing led to a shift from manufacturing to service-sector jobs (i.e., low-pay, low-skill work), increased part-time and temporary work, a rise in long-term unemployment, more incidents of layoffs, and that all sectors of the economy have experienced some version of these new labor realities. These

sweeping economic shifts have created a polarized workforce where low-quality jobs (i.e., less security, lower pay, little to no benefits) have become the norm, and in fact, a central feature to how the US economy operates (Kalleberg 2011). Some argue that these transformations were direct objectives of policies enacted in the US starting in the 1980s (Madrick 2012). Companies have abandoned job protection measures as a way to ensure low-cost operations, and companies that attempt to stick to long-established standards, like higher pay, safety protocols, and the right to organize, are forced to adopt those policies in order to compete and survive (Bernhardt et al. 2008). Research substantiates these claims since involuntary job loss increased over time, particularly during the 1980s, and it became harder to get reemployed, especially in comparably paid positions (Polsky 1999). Uncertainty and risk now define workplace experiences across the occupational spectrum, including positions that historically were safe, like managers and professionals, who are now experiencing higher rates of job loss, unemployment, and taking pay cuts when they are able to land a new job (Smith 2001; Jacobs and Newman 2008).

Jobs are more precarious across the board, but the effects are more pronounced for men in the US. From 1979 to 2003, labor force participation rose sharply for women in low-skill jobs, and they even witnessed modest gains in wages, but men experienced falling wages and higher rates of unemployment (Blank and Shierholz 2006). Men have fared worse in this new economic landscape since they have experienced shorter tenures with employers beginning in the 1970s (Farber 2008). More specifically, young white men with lower levels of education encountered wage stagnation, dead-end jobs, and struggled to find stable work since the 1980s (Bernhardt et al. 2001). Similarly, Black men with less than a college degree, witnessed sharp declines in employment rates from the 1960s to 2009 (Wagmiller and Lee 2014). Segregation in American cities further decreases employment rates of Black workers overall, and in fact, Black men and

women experience higher rates of employment as cities become less segregated (Dickerson 2007). These compounded structural processes have generated widespread joblessness for Black Americans in most metropolitan areas in the US. Interviews with employers in Chicago reveal that they perceive Black men from the inner city, in particular, as unqualified for service and blue-collar jobs based on stereotypes of them being uneducated, unreliable, and lacking the skills needed for the position (Wilson 1996).

Less secure forms of labor and the proliferation of low-wage jobs unsurprisingly led to higher rates of poverty in this economic era, especially for Black Americans. Wilson (1987; 1996) documents how structural transformations, such as deindustrialization, the suburbanization of job opportunities, and the out-migration of nonpoor Black and white families, created concentrated poverty in many Black neighborhoods in American cities. Massey and Denton (1993) expand on this notion to show that residential segregation is the key institutional apparatus that subjugates Black Americans to persistent poverty, disadvantage, and subordination. By 1986, the urban poverty rate of Blacks tripled the rate of whites and median income of Black families was lower than Blacks in the suburbs and whites overall (Sassen 1990). Throughout the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, poor Black neighborhoods experienced higher rates of poverty over time, suggesting that segregated Black neighborhoods became trapped in a cycle of poverty (Sampson 2009). These patterns of disenfranchisement and oppression have been embedded within the structural foundations of the US throughout the country's history. Systemic racism is uniquely damaging to Black Americans since they have been subjected to overt economic exploitation and consistently marginalized and oppressed in order to maintain white dominance (Feagin 2006).

These economic realities point to the need to move beyond simply investigating the effects of economic inequality and/or racial and ethnic diversity in understanding social trust. Unemployment and precarious work, specifically for males, are central features of the American economy since the 1970s. Black poverty has become compounded and more severe as a result of deindustrialization and continued segregation. Yet, the literature on social trust rarely examines these pivotal trends. The majority of research that emphasizes unemployment focuses on other forms of social capital, primarily political participation or civic engagement (see Alesina and La Ferrara 2000; Giugni and Lorenzini 2013; Emmenegger, Marx, and Schraff 2015; Marx and Nguyen 2016). Some researchers have examined poverty generally to show that it does have long-term effects on social trust (Sampson and Graif 2009), and that black poverty specifically reduces political participation (Hero 2003). The literature also demonstrates that a combination of adverse economic conditions and racial/ethnic diversity drive down social trust (Portes and Vickstrom 2011; Gereke et al. 2018; Paarlberg et al. 2018; Ziller and Heizmann 2019). The fact that white people have been shown to be the only group that responds negatively to increased racial/ethnic diversity (see Marschall and Stolle 2004; Fieldhouse and Cutts 2010; Abascal and Baldassarri 2015) also suggests that a more nuanced dynamic is at play. Thus, this paper examines the effects of economic insecurity, racial/ethnic stratification, and racial/ethnic diversity to test the importance of economic conditions of particular racial/ethnic groups in understanding social trust in the US.

### **The Current Study**

All of these insights help inform the framework of this study. The following tests only include white Americans since they appear to be driving the downward trend of social trust, even



though it is unclear exactly why this is occurring. The analyses also extend racial/ethnic demographic concerns by including the percentage of Black individuals since there is evidence that social trust, and social capital broadly speaking, decrease as the proportion of Blacks increases (see Portes and Vickstrom 2011; Chapter 2). Furthermore, the economic realities of both whites and Blacks discussed in the previous section are included to test for their effects separately as well as whether these particular economic conditions interact with increased racial/ethnic diversity in shaping social trust outcomes. Male unemployment and poverty have risen for both racial groups during the late twentieth century. This timeframe is also marked by increased racial/ethnic diversity so it is plausible to assume that both structural shifts work in tandem.

This study investigates the implications of both race and class in understanding the state of social trust in the US. The literature has begun to consider the combined effects of both, but scholars have not fully examined the sweeping structural shifts that have transformed this country's economy and workforce. Research on precarious work demonstrates that unemployment is high among both white and Black males. Poverty is more severe for Black Americans, but this economic era has affected the economic well-being of whites as well. For instance, even full-time white males have experienced wage stagnation in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, historically the most economically secure group in the US (Morris and Western 1999). These economic realities have not been incorporated directly and comprehensively into the study of social trust, but research suggests that the solution to this puzzle lies somewhere within the nexus of race and class. Thus, this study hypothesizes that male unemployment and poverty among whites and Blacks have deleterious effects on social trust, at least for white Americans. Furthermore, the project is designed to determine whether including these race/class

variables will negate the effects of racial/ethnic diversity and the percent of Black population on social trust. Lastly, I will determine whether these race/class variables are more impactful in contexts of higher racial/ethnic diversity through the use of the interactions discussed above.

## **Data and Methods**

The primary data source for this analysis is Putnam's (2000) Social Capital Community Benchmark Survey (SCCBS). The sample size consists of nearly 30,000 respondents from both a nationally representative sample (3,003) and subsamples of 41 US communities (26,730), ranging from large metropolitan areas like Chicago and Los Angeles to rural areas in South Dakota and West Virginia. These data are linked to census-tract level data from the 2000 Census of Population to account for measures of community-level conditions (See Table 1 for full list and discussion below). The tests are limited to whites, which amounts to a total sample of 19,930 cases.

Multiple imputation methods are used in Stata to address high levels of missing data in the SCCBS. The use of multiple imputation offers a more robust analysis since the dataset contains a significant amount of missing values for many of the variables included in the model. I utilize the *mi* program in Stata and the multiple imputation by chained equations (MICE) method specifically, which provides the ability to use different forms of regression in computing the imputed values for binary and categorical variables (UCLA Institute for Digital Research & Education: Statistical Consulting). Using all of the variables included in the model, five imputed datasets were created to generate values for variables with higher rates of missingness.

