

THE NEIGHBORHOOD AS A SOCIAL STRUCTURE FOR COLLECTIVE ACTION: THE  
ROLE OF BONDING SOCIAL CAPITAL, CIVIC ENGAGEMENT, AND NEIGHBORHOOD  
RACIAL HOMOGENEITY

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## ABSTRACT

### THE NEIGHBORHOOD AS A SOCIAL STRUCTURE FOR COLLECTIVE ACTION: THE ROLE OF BONDING SOCIAL CAPITAL, CIVIC ENGAGEMENT, AND NEIGHBORHOOD RACIAL HOMOGENEITY

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Collective action is a process by which individuals linked by a common goal engage in cooperative activities in order to affect socio-political change. Collective action takes a variety of forms including protests, sit-ins, and marches, and can address a wide swath of social justice issues. However, research on the mechanisms by which collective action takes place is still developing. Utilizing a national sample of urban neighborhood residents within seven cities, this dissertation is comprised of two related studies investigating the role that civic engagement, bonding social capital, and neighborhood homogeneity play in influencing collective action. Using path analysis, Study 1 investigates the mediating role of bonding social capital in the relationship between civic engagement and collective action. Study 2 utilized multilevel modeling (MLM) and includes a neighborhood level indicator – neighborhood racial homogeneity – to understand the relationship between individual level bonding social capital and collective action.

Overall, the results reveal a complex relationship between civic engagement, bonding social capital, and neighborhood homogeneity on the outcome variable of collective action. Study 1 found that collective action was directly related to both bonding social capital and civic engagement, but that bonding social capital partially mediated the relationship between civic engagement and collective action. Specifically, residents who reported greater levels of civic engagement also perceived higher levels of bonding social capital and collective action among

their neighbors. In addition, residents who reported stronger levels of bonding social capital also reported higher levels of collective action. Study 2 was consistent with Study 1 and found a positive relationship between bonding social capital and collective action (at Level-1). However, this relationship was moderated by neighborhood racial homogeneity (at Level-2) wherein more homogeneous neighborhoods enhanced the relationship between bonding social capital and collective action. Interestingly, this study also demonstrated a non-hypothesized direct relationship between neighborhood homogeneity and collective action. Particularly, neighborhood homogeneity directly influenced reports of collective action wherein residents in more *heterogeneous* neighborhoods perceived greater levels of collective action among their neighbors.

In conjunction, these results indicate that civic engagement provides residents with the opportunities to build relationships of trust, or bonding social capital, and allows the potential formation of collective action. Also, they reveal that bonding social capital may enhance collective action, but more so within racially homogeneous neighborhoods. The promotion of collective action within racially heterogeneous neighborhoods may vary from that of racially homogeneous neighborhoods. As such, this research calls for community organizers and builders to adopt varying strategies when engaging communities that differ with regard to racial heterogeneity. Within racially homogeneous neighborhoods, for example, the enhancement of relationships of trust (i.e. bonding social capital) among residents may be more effective in building collective action compared to residents within heterogeneous neighborhoods. Understanding these mechanisms may enhance community builders' ability to work with their communities to promote community change.

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Collective action is a form of social action with the purpose of influencing the social, economic, and/or political environment. Particularly, collective action includes activities to address perceived injustices taken by groups of individuals who share similar goals (Sampson, McAdam, MacIndoe, & Weffer-Elizondo, 2005). These activities have taken a variety of forms throughout history and include a range of goals. Examples of collective action include collective marches, such as: the Selma to Montgomery march organized by southern Black Americans for the purpose of advancing the voting rights act (Davis, 1998), the boycott of British imports by Indians organized by Mohandas Ghandi for the purpose of advancing Indian independence (Bandyopadhyay & Sundaram, 2005), sit-ins designed to increase the rights of blue-collar workers (Baulch & Zacharias, 1997), and even the current tea-party movement in the U.S.

Although the examples above focused on activities to create social change at larger ecological levels (e.g. state or national levels), other collective action activities have taken place at more micro-levels such as within urban neighborhoods. Comprehensive community initiatives, such as those funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation (AECF, 2002), emphasize the promotion of collective action among residents within local neighborhoods. Indeed, collective action at this level has been integral in creating changes in issues of dilapidated housing (Speer et al., 2003), local land-usage policy (Martin, 2004); and addressing issues of police brutality in Skid Row, Los Angeles (Stuart, 2011). Although each of these examples varies with regard to context, goal, and activity, the overarching purpose is similar – collective action is a process of coordinating groups of individuals to take action against perceived injustices and advance social change around those issues.

Several key indicators are presented when discussing involvement in collective action – namely close social relationships and opportunities to participate in collective action activities (Christens & Speer, 2011; Ostrom, 1994, 2000, 2010; Paxton, 2002; Sampson et al., 2005; Speer, Hughey, Gensheimer, & Adams Leavitt, 1995). First, close relationships – particularly, bonding social capital – are an integral component in promoting collective action. The idea that bonding social capital, defined as relationships of trust and norms of reciprocity that exist between community residents, acts as a potential promoter of collective action is evident across a variety of fields. In developing one of the foundational explanations of bonding social capital in political science, Robert Putnam’s (2001) controversial book *Bowling Alone* contests that the cohesive nature of bonding social capital enables individuals to engage collectively to address shared issues and promote shared goals. In sociology and organizational science, Coleman (1988) and Burt (2001, 2005), respectively, have discussed how certain group social structures promote indicators of bonding social capital (e.g. trust), which reward individuals for acting in a way that conform to the group collective good. Additionally, from an economic perspective, Ostrom (2000) contended that collective action, as a function of individuals acting in a way that advances their personal benefit, is enabled through individuals’ real and perceived trust among group members. This work suggested that individuals may be more likely to engage collectively if they have strong social relationships of trust and norms of reciprocity (i.e. bonding social capital).

Second, while bonding social capital may act as a promoter of collective action this could not be the case without opportunities to participate in collective action activities. As such, research and theory indicates that residents who engage in civic events and activities may be more likely to build bonding social capital due to the opportunities to engage in relationship

building activities. In this case, civic engagement is defined as individualized activities of a democratic and/or political nature within the public sphere (Chong, Farquharson, Choy, Lukman, & Mokhtar, 2011; Mackert, Turner, & Hamilton, 1996) and includes volunteering in organizational (e.g. a soup kitchen, volunteering in a non-profit organization, etc.) and other activities of a civic nature (e.g. attending city council meetings). Additionally, those who are civically engaged may also be more likely to engage in collective action. Again, theoretical justification across disciplines expands the argument above. In microeconomic theory for example, the rational egoist argument contends that individuals may engage civically when they perceive these actions as personally beneficial. Those who are civically engaged gain opportunities to interact with others and build relationships of trust and norms of reciprocity (i.e. bonding social capital) with other individuals who are also civically engaged. Consequently, these individuals may be willing to participate in collective action so long as that participation is perceived to yield personal benefit (Ostrom, 2000). Within community psychology, Speer and Hughey (1995), in their examination of community organizing affiliates, argued that those who were civically engaged have greater opportunities to interact with others and build bonding social capital. These relationships, in turn, are a necessary component in fostering collective action (Speer et al., 1995). Across disciplines, research and theory has suggested that:

- 1) those who engage in civic activities are given greater opportunities to interact with similar others (McPherson, Smith-Lovin, & Cook, 2001)
- 2) opportunities to interact with others provided by civic engagement enable the promotion of bonding social capital

- 3) relationships of trust and norms of reciprocity (i.e. bonding social capital) may enhance social ties to engage in collective action
- 4) those who are civically engaged gain greater opportunities to engage in collective action

### The Neighborhood as an Opportunity Structure

Evidence suggests that the neighborhood structure may influence the process described above – that collective action may be a function of civic engagement and bonding social capital. The neighborhood is a micro-level setting that allows individuals to interact and build relationships of mutual cooperation (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Research in community psychology has found that the neighborhood structure allows for the formation of social ties providing residents with a greater sense of connectedness (Unger & Wandersman, 1982, 1983, 1985) and is related to a number of bonding social capital factors such as sense of community (Prezza, Amici, Roberti, & Tedeschi, 2001) and trust (Ostrom, 2010). Comprehensive community initiatives (CCIs) for example, seek to engage residents in collective action activities within their neighborhoods due to the close proximity and relationships of residents (Eisen, 1994).

Evidence suggests that the neighborhood provides a fitting infrastructure to enhance elements of bonding social capital and collective action and to promote the connection between these two constructs. However, recent studies have found that neighborhood level factors – particularly neighborhood racial homogeneity – may influence the relationship between bonding social capital and collective action (e.g. Greenbaum & Greenbaum, 1985). The homophily principle states that individuals are more likely to interact with those similar to themselves (McPherson et al., 2001). Given the fact that neighborhoods tend to be segregated race (Clark, 1991) – even within neighborhood (Dwyer, 2010) – individuals have more opportunities to form

relationships with similar others in homogenous neighborhoods due to the close proximity of neighbors who are racially similar. As such, racial homogeneity may affect the relationship between bonding social capital and collective action simply due to the greater opportunities for racially similar residents to interact. As such:

- 1) The neighborhood as a micro-level setting provides the infrastructure for residents to interact
- 2) These interactions enable the formation of bonding social capital and collective action
- 3) However, racial homogeneity may influence the relationship between bonding social capital and collective action due to the greater potential for racially similar residents to interact

### Multi-Study Approach

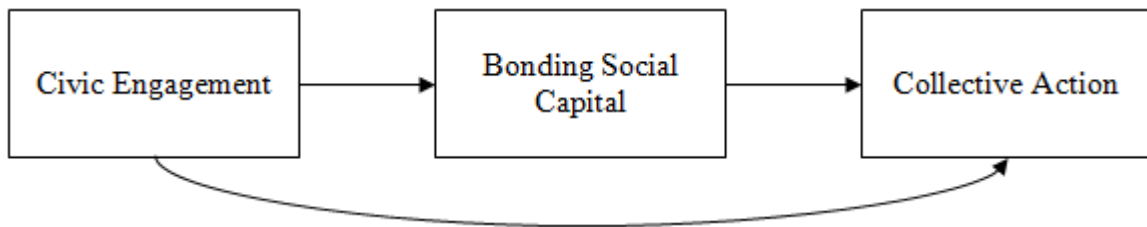
Although research has indicated a relationship between the various factors examined above (i.e. civic engagement, bonding social capital, collective action, and neighborhood homogeneity) no study to date has integrated these constructs into a more comprehensive examination of the relationships between these factors within a neighborhood context. As such, this dissertation looks to expand the existing literature on the processes of collective action within the urban neighborhood context. Specifically, two inter-related studies were developed to examine collective action among urban residents using a large scale multi-city dataset provided by the Annie E. Casey Foundation's *Making Connections* (MC) Initiative. The MC Initiative is a comprehensive community initiative (CCI) that took place within low-income neighborhoods across seven US cities over ten years beginning in 1999 with the goal of improving social,

educational, economic, and health outcomes for disadvantaged children and their families. Data utilized for this study were collected near the end of the initiative between 2008 and 2010.

Study 1 built on the existing literature to test a model of collective action as it is related to civic engagement and bonding social capital. Specifically, Study 1 tested the direct and indirect effects of civic engagement on collective action as mediated by bonding social capital among residents within neighborhoods. In this study, I tested whether higher levels of perceived civic engagement positively relates to both bonding social capital and collective action. In addition, I tested whether greater levels of perceived bonding social capital among residents within neighborhoods promote higher levels of collective action. This study built on the existing literature by examining a process model of collective action within neighborhoods among urban residents as predicted by civic engagement and partially mediated by bonding social capital.

Figure 1 provides a conceptual framework for Study 1.

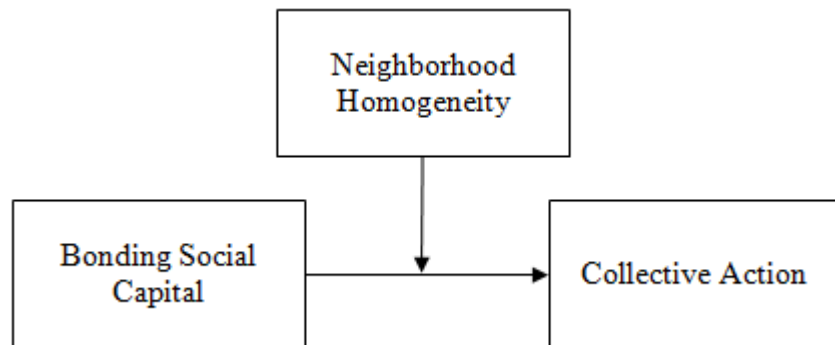
**Figure 1: Study 1 Conceptual Model**



Building on Study 1, which tested the meditational effects of bonding social capital on the relationship between civic engagement and collective action within urban neighborhoods, Study 2 added a neighborhood level factor to test the latter part of the model – the relationship between bonding social capital and collective action. This study investigated urban neighborhood settings and the extent to which neighborhood racial homogeneity moderates the relationship

between bonding social capital and collective action. This study built on Study 1 by incorporating a neighborhood approach to examine a particular dimension of neighborhood context – racial homogeneity/heterogeneity – and its influence on the relationship between bonding social capital and collective action. This investigation moved the literature forward by understanding how urban neighborhoods act as social micro-structures in facilitating community change, and particularly how the demographic make-up of the neighborhood influences a process of community change. Figure 2 provides a conceptual framework for Study 2.

