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The Impact of Concentrations of African Americans and Latinos/Latinas on Neighborhood Social Cohesion in High Poverty United States Neighborhoods

Cover Page Footnote

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The Impact of Concentrations of African Americans and Latinos/Latinas on Neighborhood Social Cohesion in High Poverty United States Neighborhoods

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United States research concludes concentrations of Latinos/Latinas and African Americans have a negative impact on Neighborhood Social Cohesion (NSC); however, European research finds higher levels of NSC when controlling for measures of concentrated disadvantage. This study utilizes a longitudinal stratified random sample of 7,495 households in 430 Census Blocks within 10 United States cities that participated in the Making Connections Initiative. Results show higher NSC is associated with higher percentages of residents who are Latino/Latina, African American, and homeowners when controlling for measures of concentrated disadvantage. The study findings challenge the stigma associated with concentrations of racial minorities in neighborhoods.

Key words: longitudinal analysis, poverty, neighborhoods, race, social cohesion

Neighborhood Social Cohesion (NSC) is a measure of resident closeness, trust, shared values, a willingness to help one another, and how much they get along with one another (Earls, Brooks-Gunn, Raudenbush, & Sampson, 2007). United States (U.S.) empirical data provide evidence that a concentration of low-income households in high poverty (over 20 percent poverty

rate) and extreme poverty neighborhoods (over 40 percent poverty rates) has negative consequences on NSC. Concentrated disadvantage (such as concentrations of families living below the poverty rate within one neighborhood) commonly results in residents coping with the challenges of higher crime and violence rates that may have an impact on their NSC, health, mental health, educational, and economic outcomes (Abada, Hou, & Ram, 2007; Berube 2006; Browning & Cagney, 2002, 2003; Popkin & Cunningham, 2009; Popkin et al., 2004; Sampson & Graif, 2009; Sampson, Morenoff, & Earls, 1999).

Prior research in high poverty neighborhoods within the U.S. associates concentrations of racial and ethnic identities with segregation and may conflate these identities as a component of concentrated disadvantage. However, studies outside the U.S. indicate that diverse neighborhoods have higher NSC when the negative impact of concentrations of low-income households is accounted for (Cantle, 2005; Demireva, 2015; Laurence & Heath, 2008; Letki, 2008; Sturgis, Brunton-Smith, Read, & Allum, 2010; Sturgis, Brunton-Smith, Kuha, & Jackson, 2014). The studies outside the U.S. often include contact-theory-focused explanations that often note ongoing contact between individuals of different identities within a geographic neighborhood may result in working together on a common goal (Allport, 1954; Cook, 1988). The long-term impact of a large composition of racial groups like African Americans and Latinos/Latinas in high poverty and multiracial/multiethnic U.S. neighborhoods is not well established, particularly in neighborhoods with initiatives seeking to improve NSC and capacities to address neighborhood problems (Hewstone, 2015; Koopmans & Schaeffer, 2014; Schaeffer, 2014).

This research seeks to reframe the existing narrative to focus on the possible positive outcomes associated with having high concentrations of households of color living in close proximity to each other in multicultural neighborhoods. The authors provide frameworks rooted in the theoretical perspectives of racial/ethnic minority groups that explain the development and maintenance of NSC within the context of coping with the challenges of concentrated disadvantage. Ethnically diverse, high poverty neighborhoods, with initiatives seeking to increase neighbor interactions and interventions to address neighborhood problems, may

find that a high composition of African American and Latino/Latina residents over an extended period of time may in fact help maintain or build NSC. This study uses data from the Making Connections Initiative (MCI), which was a long-term multisite project of the Annie E. Casey Foundation (AECF) focused on comprehensive community change and improved outcomes for children and families by engaging multicultural residents within their neighborhoods to identify and address problems (AECF, 2013). The MCI investments built the capacity and collaborative relationships of neighborhood groups, city systems, and private developers. The MCI invested in neighborhood activities, which may have increased contact among across racial/ethnic groups and therefore maintained or increased NSC.