Table 4.1 reports variables and descriptive statistics for all variables included in this analysis. One dependent variable is *trust in neighbors*, which is computed from a survey question

asking, “How much you can trust people in your neighborhood,” with the options of “trust them a lot,” “trust them some,” “trust them only a little,” and “trust them not at all.” The other two forms of social trust are *inter-race trust* and *intra-race trust*. Both variables use the same scale as discussed above and are calculated from separate questions asking about the individual’s trust levels for the four different racial and ethnic groups included in the sample (e.g., “How much you can trust Asian people”). *Inter-race trust* is a composite mean based on trust reported for the different racial and ethnic groups, excluding the respondent’s own identified race/ethnicity. *Intra-race trust* is simply the level of trust expressed in one’s own racial/ethnic group.

Key independent variables include two measures of racial/ethnic demographics and four measures for race and class. The *Herfindahl-Hirschman Index of ethnic homogeneity* (HHI) is used to measure racial/ethnic diversity, which is interpreted as the likelihood that any two individuals randomly selected from a given community will be from the same racial/ethnic category. The HHI uses the four racial/ethnicity categories found in the SCCBS (white, Black, Hispanic, and Asian) and is a scale between 0 and 1 with higher values denoting more homogeneity. Thus, a positive value in the model actually represents a negative association between the dependent variable and the effect of racial and ethnic diversity. *Percent Black* comes from the 2000 Census of Population and is measured as the proportion of Black individuals within each census tract. The four race/class measures also come from the 2000 Census of Population. *Percent of unemployed Black males* is calculated as the proportion of the population that is sixteen years or older that is Black, male, and unemployed. *Percent of unemployed white males* is created using the same criteria but for white males. *Black poverty* is derived from the percent of Black individuals that are living in poverty out of the total Black population. *White poverty* is the percent of white individuals living in poverty out of the total white population.

Lastly, there are four separate interaction terms comprised of the HHI and each of the race/class variables just mentioned.

**Table 4.1 Descriptive statistics of three forms of trust and independent variables**

	Mean	Standard Deviation
<i>Dependent Variables</i>		
Trust in Neighbors	2.26	0.87
Inter-Race Trust	2.1	0.67
Intra-Race Trust	2.2	0.68
<i>Key Independent Variables</i>		
Percent Black Population (ct)	14.02	21.57
Herfindahl Index of Ethnic Homogeneity (ct)	0.71	0.2
Percent Unemployed Black Males (ct)	11.56	6.11
Percent of Unemployed Black Males * HHI	8.31	5.81
Percent Unemployed White Males (ct)	4.44	1.38
Percent of Unemployed White Males * HHI	3.22	1.46
Percent Black Individuals in Poverty (ct)	20.38	21.42
Percent of Black Individuals in Poverty * HHI	14.51	17.43
Percent White Individuals in Poverty (ct)	10	10.11
Percent of White Individuals in Poverty * HHI	6.91	7.53
<i>Community characteristics</i>		
Percent living in same MSA five years ago (ct)	70.01	14.24
Violent crimes per capita (county)	766.61	2,031.49
Nonviolent crimes per capita (county)	1,617.11	3,210.35
South	0.3	0.46
Population density (ct)	3,231.44	6,733.94
<i>Respondent characteristics</i>		
Employment Status: Working (ref.)		
Employment Status: Laid off	0.02	0.13
Employment Status: Unemployed	0.03	0.16
Employment Status: Retired	0.17	0.37
Employment Status: Disabled	0.03	0.18
Employment Status: Homemaker	0.07	0.25
Employment Status: Student	0.03	0.18
Economic satisfaction	0.84	0.37
Household income	3.31	1.55
Years of education	3.64	1.82
Owns home	0.7	0.46
Age	45.13	16.84
Female	0.59	0.49
Years in community	3.59	1.49
US citizen	0.95	0.22
Interviewed in Spanish	0.04	0.19

Note: ct = census tract

The controls represent both individual- and community-level characteristics. The individual-level information comes directly from the SCCBS and includes detailed demographic characteristics that are typical considerations in this literature. The respondent's *age* is treated as a continuous variable. *Gender*, *citizenship status*, and *home ownership* are treated as dichotomous variables with male, not a US citizen, and not owning one's home as the reference categories respectively. The respondent's *native language* is measured by whether the interview was conducted in English or Spanish (Eng. coded as ref.). *Tenure in community* is a scale of options for the number of years that the individual lived in their community. Several socioeconomic attributes about the respondent are also included: *employment status*, which consists of several options with employed as the reference point (laid off, unemployed, retired, disabled, homemaker, and student), *economic satisfaction* as a dichotomous variable, and *household income*, which is a series of six different income categories, and *education* measured as the total number of years completed.

Community contextual factors round out the rest of the controls used in his model. The *census tract population density* is included in the SCCBS dataset as well as the *South*, which is based on the regional classification system from the US Census and is a dichotomous variable. The 2000 Census of Population is used to calculate the *percent of individuals living in the same town as five years earlier*. The county-level violent and non-violent crimes per capita<sup>15</sup> come from the 2000 Uniform Crime Reporting Program Data.

The data are grouped hierarchically with individual respondents nested within their corresponding census tracts. Multilevel regression modeling techniques are used to predict individual responses based on spatial/contextual conditions, employing multilevel mixed-effects

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<sup>15</sup> The county is the smallest geographical level at which crime rates are reported consistently

linear models. These hierarchical or multilevel models allow for the estimation of group averages and group-level effects, similar to interaction effects, but in a less complicated and noisy fashion by using standard interaction effects in linear regression models (Gelman and Hill 2007). These analyses are conducted after the multiple imputation process described above was performed. Stata's mi program provides the ability to run separate models for each of the imputed datasets, five in this case, takes the average of the slope coefficients, and adjusts the standard errors to account for model uncertainty due to missingness.

## **Results**

Table 4.2 presents four separate models, each consisting of one of the interaction terms discussed above, for outcomes of trust in neighbors. Column 1 includes the percent of unemployed Black males and the interaction term of number of unemployed Black males and the HHI. Neither are significant, and instead percent of Black population and HHI are both negatively associated with trust in neighbors. The HHI indicates the proportion of racial and ethnic homogeneity in each census tract, and thus, a positive value suggests that a person trusts their neighbors more in communities that are more homogeneous and trust them less in more heterogeneous contexts. More specifically, the first model demonstrates that individuals trust their neighbors 26% less as the level of racial/ethnic diversity increases, even after controlling for the individual and community characteristics listed. Column 2 includes the corresponding variables for unemployed white males, and this time, both the interaction term and the percent of unemployed white males have a significant negative effect on trust in neighbors. The interaction term demonstrates that racial/ethnic diversity erodes a white person's trust in their neighbors as the percent of unemployed white males goes up. Furthermore, racial/ethnic diversity, on its own,

is no longer associated with the outcome. Column 3 includes the information for Black individuals in poverty, which matches the same pattern as that of Column 2 since the interaction term and race/class measure of percent Black individuals in poverty are both negatively associated with trust in neighbors. However, the only difference is that now the HHI stays significant. Column 4 accounts for white poverty, and the interaction term is not significant, but the percent of white individuals in poverty and the HHI separately decreases trust in neighbors among white respondents. Interestingly, the percent of Black population remains highly significant in all four models, suggesting that whites are consistently more distrusting in contexts of higher proportions of Black people.

Tables 4.3 and 4.4 match the same format as Table 4.2 but include outcomes for inter-race and intra-race trust respectively. The results for the interaction terms and race/class measures mostly mirror the same trends as that of trust in neighbors. The effect of unemployed white males and Black individuals in poverty as well as the interaction terms with the HHI are negatively associated with each form of trust. The HHI is not significant in the model with information pertaining to unemployed white males but remains significant for the model of Black individuals in poverty for inter-race trust. The HHI is marginally significant for intra-race trust in both models. The percent of Black population also sustains a negative relationship with both inter-race and intra-race trust for white individuals. These findings suggest that whites overall become less trusting of individuals of other racial/ethnic groups as well as their own racial/ethnic group in contexts that have higher rates of racial/ethnic diversity and percent of unemployed white males or percent of Black individuals living in poverty. Thus, social trust among whites appears to be most negatively impacted by racial/ethnic diversity when their communities also experience more pronounced problems of unemployment among white males

and where Black poverty is more abundant. It's also important to note that white poverty alone is also negatively associated with all three forms of social trust.