**Figure 2: Study 2 Conceptual Model**



### Summary

This dissertation investigates the relationship between collective action, bonding social capital, civic engagement, and neighborhood racial homogeneity. Extant literature within urban studies, political science, community psychology, community building, and community organizing provide a theoretical foundation to investigating the relationship between these constructs. In particular, research and theory has expounded the relationship between collective action and factors such as bonding social capital and civic engagement, between civic engagement and bonding social capital, and has argued that neighborhood racial homogeneity provides opportunities for residents to interact. However, no study to date has incorporated each



of these factors into a more comprehensive examination of the processes of collective action within urban neighborhoods. Thus, this dissertation takes a two-study approach to investigate these relationships. Chapter 2 highlights Study 1, which examines the individual level variables of civic engagement and bonding social capital and their relationship with collective action and particularly the role that bonding social capital plays as a potential mediator in this process. Chapter 3 adds a second study (i.e. Study 2) that builds on Study 1 by taking a multilevel approach in investigating the effects that neighborhood racial homogeneity plays in moderating the relationship between bonding social capital and collective action. Finally, Chapter 4 wraps up this dissertation by providing concluding thoughts of Studies 1 and 2 including an overview of findings, research and practical implications, and conclusions. As such, this dissertation project investigates a process of collective action within urban neighborhoods with particular focus on civic engagement, bonding social capital, and neighborhood racial homogeneity. To understand the theoretical and empirical standpoint of these relationships, a comprehensive literature review of these constructs was conducted across diverse fields including community psychology, urban studies, sociology, and political science, for example. This literature has been incorporated into the introduction sections of Chapters 2 and 3.

CHAPTER 2:  
CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AS A PROMOTER OF COLLECTIVE ACTION: THE MEDIATING  
ROLE OF BONDING SOCIAL CAPITAL  
LITERATURE REVIEW

In light of declining city coffers and public service provisions, local citizens have taken collective action to address many social inequities associated with degenerating urban neighborhoods. Collective action is expressed through activities taken by groups of individuals, linked by a common goal, with the shared purpose of affecting socio-political change (Sampson, McAdam, MacIndoe, & Weffer-Elizondo, 2005). Here, socio-political change refers to changes in community and organizational policies, practices, and norms. Activities qualifying as collective action include group actions such as neighborhood improvement projects (e.g. neighborhood lighting, park beautification) (Foster-Fishman et al., 2006) and activities that disrupt social norms such as infiltrating white department stores with bus loads of black patrons during segregation (Alinsky, 1971), and political activities such as protest events (Sampson et al., 2005). These activities are often delivered through citizens' organizations (e.g. power-based community organizing groups, neighborhood associations), which have grown substantially in number and power in recent decades (Sampson et al., 2005; Wood, Fulton, & Partridge, 2012). These groups provide opportunity structures to promote shared goals, which are imperative in collective action movements as they enable groups of individuals to act as a cohesive unit in pursuit of community change.

Both formal organizations (e.g. community boards) and informal relations between residents provide the foundation by which citizens participate in collective decision-making and action within localities. Indeed, through these formal and informal networks, collective action

can take form as a catalyst in pressuring city officials to address issues such as dilapidated housing (Speer et al., 2003); promoting black-feminist anti-rape campaigns (White, 1999); and decreasing the availability of alcohol to adolescents (Perry et al., 2000). Collective action provides a foundation for residents to mobilize resources, influence local policy decisions, and affect their social, political, and economic environments.

Warren's (1998) investigation of an Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF) affiliate organization in Texas provided a sterling example of collective action. The IAF is a community action organization that promotes community change around issues that affect citizens and their communities. In his case study, Warren highlighted organization members' desired goal of building a publically funded job training program, project QUEST, for low-income workers. He began his case study by discussing a public protest taken up by the IAF wherein citizens and organization members marched collectively into a San Antonio city council meeting to express the need for funds to support project QUEST. Warren found that organization members, with the shared goal of implementing a statewide job training program, were able act collectively through protest movement activities and public negotiations with powerful community leaders. Through these activities, IAF organization members were able to negotiate with and pressure public officials to dedicate \$5 million from the state budget to fund project QUEST. Collective action activities provided members of the IAF affiliate organization the ability to clearly articulate their shared goals and take action to influence their socio-political environment.

The IAF built collective action movements by organizing members of church congregations and other citizen's organizations around issues that affect their communities. As such, they identified citizens who are engaged civically within local community and church-based organizations (e.g. church congregations, neighborhood associations) and seek to engage

them in collective action movements. Putnam (1995, 2000) provided a broader conceptualization of civic engagement, arguing that it consists of individual activities that put citizens into the public setting through participation in volunteer and other “citizenship” events. These activities included but were not limited to voting, reading the newspaper, volunteering, and participating in group or organization activities (e.g. PTA, church congregations, working with neighbors to clean up trash, etc.). In considering Putnam’s conception of civic engagement, Hyman (2002) argued that these activities do not have to be organized, goal oriented, or involve other citizens in any particular way, but were simply activities intended to get individuals interacting with one another. As such, this study took a more concentrated definition because, as others have argued, Putnam’s definition was so inclusive that it loses its meaning (Portes & Vickstrom, 2011). Specifically, for the purposes of the study described here, civic engagement is defined as activities of a democratic and/or political nature within the public sphere that are exhibited by individuals (Chong, Farquharson, Choy, Lukman, & Mokhtar, 2011; Mackert, Turner, & Hamilton, 1996). These activities included volunteering in organizations (e.g. a soup kitchen, volunteering in a non-profit organization, etc.) and other individual activities of a civic nature (e.g. attending city council meetings).

Sampson et al. (2005) highlighted clear distinctions between civic engagement and collective action: while civic engagement was an individualized behavior, it may have consisted of a collective of individuals within a setting. However, the difference between a collective of civically engaged individuals and collective action was that collective action was orientated toward the goal of shifting the socio-political environment, whereas a collective goal was not specified for those engaged civically. In contrast, Sampson et al. (2005) contended that in the

context of social movements, collective action had an expressed purpose of influencing systemic (e.g. policy) change. For example, an individual who volunteered monthly at a local soup kitchen was considered to be civically engaged. Alternatively, a group of church congregants coming together to address issues of poor school performance by petitioning the county for more school funding was considered to be engaging in collective action. Sampson and colleagues argued that individual civic engagement is essential in building collective action, however, they disagreed with the supposition that “collective action results simply from the aggregation of individual civic behavior” (Sampson, et. al., 2005, p. 676). More specifically, although collective action movements are made up of individuals who are civically engaged, an aggregate of civically engaged individuals is not sufficient for a collective action movement to take hold.

While Sampson et al. (2005) took the approach that community organizations partly provide the community structure that promotes individual civic engagement into collective action movements, the mechanism by which this process takes place is not clear. Fortunately, scholars across disciplines have provided some insight into this question through the concept of social capital – and particularly bonding forms of social capital (Kapucu, 2011; Portes & Vickstrom, 2011). Bonding social capital has had broad conceptualizations across a variety of disciplines. Within political science, Putnam (1995, 2000) contended that bonding social capital consisted of trust and norms of reciprocity among members of a civil society. As such, this sense of collectivism amplified desires of individual prosperity into collective gain (p. 66). Sociologists have taken a social-structural approach to bonding social capital. Coleman (1988) for example, defined bonding social capital as the social networks (i.e. relationships) of cohesion that promote norms of trust and reciprocity and facilitate collective advantage. In the context of the study

described here, bonding social capital is defined as the relationships of norms of reciprocity and trust that exist between community residents.

While foundational frameworks propose the reciprocal interaction between bonding social capital and civic engagement (e.g. Putnam, 1995, 2001), more contemporary formulations of the construct (e.g. Welzel, Inglehart, & Deutsch, 2005) pointed to the idea that bonding social capital may act as a conduit to collective action. Indeed, because participation in civic events (i.e. civic engagement) provides the opportunity for active individuals to build relationships of trust and reciprocity with others (i.e. bonding social capital), bonding social capital creates the figurative social superglue that enables individuals to act as a cohesive unit (i.e. take collective action). It is this mechanism that brings us to the purpose of the current study, which is to investigate the relationship between civic engagement, social capital, and collective action (see Figure 1 above [Chapter 1] for a study conceptual model). Specifically, this study sought to examine the following research questions:

1. What is the relationship between civic engagement and collective action?
2. Is bonding social capital a mechanism through which civic engagement promotes collective action?

#### Civic Engagement as a Promoter of Collective Action

While scholars (e.g. Sampson, et. al., 2005) have noted that civic engagement is a necessary component in building collective action movements, Ostrom's (2000) microeconomic theory of collective action provided a centerpiece to understanding the relationship between civic engagement and collective action. Her framework drew on empirical evidence from experimental economic studies and naturalistic investigations to describe the process of collective action. In

connecting civic engagement to collective action, she espoused the rational egoist argument, which contends that individuals are willing to participate in collective activities so long as those activities provide some personal benefit. In adapting this argument to the study of civic actors, individual citizens who are civically engaged are also willing to participate in collective action if those activities are potentially beneficial to them. This relationship is evident in the community organizing literature wherein individuals engage in civic activities (e.g. volunteering, church activities, etc.), usually through church-based or other organization-based means, and move into collective action as a potential mechanism for accruing personal gains such as improving neighborhood or school conditions, for example (Hyman, 2002; Slessarev-Jamir, 2004; Speer, Hughey, Gensheimer, & Adams Leavitt, 1995; Warren, 2009; Warren & Wood, 2001; Wood & Warren, 2002). Indeed, the foundational community organizing thinker – Saul Alinsky (1971) – preached that the most effective way to engage individuals collectively is by appealing to their self-interests.

From an empowerment perspective, the relationship between civic engagement and collective action is also evident. In Speer and Hughey's (1995) influential piece outlining the organizing process of a national community organizing network – The PICO Network – they identified opportunity structures that provided the potential to allow civically engaged individuals to act collectively. Reflecting on their years conducting research in the community organizing realm, they concluded that participation in organizational settings (e.g. church, neighborhood organizations, etc.) provided an “avenue through which an individual's cognitive insights and emotional responses can be acted upon (p. 734)” wherein collective action can be achieved by focusing individual activities among organizational members into a collective

movement. Indeed, as Speer and Hughey contend, civic engagement within organizational and other community settings provides the potential to connect with other individuals so that collective action may materialize.

In addition to Speer and Hughey's contention that engagement in civic activities provides opportunities to advance a collective action agenda, Mesch and Schwirian (1996) found corroborating results in their study of neighborhood associations' engagement in collective action activities. In interviewing and surveying leaders from 105 neighborhood organizations about their perceptions of association effectiveness in collective action activities, Mesch and Schwirian found that although several demographic factors (e.g. neighborhood SES) contributed to the perceived effectiveness of collective action activities, the strongest predictor was perceptions of member participation (i.e. civic engagement). They argued that this was due to the ability of active members to provide the human resources necessary to advance the collective goals of the association. Thus, my first hypothesis is: individuals who report higher levels of civic engagement in their neighborhoods are more likely to report higher levels of collective action (*hypothesis 1*).

#### Bonding social capital as a potential mediator

While scholars suggest a relationship between civic engagement and collective action via self-interest (Alinsky, 1971; Ostrom, 2000) and opportunity structures (Speer & Hughey, 1995), empirical and theoretical foundations point to bonding social capital as a potential linkage between the two constructs. Drawing on the social capital literature from political science, Putnam (1995, 2001) suggested that bonding social capital acts as the substance that adheres the individual "I" into the collective "we". Scholars from a variety of fields have commented on



bonding social capital's cohesive nature (Burt, 2001; Coleman, 1988; Moody & White, 2003; Paxton, 2002; Payne, Moore, Griffis, & Autry, 2011; Perkins, Hughey, & Speer, 2002; Portes & Vickstrom, 2011). For example, Burt (2001) presented the idea of network closure as a proxy to bonding forms of social capital wherein social cohesion is created through reciprocal ties among group (or network) actors. In Burt's representation, cohesion is defined as many dense ties among internal group members and few, sparse connections with external actors. Similarly, Coleman (1988) contended that social cohesion is created through resource exchanges among setting actors wherein actors must adhere to setting norms.

In understanding the role that bonding social capital may play in collective action, Hyman (2002) has developed a strong theoretical foundation that demonstrates bonding social capital's potential to mediate the relationship between civic engagement and collective action. In developing his community building framework, Hyman argued that, "Civically engaged individuals...success at coming together creates the [bonding] social capital that is then directed toward some community action or activity [i.e. collective action], in an effort to achieve an outcome" (p. 227). Speer and his colleagues echoed this same point. Speer and Hughey (1995) contended that the simple act of engaging civically provided the opportunity to interact with others and build the relationships of trust (i.e. bonding social capital) necessary to foster collective action movements. Additionally, Speer, Hughey, Gensheimer, & Adams-Leavitt (1995) outlined the processes of organizing and find that the "assessment" phase of organizing consists of civically engaged individuals (e.g. residents, congregation members, etc.) coming together and sharing stories of issues in their communities. This setting provides the opportunity to build cohesive relationships of trust that can transform civic engagement into collective action.

To give further evidence of social capital as a potential mediator between civic engagement and collective action, Ostrom (2000) extended her rational egoist argument (i.e. individuals will act collectively if there is a perceived personal benefit in doing so) and attests that acting collectively is filtered through real and perceived trust and norms of reciprocity among group members (i.e. bonding social capital). Ostrom argued that, “long-term sustainability of collective action [is promoted through] the willingness of some to pay a cost to sanction others” who violate norms of trust and reciprocity (p. 142). This is consistent with sociological theories which assert that bonding social capital consists of cohesive relationships that promote trust and reciprocity (Coleman, 1988). In his formative paper, Coleman (1988) addressed the issue of social sanctions and subscribes the idea that actors will conform to group norms (e.g. trust, reciprocity, etc.) if sanctions are applied to those who violate those norms (and alternatively rewarded for adhering to them). In reflecting on Hyman’s framework, engaging civically provides the opportunity for individuals to build relationships of trust and reciprocity. Meanwhile, those relationships of trust and reciprocity enable individuals to engage in collective action. Certainly, Ostrom’s (2000) and Coleman’s (1988) theoretical contributions, as well as those of Putnam (1995, 2000) and Speer and his colleagues (Speer & Hughey, 1995; Speer et al., 1995) give weight to the notion that the relationship between civic engagement and collective action may be facilitated *through* bonding social capital.