The research question for this study is: do concentrations of African American and Latino/Latina households in U.S. neighborhoods predict NSC over time when controlling for additional measures of concentrated disadvantage and advantage in the context of a large-scale change initiative? The hypothesis is that concentrations of homeowners, African Americans, and Latinos/Latinas are positive predictors of NSC, and measures of concentrated disadvantage will be negative predictors of NSC. Two contributions of this paper include: (a) providing a synthesis of factors of concentrated advantage and disadvantage known to have an impact on NSC, and (b) providing evidence for the theoretical assertion that concentrated African American and Latino/Latina populations in neighborhoods with neighborhood-based initiatives may be a positive contributor to NSC over time because of the collective resistance and trust-building process within and across racial groups (Browning & Cagney, 2003; Manjarrez, 2005).

Research on the Impact of Racial/Ethnic Concentrations on Neighborhood Social Cohesion

The findings of the impact of diversity are inconsistent across various studies and contexts (Van der Meer & Tolsma, 2014). Two studies found that diversity has a negative impact on NSC (Dinesen & Sonderskov, 2015; Laurence, 2011), yet another study found being a racial minority who is a long-term resident of a particular neighborhood results in higher NSC

and increased self-ratings of health (Abada et al., 2007). Possible reasons for long-term benefits to African American and immigrant networks include that they frequently rely on informal social supports for information about housing and employment opportunities (Keller, 2011; Kleit & Galvez, 2011; Krysan, 2008; Varady, Walker, & Wang, 2001).

One qualitative study in England described NSC in diverse communities (Hudson, Phillips, Ray, & Barnes, 2007). Individual resident's experiences of NSC are described as being more racially mixed if they are younger, have lived in the neighborhood longer, or interact with others – in activities such as in work, volunteering, or neighborhood-based schools, stores, recreational activities, and organizations – where they get to know their neighbors of different races (Hewstone, 2015; Hudson et al., 2007; Laurence, 2011; Uslaner, 2011). Residents describe their NSC as occurring in varied contexts such as a neighborhood association, sports team, specific blocks, or among longer-term residents within their community (Hudson et al., 2007). Longer-term Black residents also describe an increase in social interactions in more recent years, while racial acceptance has increased (Hudson et al., 2007).

A meta-analysis of more than 500 quantitative studies found that contact between groups reduces anxiety, increases empathy, and reduces prejudice among groups in general (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008). A similar literature focused on NSC is emerging. Laurence (2011) found that establishing bridging ties across ethnic groups could increase NSC. Therefore, increased contact between groups in a neighborhood context may also increase NSC in communities with concentrations of specific racial groups who build trust over time.

Research in contexts outside the U.S. provides evidence that income moderates the negative association found between race and NSC, and therefore the impact of neighborhood differentiating factors on NSC should be explored more in the U.S. (Bécares, Stafford, Laurence, & Nazroo, 2010; Gijssberts, van der Meer, & Dagevos, 2012). Additionally, the U.S. has a greater percentage of the total population that are racial minorities than the United Kingdom (30% compared to 15%), which may have varying impacts on NSC, trust, and involvement within neighborhoods with varying racial compositions (Demireva, 2015;

Hewstone, 2015; Uslaner, 2011). Evidence suggests that a higher neighborhood composition of one’s own ethnic group increases social trust, yet research in European contexts did not have enough ethnic minority concentrations to determine the effect (Bakker & Dekker, 2012). Therefore the research in this manuscript could determine if a concentration of ethnic minority groups improves NSC in U.S. contexts. Factors known to weaken and strengthen NSC often include concentrated disadvantage and advantage (see Tables 1 and 2).