In sum, the results overall confirm some hypotheses but also paint a complicated picture in understanding social trust among whites. Most notably, half of the race/class measures are uniformly more impactful in contexts of higher racial/ethnic diversity. Both white male unemployment and Black poverty are negatively associated with all three forms of social trust as racial and ethnic diversity increases in a community. Furthermore, the HHI on its own is no longer significant in the models for white male unemployment, but it does maintain a negative effect in the models for Black poverty for both trust in neighbors and inter-race trust. This study demonstrates that the growing problem of urban concentrated poverty for Black Americans (Wilson 1987; Sassen 1990; Massey and Denton 1993; Sampson 2009) is affecting whites' perceptions of their communities overall, especially when racial/ethnic diversity increases. Whites are also less trusting because of the deteriorating labor markets and precarity that has come to define the past several decades (Polsky 1999; Smith 2001; Jacobs and Newman 2008; Kalleberg 2009; 2011), and these negative effects are more distinct in contexts of greater racial/ethnic diversity. Interestingly, this is only true for white male unemployment but not Black male unemployment. It suggests that there is an element of group threat at play (see Blumer 1958; Blalock 1967; Quillian 1995) since white people are more concerned when other white people are experiencing economic hardship but seem unphased by the plight of Black males. Overall, these findings indicate that the relationship between racial/ethnic diversity and social trust among white people is most directly tied to a combination of a fear of poor Black people and discontent over the worsening economic realities of "people like them."



**Table 4.2 Multilevel linear regression of trust in neighbors on community and respondent characteristics: White sample**

	Trust in Neighbors			
<i>Key Independent Variables</i>				
Percent Black Population (ct)	-0.004 ***	-0.004 ***	-0.004 ***	-0.003 ***
Herfindahl Index of Ethnic Homogeneity (ct)	0.26 **	0.08	0.22 **	0.28 ***
Percent Unemployed Black Males (ct)	-0.005			
Percent of Unemployed Black Males * HHI	0.006			
Percent Unemployed White Males (ct)		-0.06 **		
Percent of Unemployed White Males * HHI		0.06 *		
Percent Black Individuals in Poverty (ct)			-0.005 **	
Percent of Black Individuals in Poverty * HHI			0.005 **	
Percent White Individuals in Poverty (ct)				-0.01 ***
Percent of White Individuals in Poverty * HHI				0.004
<i>Community characteristics</i>				
Percent living in same MSA five years ago (ct)	-0.002 **	-0.002 **	-0.002 ***	-0.003 ***
Violent crimes per capita (county)	0.00001 □	0.00002 **	0.00001	0.00002 *
Nonviolent crimes per capita (county)	-0.000009 **	-0.00001 **	-0.000008 *	-0.00001 **
South	0.001	-0.008	-0.001	-0.006
Population density (ct)	-0.000005 ***	-0.000005 ***	-0.000005 ***	-0.000005 ***
<i>Respondent characteristics</i>				
Employment Status: Working (ref.)				
Employment Status: Laid off	-0.12 **	-0.12 **	-0.12 **	-0.12 **
Employment Status: Unemployed	-0.07 □	-0.07 □	-0.07 □	-0.07 □
Employment Status: Retired	-0.07 ***	-0.07 ***	-0.07 ***	-0.07 ***
Employment Status: Disabled	-0.16 ***	-0.16 ***	-0.16 ***	-0.15 ***
Employment Status: Homemaker	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03
Employment Status: Student	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.06 □
Economic satisfaction	0.17 ***	0.16 ***	0.17 ***	0.17 ***
Household income	0.04 ***	0.04 ***	0.04 ***	0.04 ***
Years of education	0.05 ***	0.05 ***	0.05 ***	0.05 ***
Owns home	0.24 ***	0.24 ***	0.24 ***	0.23 ***
Age	0.009 ***	0.009 ***	0.009 ***	0.009 ***
Female	0.08 ***	0.08 ***	0.08 ***	0.08 ***
Years in community	0.01 **	0.01 ***	0.01 ***	0.01 ***
US citizen	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07
Interviewed in Spanish	-0.03	-0.02	-0.02	-0.02
Constant	1.22 ***	1.41 ***	1.27 ***	1.33 ***
n	19,930	19,930	19,930	19,930

**Table 4.3 Multilevel linear regression of inter-race trust on community and respondent characteristics: White sample**

	Inter-Race Trust			
<i>Key Independent Variables</i>				
Percent Black Population (ct)	-0.002 ***	-0.002 ***	-0.002 ***	-0.001 *
Herfindahl Index of Ethnic Homogeneity (ct)	0.08	-0.15	0.08 *	0.1 *
Percent Unemployed Black Males (ct)	-0.004			
Percent of Unemployed Black Males * HHI	0.005			
Percent Unemployed White Males (ct)		-0.05 **		
Percent of Unemployed White Males * HHI		0.07 **		
Percent Black Individuals in Poverty (ct)			-0.003 **	
Percent of Black Individuals in Poverty * HHI			0.003 **	
Percent White Individuals in Poverty (ct)				-0.006 **
Percent of White Individuals in Poverty * HHI				0.004
<i>Community characteristics</i>				
Percent living in same MSA five years ago (ct)	-0.001 **	-0.001 **	-0.001 ***	-0.001 ***
Violent crimes per capita (county)	0.000005	0.000008	0.000003	0.000005
Nonviolent crimes per capita (county)	-0.000005 □	-0.000006 □	-0.000005	-0.000005 □
South	-0.07 ***	-0.07 ***	-0.07 ***	-0.07 ***
Population density (ct)	-0.000003 **	-0.000003 **	-0.000003 **	-0.000003 **
<i>Respondent characteristics</i>				
Employment Status: Working (ref.)				
Employment Status: Laid off	-0.09 *	-0.09 *	-0.09 *	-0.09 *
Employment Status: Unemployed	-0.02	-0.02	-0.02	-0.02
Employment Status: Retired	-0.007	-0.007	-0.006	-0.008
Employment Status: Disabled	-0.07 *	-0.07 *	-0.07 *	-0.07 *
Employment Status: Homemaker	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.01
Employment Status: Student	-0.002	-0.0006	-0.0006	0.002
Economic satisfaction	0.16 ***	0.16 ***	0.16 ***	0.16 ***
Household income	0.006 □	0.007 □	0.006	0.005
Years of education	0.04 ***	0.04 ***	0.04 ***	0.04 ***
Owns home	0.03 **	0.03 **	0.03 **	0.03 *
Age	0.005 ***	0.005 ***	0.005 ***	0.005 ***
Female	0.07 ***	0.07 ***	0.07 ***	0.07 ***
Years in community	-0.002	-0.003	-0.002	-0.002
US citizen	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.04
Interviewed in Spanish	-0.04	-0.04	-0.04	-0.04
Constant	1.65 ***	1.81 ***	1.66 ***	1.68 ***
n	19,930	19,930	19,930	19,930