### Civic Engagement and Social Capital

Within the social capital literature, the relationship between civic engagement and bonding social capital is clear: bonding forms of social capital can be created through individuals’ civic engagement in public life. Putnam’s (1995, 2000) framework contended that

engagement in civic events provides citizens with opportunities to form social connections of trust, or bonding social capital. These civic events range in mission, purpose, and variety (e.g. PTA, labor unions, sports clubs, etc.), but the underlying mechanism is the same – they provide individuals with opportunities to interact and build trust. Empirical evidence points to this assertion. In their study of a Healthy Living Center (HLC) in the UK, Kirkby-Geddes, King, and Bravington (2012) found evidence for bonding social capital maintenance as it is related to participation in the HLC. Particularly, they found that while relationships took some effort to maintain, the ability for members to develop a sense of reciprocity and trust among one another (i.e. bonding social capital) was core to the group experience. Their qualitative interviews with HLC members suggested that although initial participation in the group may have been difficult for some, overcoming this initial barrier and engaging in group activities allowed for the promotion of bonding social capital among group members. This finding confirmed other studies that have found a direct connection between civic engagement activities and bonding social capital. For example, Claibourn and Martin (2000), in their examination of the Michigan Socialization Study data, found that Michigan parents who reported greater levels of civic engagement through participation in volunteer organizations also perceived higher levels of bonding social capital in the form of interpersonal trust in the same year. This finding was echoed by Paxton (2002) who found an interdependent relationship between bonding social capital (i.e. trust) and civic engagement (or democracy as she titles it) wherein trust has a positive cross-lagged relationship with democracy and democracy has a positive cross-lagged relationship with trust. These findings are consistent to Lappe and Moore's (1997) exclamation that in order for bonding social capital to be nurtured within communities, it is necessary to provide opportunities for civic engagement.

## Bonding Social Capital and Collective Action

Building on the previous work of social capital and collective action theorists, numerous empirical investigations have been conducted across the social sciences, including community psychology, urban studies, and sociology, that have investigated bonding social capital's cohesive nature in promoting collective action. Again, drawing on the community organizing/building literature, Warren (2009) examined a complex relationship between bonding social capital and the growth of local community organizing groups in Britain. He found that a community organizing network in Britain (named COF) stalled in growth and power at the local level, which is counter to its American community organizing counterparts. In his examination, Warren contended that bonding forms of social capital that are prevalent in various religious traditions are one explanation as to why local COF chapters have had difficulty engaging congregants in collective action efforts. Warren argued that relative high levels of church attendance among Protestants in the US (roughly 40% of proclaimed Protestants attended church weekly) provided the context wherein individuals were able to build bonding social capital within U.S. community organizing affiliates. Conversely, relative low levels of church attendance among Protestants in Britain (roughly 9% attend weekly) made those necessary connections between congregants more difficult. This finding conformed to the relationship between religious traditions and social capital found elsewhere (Beyerlein & Hipp, 2006; Teney & Hanquinet, 2012). Consequently, Warren found that higher levels of bonding social capital in the U.S. promoted collective action, whereas lower levels in Britain hindered it.

In analyzing the community psychology literature, I draw on the empowering settings framework to understand social capital and its relationship to collective action. Empowering

community settings (ECS) are those that have both the processes in place that provide support for members to take action of their lived experiences as well as the outcomes to gain control over needed resources (Fedi, Mannarini, & Maton, 2009; Maton, 2008; Maton & Salem, 1995). One component of an empowering community setting – the social support system – is of particular interest as it mirrors components of bonding social capital. As Maton and Salem (1995) argued, the support system provides setting actors with access to needed social support and resources to gain power over disempowering situations. To test the ECS framework, two case studies were conducted that investigated the relationship between empowering settings and external outcomes. In one paper outlining a series of case studies, Maton (2008) found that the social support provided through empowering relationships with members of a community action organization created structures that fostered collective social change value systems. In turn, these relationships, paired with values of social change, provided the context in which organizational members could engage in collective action activities aimed at addressing existing community inequities. In another ECS study, Fedi, Mannarini, and Maton (2009) found that an empowering community setting ripe with strong relational connections among setting members fostered collective action in an anti-High Speed Railway movement. Indeed, community psychological studies of empowering community settings endorse the contention that bonding social capital (e.g. trust, reciprocity, etc.), in the form of relationships, provide the groundwork for setting members to engage collectively to influence external environments.

Looking beyond the community psychology and community organizing literature, numerous studies in social networks and social movements also give weight to bonding social capital as a predictor of collective action. First, within the social network literature, bonding

social capital is conceptualized as a structural phenomenon. Meaning, social capital exists depending on the structure of relationships and the location of actors among those relationships. For example, Dekker, Völker, Lelieveldt, and Torenvlied (2010), in investigating bonding social capital and collective engagement within neighborhoods, found that the number of social relationships and relationship density were both predictors of resident participation in collective neighborhood projects. Indeed, social network theorists contend that network density is one indicator of bonding forms of social capital (Borgatti, Jones, & Everett, 1998; Burt, 2005). Diani and colleagues (Baldassarri & Diani, 2007; Diani, 1992; Diani & Bison, 2004) sit at the forefront of network relationships and collective action. In one study, Diani and Bison (2004) investigated the social processes involved in collective engagement. They found that network forms of bonding social capital (e.g. dense informal relationships) were integral in the development of collective action movements. The social network and social movement literature is ripe with examples examining the relationship of social capital on collective action. These include large-scale multiyear studies (Paxton, 2002); microstructural approaches to recruitment into collective action movements (Snow, Zurcher Jr, & Ekland-Olson, 1980); examination of East German political demonstrations in the late 1980's (Opp & Gern, 1993); and the utilization of bonding social capital to involve youth in political action (Teney & Hanquinet, 2012), just to name a few. While the analysis methods and populations may vary, the message still remains – bonding forms of social capital, both conceptually and structurally, play an integral part in enhancing collective action.

The connection between bonding social capital and collective action is also relevant in studies of neighborhood perceptions. In their study of eight Phoenix, Arizona neighborhoods,

Larsen and colleagues (Larsen et al., 2004) investigated residents' perceptions of bonding social capital among neighbors and collective action activities to address perceived neighborhood problems. They found that residents who reported greater levels of bonding social capital among their neighbors (e.g. knowing and trusting neighbors) also reported that they were more likely to engage with neighbors to take collective action in addressing neighborhood problems (e.g. widening roads, addressing hazardous waste sites, etc.). This finding provided evidence that while the relationship between bonding social capital and collective action may exist at a macro level through social movements (e.g. Samson et. al., 2005), it also takes form in more micro settings such as neighborhoods. This, then, brings us to the second hypothesis of this study: bonding social capital will partially mediate the relationship between civic engagement and collective action (*hypothesis 2*). Specifically, residents who report higher levels of civic engagement will also report higher levels of bonding social capital (*hypothesis 2a*). Additionally, residents who report greater levels of bonding social capital will also perceive greater levels of collective action in their neighborhoods (*hypothesis 2b*).

## METHODS

### Study Context and Sample

The data utilized for this study are responses to household surveys conducted by the Annie E. Casey Foundation's *Making Connections* (MC) initiative. The survey is a component of a multi-year comprehensive community initiative (CCI) that took place within low-income neighborhoods across seven US cities (Denver, CO; Des Moines, IA; Indianapolis, IN; Louisville, KY; Providence, RI; San Antonio, TX; and Seattle/White Center, WA) with the goal of improving social, educational, economic, and health outcomes for disadvantaged children and

their families. The MC initiative is a ten-year CCI that began in 1999 in collaboration with the National Opinion Research Center (NORC), Local Management Entities (LMEs) within each community, and the Urban Institute (UI) at the University of Chicago. Probability sampling methods were employed to select households from a sample of addresses that were representative of MC neighborhoods. All addresses in MC neighborhoods were included in the sampling frame and were selected by simple random sampling. Additionally, sampling weights were calculated that represent household-level population estimates for each MC neighborhood and were used in analyses for this investigation. Across the seven MC cities, response rates ranged from 75% to 87% with an average of 80%.

According to 2010 Census statistics, San Antonio, Texas was the largest city sampled with a population of 1,327,407 and the smallest was Des Moines, Iowa with 203,433 residents (average population across sampled cities = 619,355). White residents tended to be most common among the cities included in the MC initiative (M=54.3%; min=26.6%, max=70.5%) and “other race” residents tended to be the least common (M=8.2%; min=3.9%, max=19.3%). Additionally, residents primarily resided in owner occupied housing (M=324,566; min=60,277, max=781,567), and were more likely to be female (M=316,108; min=92,204, max=679,717), with an average age of 33.6 years. Table 1 provides sample city level demographic data.

It must be noted however, that sample neighborhoods, and subsequently households, do not demographically represent the cities in which they reside. Again, the MC initiative sought to sample households from primarily low-income neighborhoods. Given the relationship between race and income – with residents residing in minority neighborhoods tending to have lower incomes (Deaton & Lubotsky, 2003), the sample for both Study 1 and Study 2 had a greater



porportion of minority households (i.e. Black, Latino, and “Other”) compared to their respective cities. For example, while White residents made up more than half of the total population across all cities, they made up less than a third (27.3%) of the responses sampled for this dissertation. As such, the sample for Study 1 (and Study 2) do not intend to reflect the population of their respective cities, but rather seek to represent lower income neighborhoods and residents. Table 2 provides demographic information for the sample utilized across the seven initiative cities.

**Table 1: Demographic Information by Sampled Cities**

CITY	POPULATION TOTAL	RACE				HOUSING TENURE		SEX		AGE (median)
		Black	Latino	White	Other	Owner Occupied	Renter Occupied	Male	Female	
Denver	600158	9.7%	31.8%	52.2%	6.3%	274202	309975	300089	300069	33.7
Des Moines	203433	10.0%	12.0%	70.5%	7.5%	67616	129713	99535	103898	33.5
Indianapolis	820445	27.2%	9.4%	58.6%	4.8%	341166	463246	396346	424099	33.7
Louisville	597337	22.6%	4.5%	68.3%	4.6%	372726	212049	289236	308101	37.1
Providence	178042	13.1%	38.1%	37.6%	11.2%	102679	60277	85802	92240	28.5
San Antonio	1327407	6.3%	63.2%	26.6%	3.9%	518040	781567	647690	679717	32.7
Seattle	608660	7.7%	6.6%	66.3%	19.3%	268598	315137	304030	304630	36.1
Averages	619355	13.8%	23.7%	54.3%	8.2%	277861	324566	303247	316108	33.6

**Table 2: Demographic Information of Sample by Cities**

CITY	SAMPLE SIZE	RACE								SEX				AGE (median)
		BLACK		LATINO		WHITE		OTHER		FEMALE		MALE		
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Denver	635	89	14.1%	294	46.5%	160	25.3%	89	14.1%	419	66.0%	216	34.0%	41.4
Des Moines	618	148	23.9%	107	17.3%	311	50.3%	52	8.4%	408	66.0%	210	34.0%	44.5
Indianapolis	622	346	55.6%	27	4.3%	218	35.0%	31	5.0%	410	66.0%	211	34.0%	46.4
Louisville	576	435	75.5%	8	1.4%	92	16.0%	41	7.1%	387	66.7%	193	33.3%	45.3
Providence	565	115	20.4%	291	51.5%	81	14.3%	78	13.8%	403	71.5%	161	28.5%	44.1
San Antonio	654	12	1.8%	615	94.2%	20	3.1%	6	0.9%	462	70.6%	192	29.4%	46.1
Seattle	631	47	7.5%	117	18.7%	293	46.8%	169	27.0%	382	60.5%	249	39.5%	44.6
Averages	614	170	28.4%	208	33.4%	168	27.3%	67	10.9%	410	66.8%	205	33.2%	44.6

To select a household representative, interviewers employed a multi-pronged approach. Respondents were selected based on whether or not children lived in the sample residence. If children resided in the sample home, a “focus child” was selected at random. After a focus child was chosen, the parent/guardian of the focus child was selected as the survey respondent. If children did not live within the residence, household representatives were chosen at random among all household adults. Respondents for this investigation were primarily female (66.8%) and 41.1% of respondents identified as home owners. On average, respondents were 44.6 years of age (SD=15.9), were primarily Latina/o (34%) followed by Black/African-American (27.8%), White/Caucasian (27.4%), and other racial categories (10.9%). They also were more likely to be high school graduates (31.5%) compared to other education categories such as having no high school diploma (29.5%), some college (25.9%), college graduate and beyond (9.5%), and having a graduate degree (3.6%). Finally, 35.5% of respondents reported that they had received food stamps within the past 12 months. See Table 3 for percentages and sample size for each demographic variable. Data from the *Making Connections* initiative used in the current study were collected between 2008 and 2010 with a total of 4306 households responding for a total response rate of 80%.

**Table 3: Demographic Information of Sample**

	<i>n</i>	Valid (%)		<i>n</i>	Valid (%)
<b>RACE</b>			<b>EDUCATION</b>		
Black	1175	27.8	No HS Diploma	1254	29.5
Latino	1459	34.0	HS Diploma or equivalent	1338	31.5
White	1176	27.4	Some College	1102	25.9
Other	466	10.9	College Graduate and Beyond	403	9.5
Missing	14		Graduate Degree	152	3.6
			Missing	57	
<b>SEX</b>			<b>HOME OWNERSHIP</b>		
Female	2871	66.7	Own	1768	41.1
Male	1432	33.3	Rent	2538	58.9
Missing	3				
<b>RECEIVED FOOD STAMPS IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS</b>					
No	2748	64.5			
Yes	1512	35.5			
Missing	46				

## Measures

*Neighborhood Collective Action.* A five-item scale was used to assess collective action within neighborhoods. Sample items include, “If the fire station closest to their house was threatened by budget cuts, how likely is it that your neighbors would do something about it?” and “If some children were spray-painting graffiti on a local building, how likely is it that your neighbors would do something about it?” Items were adapted from existing scales including the Detroit Area Study of 2001, The Social Capital Community Benchmark, and The Project on Human Development in Chicago Neighborhoods (Earls, 1995) and were rated on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1-5 (“Very Unlikely” to “Very Likely”). A Cronbach’s alpha score of .79 indicates acceptable internal consistency for this scale.