Table 1: Factors That Weaken Neighborhood Social Cohesion (NSC)

| Factor | Explanation | Citations |
|---|---|--|
| Population density | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher density housing increases anonymity within neighborhoods. | Browning, Feinberg, & Dietz, 2004 |
| Level of education such as less than a high school education | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A high school education has the potential to build pro-social relationships across ethnic groups and problem solving skills that can build the capacity of individuals to positively contribute to their community. | Browning & Cagney, 2003; Rotolo, Wilson, & Hughes, 2010 |
| Concentrated disadvantage including class, gender and race based concentrations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class (percentage of residents living below poverty, receiving public assistance, unemployed, low rates of homeownership), gender (single parents that are often female headed households with children), and ethnic segregation (African American) may decrease trust within distressed neighborhoods that have been systemically disinvested, which results in low to moderate NSC and collective efficacy. • Segregation decreases NSC for younger residents and makes parenting and positive youth development difficult because youth are exposed to danger or have less access to opportunities. • Indices used within existing research often group racial/ethnic groups as highly correlated components of concentrated disadvantage (percent below the poverty line, unemployed, female-headed households, and African American). | Abada, Hou, & Ram, 2007; Browning & Cagney, 2002, 2003; Browning, Feinberg, & Dietz, 2004; Elliott et al., 2006; Hewstone, 2015; Hudson et al., 2007; Kingston, Huitzga, & Elliott, 2009; Manjarrez, 2005; Sampson, Morenoff, & Earls, 1999; Sampson & Wikstrom, 2008; Sampson & Graif, 2009; Silver & Miller, 2004; Strurgis et al., 2013; Sturgis, Brunton-Smith, Kuha, & Jackson, 2014; Uslaner, 2011; Wilson, 1987 |
| Percent foreign born | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First generation immigrants are often focused on language learning and earning an income, and as a result recent immigrants often feel more comfortable in their own social networks and are less likely to participant in neighborhood organizations. For example, Somali households tend to have less NSC with other ethnic groups, which are conceivably related to language barriers, as well as stereotyping, fears of crime, as well as racial tensions and anti-Muslim sentiments. • Historic African American and Latino/Latina residents may critique the amount and types of resources provided to immigrants, while they have experienced generational poverty and/or systemic discrimination within the same neighborhood without access to the same supports in the present. • Existing researchers often group racial/ethnic groups as immigrant concentration (immigrant concentration and percent Latino/Latina). | Browning & Cagney, 2002; Gijsberts, van der Meer, & Dagevos, 2012; Hudson et al., 2007; Van der Meer & Tolsma, 2014; Hudson et al., 2007 |

Table 1. Factors That Weaken Neighborhood Social Cohesion (NSC) (continued)

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| Resident mobility | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High percentages of residential mobility contribute to tensions and a lack of respect or understanding among adults and youth (i.e. low rates of stability and high rates of newness to the neighborhood). • United States households relocate to other less segregated neighborhoods, which is conceivably due to the conflictual dynamics among racial/ethnic groups. | Coulton, Theodos, & Turner, 2012; Uslaner, 2011 |
| Employment rates | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment has a negative relationship with NSC because NSC helps low-income residents “get by” not “get ahead.” • Higher NSC, racial concentrations, immigrant status, and poverty status predict low full-time employment rates. | Brisson, Roll, & East, 2009; Coulton, Theodos, & Turner, 2012 |
| Diversity (the presence of several races/ethnicities within a neighborhood) results in low levels of communication and patterns of conflict, competition, or tolerance between groups | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low levels of communication across racial/ethnic groups, lower levels of social trust, and higher levels of social disorganization may be due to perceived social and physical disorder (appearance of a disorder versus a clean/healthy neighborhood). • Conflict and ethnic competition mechanisms underlying social interactions in diverse neighborhoods may include: (a) low levels of interaction due to language barriers or feeling dissimilar to one another; (b) the presence of negative perceptions or experiences with one another despite living in close proximity; (c) competition for resources among stratified groups that perceive each other as threat due to perceptions of unequal treatment (such as service provider favoritism towards low-income foreigners); (d) a decrease in trust resulting among groups because they perceive inequality in available resources, services, and treatment; and (e) the proportion of one’s own group compared with other groups that experience discrimination. • May be tolerant of each other and focused on reciprocity and helping, rather than establishing a deeper trust and cohesion across racial and immigrant groups that may require assimilation rather than multiculturalism. | Bakker & Dekker, 2012; Browning & Cagney, 2003; Elliott et al., 2006; Gundelach & Traummüller, 2014; Kingston, Huizinga, & Elliott, 2009; Uslaner, 2011; Van der Meer & Tolsma, 2014; Bakker & Dekker, 2012; Dinesen & Sonderskov, 2015; Gijssberts, van der Meer, & Dagevos, 2012; Hewstone, 2015; Koopmans & Schaeffer, 2014; Lundåsen & Wollebaek, 2013; Putnam, 2007; Sturgis et al., 2014; Uslaner, 2011; Van der Meer & Tolsma, 2014 |