**Table 4.4 Multilevel linear regression of intra-race trust on community and respondent characteristics: White sample**

	Intra-Race Trust			
<i>Key Independent Variables</i>				
Percent Black Population (ct)	-0.002 ***	-0.002 ***	-0.001 ***	-0.001 **
Herfindahl Index of Ethnic Homogeneity (ct)	0.07	-0.17 □	0.07 □	0.11 **
Percent Unemployed Black Males (ct)	-0.006			
Percent of Unemployed Black Males * HHI	0.007			
Percent Unemployed White Males (ct)		-0.06 ***		
Percent of Unemployed White Males * HHI		0.07 ***		
Percent Black Individuals in Poverty (ct)			-0.004 **	
Percent of Black Individuals in Poverty * HHI			0.004 **	
Percent White Individuals in Poverty (ct)				-0.005 *
Percent of White Individuals in Poverty * HHI				0.003
<i>Community characteristics</i>				
Percent living in same MSA five years ago (ct)	-0.0007 □	-0.0006	-0.0007 *	-0.0009 *
Violent crimes per capita (county)	0.000006	0.000006	-0.000002	0.000001
Nonviolent crimes per capita (county)	-0.000005 □	-0.000007 *	-0.000005 □	-0.000006 *
South	-0.05 ***	-0.05 ***	-0.05 ***	-0.05 ***
Population density (ct)	-0.000004 ***	-0.000004 ***	-0.000004 ***	-0.000004 ***
<i>Respondent characteristics</i>				
Employment Status: Working (ref.)				
Employment Status: Laid off	-0.07 □	-0.07 □	-0.07 □	-0.07 □
Employment Status: Unemployed	-0.08 *	-0.08 *	-0.08 *	-0.08 *
Employment Status: Retired	-0.002	-0.002	-0.003	-0.003
Employment Status: Disabled	-0.04	-0.04	-0.04	-0.04
Employment Status: Homemaker	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03
Employment Status: Student	-0.004	-0.002	-0.005	0.00004
Economic satisfaction	0.15 ***	0.15 ***	0.15 ***	0.15 ***
Household income	0.001	0.0008	0.0006	-0.0009
Years of education	0.02 ***	0.02 ***	0.02 ***	0.02 ***
Owns home	0.03 **	0.03 **	0.03 **	0.03 *
Age	0.006 ***	0.006 ***	0.006 ***	0.006 ***
Female	0.04 ***	0.04 ***	0.04 ***	0.04 ***
Years in community	0.003	0.003	0.003	0.004
US citizen	-0.02	-0.02	-0.02	-0.02
Interviewed in Spanish	-0.03	-0.03	-0.03	-0.03
Constant	1.76 ***	1.96 ***	1.77 ***	1.78 ***
Adjusted R2				
n	19,930	19,930	19,930	19,930

However, these race/class measures do not negate the impact of both diversity measures. In fact, the percent of Black population maintains a consistent negative relationship for all models. Racial/ethnic diversity is more complex however. For trust in neighbors, it is significant for all models, except for the model that includes white male unemployment. For inter-race trust, it is only significant in both of the poverty models, and only reports a negative effect in the model with white poverty on intra-race trust. It is difficult to ascertain the underlying reason for these findings, but regardless, racial/ethnic diversity appears to remain important since it erodes social trust among whites in half of the models. It is worth repeating that the percent of Black population regularly negatively impacts all three forms of trust though, suggesting that whites become less trusting in contexts with higher proportions of Blacks, as opposed to general racial/ethnic diversity. Again, whites are not concerned when Black males, and arguably Black families, struggle economically since Black male unemployment on its own has no association with any of the three forms of social trust. Conversely, white poverty undermines all three forms of social trust, along with both diversity measures, which supports other research concluding that adverse economic conditions and racial/ethnic diversity are equally important in eroding social trust (Portes and Vickstrom 2011; Gereke et al. 2018; Paarlberg et al. 2018; Ziller and Heizmann 2019).

## **Discussion and Conclusion**

Social trust has been a central focus of academics for a few decades. Two of the leading theories on why social trust is diminishing are increased racial/ethnic diversity and economic inequality. Research suggests that racial/ethnic diversity erodes social trust in the US, and that this relationship may be unique to this country (Alesina and La Ferrara 2002; Putnam 2007; Van

Der Meer and Tolsma 2014). More critical accounts emphasize the role of residential segregation and oppression (Uslaner 2010; Rothwell 2012) and that white people are actually driving this negative trend (Marschall and Stolle 2004; Fieldhouse and Cutts 2010; Abascal and Baldassarri 2015). Economic inequality also plays a role in undermining social trust in the US (Uslaner and Brown 2005; Rothstein and Uslaner 2005). More interestingly, there is evidence that both conditions appear to be equally important here in the US and abroad (Alesina and La Ferrara 2002; Gereke et al. 2018; Ziller and Heizmann 2019).

The literature suggests the need to dig deeper into the combined effects of racial/ethnic diversity and inequality as well as economic conditions. First, this study moves beyond the typical focus on economic inequality since other features of the globalized economy are equally troubling and widespread. The US has undergone a transition from more secure forms of labor that offered higher pay and benefits to an economy that overwhelmingly provides low-quality jobs, fewer worker protections, and more instances of unemployment (Bernhardt et al. 2008; Kalleberg 2009; 2011). Men in particular have witnessed a dramatic decline in economic security and job opportunities (Bernhardt et al. 2001; Blank and Shierholz 2006; Wagmiller and Lee 2014). Poverty has also risen in the US, especially in Black neighborhoods across American cities. Deindustrialization, the outsourcing of jobs to suburbs, and the out-migration of nonpoor Black and white families created and exacerbated concentrated poverty across the country (Wilson 1987; 1996). Residential segregation further cements this position of disadvantage and subordination (Massey and Denton 1993), leading to higher rates of poverty among Blacks when compared to whites (Sassen 1990) and neighborhoods being trapped in cycles of entrenched poverty (Sampson 2009). Second, using these insights, this study emphasizes the importance of

race and class in understanding the state of social trust by incorporating the unemployment rates of white and Black men and poverty rates for Black and white individuals.

The goal of this paper is to expand upon the apparent interconnected effects of both racial/ethnic diversity and economic inequality seen in this literature by using one of the major data sources on social trust, the 2000 Social Capital Community Benchmark Survey. This dataset provides multiple measures of social trust, and this study utilizes three of them: trust in neighbors, inter-race trust, and intra-race trust. Interaction terms for racial/ethnic diversity and each of the four race/class measures mentioned in the last paragraph are used in order to test whether the negative effect of racial/ethnic diversity is greater in communities that have higher rates of male unemployment and poverty for both Blacks and/or whites. The analysis also postulates that these race/class variables will be more impactful in reducing social trust and will negate the effect of racial/ethnic diversity. Lastly, the study further builds on the finding that white people only experience the negative relationship between racial/ethnic diversity and social trust (see Abascal and Baldassarri 2015) by limiting the focus to only white respondents from the 2000 SCCBS. Based on this framework, the percent of Black population is used as an additional key independent variable since this measure has been shown to erode social capital (Portes and Vickstrom 2011) and social trust (see Chapter 2).

Results confirm some of these hypotheses but also convey convoluted patterns. The most striking finding is that both white male unemployment and Black poverty do, in fact, reduce all three forms of social trust in contexts of greater racial/ethnic diversity. However, racial/ethnic diversity also remains negatively associated with social trust in half of the models, and appears to have the strongest impact on trust in neighbors. The percent of Black population decreases all three forms of social trust in every single model, which suggests that whites are more concerned

about that presence of Blacks, as opposed to general diversity. Overall, the findings indicate that the deterioration of social trust among whites is most connected to a combination of racial/ethnic diversity and the presence of Black people specifically, a fear of poor Black people, and discontent over the worsening economic realities of “people like them.” This mindset can be likened to more recent work where conservative whites express resentment towards Black people and immigrants for receiving more assistance from the government and feeling left behind in mainstream politics (Hochschild 2016). The effects of major economic and demographic shifts have upended whites’ perception of this country, mainly their position of symbolic and economic power within it, and the ramifications of these fears and concerns are pervading the culture and politics of present-day America.

Racism and notions of white supremacy appear to be central to this story. Systemic racism is foundational to the history of this country, especially directed at African Americans, in the forms of economic exploitation and political marginalization (Feagin 2006). The economic system has been inextricably linked to racist ideologies since capitalism hinged on the dehumanization of Black people in this country (Cox 1948). Systems of oppression are created and maintained by dominant groups, whites in this case, by rationalizing the subjugation of non-whites through ideological means, such as stereotypes and perceived cultural differences (Jackman 1994; Golash-Boza 2016). The fact that social trust among whites is negatively affected by Black poverty, and not Black unemployment, demonstrates the significance of stereotypes and racist ideologies. The diminished sense of social cohesion is not negatively affected by whether their Black neighbors have lost their job, but rather, whites are perceiving their community as dysfunctional based on racist conceptions of what it means to be poor and Black in this country. Additionally, it appears that the threats to white supremacy, via economic

advantages and security, are stoking greater fear and uncertainty among whites about their neighbors, especially if the community's demographic makeup consists of higher proportions of Black Americans. Concerns that the community is economically suffering, or more accurately if white people around them are struggling, may partly explain the loss of social trust among whites, but the distinct effect of Black poverty specifically, as well as the consistent negative effect of the proportion of Black people in a community, suggests that stereotypes and racist ideologies that have shaped perceptions of poor Black people in this country lie at the heart of the problem.