*Civic Engagement.* A seven-item composite score was created to assess individual civic engagement within neighborhoods. To assess individual civic engagement behaviors, residents responded either “yes” or “no” to each item. Items were then summed to obtain an overall individual civic engagement score. Sample items include, “Have you (or any member of your household) spoken with a local political official like your Metro Council Member about a neighborhood problem or improvement?” and “Have you (or any member of your household) talked to a local religious leader or minister to help with a neighborhood problem or improvement?” Items were adapted from existing scales including the Los Angeles Family and Neighborhood Study (Sastry, Ghosh-Dastidar, Adams, & Pebley, 2006), the HOPE VI Panel Study (Popkin, 2002), The Project on Human Development in Chicago Neighborhoods (Earls, 1995), The Child and Family Well-Being Study (Winston et al.), and the Neighborhood Quality of Life Survey.

*Bonding Social Capital.* A five-item scale was created to assess individual perceptions of bonding social capital among neighbors. Residents responded to items rated on a 5-Point Likert-type scale ranging from 1-5 (“Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree”). Sample items include, “People in my neighborhood are willing to help their neighbors” and “People in my neighborhood generally don’t get along with each other”. The bonding social capital scale indicates acceptable internal consistency with a Cronbach’s alpha score of .72. Items were adapted from existing scales including the Los Angeles Family and Neighborhood Study (Sastry et al., 2006), the HOPE VI Panel Study (Popkin, 2002), The Project on Human Development in Chicago Neighborhoods (Earls, 1995), and The Child and Family Well-Being Study (Winston et al.). See Table 4 for individual Cronbach’s alpha and correlation scores across all scales.

*Demographic Control Variables.* Six demographic control variables were utilized for this study’s analysis. Age was grand mean centered and assessed as a continuous variable with an average age of 45 (SD=16). Education was broken into four categories, which included No High School Diploma, High School Diploma or Equivalent (e.g. GED), Some College, and College Graduate and Beyond (e.g. graduate/professional school graduate). Race was also split into four categories and included Black/African-American, Latina/o, White, and Other. For analysis purposes, education and race categories were dummy coded (i.e. 0/1) – reference groups for subsequent analyses included No High School Diploma and White for education and race, respectively. In addition to age, education, and race, analyses controlled for sex (male = 0; female = 1), whether the respondent had received food stamps in the past 12 months (no food stamps = 0; received food stamps = 1), and home ownership status (renter = 0; owner = 1).

## RESULTS

### Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive analyses were conducted in this study to 1) investigate the scale properties of the constructs of interest, and 2) understand the bivariate relationships between those variables. First, although Cronbach's alphas indicated that the two scaled constructs, bonding social capital and collective action, maintained acceptable levels of internal consistency, exploratory factor analyses (EFA) with varimax rotation were conducted to investigate the relationships between each item and the item's respective scale. EFA suggested that all items load appropriately on each theorized construct. Specifically, component scores for bonding social capital items ranged between .544 and .805 and component scores for collective action items ranged between .595 and .821. Additionally, bivariate Pearson correlations between all items and scales ranged from .079 to .801, a correlation between bonding social capital and collective action at .503, and between civic engagement and collective action at .103. Table 4 provides descriptive statistics, correlations, and factor loadings for all bonding social capital and collective action items and scales.

### Analysis Strategy

Single level path analysis was conducted for this study. While the neighborhood/city aspect of the initiative suggests a nested design, intra-class correlations (ICC) coefficients indicate that only a small percentage of variance is explained at the census tract level (2.7%) and at the city level (10.6%) for the study outcome variable, collective action<sup>1</sup>. Path models analyzed all investigative research questions using maximum-likelihood estimation with robust standard

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<sup>1</sup> Study 2 will examine census tract level differences.

errors (MLR) within the Mplus (6.1) software (Muthén & Muthén, 1998 - 2010) package. Additionally, sample weights were used in all analyses and multiple imputation using Bayesian analysis was conducted to impute missing values for the three analysis constructs (civic engagement, bonding social capital, and collective action) and for demographic control variables. Missing values analysis revealed that 165 cases had at least one missing value on the analysis constructs or demographic values control variables. One thousand forty one cases had complete data (i.e. non-missing values) and did not require imputation. Unstandardized parameter estimates are used for reporting purposes throughout the paper. Model fit was examined using three fit indices including: a root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) statistic less than 0.08 (Brown & Cudek, 1993); a standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) statistic less than 0.08; and a comparative fit index (CFI) of 0.90 or greater (Kline, 2011). Although a small and non-significant chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) statistic is often utilized to examine model fit, it is sensitive to large sample sizes (Kline, 2011) such as with the current study, therefore an adjusted chi-squared ( $\chi^2/df$ ) was computed seeking values of 3.0 or less (Bollen, 1989).



**Table 4: Descriptives, correlations, and factor loadings for all bonding social capital and collective action items and scales**

	(SC)	SC1	SC2	SC3	SC4	SC5	(CA)	CA1	CA2	CA3	CA4	CA5	(CE)	CE1	CE2	CE3	CE4	CE5	CE6	CE7
(SC)		<b>.68</b>	<b>.77</b>	<b>.73</b>	<b>.65</b>	<b>.59</b>														
SC1			<b>.52</b>	<b>.38</b>	<b>.21</b>	<b>.17</b>														
SC2				<b>.51</b>	<b>.37</b>	<b>.25</b>														
SC3					<b>.32</b>	<b>.26</b>														
SC4						<b>.36</b>														
SC5																				
(CA)								<b>.64</b>	<b>.79</b>	<b>.80</b>	<b>.74</b>	<b>.71</b>								
CA1									<b>.42</b>	<b>.33</b>	<b>.28</b>	<b>.27</b>								
CA2										<b>.55</b>	<b>.44</b>	<b>.44</b>								
CA3											<b>.59</b>	<b>.46</b>								
CA4												<b>.44</b>								
CA5													<b>.09</b>	<b>.08</b>	<b>.04</b>	<b>.02</b>	<b>.05</b>	<b>.06</b>	<b>.06</b>	<b>.08</b>
(CE)														<b>.64</b>	<b>.61</b>	<b>.56</b>	<b>.64</b>	<b>.58</b>	<b>.31</b>	<b>.66</b>
CE1															<b>.40</b>	<b>.34</b>	<b>.28</b>	<b>.23</b>	<b>.06</b>	<b>.38</b>
CE2																<b>.30</b>	<b>.25</b>	<b>.25</b>	<b>.05</b>	<b>.33</b>
CE3																	<b>.22</b>	<b>.21</b>	<b>.17</b>	<b>.23</b>
CE4																		<b>.35</b>	<b>.14</b>	<b>.35</b>
CE5																			<b>.11</b>	<b>.35</b>
CE6																				<b>.15</b>
CE7																				
Factor Loading	N/A	.68	.80	.75	.64	.54	N/A	.60	.79	.82	.77	.71	N/A	.72	.67	.61	.62	.57	.27	.68
Mean	3.28	3.32	3.52	3.13	3.44	2.96	3.41	3.05	2.98	3.68	3.80	3.53	1.55	.23	.16	.10	.29	.12	.27	.21
SD	.72	1.09	1.01	1.09	.99	1.02	.93	1.28	1.33	1.27	1.19	1.22	1.47	.42	.37	.30	.45	.32	.44	.40

NOTES: Underlined values significant at  $p < .05$ ; **bold** values significant at  $p < .01$

See the Appendix for items.

In examining research questions 1 and 2: “What is the relationship between civic engagement and collective action?” and “What role does bonding social capital play as a mechanism for promoting collective action?” a two-stage path model development process was employed based on the conceptual framework presented in Figure 1. First, a fully saturated model (Model 1) was developed in which parameters were estimated for all exogenous variables on all endogenous variables and correlations were estimated between all exogenous indicators. Second, to advance a more parsimonious model, a second model (Model 2) constrained parameters that were non-significant at the .01 level equal to zero, which resulted in constraints of 16 parameters. Model 2 indicated good model fit ( $\chi^2(16) = 36.28, p < .001$ ; adjusted  $\chi^2 = 2.26$ ; RMSEA = .017; SRMR = .011; CFI = .98) and was consequently adopted as the final analysis model used to interpret mediated relationships among variables. The final model accounted for 29% of the overall variance in the outcome variable of collective action and 4% of the mediator variable bonding social capital.

To assess the relationship between civic engagement and collective action, parameter estimates from Model 2 were examined. Results provided support of the first hypothesis, that greater levels of civic engagement were related to higher levels of collective action ( $B = .07, p < .001$ ). In examining research question 2, Model 2 provided support for the second hypothesis, that bonding social capital partially mediated the relationship between civic engagement and collective action. Specifically, Model 2 indicated a direct relationship between civic engagement and bonding social capital ( $B = .065, p < .01$ ); a relationship between bonding social capital and collective action ( $B = .515, p < .001$ ); and an indirect effect between civic engagement and collective action ( $B = .024, p < .001$ ). Indirect effects were obtained using the Mplus “model

indirect” command wherein specific indirect, total indirect, and total effects are given along with confidence intervals (Muthén, 1998).

## DISCUSSION

Results of this study have important implications for practitioners and researchers. First, in exploring whether civic engagement is related to collective action, this study found that higher perceived levels of resident engagement in civic events – such as talking with elected officials – was positively related to perceived neighborhood collective action. This relationship is present even after controlling for individual level demographic factors such as resident age, race, and education level. This result provided support for community organizing researchers (e.g. Speer & Hughey, 1995) who contended that community members who were engaged civically in organizational activities, for example, may gain the opportunity to join collective action movements. Additionally, this finding provided support for the economic literature, which proposes that individuals who participate civically were likely to also engage in collective action if they perceive their participation as personally beneficial (Ostrom, 2000). The direct relationship between civic engagement and collective action resonates with the collective action (Ostrom, 2000) and social movements (McAdam, 2003; Sampson, et. al., 2005) literatures that suggest that citizens become active in collective movements when they engage first as individuals (i.e. civically engage).

Second, a direct relationship was found between bonding social capital and collective action. This finding gives credence to the community organizing, community psychology, and the social movements literature. Specifically, this finding builds on the current community organizing literature, which suggests that one path to collective action exists through the

promotion of relationships and a sense of solidarity within communities and organizations (Warren, 2009). Similarly, this result speaks to the empowering community settings (ECS) framework of community psychology (Fedi, Mannarini, & Maton, 2009; Maton, 2008; Maton & Salem, 1995), which asserts that the social support provided by empowering settings gives setting actors a sense of unity that enables them to engage collectively to address issues of social inequity.

Finally, an indirect relationship between civic engagement and collective action, as mediated through bonding social capital, gives evidence for Hyman's (2002) community building model, which suggests that civic engagement enhances collective action through bonding social capital. Specifically, while civic engagement directly promotes collective action, it also does so by enhancing bonding social capital. The indirect effect between civic engagement and collective action gives some support to the notion that through engagement in civic events, residents gain the opportunity to build relationships of trust (i.e. bonding social capital) with other citizens (Hyman, 2002; Putnam, 1995, 2000), and additionally, those relationships give citizens a sense of oneness that enables them to engage collectively (Fedi, Mannarini, and Maton, 2009).

In light of the findings above, this research has several implications noted here. The first of which include comprehensive community initiatives (CCIs), such as the *Making Connections* Initiative funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation – from which the data for this study were gathered. CCIs promote community change by engaging residents in community change efforts (Chaskin, 2001; Foster-Fishman & Long, 2009). As such, this research suggests that CCIs should continue to engage citizens individually through participation in community and organizational

events, as the results here suggest that these activities may provide opportunities for a collective action movement to grow. The positive link between civic engagement and bonding social capital also suggest that opportunities for citizens to become civically engaged may enhance a shared sense of unity between residents – a potentially important element in fostering collective action. While many CCIs work directly with community organizations, this research finds that through relationship building among neighbors, citizens may become empowered to sustain collective action activities to address systemic inequality.

Second, this research has implications for community organizing groups. Power-based community organizing is a method of organizing community residents wherein citizens gain power through engagement in collective action (Alinsky, 1971). As such, some major community organizing networks, such as the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF), the Gamaliel Foundation, and People Improving Communities through Organizing (PICO) have employed relational organizing methods wherein local community organizers promote relationship-building among organization members and neighborhood residents to engage in collective action. This study gives some support to this organizing technique and suggests that through the promotion of cohesive relationships of trust among community residents, community organizers provide the opportunity for citizens to cultivate a shared identity and the foundation to engage collectively to influence their social environment.

#### Strengths, Limitations, and Future Directions

Although the findings of this study have implications for community builders, organizers, and community researchers, several strengths and limitations should be noted. The design of this investigation provides a robust sample of neighborhoods and residents across urban America. As

such, the results of this investigation provide some insight into the processes of civic engagement, bonding social capital, and collective action within urban neighborhoods. Additionally, the constructs under investigation and their relationships are consistent with findings across other contexts such as the relationship between bonding social capital and collective action advanced in the empowering community settings framework (Fedi, Mannarini, & Maton, 2009; Maton, 2008; Maton & Salem, 1995), the work on civic engagement and social capital conducted by Putnam (1995, 2000), and Ostrom's (2000) microeconomic theory linking civic engagement and collective action. More specifically, the large sample, multi-site, and quantitative approach employed by this study provide additional support for many of the qualitative case studies previously conducted examining similar relationships (e.g. Speer & Hughey, 1995; Warren, 2009).