A synthesis of existing and emerging theoretical explanations of the impact of racial/ethnic concentrations on NSC in high-to-extreme poverty neighborhoods provided in existing empirical research is provided below.

Table 2. Factors That Strengthen Neighborhood Social Cohesion (NSC)

| Factor | Explanation | Citation |
|---|---|---|
| Concentrated affluence | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education, income, homeownership, and residential stability have positive relationships with social factors like NSC. | Coulton, Theodos, & Turner, 2012; Manjarrez, 2005; Sampson, Morenoff, & Earls, 1999; Sampson & Graif, 2009 |
| Long-term residents | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NSC is higher on specific blocks or in specific resilient networks where long-term residents name social ties as a reason to remain in the neighborhood. | Hudson et al., 2007 |
| Residential contact between racial/ethnic groups | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Racial concentration in a neighborhood may contribute to moderated (neutral or higher trust and NSC) resulting from higher levels of interethnic friends and contact within and between groups, which is particularly prevalent in diverse yet predominantly White neighborhoods in research focused on countries outside the U.S. such as Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and other European contexts. | Cantle, 2005; Demireva, 2015; Gundelach & Freitag, 2014; Gundelach & Traummüller, 2014; Hewstone, 2015; Laurence & Heath, 2008; Letki, 2008; Lundåsen & Wollebaek, 2013; Stolle et al., 2013; Sturgis, Brunton-Smith, Read, & Allum, 2010; Stolle et al., 2013; Van der Meer & Tolsma, 2014 |
| Diverse social networks and coalitions developed within local organizations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historic concentration of African Americans and Latinos/Latinas may develop diverse social networks and coalitions of residents that work together in local organizations. These diverse coalitions can maintain and/or develop NSC as a means of coping with discrimination and solving common problems. They may take pride in, defend, and demand respect for their neighborhood and themselves as residents. Concentrations of African Americans and Latinos/Latinas can be a positive predictor of NSC as they can increase the possibility of more diverse social networks and trust, particularly when a concentration of homeowners is present. • Groups are often mistrustful across difference and need community level interventions to develop and sustain NSC over time by building relationships across age, race, and length of time in the neighborhood. | Hudson, Phillips, & Barnes, 2007; Uslander, 2011; Wilson, 2009 |

Theories Explaining Collective Resistance and Trust Building Within Neighborhoods

Residents of high-to-extreme poverty neighborhoods have various experiences with responding to inequality rooted in the stratification of society (Tilly, 1998; Wilson, 1987). Common theoretical explanations of neighborhood social responses to living in high-to-extreme poverty neighborhoods include structural explanations that are often beyond resident control (such as concentrated disadvantage and neighborhood effect theory) (Galster, 2010; Letki, 2008). Concentrated disadvantage and

neighborhood effect theory take into account the impact of social, environmental, geographic, and institutional processes on outcomes like NSC (Galster, 2010; Letki, 2008). Other theoretical perspectives focus on social interactions within neighborhoods that have an impact on NSC (Earls et al., 2007). The structural and social explanations are important, because the concentration of African Americans and Latinos/Latinas in high-to-extreme poverty neighborhoods often serves to equate their identities with concentrated disadvantage, which may in part blame their racial/ethnic identity for experiencing the challenges of systemic isolation and disinvestment.