The negative relationship between white male unemployment and social trust is a new angle to this discussion that needs to be dissected further. This paper focuses predominately on the interrelated effects of race and class, but gendered processes also appear to be important in understanding the decline of social trust in the US. The economic hardship of white men is clearly shaping whites' perceptions of others in their community, especially in contexts with greater racial and ethnic diversity. Again, this ties to particular racist ideologies that blame non-whites for the lack of jobs available to the dominant group, but examining whether unemployment among white females has the same effect can shed light on other possible explanations. For instance, is the decline in social trust a mourning of the loss of symbolic, and literal, power among this country's most privileged group? Gendered differences in this analysis are also observed since women are more trusting than men in every single model. This also indicates that doing separate analyses for white men and women could provide additional insights to this phenomenon.

This study expands upon the literature by emphasizing the combined effects of race and class in understanding why whites are becoming less trusting, but future research can dig deeper



into some of these trends. First, this analysis is limited to white respondents so it would be equally important to look at other racial/ethnic groups. However, the 2000 SCCBS sample consists of mostly of white respondents so a different data source or a new survey that better addresses racial/ethnic representation would be needed. The data are also very old at this point, which further illustrates the need to revisit these types of issues, especially considering the continued, and heightened, importance of racial/ethnic and economic inequalities in the US. Lastly, more research is needed to properly ascertain the specific contexts, circumstances, and processes that affect social trust among whites. The narrative on social trust has been revised and updated, but we are far from understanding how all of these different factors can be simultaneously important. A qualitative approach using interviews and ethnography can offer a more holistic look at some of these processes. This literature is heavily dominated by survey data, but it is clear that these types of data are not capable of telling the whole story.

Social trust is conceptualized as a gauge for the health of society and democracy, and perhaps, the current political moment illustrates the need to understand what enhances or erodes it more than ever. Political polarization has increased dramatically and racial/ethnic tensions are actively being enflamed by political actors and pundits. The prevailing discourse emphasizes the “us vs. them” mindset, which has been particularly effective in gaining support among whites without a bachelor’s degree. Increasing racial/ethnic diversity is viewed as a threat to the country, and this notion has been capitalized upon by the current president (see Porter 2018). Economic hardship exacerbates these patterns, either directly or indirectly (see Galofaro 2017). Theoretically, improving the state of social trust can help end this political trajectory of conflict, and this study shows that addressing both economic and racial/ethnic inequalities are necessary to reach that goal.

## Chapter 5: Conclusion

Social trust and civic engagement represent indicators for community health and stability. Scholarship examining the decline of these phenomena has remained steady, yet contentious, throughout the twenty-first century. The leading theories for diagnosing the erosion of both are aggregate economic inequality (Alesina and La Ferrara 2002; Costa and Kahn 2003; Rothstein and Uslaner 2005; Uslaner and Brown 2005) and increased racial/ethnic diversity (Alesina and La Ferrara 2000; Alesina and La Ferrara 2002; Leigh 2006; Putnam 2007). One of the most famous examples that assessed several measures for social trust and civic engagement comes from Robert Putnam (2007). He reported findings that racial/ethnic diversity reduced all of the measures examined, but mostly highlighted the effects on social trust: inter-racial, intra-racial, and trust in neighbors. The majority of these claims are based on unreported analyses and bivariate correlations,<sup>16</sup> but this work became a driving force in the literature and in popular discourse on the issue of increased racial/ethnic diversity. This is partly because of Putnam's earlier work examining the decline of social capital in the US in his book, *Bowling Alone* (2000), which is perhaps one of the most widely known social science studies of the last couple of decades.

Many scholars have tested, extended, or critiqued his work. Some studies confirm that different forms of social capital are reduced by increased racial/ethnic diversity (Leigh 2006; Laurence 2011; Rotolo and Wilson 2012; 2014; Gundelach and Traunmuller 2014; Van der Meer and Tolsma 2014; Robinson 2016). More critical accounts, however, suggest that this negative relationship is found only among whites stemming from a general distaste for racial/ethnic

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<sup>16</sup> Putnam (2007) conducted multilevel regression on trust in neighbors, but only reported correlation analysis for the relationships of racial/ethnic diversity with inter-race and intra-race trust. He mentioned that he performed the same stringent analysis (i.e., multilevel regression) on these two other forms of trust as well as the various measures he used for civic engagement, but he does not report any of these analyses.

diversity, or more specifically, living amongst nonwhite out-groups (Fieldhouse and Cutts 2010; Abascal and Baldassarri 2015). While others have focused on aggregate and individual economic conditions. For instance, economic inequality decreases participation and membership in organizations, volunteering, and social trust (Costa and Kahn 2003; Rothstein and Uslander 2005; Uslander and Brown 2005; Lancee and van de Werfhorst 2012). Other studies find that individual labor status explains the shifts in civic engagement, such as a decline in community and political involvement as a result of long-term unemployment and shift work – particularly overnight and weekend shifts (Guigni and Lorenzini 2013; Cornwell and Warburton 2014).

This dissertation reassesses Putnam's (2007) work by testing his own models directly, applying more robust theoretical considerations to the observed patterns, and incorporating more recent findings within the literature to develop more nuanced analyses involving a mixture of racial/ethnic and economic inequality. Overall, the preceding chapters confirm some of his original conclusions about the deleterious effects of racial/ethnic diversity on social trust and civic engagement, suggesting that social trust among whites is more impacted by the presence of Blacks as opposed to general diversity, and that specific forms of community-level economic conditions – namely Black poverty and white male unemployment – are making whites less trusting, especially in contexts of greater diversity. Thus, racist ideology and threats to white dominance appear to be at the core of this downward trend.

## **Summary of Empirical Chapters**

### *Chapter 2: “Is Social Trust a Gauge of Whites’ Fear of ‘the Other?’: The Role of Group Threat and Symbolic Boundaries in Understanding the Effects of Racial/Ethnic Diversity”*

This chapter tests Putnam’s (2007) conclusions about social trust by revisiting his own models, expanding upon the methodological framework, and applying new theoretical perspectives. The replication analyses confirm the negative relationship between racial/ethnic diversity and trust in neighbors and inter-race trust, but there is only a marginally significant effect on intra-race trust for the full sample. I then conduct the same analyses for racial/ethnic subsamples: whites, Blacks, Hispanics, and Asians. These models confirm that whites are the only racial/ethnic group that become less trusting of their neighbors and report lower levels of inter-race trust as a result of increased diversity, which suggests that racist ideology lies at the core of observed declines in social trust in the US. Lastly, I add the percentage of Blacks and Hispanics to these models for each of the four subsamples. Again, these two measures do not affect social trust among Blacks, Hispanics, or Asians. For whites, both racial/ethnic diversity and percent of Blacks have a negative relationship with trust in neighbors. Percent Black and Hispanic do not affect inter-race trust, but the observed association with racial/ethnic diversity becomes marginally significant when both of these measures are included in the model. Most importantly, the proportion of Black individuals does reduce intra-race trust, whereas diversity has no effect. Overall, these findings demonstrate that Putnam’s (2007) analyses, as well as his interpretations, were lacking nuance and made sweeping arguments that racial/ethnic diversity is problematic for fostering social trust. He makes it clear that the take-away should not be to condemn racial/ethnic diversity, but rather to be mindful of the potential harm and to address these complications through policy. However, this conclusion lacks deeper substance by ignoring

the social and cultural processes that shape these outcomes in the first place. It is clear that racism lies at the core of this pattern since the presence of Blacks appears to make whites less trusting, generally speaking.