Several limitations of this study should be noted that may be addressed in future research. First, the perceptual nature of this investigation provides insight into residents' understanding of their neighbors and neighborhoods. However, objective measures of the constructs under investigation would be useful, such as the number of collective action events present in newspapers as utilized by Sampson and colleagues (McAdam et. al., 2005; Sampson, et. al., 2005), the structural relationships between community residents provided by methods such as social network analysis as a measure of bonding social capital, and the number of meetings attended by members of a volunteer organization as indicated by a sign-in sheet as a measure of civic engagement (Christens & Speer, 2011). These measures would give additional evidence of the relationships between collective action, civic engagement, and bonding social capital. Second, this investigation's cross-sectional design does not provide inference into causation

beyond the theoretical evidence provided. While the theoretical mechanism for collective action flows directly and indirectly from civic engagement, it could also be justifiably argued that those who perceive greater levels of collective action in their neighborhoods are also more likely to report higher levels of civic engagement. Future studies should incorporate a longitudinal design as to better understand the causal mechanisms at play between the constructs under investigation. Finally, the individual level nature of this study provides a small glimpse into the process of collective action within neighborhoods. Although evidence provided by this study suggest that *within neighborhoods*, civic engagement promotes collective action in neighborhood events through bonding social capital, these findings may not generalize across various settings and levels of analysis (e.g. within organizations, cities, states, etc.). Neighborhoods provide certain structural opportunities (e.g. living next door to someone) for individuals to interact and build cohesive relationships, whereas in other settings, such as an online network of game players, these opportunities may not exist and/or may manifest differently. Looking into the future, studies should investigate the reliability of these processes across a variety of ecological levels and contexts.

### Conclusion

This study investigated the relationship among civic engagement, bonding social capital, and collective action within urban neighborhoods across seven U.S. cities. Results indicate a direct positive relationship between civic engagement and collective action; a direct positive relationship between bonding social capital and collective action; and an indirect relationship between civic engagement and collective action as partially mediated by bonding social capital. These results have implications for researchers and practitioners. Specifically, this study moves

the literature on collective action, social movements, and community organizing forward by suggesting that neighborhood structures are important in providing citizens the opportunity to interact with one another in civic events. These opportunities provide the foundation by which community residents can connect to one another, create shared goals and a sense of unity, and take collective action to address issues that affect their communities.



CHAPTER 3:  
BONDING SOCIAL CAPITAL AND THE PROMOTION OF COLLECTIVE ACTION:  
NEIGHBORHOOD RACIAL HOMOGENEITY AS AN ENHANCING MECHANISM  
LITERATURE REVIEW

The neighborhood setting is a microsystem that provides opportunities for individuals to interact and build relationships of mutual cooperation (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Neighborhoods are social settings that can promote trust and enable citizens to engage in collective action for mutual benefit (Berger & Neuhaus, 1977; Putnam, 1995, 2000). For example, residents, community organizers and builders have worked within neighborhoods to address issues of dilapidated housing (Speer et al., 2003), establish work training programs (Warren, 1998), and organize labor unions (Alinsky, 1971). However, the processes by which neighborhood residents engage in collective action can be influenced by setting characteristics, including racial homogeneity. Across different settings, research has indicated that racial homogeneity may affect activity in volunteer organizations in the U.S. (Lipford & Yandle, 2009) and can enhance forms of collective action (Vigdor, 2004). Although the setting type may vary, the point is evident – racial homogeneity within social settings may influence the extent to which setting members take collective action, and particularly the processes by which collective action is advanced.

Study 1 found that residents who perceived higher levels of bonding social capital in their neighborhoods also perceived greater collective action in those same settings. Additionally, bonding social capital partially mediated the relationship between civic engagement and collective action. Study 1 argued that through civic engagement activities, residents gained

opportunities to build relationships of trust (i.e. bonding social capital), which then formed the foundation for residents to engage in collective action. Theoretical considerations indicate that the cohesive nature of bonding social capital establishes the singular “I” into the collective “we”, which has the potential to stimulate collective action (Putnam, 2000). Indeed, scholars across sociology (Coleman, 1988; Moody & White, 2003; Paxton, 2002; Portes & Vickstrom, 2011), organizational science (Burt, 2001), community psychology (Perkins, Hughey, & Speer, 2002), and management (Payne, Moore, Griffis, & Autry, 2011) have defined bonding social capital in terms of social cohesion, and evidence suggests that social cohesion may lead to collective action (Speer, Jackson, & Peterson, 2001; Welzel, Inglehart, & Deutsch, 2005).

Building on Study 1, this study (Study 2) investigates urban neighborhood settings and the extent to which neighborhood racial homogeneity moderates the relationship between bonding social capital and collective action. This study builds on Study 1 by incorporating a neighborhood approach to examine a particular dimension of neighborhood context – racial homogeneity/heterogeneity – and its influence on the relationship between bonding social capital and collective action. This investigation moves the literature forward by understanding how urban neighborhoods act as social micro-structures in facilitating community change, and particularly how the demographic make-up of the neighborhood influences a process of community change. Figure 2 above (Chapter 1) provides a conceptual framework for Study 2.

### The Neighborhood as an Opportunity Structure

The neighborhood microsystem provides the social structure for residents to interact with one another. The community organizing and building literature attests to the idea that the social

structure provided by the neighborhood context allows residents to build relationships of trust (i.e. bonding social capital) and engage in collective action activities.

Regarding aspects of bonding social capital, empirical research on social ties has indicated that the opportunity to interact with neighbors gives residents an increased sense of connectedness. For example, Unger and Wandersman (1985) found that neighborhood connections influence the social, cognitive, and affective aspects of residents' lives by providing residents with needed social and emotional support, a sense of community, and neighborhood attachment. In addition, Austin and Baba (1990) investigated residents in Oklahoma City and found that neighbors with more social ties within their neighborhoods felt a greater sense of attachment. Prezza et al. (2001) found similar results with an Italian sample where neighborhood ties were the strongest predictor of a sense of community when compared to other socio-demographic factors. Similar results were found by Farrell, Aubry, and Coulombe (2004) in a Canadian sample where again, greater interaction among neighbors was predictive of higher reported sense of community. Finally in Israel, it was concluded that the greater number of social ties residents had within their neighborhoods, the greater levels of social connectedness they reported (Mesch & Manor, 1998). These studies reflect Ostrom's (2010) contention that neighborhoods enable reciprocal transactions over time between residents, which have the potential to enhance trust among neighbors.

In addition to the sense of connectedness provided by opportunities to interact within neighborhood settings, the close proximity of neighbors gives them the opportunity to build both weak and strong social ties that can promote collective action. Eisen's (1994) examination of community change initiatives indicates that neighborhoods advance resident relationships of cooperation, especially among low-income residents, because they provide the social space for

residents to build social ties giving neighborhoods the “potential to become cohesive communities with common concerns, shared visions, interrelationships, networks, and solidarity that can contribute synergistically to the effectiveness of an initiative” (p. 238). In addition, the “relative ease of transportation, childcare provision, and levels of social comfort” provided by the neighborhood physical and social structure make collective action more accessible for residents living in target initiative neighborhoods (Eisen, 1994, p. 238).

Eisen’s arguments are mirrored in other empirical work. For example, Unger and Wandersman (1982, 1983, 1985) conducted a series of studies investigating the role that neighborhood connections have for residents. In one study, they concluded that “neighboring” – or social connections and interactions among neighborhood residents – can directly influence residents and the neighborhoods in which they reside. They argue that neighborhood ties provide the social structure for residents to engage in community building activities for collective benefit by developing connections to larger institutions through participation in block and organizational activities (Unger & Wandersman, 1985). Indeed, “collectively, neighbors have the potential to shape their environment in accordance with their needs” (Unger & Wandersman, 1982, p. 506) through the opportunity to interact and collectively problem solve. In another study, they found that block groups were more likely to gain success in neighborhoods where informal resident relationships were prevalent (Unger & Wandersman, 1983). Although trends are beginning to show stronger social connections among individuals outside of their immediate neighborhoods (Guest & Wierzbicki, 1999), the neighborhood social structure still provides opportunities for residents to interact, which may afford residents the ability to solve collective neighborhood problems. The evidence above provides three main conclusions; 1) the neighborhood provides opportunities for residents to interact, 2) greater levels of social interaction build a sense of

connectedness – or bonding social capital and 3) social engagement increases opportunities to act collectively to solve neighborhood issues.

### Racial Homogeneity in Urban Neighborhoods

Although evidence suggests that the neighborhood structure provides opportunities for resident interactions, to build bonding social capital, and to engage in collective action, research suggests that race and ethnicity may influence the extent of these interactions. For example, Greenbaum and Greenbaum (1985) found a complex relationship between racial diversity and neighborhood ties among neighborhood face-blocks. In their study, they define a face-block as including “all dwellings that fronted on the same street and were situated between the first cross-streets to be encountered in both directions away from the respondent’s house” (p. 58). They found that within heterogeneous neighborhoods, social ties occurred primarily among residents residing *within* the same face-block and not among residents between face-blocks. However, within homogeneous neighborhoods, resident ties occurred both *within* and *between* face-blocks. As such, the authors argue that while proximal relationships are likely to occur in both homogeneous and heterogeneous neighborhoods, homogeneous neighborhoods allow for greater connections across face-blocks because of the opportunity for racially similar neighbors to interact in other facets of neighborly life (e.g. at church, the grocery store, etc.).

Recent studies of neighborhood racial homogeneity and its influence on social relationships have found similar results. In an international context, Lenzi, Vieno, Santinello, and Perkins (2013) found that the ethnic heterogeneity of neighborhoods in Italy acted as a barrier to social tie formation among adolescents. Additionally, in investigating perceptual “connectedness” and the effects racial diversity has on these measures within neighborhoods,

Lancee and Dronkers (2011) found that the quality of neighborly contact was rated significantly lower among more heterogeneous neighborhoods compared to homogeneous settings. Although these studies take place in varying contexts, the point is made – neighborhood racial homogeneity may provide structural opportunities for neighborhood residents to interact whereas racial heterogeneity may, to some degree, impede these opportunities.

### Neighborhood Homogeneity and Structural Opportunities: The Homophily Principle

In considering the extent to which racial homogeneity may influence the opportunity to build social relationships, McPherson and colleagues have described the homophily principle. The homophily principle examines how structural mechanisms are integral in forming homogeneous social relationships (Mayhew, McPherson, Rotolo, & Smith-Lovin, 1995; McPherson & Rotolo, 1996; McPherson & Smith-Lovin, 1987; McPherson et al., 2001). This framework contends that “similarity breeds connection”, meaning, individuals’ interpersonal social relationships across a variety of social settings (e.g. neighborhood, organizational, work, etc.) tend to be homogeneous with regard to various socio-demographic factors such as race, religion, age, and education (McPherson et al., 2001, pg. 415). More specifically, setting actors tend to interact with those who are similar to themselves on these various demographic characteristics. These interactions are not due only to individual choice, per se, but also stem from the opportunities provided by social settings (or lack thereof) to interact with dissimilar actors. This phenomenon is consistent across a variety of contexts and relationship types including adolescent peer groups (Doyle & Kao, 2007; Joyner & Kao, 2000; Kandel, 1978; Maharaj & Connolly, 1994), within voluntary associations (McPherson & Rotolo, 1996), and with confiding relationships (Marsden, 1988).

In the neighborhood context, opportunities to interact with similar others occurs in a variety of ways. For one, neighborhoods tend to be segregated by race (Clark, 1991) and indeed, segregation patterns often occur *within* neighborhoods as well (Dwyer, 2010). These segregation patterns tend to place individuals who are racially similar in close proximity, providing greater opportunities for interaction through geographic propinquity. Simply put, “we are more likely to have contact with those who are closer to us in geographic location than those who are distant” (McPherson, et. al., 2001, p. 429). Additionally, focused group activities such as school and volunteer organizations, the locations of which are often dictated by neighborhoods, place similar individuals together providing another avenue for social interaction with like others. Finally, at the individual level, residents who are racially similar are argued to have a greater sense of shared cultural knowledge and tend to interact at greater levels (McPherson et al., 2001). Because of the homophily principle, I contend that homogeneous neighborhoods provide greater opportunities to interact with like others compared to diverse neighborhoods.

These opportunities to interact and build social ties have consequences for promoting collective action, especially when considering its strong connection to bonding social capital. Again, as others have contended and as was argued in Study 1, bonding social capital promotes collective action *through* strong social ties. The opportunity for residents to interact and build cohesive social ties is integral for residents to act collectively. However, as advanced above, homogeneous neighborhoods may provide greater opportunities for residents to interact with similar others, enabling more social tie formation. Thus, it may be the case that the relationship between bonding social capital and collective action is greater within homogeneous neighborhoods simply due to the fact that residents in those neighborhoods may be more likely to interact due to the homophily principle.

## The Current Study

The current investigation builds on Study 1, which found that greater perceptions of bonding social capital among residents was related to higher levels of perceived collective action within residents' neighborhoods, by incorporating a neighborhood level indicator – racial homogeneity – as a moderator to this relationship. Building on the evidence above, I argue that the neighborhood is a social structure that provides opportunities for residents to interact. As such, individuals within neighborhoods can build ties of trust, cooperation, and norms of reciprocity – or bonding social capital. These relationships of trust then provide the social “superglue” that enables individual residents to promote the neighborhood good through collective action. However, neighborhood homogeneity provides greater opportunities for interaction among residents who are racially similar. Racially homogeneous neighborhoods may facilitate greater social interaction because, as the homophily principle contends, residents are more likely to interact with others who are similar to themselves. Thus, homogeneous neighborhoods may augment the relationship between bonding social capital and collective action by providing greater opportunities for social tie formation among similar neighbors. Therefore, I hypothesize that the greater opportunity for residents to interact with similar others provided in more homogeneous neighborhoods will enhance the positive relationship between bonding social capital and collective action.