The authors of this paper instead assert the view that the presence of African Americans and Latinos/Latinas is a social asset that builds NSC, trust, mutual aid, and solidarity in response to adversity. Three theoretical perspectives explain cultural assets within African American and Latino/Latina populations and across multiracial/multiethnic groups, which provide a rationale for why concentrations of racial groups within multicultural neighborhoods may result in racial concentrations as a positive rather than negative predictor of NSC. The authors' theoretical explanations are rooted in critical race theory explanations that situate experiences of African American and Latino/Latina populations within the context of institutional and cultural racism (Marsiglia & Kulis, 2009; Ortiz & Jani, 2010). The authors' theoretical explanations contrast with structural explanations that ascribe a position or status that may be beyond the control of individuals or groups (Marsiglia & Kulis, 2009).

Concentrated Disadvantage and Neighborhood Effects on Neighborhood Social Cohesion

Table 1 provides evidence of several structural factors common to high-to -extreme poverty neighborhoods that are theorized to have a weakening effect on NSC including: (a) higher population density, number of households, and mobility rates increasing anonymity; (b) less than a high school education, decreasing interaction and problem-solving among groups; and (c) concentrations of disadvantage such as the percent of households below poverty, unemployed, female-headed, ethnically segregated African American households, a high number

of residents below 18 years old, and a higher percent of foreign-born residents that may be more focused on meeting basic needs and less engaged with neighborhood organizations.

Neighborhood effect theorists assert that a concentration of African American or foreign-born residents in high-to-extreme poverty neighborhoods is the result of structural inequalities, and contributes to local crime and disorder, as well as the systemic neighborhood disinvestment and neglect of neighborhood-serving institutions. Concentrated disadvantage and neighborhood effect theorists often group different identities like race (such as the percent of African American or Latino/Latina households) and gender (such as the percent of female-headed households), which may in fact be either more class-based or may conflate many complicated structural inequalities rooted in social interactions and structures rather than innate in a race, ethnicity, or gender (Letki, 2008).

The Impacts of Social Interactions on Neighborhood Social Cohesion

The remaining theoretical explanations focus on social explanations of NSC rooted in interactions within and across race/ethnic groups. Theorists and researchers describing social interactions in high-to-extreme poverty U.S. neighborhoods typically described building trust and collective efficacy in either a racially neutral or stigmatizing manner (Browning & Cagney, 2003; Manjarrez, 2005). However, emerging neighborhood researchers and theorists assert that high-to-extreme poverty neighborhoods are multicultural rather than segregated (Van der Meer & Tolsma, 2014; Vervoort, Flap, & Davevos, 2010; Walker, 2011). The race and ethnicity conscious theories and research are emerging in the U.S. and European research, and therefore require further description.

Social interactions that may develop NSC via neighborhood interventions include: (a) identity specific interactions such as African American-informed standpoint theory (Collins, 2000; Harding, 1993) and Indigenous Latino/Latina-informed decolonizing theory (Tuck & Yang, 2012; Walker, Littman, Riphenburg-Reese, & Ince, 2016); (b) homogeneity theory focused on racial/ethnic group preferences to interact with people most like

them (Chaskin & Joseph, 2010; Gijsberts et al., 2012); and (c) developing relationships between identities explained via contact theory (Heath & Demireva, 2014; Laurence, 2011).

Collectivist Cultural Responses to Oppression. Standpoint and decolonizing theorists describe African Americans and Indigenous populations, including Mexican Americans as a sub-population of Latinos/Latinas, as generationally resisting oppression in a manner that has resulted in maintaining more collective cultures in an individualistic dominant U.S. culture (Collins, 2000; Harding, 1993; Tuck & Yang, 2012). Generations of collective resistance in the context of legal restrictions on rights may develop communal trust/solidarity, wisdom, strengths, and power over time (Collins, 2000; Harding, 1993; Tuck & Yang, 2012; Van der Meer & Tolsma, 2014). For example, two previous NSC-focused studies stated that if a group feels segregated or isolated, they build ties and cohesion both as a natural response to living among one another, maintaining their culture, and as a means to establish power (Uslaner, 2011; Walker et al., 2016). Long-term Mexican American neighborhood residents are associated with higher NSC, which may be the result of building and maintaining a generational and collective culture that emphasizes the importance of family, geographically-based companionship, and engagement in schools, faith-based organizations, and cultural traditions (Almeida, Kawachi, Molnar, & Subramanian, 2009; Bascal, 1994; Landale, Oropesa, & Bradatan, 2006; Otero, 2010; Ready, Knight, & Chun, 2006; Walker et al., 2016).