I expand upon this framework by incorporating two prominent theoretical perspectives in the sociological understanding of race and ethnicity. First, group threat theory emphasizes that racial/ethnic majority groups perceive minority groups as a threat to existing social arrangements and their privilege, which produces hostility and prejudice towards these groups, especially as the proportion of minority groups increases (Blumer 1958; Blalock 1967). Second, symbolic boundaries represent the ways in which racial/ethnic groups are created and maintained through abstract and physical similarities and differences, and how these delineations affect how these groups interact and view each other (Lamont and Molnar 2002).

Both of these perspectives help illuminate some of the processes driving these results. The percentage of Black people in a community drives down whites' trust in neighbors equally as much as general diversity and it is the only demographic measure of diversity that negatively affects intra-race trust among whites. This confirms group threat theory since the increased presence of minorities, specifically Blacks, alters whites' perception of their community and even people of their own racial/ethnic group. The symbolic boundaries literature helps round out that observed pattern since it appears that the Black-white divide is more rigid than boundaries between other racial/ethnic groups, at least from the perspective of whites. The increased presence of Hispanics does not affect any of the forms of social trust among whites, for instance. Moreover, whites are the only racial/ethnic group that is negatively affected by diversity. This suggests that the symbolic boundaries between these different groups looms large over whites' perception of their community. Conversely, diversity does not affect social trust for Blacks,

Hispanics, or Asians. The symbolic boundaries for these nonwhite groups appear to be more malleable and less affected by the presence of other types of races or ethnicities.

*Chapter 3: “Are Americans ‘Hunkering Down’ in Response to Increased Racial and Ethnic Diversity?: Revisiting Putnam’s Analysis on Civic Engagement”*

Putnam’s (2007) “hunkering down” thesis not only posits that social trust is eroded by racial/ethnic diversity, he also makes the point that the same negative relationship is observed for a variety of different civic engagement measures. However, this part of the argument relies on *unreported* analyses.<sup>17</sup> He concludes that in communities with higher rates of racial/ethnic diversity, people become less likely to donate, volunteer, be politically involved, have fewer relationships with people in the community, rate their community negatively, etc. Many scholars have tested this relationship in various contexts and different data sources, while others have highlighted economic inequality as the potential driving force behind this pattern.

There are two major competing theoretical camps that either stress racial/ethnic diversity or economic inequality as being responsible for the loss of civic engagement in the US. The literature has not come to a consensus on what is specifically happening, even though there is evidence that each plays some role. Revisiting Putnam’s (2007) classic work can help bring more clarity to this complicated story. Thus, I replicate his single multivariate model reported in the paper (testing for trust in neighbors) to examine all of the measures he discusses, which I categorize as three separate forms of civic engagement: 1) Perception of Community, 2) Political and Community Involvement, 3) Relationships and Well-Being. His original model includes the

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<sup>17</sup> He mentions that all measures of civic engagement are negatively correlated with racial/ethnic diversity, and that the same multilevel regression analyses were conducted with similar results. However, he does not provide any results of either of these analyses.

Gini coefficient so the analyses also serve as a way to test for both of the most debated explanations. The results confirm his claim that racial/ethnic diversity causes people to develop more negative perceptions of their community, but there is little to no evidence that it causes people to withdraw from Political & Community Involvement or negatively affects their Relationships & Well-Being. Moreover, economic inequality has very little impact on any of the outcomes, which suggests a need to expand the dialogue.

*Chapter 4: “Economic Hardship, Racial Oppression, and Trust among Whites in the United States”*

This final analytical chapter builds on the results of the previous analyses in this dissertation and attempts to provide new explanations for why social trust has been on the decline in the US. As mentioned above, there is evidence of a negative relationship between racial/ethnic diversity and social trust (Alesina and La Ferrara 2002; Putnam 2007; Van der Meer and Tolsma 2014), but white people may be solely responsible for this trend (Marschall and Stolle 2004; Fieldhouse and Cutts 2010; Abascal and Baldassarri 2015). In addition, economic inequality has been shown to reduce social trust in the United States (Uslaner and Brown 2005; Rothstein and Uslaner 2005), and a few studies provide proof that both conditions can equally impact the state of social trust in the US and abroad (Alesina and La Ferrara 2002; Gereke et al. 2018; Ziller and Heizmann 2019).

Despite these studies and findings, scholars have not fully considered the connected effects of class and race during the era of globalization in understanding why a loss of social trust is being observed. Major economic shifts over the past several decades have dramatically undermined the economic livelihoods of all Americans (see Smith 2001; Jacobs and Newman

2008; Kalleberg 2009; 2011). Men in particular have experienced higher rates of job loss and unemployment compared to earlier periods of American history (see Bernhardt et al. 2001; Blank and Shierholz 2006). Structural constraints, like residential segregation and the suburbanization of middle-class jobs, have especially trapped many Black Americans in concentrated and persistent poverty across this country (Wilson 1987; 1996; Massey and Denton 1993; Sampson 2009).

These harsh economic realities justify investigating whether unemployment and poverty rates of different race/ethnic groups are more important than simple questions of demographic change or aggregate economic inequality. Specifically, the analyses explore the effects of male unemployment and poverty rates for both whites and Blacks on social trust among whites. Racial/ethnic diversity is also included in the model, and interaction effects of diversity and these economic measures are considered in order to test whether these conditions are more impactful in contexts of higher diversity. The sample only includes whites and the percentage of Black Americans is added to the models in order to address findings from the literature as well as results from earlier chapters in this dissertation. The analyses show a consistent negative effect of both white male unemployment and Black poverty in contexts of higher racial/ethnic diversity for the three forms of social trust examined: inter-race, intra-race, and trust in neighbors. Diversity still maintains a negative relationship with one's trust in neighbors, but the other two forms of social trust are not affected by this measure. Whereas, the percentage of Black Americans has a negative effect across all models, suggesting that the presence of this minority group, particularly, reduces social trust among whites.

In sum, these three analyses provide revisions and new pathways for research in this literature. The first chapter contextualizes Putnam's (2007) findings on social trust by showing



that whites are becoming less trusting in communities with higher levels of racial/ethnic diversity, even when using his own regression models. Moreover, the proportion of Black Americans is equally or even more impactful, which suggests that racist ideology and “group threat” are more responsible for this pattern than some abstract aversion to diversity. The second chapter presents further nuance to Putnam’s (2007) original claims by showing that Americans develop negative perceptions of their communities in response to greater racial/ethnic diversity, such as feeling like the people running the community do not care about them, losing trust in local government and news media, and viewing their community as a poor place to live where residents do not cooperate for a common cause. However, diversity does not lead to people becoming less likely to engage in their community or impeding their willingness to develop and maintain social relationships, or more simply, Americans do not “hunker down” and disconnect from their community. The third chapter expands the focus of the literature beyond questions of diversity or economic inequality and highlights the combined effects of race and class in shaping social trust in the US. The analysis shows that whites become less trusting as a result of higher rates of Black poverty and white male unemployment in contexts of increased racial/ethnic diversity. The tests also illustrate that social trust is still negatively impacted by the presence of Black Americans, and to a lesser extent diversity, which suggests that pure demographics cannot be ruled out of this discussion. However, this analysis overall demonstrates that racist ideology and threats to white supremacy appear to be most consequential in this narrative.