## METHODS

### Study Context and Sample

A similar sample utilized in Study 1 is also used in this study. Specifically, Annie E. Casey Foundation's *Making Connections* (MC) initiative provided the data for this investigation.



Sampling weights were calculated for each neighborhood that represent household-level population estimates and are used in multilevel and regression analyses throughout this investigation. Individual level data (Level-1) utilized from the MC initiative were collected between 2008 and 2010. At the neighborhood level (Level-2), census tract data were collected in 2010. The sample for this study is slightly different from that in Study 1 due to the use of neighborhood level variables. Namely, due to shifts occurring in census tracts between the time of data collection on the MC study and data collection by the U.S. Census Bureau, individuals residing in 11 census tracts – nine that were split into multiple tracts and two that had been integrated into neighboring tracts – were excluded from the sample in Study 2 (N=274). This was necessary as there were no clear explanations as to why these changes in census tract boundaries had taken place. In addition, 13 individuals residing in five tracts with very small sample sizes (i.e.,  $N < 10$ ) were excluded from analyses. Finally, all analyses were conducted using listwise deletion resulting in a final sample of 3868 households across 75 neighborhoods. Household respondent demographic characteristics are reported in Table 5.

**Table 5: Demographic Information**

	<i>n</i>	Valid (%)		<i>n</i>	Valid (%)	
<b>RACE</b>			<b>EDUCATION</b>			
Black	1133	29.3	No HS Diploma	1132	29.3	
Latino	1203	31.1	HS Diploma or equivalent	1222	31.6	
White	1107	28.6	Some College	998	25.8	
Other	425	11.0	College Graduate and Beyond	374	9.7	
			Graduate Degree	142	3.7	
<b>SEX</b>			<b>HOME OWNERSHIP</b>			
Female	2557	66.1	Own	1582	40.9	
Male	1311	33.9	Rent	2286	59.1	
<b>RECEIVED FOOD STAMPS IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS</b>			<b>RESPONDENT AGE</b>			
No	2489	64.3	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Yes	1379	35.7	44.5	15.8	16	75

Measures: Individual Level

Neighborhood Collective Action was assessed with a five-item scale adapted from several existing scales including the Detroit Area Study of 2001, The Social Capital Community Benchmark, and The Project on Human Development in Chicago Neighborhoods (Earls, 1995). Items were rated on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1-5 (“Very Unlikely” to “Very Likely”) and included items such as “If the fire station closest to their house was threatened by budget cuts, how likely is it that your neighbors would do something about it?” and “If some children were spray-painting graffiti on a local building, how likely is it that your neighbors would do something about it?” This scale indicates acceptable reliability ( $\alpha=.79$ ).

Bonding Social Capital was also assessed with a five-item scale created from existing measures of the construct including the Los Angeles Family and Neighborhood Study (Sastry, Ghosh-Dastidar, Adams, & Pebley, 2006), the HOPE VI Panel Study (Popkin, 2002), The

Project on Human Development in Chicago Neighborhoods (Earls, 1995), and The Child and Family Well-Being Study (Winston et al., 1999). Items were rated on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1-5 (“Very Unlikely” to “Very Likely”) and included items such as, “People in my neighborhood are willing to help their neighbors” and “People in my neighborhood generally don’t get along with each other” (reverse scored). This scale also indicates acceptable reliability ( $\alpha=.73$ ).

Demographic Control Variables were utilized for this study’s analysis. Specifically, age (grand mean centered) was assessed as a continuous variable; race was broken into four categories and education into five – for analysis purposes the race and education categories were dummy coded (i.e. 0/1). Reference groups for analyses included No High School Diploma and White for education and race, respectively. In addition to age, education, and race, analyses controlled for sex (male = 0; female = 1), whether the respondent had received food stamps in the past 12 months (no food stamps = 0; received food stamps = 1), and home ownership status (renter = 0; owner = 1). See Table 5 for sample size and percentages for each variable.

#### Measures: Neighborhood Level

Neighborhood Homogeneity was calculated as a Level-2 (neighborhood) variable using Simpson’s measure of diversity (D) (Simpson, 1949). Using probability theory, Simpson’s D calculates the chance that two individuals chosen at random in a setting will have the same racial background. This measure was first utilized to calculate the diversity of species within a given ecology (e.g. Magurran, 1988) but has since been adopted by social scientists to measure: the diversity of county employment (Israel & Beaulieu, 2004; Israel, Beaulieu, & Hartless, 2001), urban neighborhood racial diversity (Richardson, Fendrich, & Johnson, 2003; Talen, 2010),

religious diversity within a given geographic space in the U.S. and Canada (Warf, 2006), and ethnic diversity within high schools (Felix & You, 2011). This measure takes into account multiple groups and scores closer to 0 indicate less diversity (i.e. greater homogeneity) and scores closer to 1 indicate greater diversity (i.e. greater heterogeneity). More specifically, scores closer to 0 indicate that the racial composition of a neighborhood is skewed toward one race and the probability of two individuals falling into the same racial category is high. Alternatively, scores closer to 1 indicate that the racial composition is more evenly dispersed across several races and that the probability of two individuals falling into the same category is low.

For the purposes of this study, Simpson’s *D* is calculated using the following formula adapted for this context from the original (Simpson, 1949):

$$D = 1 - (\%Asian^2 + \%Black^2 + \%Hawaiian^2 + \%Latino^2 + \%Native\ American^2 + \%White^2 + \%Multi-Racial^2 + \%Other^2)$$

As a conceptual example, neighborhood X, a relatively homogeneous neighborhood, has a racial make-up of 96% White, 1% Black, 1% Hawaiian, 1% Latino, and 1% Other (with zero percentage of any other race category). In utilizing the calculation above, the *D* score for neighborhood X with the racial make-up presented above is:

$$D = 1 - (\%Asian[0]^2 + \%Black[.01]^2 + \%Hawaiian[.01]^2 + \%Latino[.01]^2 + \%Native\ American[0]^2 + \%White[.96]^2 + \%Multi-Racial[0]^2 + \%Other[.01]^2) \quad \text{OR}$$

$$D = 1 - (0^2 + 0.01^2 + 0.01^2 + 0.01^2 + 0^2 + 0.96^2 + 0^2 + 0.01^2) = 0.078.$$

Alternatively, neighborhood Y, a relatively heterogeneous neighborhood, has a racial make-up of 16% Asian, 12% Black, 12% Hawaiian, 12% Latino, 12% Native American, 12% White, 12% Multi-Racial, and 12% Other, the *D* score for neighborhood Y with the racial make-up presented above is:

$$D = 1 - (\%Asian[.16]^2 + \%Black[.12]^2 + \%Hawaiian[.12]^2 + \%Latino[.12]^2 + \%Native American[.12]^2 + \%White[.12]^2 + \%Multi-Racial[.12]^2 + \%Other[.12]^2) \quad \text{OR}$$

$$D = 1 - (0.16^2 + 0.12^2 + 0.12^2 + 0.12^2 + 0.12^2 + 0.12^2 + 0.12^2 + 0.12^2) = 0.87.$$

As discussed, neighborhood X is racially skewed where the percentage of white within this neighborhood far exceeds any other race, indicating that neighborhood X is relatively homogeneous. Alternatively, neighborhood Y has a fairly even distribution of racial categories, indicating that neighborhood Y is relatively heterogeneous. Accordingly, the *D* score for each neighborhood represents this fact, where neighborhood X has a low *D* score (i.e. closer to 0) and neighborhood Y has a higher score (i.e. closer to 1).

U.S. Census tracts were used as a proxy for neighborhood to measure homogeneity using Simpson's *D*, as is often the case in neighborhood research (see Coulton and colleagues: Coulton, Korbin, & Su, 1996; Coulton, Corbin, Tsui, & Su 2001; Coulton, Chan, & Mikelbank, 2011). Specifically, 75 neighborhoods were sampled across seven cities with an average of 10.71 tracts per city (see Table 6 for the number of tracts sampled per city). Of all 75 neighborhoods, an average of 51.57 residents (SD=40; Min=9, Max=182) were sampled from each tract. In

addition, Simpson's  $D$  averaged .41 (SD=.25) ranging from .04 (Min) to .75 (Max) across neighborhoods.

**Table 6: Number of Census Tracts Sampled by City**

CITY	NUMBER OF CENSUS TRACTS	CITY <i>N</i>
Denver, CO	4	563
Des Moines, IA	9	609
Indianapolis, IN	15	590
San Antonio, TX	22	450
Seattle, WA	9	562
Louisville, KY	7	553
Providence, RI	9	541

## RESULTS

### Analysis Strategy: Multilevel Modeling

To examine the Level-1, Level-2, and cross-level effects on the outcome variable of collective action, multilevel modeling (MLM) was utilized as an analytic method. MLM provides the ability to test for individual (i.e. Level-1) and neighborhood (i.e. Level-2) level effects on the individual level variable of collective action, while controlling for individual level demographic factors and accounting for data dependence due to the nested nature of the research design (Raudenbush & Bryk, 2002). Additionally, MLM allows researchers to test cross-level interaction effects to examine whether a relationship between variables at Level-1 are moderated by variables at other levels (e.g. Level-2). Stata 12.0 (StataCorp, 2011) software was used to develop and test statistical models. The equation for the final analysis model is presented below.

## MLM Equation for Final Model

### *Level-1*

$$Y_{ij}(\text{Collective Action}) = \beta_{0j} + \beta_{1j}(\text{Sex}) + \beta_{2j}(\text{Age} - \bar{x}_{\text{Age}}) + \beta_{3j}(\text{Food Stamps}) + \beta_{4j}(\text{HS Graduate}) + \beta_{5j}(\text{Some College}) + \beta_{6j}(\text{College Degree}) + \beta_{7j}(\text{Graduate Degree}) + \beta_{8j}(\text{Black}) + \beta_{9j}(\text{Latino}) + \beta_{10j}(\text{Other Race}) + \beta_{11j}(\text{Home Owner}) + \beta_{12j}(\text{Bonding Social Capital}) + e_{ij}$$

### *Level-2*

$$\beta_{0j} = \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{01}(\text{NH Homogeneity}) + u_{0j}$$

$$\beta_{1j}(\text{Sex}) = \gamma_{10} + u_{1j}$$

$$\beta_{2j}(\text{Age} - \bar{x}_{\text{Age}}) = \gamma_{20} + u_{2j}$$

$$\beta_{3j}(\text{Food Stamps}) = \gamma_{30} + u_{3j}$$

$$\beta_{4j}(\text{HS Graduate}) = \gamma_{40} + u_{4j}$$

$$\beta_{5j}(\text{Some College}) = \gamma_{50} + u_{5j}$$

$$\beta_{6j}(\text{College Degree}) = \gamma_{60} + u_{6j}$$

$$\beta_{7j}(\text{Graduate Degree}) = \gamma_{70} + u_{7j}$$

$$\beta_{8j}(\text{Black}) = \gamma_{80} + u_{8j}$$

$$\beta_{9j}(\text{Latino}) = \gamma_{90} + u_{9j}$$

$$\beta_{10j}(\text{Other Race}) = \gamma_{100} + u_{10j}$$

$$\beta_{11j}(\text{Home Owner}) = \gamma_{110} + u_{11j}$$

$$\beta_{12j}(\text{Bonding Social Capital}) = \gamma_{120} + \gamma_{121}(\text{NH Homogeneity}) + u_{12j}$$



## Descriptive Analyses

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) with varimax rotation was conducted to investigate the structure of scale items for the collective action and bonding social capital measures. Findings suggest that scale items load appropriately on each theorized construct. Specifically, component scores for collective action ranged from .60 to .82 and bonding social capital items ranged between .55 and .80. All bivariate correlations across items and scales were significant at the  $p < .001$  level. Cronbach's alphas ranged from .079 to .80 with a correlation between collective action and bonding social capital at .51. Additionally, across all neighborhoods, the mean for bonding social capital was 3.27 ( $SD = .72$ ) and the mean for collective action was 3.41 ( $SD = .93$ ). Table 7 provides descriptive statistics, correlations, and factor loadings for all bonding social capital and collective action items and scales.

In addition to analyses across all neighborhoods, t-tests were conducted to identify whether more homogeneous or heterogeneous neighborhoods had higher levels of bonding social capital and collective action. Neighborhoods were split using the median neighborhood diversity score (.47) with 38 neighborhoods coded as homogeneous and 37 coded as heterogeneous. Results do not indicate a significant mean difference between homogeneous ( $M = 3.31$ ,  $SD = .24$ ) and heterogeneous neighborhoods ( $M = 3.30$ ,  $SD = .21$ ) on bonding social capital ( $t(73) = .33$ ,  $p = .74$ ) or collective action (homogeneous neighborhoods  $M = 3.51$ ,  $SD = .31$ ; heterogeneous neighborhoods  $M = 3.42$ ,  $SD = .23$ ;  $t(73) = 1.51$ ,  $p = .13$ ).

**Table 7: Descriptive statistics, correlations, and factor loadings for all bonding social capital and collective action items and scales**

	(SC)	SC1	SC2	SC3	SC4	SC5	(CA)	CA1	CA2	CA3	CA4	CA5
(SC)		.69	.78	.74	.66	.51	.51	.28	.41	.44	.38	.38
SC1			.52	.39	.23	.39	.39	.28	.34	.31	.25	.28
SC2				.52	.38	.45	.45	.24	.37	.40	.34	.34
SC3					.34	.43	.43	.24	.35	.37	.31	.34
SC4						.28	.28	.08	.20	.28	.26	.21
SC5							.23	.12	.17	.20	.18	.17
(CA)								.64	.78	.80	.74	.71
CA1									.42	.34	.28	.28
CA2										.55	.43	.44
CA3											.59	.47
CA4												.44
CA5												
Factor Loading	N/A	.68	.81	.75	.66	.55	N/A	.60	.79	.82	.76	.71
Mean	3.28	3.31	3.53	3.12	3.45	2.96	3.41	3.05	2.97	3.68	3.80	3.53
SD	.72	1.09	1.01	1.09	.98	1.02	.93	1.28	1.33	1.28	1.20	1.22

NOTES: Underlined values significant at  $p < .05$ ; **bold** values significant at  $p < .01$

See Appendix for Items.

## Model Results

Examining the individual level (Level-1) predictors of collective action, several demographic control variables and bonding social capital were significant. First, males (compared to females) and older residents were more likely to engage in collective action activities. Those without a high school diploma tended to perceive their neighborhoods as more collectively active compared to those with higher levels of education (e.g. Some College and College Degree). Additionally, Latino residents were more likely than White residents to report their neighborhoods as collectively active. The results also indicate that bonding social capital is a positive and significant predictor of collective action, even after controlling for demographic factors. Specifically, residents who report higher levels of bonding social capital in their neighborhoods also report greater levels of collective action among their neighbors.

In investigating the relationship that the neighborhood level (Level-2) variable – neighborhood homogeneity – has with collective action, an unexpected result occurred wherein neighborhood homogeneity is found to be a significant predictor of collective action. Specifically, residents within more *heterogeneous* neighborhoods were more likely to report greater levels of collective action among their neighbors. This finding is somewhat counter to the results of the cross-level interaction effect, which found that more *homogeneous* neighborhoods (Level-2) enhanced the relationship between bonding social capital and collective action (Level-1). Figure 3 provides a representation of the main effect of neighborhood homogeneity and Figure 4 provides a visual representation of the relationship between bonding social capital and collective action within homogeneous versus heterogeneous neighborhoods.

**Table 8: Final Model Results**

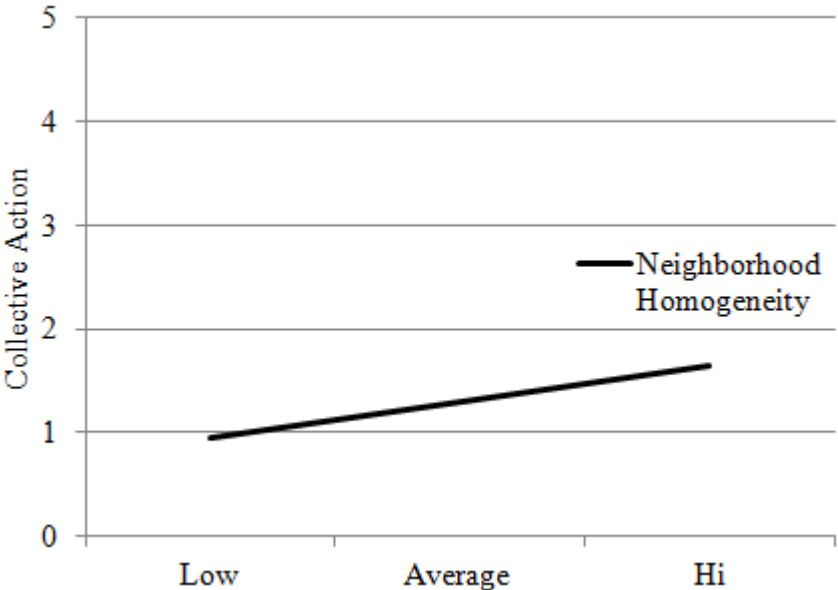
Variables	$\beta$	(SE)	95% CI
<b>LEVEL-1 VARIABLES</b>			
Intercept	.730**	(.158)	[.420, 1.04]
Sex	-.079*	(.038)	[-.153, -.005]
Age	.003*	(.001)	[<.001, .006]
Food Stamps	-.018	(.040)	[-.096, .059]
High School Graduate	-.046	(.043)	[-.130, .037]
Some College	-.122*	(.051)	[-.222, -.022]
College Degree	-.138*	(.062)	[-.259, -.017]
Graduate Degree	-.123	(.083)	[-.286, .040]
Black/African-American	.061	(.044)	[.025, .147]
Latino/Hispanic	.198**	(.041)	[.117, .279]
Other Race	-.144	(.079)	[-.298, .011]
Home Owner	-.029	(.037)	[-.102, .044]
Bonding Social Capital (BSC)	.830**	(.036)	[.759, .971]
<b>LEVEL-2 VARIABLE</b>			
Neighborhood Homogeneity <sup>2</sup>	1.38**	(.304)	[.788, 1.99]
<b>CROSS-LEVEL INTERACTION</b>			
BSC X NH Homogeneity	-.410**	(.083)	[-.574, -.247]
<b>SELECTED FIT STATISTICS</b>			
Log Pseudolikelihood	- 4,491	--	--
Wald $\chi^2$ (14)	1176	--	--
$\chi^2$ p value	< .001	--	--
<b>RANDOM EFFECTS</b>			
Intercept (mean Collective Action)	.120	(.019)	[.088, .163]
Residual	.774	(.015)	[.745, .804]

\* p<.05, \*\* p<.001;

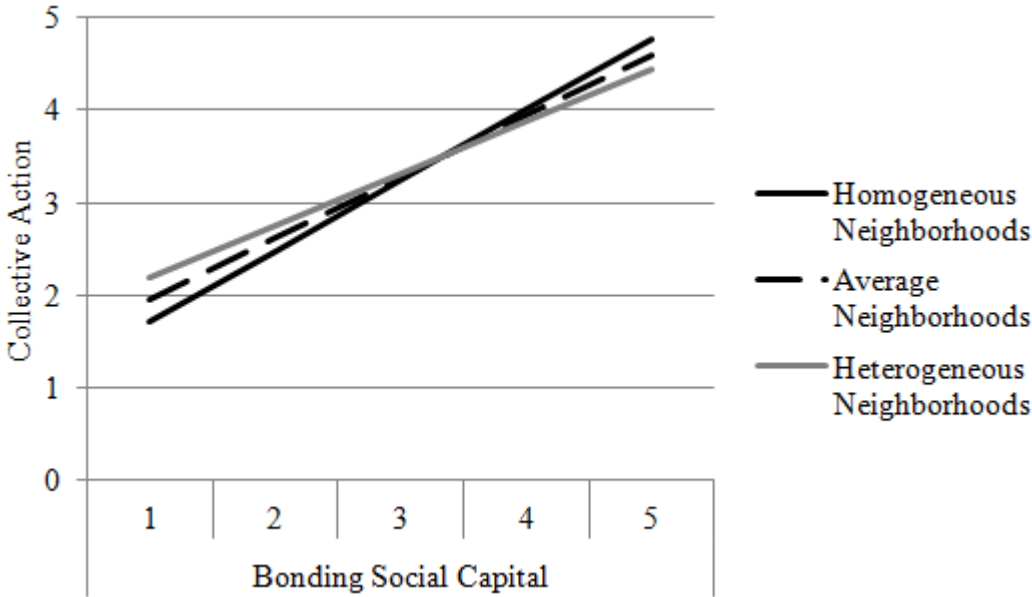
Individual (Level-1) Listwise  $N = 3,868$ ; Neighborhood (Level-2)  $N = 75$

<sup>2</sup> Neighborhood racial homogeneity is coded so that higher scores indicate more racially *heterogeneous* neighborhoods

**Figure 3: Main Effect of Neighborhood diversity on collective action**



**Figure 4: Cross-Level Interaction of Neighborhood diversity moderating the relationship between bonding social capital and collective action**



## DISCUSSION

This investigation has several important findings that require discussion. Like Study 1, Study 2 found a positive and significant relationship between bonding social capital and collective action within both homogeneous and heterogeneous neighborhoods after controlling for demographic variables. Moreover, even after accounting for the variance explained across neighborhoods, Study 2 still found a relationship between bonding social capital and collective action.

Study 2 found a positive relationship between bonding social capital and collective action across all neighborhood types; of particular interest, however, Study 2 found a cross-level interaction effect wherein neighborhood homogeneity (at Level-2) moderated the relationship between bonding social capital and collective action (at Level-1). These results provided evidence for the hypothesis that neighborhood homogeneity potentiates the positive relationship between bonding social capital and collective action. Interestingly, residents who lived within more homogeneous neighborhoods reported a stronger relationship between bonding social capital and collective action, indicating that racial make-up is an influential attribute of urban neighborhoods. Drawing on the homophily principle, these findings indicate that racial similarity may influence residents' opportunities to interact (McPherson et al., 2001). More specifically this study gives weight to the contention that homogeneous neighborhoods may provide greater opportunities for similar neighbors to interact across a variety of neighborhood contexts (e.g. church, businesses, organizations, etc.), which may enhance the relationship between bonding social capital and collective action within those neighborhoods.

In addition to the support for the hypothesized results found in this study, an unexpected result emerged that requires further discussion. Specifically, a direct significant relationship was discovered between heterogeneity at the neighborhood level (Level-2) and collective action at the individual level (Level-1) where more *heterogeneous* neighborhoods predict greater levels of collective action. This result is surprising in that it is somewhat counter to the finding that greater levels of neighborhood *homogeneity* predict a stronger relationship between bonding social capital and collective action. Research on community organizing has lent some insight into this finding. Speer and his colleagues (Speer & Hughey, 1995; Speer et al., 1995; Speer et al., 2003) have emphasized the relational nature of community organizing in building collective action movements across a diverse constituency. In one study, Speer et al. (1995) found that organizing techniques in which leaders build relationships across a diversity of community members tended to be more effective in promoting collective action compared to techniques that emphasized community mobilization based on particular issues. Indeed, a recent report has found that community organizing networks are becoming much more inclusive of a diversity of racial backgrounds and religious traditions (Wood, Fulton, & Partridge, 2012), which is expanding their ability to take collective action. While the mechanism by which neighborhood heterogeneity promotes collective action is not examined here, social network theory points to the idea that “weak” ties among diverse community members may enhance access to resources, which are a much needed staple among those engaging in collective action (Granovetter, 1973). As such, future research should further investigate in more depth the relationship between neighborhood (and group) heterogeneity and its relationship to collective action. Particularly, variables that are not examined in this study, such as neighborhood size, should be included in

further analyses that may contribute to a greater understanding of this relationship and to test for potential spurious relationships.

### Implications

The results provide several implications for theory and practice. First, this study highlights the tensions community psychologists may face when two core values conflict, particularly sense of community and diversity (Townley, Kloos, Green, & Franco, 2011). As community psychologists, we strive to promote both diversity and sense of community in various settings, including urban neighborhoods. Although bonding social capital (the construct utilized for this investigation) and sense of community are not identical, Perkins et al. (2002) argued that bonding social capital is a larger construct that encompasses sense of community where sense of community is a type of “informal, community focused attitude” (p. 34). The issues raised by Townley et al. (2011) were supported by the current research results that indicate that the positive relationship between bonding social capital and collective action is slightly inhibited in more heterogeneous (i.e. diverse) neighborhoods. As such, community psychologists should recognize that these constructs may not be congruent and we should think of a variety of approaches to address issues across a diversity of communities.

More practically, this research has implications for understanding collective action within both racially homogeneous and heterogeneous neighborhoods. Particularly, there is conflicting evidence indicating that on one hand, for residents within racially homogeneous neighborhoods, participation in collective action events may be enhanced through a complex interaction with bonding social capital. Alternatively, this research also indicates that residents within more racially heterogeneous neighborhoods are more likely to perceive residents within their



neighborhood as collectively active. While there was not a significant mean difference between racially homogeneous and heterogeneous neighborhoods on the outcome of collective action, the MLM results tell a more complex story, specifically, that neighborhood racial make-up may influence how collectively active residents perceive their neighbors. As such, future research should look into the complexities of these relationships while modeling other constructs (e.g. bridging social capital) to investigate potential external variables of influence.

Finally, this research has implications for community builders as they often strive to engage heterogeneous communities in collective action. As these results indicate, not all neighborhoods are identical. This presents somewhat of a paradox for community builders because much of the emphasis on community building involves the promotion of strong relationships of trust (i.e. bonding social capital; Chaskin, 2001) often within heterogeneous communities. As such, it may be imperative for community builders and organizers alike to utilize a variety of methods to engage residents depending on the neighborhood context. For example, community organizers may utilize strategies to promote relationships of trust and norms of reciprocity within homogeneous neighborhoods as a method to enhance collective action. Alternatively, organizers within heterogeneous neighborhoods may utilize the resources provided by a diverse setting to promote collective action among residents. By utilizing a variety of strategies across neighborhood settings, community builders and organizers may enhance their potential to build collective action.

### Limitations and Future Directions

Although the results of this investigation are revealing and have implications for researchers and practitioners – no study is perfect. As such, several study limitations should be

noted and addressed in future research. First, this study was conducted within urban neighborhoods across the U.S. Thus, results may not generalize to rural or suburban neighborhoods. Future research would benefit from investigating the processes involved in promoting collective action within a more diverse sample of rural, suburban, and urban neighborhoods. Second, this data did not document potential community building activities that were taking place outside of the MC initiative. Community organizing affiliates, for example, conduct their work in neighborhoods across 40 states within the U.S (Wood et al., 2012). These activities are directed specifically to engage neighborhood residents and may influence the processes investigated by this study. As such, future research may want to understand how community building efforts, such as those conducted by community organizing groups or other comprehensive community initiatives, influence the processes presented here. Finally, this study only examines one type of social capital as it relates to collective action in the neighborhood context, particularly bonding social capital. Because of this, other forms of social capital (e.g. bridging) are not taken into account. Bridging social capital for example, may provide additional insight into how collective action is promoted through relationships across socially diverse settings.