**Table 5.1 Summary of key results from Chapter 2: Effects of racial/ethnic diversity on three forms of social trust**

	Trust in Neighbors	Inter-Race Trust	Intra-Race Trust
<i>Full Sample, Replication Model</i>			
Herfindahl Index of Ethnic Homogeneity (HHI)	0.2 **	0.11 **	0.09 □
<i>Full Sample, Replication Model with Interactions</i>			
HHI	0.25 ***	0.13 **	0.12 *
HHI * Black	-0.25 **	-0.06	-0.12 □
HHI * Hispanic	-0.05	-0.02	-0.06
HHI * Asian	0.07	-0.02	-0.02
<i>White Sample, Replication Model</i>			
HHI	0.24 **	0.11 **	0.08 □
<i>Black Sample, Replication Model</i>			
HHI	-0.03	0.06	0.03
<i>Hispanic Sample, Replication Model</i>			
HHI	0.24 □	0.11	0.12
<i>Asian Sample, Replication Model</i>			
HHI	0.32	0.04	0.15
<i>White Sample, Replication Model with Proportion of Minority Groups</i>			
HHI	0.15 **	0.09 □	0.03
Percent Black	-0.002 **	-0.0005	-0.001 *
Percent Hispanic	-0.001	-0.0004	-0.0007
<i>Black Sample, Replication Model with Proportion of Minority Groups</i>			
HHI	-0.03	0.08	0.04
Percent Black	-0.0001	-0.0005	-0.0008
Percent Hispanic	-0.001	0.001	-0.0008
<i>Hispanic Sample, Replication Model with Proportion of Minority Groups</i>			
HHI	0.23 □	0.12	0.1
Percent Black	-0.00009	-0.0001	0.0003
Percent Hispanic	0.0006	-0.001	-0.001
<i>Asian Sample, Replication Model with Proportion of Minority Groups</i>			
HHI	0.3	0.05	0.18
Percent Black	-0.0004	0.0006	0.001
Percent Hispanic	-0.003	0.001	0.002

**Table 5.2 Summary of Chapter 3 results: Effects of racial/ethnic diversity and economic inequality on civic engagement**

	Herfindahl Index of Ethnic Homogeneity (HHI)	Gini Coefficient
<i>Full Sample, Replication Model</i>		
<i>Perception of Community</i>		
Trust in Local Government	0.07 *	0.23
Trust in Local News	0.14 **	-0.15
People Running My Community Don't Care About Me*	-0.11 *	0.01
Perceived Impact in Making Community a Better Place to Live	0.03	0.3
Likelihood of People Cooperating to Save Water or Electricity	0.11 *	0.29
Rating of Your Community as a Place to Live	0.18 ***	0.61 *
<i>Political &amp; Community Involvement</i>		
Registered to Vote	0.08	0.11
Interest in Politics	-0.05	-0.14
Knowledge of Politics	0.04	-0.91
Activism	-0.17	-0.56
Belonged to Any Group that Took Local Action for Reform	-0.31 *	-1.22
Worked on a Community Project in Past 12 Months	0.2 □	-0.53
Give to Charity and/or Volunteer	-0.28	-0.04
<i>Relationships &amp; Well-Being</i>		
Number of People You Can Confide In	0.03	0.36
Number of Close Friends	0.05	0.1
Happiness	0.08 **	-0.07
Hours of TV Watched on an Average Weekday	0.01	-2.23 *
TV is My Primary Form of Entertainment	0.01	-0.46

\* Note: This variable is reverse coded

**Table 5.3 Summary of key results from Chapter 4: Effects of racial/ethnic diversity and aggregate-level economic conditions on three forms of social trust among white respondents**

	Trust in Neighbors			
<i>Key Independent Variables</i>				
Percent Black Population (ct)	-0.004 ***	-0.004 ***	-0.004 ***	-0.003 ***
Herfindahl Index of Ethnic Homogeneity (ct)	0.26 **	0.08	0.22 **	0.28 ***
Percent Unemployed Black Males (ct)	-0.005			
Number of Unemployed Black Males * HHI	0.006			
Percent Unemployed White Males (ct)		-0.06 **		
Number of Unemployed White Males * HHI		0.06 *		
Percent Black Individuals in Poverty (ct)			-0.005 **	
Number of Black Individuals in Poverty * HHI			0.005 **	
Percent White Individuals in Poverty (ct)				-0.01 ***
Number of White Individuals in Poverty * HHI				0.004
	Inter-Race Trust			
<i>Key Independent Variables</i>				
Percent Black Population (ct)	-0.002 ***	-0.002 ***	-0.002 ***	-0.001 *
Herfindahl Index of Ethnic Homogeneity (ct)	0.08	-0.15	0.08 *	0.1 *
Percent Unemployed Black Males (ct)	-0.004			
Number of Unemployed Black Males * HHI	0.005			
Percent Unemployed White Males (ct)		-0.05 **		
Number of Unemployed White Males * HHI		0.07 **		
Percent Black Individuals in Poverty (ct)			-0.003 **	
Number of Black Individuals in Poverty * HHI			0.003 **	
Percent White Individuals in Poverty (ct)				-0.006 **
Number of White Individuals in Poverty * HHI				0.004
	Intra-Race Trust			
<i>Key Independent Variables</i>				
Percent Black Population (ct)	-0.002 ***	-0.002 ***	-0.001 ***	-0.001 **
Herfindahl Index of Ethnic Homogeneity (ct)	0.07	-0.17 □	0.07 □	0.11 **
Percent Unemployed Black Males (ct)	-0.006			
Number of Unemployed Black Males * HHI	0.007			
Percent Unemployed White Males (ct)		-0.06 ***		
Number of Unemployed White Males * HHI		0.07 ***		
Percent Black Individuals in Poverty (ct)			-0.004 **	
Number of Black Individuals in Poverty * HHI			0.004 **	
Percent White Individuals in Poverty (ct)				-0.005 *
Number of White Individuals in Poverty * HHI				0.003

## **Contribution to the Literature and Ideas for Future Research**

The first major contribution to the literature undermines Putnam's (2007) claims about social trust in the US. His conclusions mask underlying social and cultural processes, such as racist ideologies and oppression, that are inherently involved with matters of race and ethnicity in this country. Whites are the only racial/ethnic group that lose social trust as a result of increased diversity, even when examining his own models. This relationship is strongest for their trust in neighbors. However, the addition of the percentage of Black population to his original model shows that the presence of this particular group is as impactful as general diversity, as opposed to Hispanics who did not affect any form of trust. Trust in neighbors is reduced by both diversity and the proportion of Black Americans in a community. Inter-race trust is only reduced by diversity; whereas the greater presence of Blacks solely drives down intra-race trust. Overall, these findings parallel the postulations of group threat theory since whites, the majority racial/ethnic group in America, become less trusting of people in their community, even people like them. It also suggests that whites are most apprehensive about Blacks, and not Hispanics, which also suggests the importance of symbolic boundaries in this discussion since the white-Black divide appears to be the strongest racial/ethnic barrier in this country (see Lamont 2000; Lamont and Molnar 2002; Miller 2015; Schachter 2016). The fact that all three of the nonwhite groups report no effect from diversity also suggests that the boundaries for these groups are not as rigid or important. In sum, racist ideology dictates the level of social trust among whites as a result of the presence of Blacks specifically. This analysis helps support others who have found and propose that structural concerns, like segregation and racial oppression, are most important in shaping social trust in this country (Fieldhouse and Cutts 2010; Uslaner 2010; Rothwell 2012; Abascal and Baldassarri 2015).

The second analytic chapter both confirms and contradicts Putnam's (2007) "constrict theory." The predominant effect observed is that an individual's Perception of their Community is diminished by greater diversity. The same deleterious relationship is not found for Relationships & Well-Being or Political & Community involvement overall since only two measures across these two categories are affected at all. People do report being less happy in more diverse communities, which helps support Putnam's (2007) claims. For Political & Community Involvement, more people belonged to a group that took local action for reform as their community became more diverse. However, this result contradicts his claim since people are becoming more involved in local politics. Others have theorized political involvement as being inherently confrontational, and thus, should not be lumped into the same conceptualization of civic engagement (see Uslaner and Brown 2005), but Putnam (2000; 2007) never adopted that viewpoint so this analysis ultimately weakens his stance on the effects of diversity. Overall, these findings do not depict a scenario where Americans are "hunkering down" when faced with greater racial/ethnic diversity, but rather, that symbolic notions of their community deteriorate, such as losing trust in local government and news media, rating their community as a bad place to live, believing that the community would not cooperate to reach a common goal (conserving water or electricity), and feeling left behind by those that are in positions of power in their community.