### Summary

This study investigated the relationship between bonding social capital and collective action within U.S. urban neighborhoods across seven cities. In addition, this investigation sought to understand how neighborhood context, specifically racial homogeneity/heterogeneity, influences the relationship above. Results indicate that while there is a positive and significant relationship between bonding social capital and collective action across all sample

neighborhoods, the relationship was significantly stronger in homogeneous neighborhoods. It is argued that this relationship is stronger within homogeneous neighborhoods because of the opportunities for residents to interact with similar others, as outlined by the homophily principle. These results have implications for researchers and practitioners. Specifically, this study moves the literature on neighborhood collective action forward by understanding how racial make-up influences the relationship between bonding social capital and collective action. I conclude that practitioners, such as community organizers and builders, should focus on other forms homophily, such as shared ideology, to enhance the relationship between bonding social capital and collective action.

CHAPTER 4:  
CONCLUSIONS, FUTURE DIRECTIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

Conclusions

Residents engage individually and collectively to address the issues that their neighborhoods face. To enhance the potential for residents to engage in collective action to solve mutual concerns about their neighborhoods, it is important to understand the factors that contribute to this process. Previous research has pointed to factors, such as bonding social capital, that enhance the potential for individuals to engage in collective action (e.g. Warren, 2009). In addition, individual civic engagement may provide opportunities to participate in larger collective action efforts (Sampson et al., 2005). Finally, these processes may be influenced by larger contextual factors, such as neighborhood racial homogeneity (McPherson et al., 2001). To further understand the processes of collective action further, this dissertation included two related studies. Using path analysis, Study 1 investigated the role of bonding social capital as a factor that mediates the relationship between civic engagement and collective action. Building on Study 1, Study 2 utilized multilevel modeling to test cross-level moderation wherein neighborhood racial homogeneity (Level-2) moderated the relationship between bonding social capital and collective action (Level-1).

After controlling for demographic factors, this dissertation found that civic engagement, bonding social capital, and neighborhood racial homogeneity were all important predictors of collective action. Study 1 found that bonding social capital partially mediated the relationship between civic engagement and collective action. Specifically, residents who reported greater levels of civic engagement also perceived higher levels of bonding social capital and collective

action among their neighbors. Additionally, as levels of bonding social capital increased so did residents' perceptions of collective action. Study 2 demonstrated a cross-level interaction effect where neighborhood racial homogeneity at Level-2 moderated the relationship between bonding social capital and collective action at Level-1. In particular, the relationship between bonding social capital and collective action was strengthened for residents living in more racially homogeneous neighborhoods. Of interest, there was an unexpected main effect of neighborhood homogeneity in Study 2 wherein residents living in more *heterogeneous* neighborhoods reported greater levels of collective action.

### Research Implications

The results of these investigations advance community psychological research and theory. Particularly, these studies 1) develop a better understanding of the processes involved in promoting collective action using quantitative analyses across a broad diversity of U.S. neighborhoods 2) among primarily low-income residents 3) utilizing a multilevel approach.

First, previous research has investigated direct predictors of collective action, but often does so from a qualitative case study perspective without the use of mediated models. Wood and Warren for example, take a qualitative case study approach to understanding how residents engage in and the factors that are directly related to collective action. In one study they found that faith-based community organizing networks enhanced their ability to engage community members collectively when they were able to enhance elements of bonding social capital (Wood & Warren, 2002). In addition, Speer and colleagues have conducted similar research. In their case-study in Camden, New Jersey, Speer and his colleagues describe how a power-based community organization strives to enhance factors of social capital and empowerment with the

purpose of engaging organization members in collective action (Speer et al., 2003). Addition, although some studies take a quantitative approach, they often sample within one community and do not examine the processes of promoting collective action across a broad spectrum of urban neighborhoods. Instead these studies tend to focus on sampling residents within neighborhoods in which comprehensive community initiatives (CCI) have taken place. Chaskin (2001) for example, developed his model of community capacity by utilizing case-studies from a CCI taking place within one community. The results of these qualitative case-studies conform to the findings of this dissertation. However, Study 1 and Study 2 presented here take an alternative approach to investigating the processes of collective action, namely a cross-sectional quantitative approach across multiple communities in which CCIs have been implemented. While a qualitative case study approach allows for an in-depth understanding of a particular phenomenon within a specified context, the quantitative approach adopted for this dissertation allows for examination of general processes involved across a diversity of neighborhoods. Although generalizability as an ideal is not sought for this project, Study 1 and 2 provide a more general understanding of the processes involved in promoting collective action within primarily low-income urban neighborhoods across the U.S., which could not be accomplished utilizing more phenomenological approaches. Indeed, no study to date has utilized a large multi-site dataset to investigate the relationships between collective action, civic engagement, and bonding social capital.

Second, the research undertaken here seeks to understand predictors of collective action among low-income residents in the U.S. That is, the sample utilized for Study 1 and 2 is intended to represent residents residing in U.S. urban neighborhoods that may or may not be involved in

collective action efforts. Previous research on the topic of collective action tends to study individuals who are currently active in these efforts. For example, the work conducted by Wood, Warren, and colleagues (Warren, 1998, 2001, 2005, 2007, 2009; Warren, Hong, Rubin, & Uy, 2009; Warren & Wood, 2001; Wood, 1997, 2007; Wood & Warren, 2002) investigates both the collective action building processes as well as outcomes among participants of community organizing affiliates who are conducting collective action efforts. The individuals examined in these studies are currently active in collective action efforts. However, Study 1 and 2 presented in this dissertation represent residents who may or may not be active in such efforts.

Third, adopting a multilevel approach in Study 2 provides a more in-depth look into the neighborhood level factors that may influence collective action. While some studies have examined the contextual factors that influence participation in collective action within community organizing affiliate organizations (e.g. Christens & Speer, 2011), the utilization of a neighborhood level indicator advances this research by investigating the influence of contextual factors within the neighborhood setting. Additionally, this approach is appropriate for advancement of community psychological theory. As is well understood among community psychologists – context matters (e.g. Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Meaning, the neighborhoods in which individuals reside influence their perceptions about collective action in some significant way. Taking a multilevel approach to investigating the factors that are related to collective action allow for the simultaneous modeling of individual and contextual influences, such as neighborhood racial homogeneity, on collective action. Indeed, community psychologists have recently called for the use of “methods that capture context” and particularly multi-level

modeling has it has the ability to capture statistical effects at higher levels of analysis that more accurately confirm to our conceptual models (p. 185, Luke, 2005).

### Future Research

Although this dissertation has certain implications for researchers, it does not paint a comprehensive picture of the processes involved in promoting collective action. As such, I recommend future research that will assist in enhancing our understanding of collective action across contexts. First, although this dissertation takes a step forward in distinguishing between the constructs of civic engagement and collective action, research on these two constructs should be further explicated. Currently, the items used to measure civic engagement and collective action is often blurred. Foster-Fishman Foster-Fishman, Cantillon, Pierce, and Van Egeren (2007) for example, utilize items to measure collective action that could be considered as civic engagement (e.g. “Attended a neighborhood watch of block watch meeting”, p. 99). In addition, Kelly and Kelly (1994) examine individual participation in trade unions as an indicator of collective action and Vigdor (2004) utilizes household responses to the 2000 U.S. census as an indicator of collective action. Although some of these examples may be considered more collective action “like”, they still do not clearly distinguish between civic engagement, collective action, and/or external variables. As such, future research may involve measurement studies with the goal of distinguishing between civic engagement and collective action and their related factors.

Second, although this research found relatively strong effects for both Study 1 and 2, future research should be conducted to identify whether the processes involved in promoting collective action within urban neighborhoods maintains consistency across contexts. Examining



the current models within suburban and rural neighborhoods or community action organizations may provide further insights into the generalizability of these processes.

Third, future research may want to manipulate the current models by integrating a longitudinal design and/or adding additional exogenous variables (e.g. bridging social capital) to understand both the causal mechanisms of collective action as well as the influence of other related variables in promoting collective action. This is needed because there may be further explanatory factors that are related to collective action such as bridging social capital as it has also been found to be related to civic engagement and forms of collective action (Kapucu, 2011; Larsen et al., 2004).

Fourth, although this research moves the literature forward in understanding how collective action is promoted within U.S. urban neighborhoods, the research conducted within this dissertation utilized perceptual measures. Perception may not be reality. Although this is the case, people still tend to act on their perceptions (i.e. the placebo effect). The research presented here provides insights into the relationships between collective action, bonding social capital, and civic engagement and how urban residents see themselves and their neighborhoods. However, to strengthen these findings future research should utilize more objective measures of collective action and other related constructs. For example, social network theorists and analysts have made significant strides in developing and utilizing social network measures of bonding and bridging social capital (e.g. Burt, 2000, 2001, 2005) and others have examined newspaper protest events as a measure of collective action (McAdam, Sampson, Weffer, & MacIndoe, 2005; Sampson et al., 2005). Utilization of more objective measures of collective action and

other related constructs will move the literature forward by contrasting these with perceptual measures and processes.

### Implications for Intervention

Because the goal for many CCIs and other community change initiatives involves engaging citizens in collective action, this dissertation project has certain implications for community builders. As the results of Study 1 indicate, those who are civically engaged are more likely to report greater levels of collective action within their neighborhoods. It is theorized that because citizens are engaged civically, their participation provides opportunities to build relationships with other like-minded individuals to engage collectively. As such, community builders and organizers should concentrate on the promotion of opportunities for citizens to engage civically, which could lead to participation in collective action activities.

In addition to enhancing the opportunities for residents to become engaged in collective action, community builders should also promote relationship building among residents, especially within homogeneous neighborhoods. As found in Study 1, residents were more likely to perceive greater levels of collective action within their neighborhoods when they also reported stronger relationships of trust (i.e. bonding social capital). Additionally, Study 2 found that this relationship was enhanced for residents within racially homogeneous neighborhoods. As such, community builders should focus on promoting relationships of trust and norms of reciprocity (i.e. bonding social capital) among residents as a mechanism of building collective action, particularly within racially homogeneous neighborhoods.

Finally, community builders ought to attend to issues of racial homogeneity. As found in Study 2, racial homogeneity moderated the relationship between bonding social capital and

collective action where residents in more homogeneous neighborhoods reported a stronger relationship between bonding social capital and collective action. In addition, a direct relationship was found wherein residents in more *heterogeneous* neighborhoods reported greater levels of collective action, after controlling for demographic variables and bonding social capital. For example, in homogeneous neighborhoods, community builders may want to promote relationship building, or bonding social capital, among residents. However, within heterogeneous neighborhoods, community builders may want to create various opportunities to engage citizens civically. Simply put, community organizers and builders may need to vary the strategies they use depending on the demographic composition of the neighborhoods in which they work. Various strategies may be more effective in different neighborhood types for promoting collective action.

### Summary

The purpose of this dissertation project is to answer one fundamental question about collective action: what are some of the individual and neighborhood level factors that contribute to collective action? As such, this dissertation consists of two studies: Study 1 built a path model to examine the role of bonding social capital in mediating the relationship between civic engagement and collective action. Study 2 utilized multilevel modeling to examine whether neighborhood racial homogeneity moderated the relationship between bonding social capital and collective action. Overall, Study 1 found that bonding social capital partially mediated the relationship between civic engagement and collective action and Study 2 found that residents in racially homogeneous neighborhoods reported a stronger relationship between bonding social capital and collective action.

These studies have implications for research, theory, and practice. Taken together, these studies suggest that relationships of trust and norms of reciprocity (i.e. bonding social capital) are important for collective action. This work also suggests that those who are civically engaged may have greater opportunities to build these relationships and consequently engage in collective action. Additionally, these studies suggest that neighborhood racial composition may influence how collective action is manifested across neighborhoods. As such, it is suggested that community builders should invest their efforts into enhancing bonding social capital and provide opportunities for civic engagement. These strategies may enhance collective action by providing social relationships of trust and norms of reciprocity (i.e. bonding social capital) that may enhance collective action (Putnam, 1995). In addition, they may enable greater levels of collective action by providing opportunities for residents to engage collectively through civic engagement activities. However, these strategies may be shifted slightly to account for the racial composition of neighborhoods. Within homogeneous neighborhoods for example, community builders may focus on promoting bonding social capital whereas in heterogeneous neighborhoods they may focus on providing opportunities to engage civically. Indeed, this research reveals that collective action may be context specific and that community builders and psychologists alike should attend to these contextual differences.

## APPENDIX

## APPENDIX

Table 9: Items used in Studies 1 and 2

Item Name	Item Label
(SC)	Bonding Social Capital Scale
SC1	I live in a close-knit neighborhood.
SC2	People in my neighborhood are willing to help their neighbors.
SC3	People in my neighborhood can be trusted.
SC4	People in my neighborhood generally don't get along with each other. (Reverse coded)
SC5	People in my neighborhood do not share the same values. (Reverse coded)
(CA)	Collective Action Scale
CA1	If a child is showing disrespect to an adult, or acting out of line, how likely is it that people in your neighborhood would scold that child?
CA2	If a group of neighborhood children were skipping school and hanging out on a street corner, how likely is it that your neighbors would do something about it?
CA3	If some children were spray-painting graffiti on a local building, how likely is it that your neighbors would do something about it?
CA4	If a fight broke out in front of their house, how likely is it that your neighbors would do something about it?
CA5	If the fire station closest to their house was threatened by budget cuts, how likely is it that your neighbors would do something about it?
(CE)	Civic Engagement Scale
CE1	Have you (or any member of your household) gotten together with neighbors to do something about a neighborhood problem or to organize a neighborhood improvement?
CE2	Have you (or any member of your household) spoken with a local political official like your Metro Council Member about a neighborhood problem or improvement?
CE3	Have you (or any member of your household) talked to a local religious leader or minister to help with a neighborhood problem or neighborhood improvement?
CE4	Over the past 12 months, have you volunteered or helped out with activities in your community?
CE5	In the past twelve months, have you served as an officer or served on a committee of any local club or organization or religious organization?
CE6	Do you attend religious services inside your neighborhood or outside your neighborhood?
CE7	Have you ever attended community organization or leadership organization meetings in your neighborhood?

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