Chapter 3 not only suggests that the literature needs to place less importance on racial/ethnic diversity; the results also show that the emphasis on economic inequality is misguided. The Gini coefficient, the primary measure used in the literature to gauge the effects of economic conditions, only reports two significant relationships, which actually represent beneficial outcomes: people watch less television and rate their community as a good place to

live. Scholars have long questioned the use and accuracy of the Gini index as a measurement of economic inequality (see Atkinson 1970; Kolm 1999). These findings suggest the use of other measures of economic inequality, especially since the nature of increased inequality in the US has occurred at the top of the income distribution. The Gini index is best suited for capturing differences in the middle of the income distribution so it is not capturing the severity of economic inequality that has occurred in this country over the past forty years. Additionally, this literature needs to expand its focus beyond economic inequality and consider other forms of economic hardship that more Americans have faced since the late twentieth century, such as unemployment, stagnant wages, and job insecurity.

The third study in this dissertation builds on the findings of the previous chapters by testing for the combined effects of race and class in understanding social trust among whites in the US. The models include racial/ethnic diversity and the percentage of Blacks since they both played a role in the other analyses. Results show that simple demographic concerns remain part of the story since the percent of Black population reduces all three forms of social trust and that general diversity maintains a negative effect for roughly half of the models and is most impactful for trust in neighbors. More importantly, the analysis adds measures of economic hardship for Blacks and whites – namely male unemployment and individual poverty rates – as well as interaction effects for these four economic measures and diversity to test for whether these economic conditions are more impactful in contexts of greater diversity. Findings suggest that the reduction of social trust is best explained by a combination of demographic concerns and economic distress. Most notably, white male unemployment and Black poverty decrease all three forms of social trust (inter-race, intra-race, and trust in neighbors) on their own but also become more detrimental in communities that experience increased racial/ethnic diversity. This observed

deterioration of social trust in the United States appears to be fueled by racism and the perceived upending of white supremacy, at least in terms of economic power and security. Whites in this country have directly and indirectly benefited from economic and political systems that have intentionally exploited Black Americans (see Cox 1948; Feagin 2006). Racist ideologies help perpetuate systems of oppression through the use of stereotypes and perceived cultural differences (Jackman 1994; Golash-Boza 2016). Racist stereotypes of poor Black people appear to loom large in whites' conceptions of their neighbors since Black poverty (and not male unemployment) reduces social trust. Additionally, the negative effect of white male unemployment demonstrates that the fear of others in their community stems from a symbolic and actualized threat to this group's historically advantageous position within the economic hierarchy and society overall. In other words, notions of white supremacy and racist ideologies help explain the diminished state of social trust in this country among white people.

Altogether, this dissertation points to several new avenues for research. Based on the results of the third article, it is important to dig deeper into the role of demographic and economic shifts. The current economic era has been shaped, partly by globalization and neoliberalism, which have caused increased economic deprivation for many as well as the (im)migration of people in search of new labor. Focusing a study on a community, or communities, that have experienced both trends could offer valuable insight to the specific mechanisms at play. Interviews and/or a survey with these theoretical considerations could provide the necessary depth to resolving the ongoing debate about racial/ethnic diversity and economic inequality. More broadly, the utilization of other methods could be beneficial since the majority of studies rely on survey data. Longitudinal analysis could also prove to be fundamental



to this type of investigation since communities, and this country, have undergone major transformations over the last couple of decades.

Another major issue within this literature lies in the measurement of social trust and civic engagement. Many scholars have emphasized the nebulous nature of these concepts and note how there is little to no consensus on how to define them or which ones are more beneficial, if at all (see Portes and Vickstrom 2011; Van der Meer and Tolsma 2014). The conceptualization of social trust has many shortcomings. Robbins (2016) attempts to boil down the multitude of “varieties” into a singular understanding that he calls the structural-cognitive model of trust, which emphasizes the relational component of the beliefs that dictate whether an individual finds another to be trustworthy with respect to a specific matter at hand. This specificity can help avoid abstract notions of whether a person “trusts their neighbors” or “trusts Black people.” Distinguishing between particularized and generalized trust further demystifies the discussion. Uslaner (2002) argues that particularized trust refers to having trust in “people like you” and generalized trust is the more ideal form where the individual believes that most, if not all, people can be trusted. Again, incorporating this distinction in an interview or survey would allow for a more nuanced understanding of social trust broadly, and particularly, this can untangle some of the complexities of concepts like intra- or inter-race trust.

Even though this analysis provides a revision to Putnam’s (2007) claims about whether people “hunker down” in response to increased racial/ethnic diversity, it would also be constructive to consider other forms of civic engagement. He includes a wide array of measures that can be questionably considered civic engagement, like one’s happiness or whether they watch television. Moreover, the political measures do not inherently equate to a healthy, stable community where everyone gets along. Political involvement can be a hostile reaction to another

group, or at the very least, is indicative of an ideological conflict (see Uslander and Brown 2005), which is a central concern for issues surrounding racial/ethnic diversity. The current political and cultural climate highlight the polarized and hateful nature of political involvement right now. This country has changed dramatically since 2000 so reconfiguring the types of civic engagement that are examined is extremely important.

Recent research on political ideology, cultural clashes, and social status provide a nuanced understanding of how racial/ethnic diversity and economic inequality are shaping matters associated with social trust and civic engagement. Norris and Inglehart (2018) argue that the rise of authoritarian values in the current political era, is partly influenced by racism and xenophobia, but that the underlying mechanisms involve a fear of cultural upheaval, or a loss of their morals, beliefs, and values, as a result of increased racial/ethnic diversity. This same study finds that economic indicators, like occupation and economic insecurity, are significantly associated with more support for authoritarianism but that the effect is weak, especially compared to cultural values like having a mistrust of the political system and an individual's overall ideology. Those that feel socially marginalized, both in terms of economic stature and social status, are more likely to disengage from the political system and to support more radical ideologies (Gidron and Hall 2020). Some sociologists are calling for a more holistic understanding of how inequality operates in this country, beyond matters of economic resources and power, to issues stemming from status and the cultural beliefs that create and justify notions of which groups are "better" or have higher levels of respect and esteem (Ridgeway 2014). Some argue that the anxiety whites feel about losing their majority status has sparked a stronger sense of racial solidarity, influencing the group's concerted effort to preserve their social and political power in the US (Jardina 2019). These considerations of cultural mechanisms and actualized or

perceived positionality of social status, especially among white people, might help contextualize some of the findings in this study.

Lastly, new data are needed to advance our understanding of both social trust and civic engagement. These tests rely on relatively old data, mainly because of the need to revisit Putnam's (2007) claims, but also because the SCCBS remains to be one of the most detailed and illustrative data sources on this topic, especially in the US. The data are additionally problematic since the majority of the sample consists of white individuals. The racial/ethnic subsample analyses conducted in this project can be potentially misleading since the three nonwhite groups are not as thoroughly represented. Richer data on racial/ethnic identities and groups could provide further insight into questions of who is responsible for the observed decline in social trust and civic engagement as well as the specific demographic conditions that are most impactful in shaping those downward trends. Another data-related conundrum rests on the type of aggregate-level data employed in these types of examinations. This project utilizes census-tract data to maintain consistency with Putnam's (2007) work. The census tract is also the most commonly used comparison point in studies on the US since they are the smallest unit with the most detailed and thorough data collected across the country. However, a study in Denmark demonstrates that higher levels of racial/ethnic diversity in an individual's immediate residential surroundings negatively affects social trust but the effect disappears when using larger aggregate contexts (Dinesen and Sonderskov 2015). The crux of this literature lies in how community-level characteristics impact localized behavioral and attitudinal outcomes so having more precise measures for neighborhood and community attributes would be most advantageous in understanding the state of social cohesion and community well-being in the US.

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