Homogeneity Theory and the Impact on Neighborhood Social Cohesion. Interventions to address concentrated disadvantage and make neighborhoods available for higher income residents, as well as those of other races – particularly those who are White – may recolonize a neighborhood and dilute the racial concentrations of historic groups and therefore have an impact on NSC (Gijsberts et al., 2012). Theorists and researchers describe NSC as higher when people are surrounded by like people, particularly in majority White neighborhoods in the U.S. (Putnam, 2007; Uslaner, 2011). Existing research on mixed-income redevelopments, as conscious efforts to disrupt patterns of race and class-based segregation in low-income neighborhoods, demonstrate that many of the historic public housing residents are relocated away from their neighborhoods (Chaskin & Joseph, 2010). Then,

residents of the historically dominant racial groups in the neighborhood are treated with suspicion by new residents, who are often White (Chaskin & Joseph, 2010, 2014). New residents then establish neighborhood associations that center the experiences and needs of the White and higher income residents (Chaskin & Joseph, 2010, 2014). Homogeneity theorists describe people as having a preference to interact with like people, and therefore they will be less social if they live in a diverse place (Gijsberts et al., 2012).

Contact and Trust Building Across Groups Over Time. The majority of the research conducted outside the U.S. uses contact theory when discussing NSC in diverse neighborhoods that are predominantly White (Heath & Demireva, 2014; Laurence, 2011). NSC is thought to be naturally lower in neighborhoods where residents are surrounded by difference (Putnam, 2007; Van der Meer & Tolsma, 2014). Yet, contact theorists describe diverse neighborhoods as an opportunity for positive contact across racial groups, which can promote positive attitudes between groups, particularly when they interact in frequent and high quality interactions, because trust is built with those with whom one has interactions (Allport, 1954; Dinesen & Sonderkov, 2015; Gijsberts et al., 2012; Hewstone, 2015; Pettigrew 1998; Sturgis et al. 2014; Uslaner 2011). For example, a decrease in prejudice can result from ongoing contact between individuals of different identities that work together on a common goal (Allport, 1954; Cook, 1988). Contact theory is applicable to neighborhoods with high concentrations of ethnic/racial minority groups because segregation, prejudice, and bias exist within all racial/ethnic groups that could feasibly be reduced via collective activities across groups. The MCI is an example of a comprehensive community initiative that invested in neighborhood activities that may have increased contact across racial/ethnic groups and therefore maintained or increased NSC even with a high rate of resident mobility.

Methods

This study builds on previous research and tests the effect of the composition of African American and Latino/Latina residents on NSC, over time, while controlling for measures of concentrated

disadvantage. The study used three waves of secondary quantitative survey data from the AECF's MCI to understand the relationship between NSC and characteristics from U.S. Census Block Groups (CBG) at one point in time. CBG are a collection of nearby neighborhood blocks with 600 to 3,000 people. The MCI cities and neighborhoods were selected from 22 cities that the foundation engaged via local stakeholders for three years (such as local foundations, city departments, organizations and residents) (NORC at the University of Chicago, 2016). The MCI data set includes a stratified random sample of families representing their U.S. CBG in 430 targeted high-to-extreme poverty neighborhoods (Singleton & Straits, 2005). U.S. CBG is the unit of analysis in the study, which was computed with the household-level sample specifically for this study. Some household-level study participants were involved with MCI planning, research, community development, and/or organizing initiatives and others resided in focus neighborhoods but were not involved. Therefore the study sample includes aggregated NSC scores that represent both involved and uninvolved households within U.S. CBGs.

The ten cities that participated in the initiative were Denver, Des Moines, Hartford, Indianapolis, Louisville, Milwaukee, Oakland, Providence, San Antonio and Seattle. The sample contains heterogeneity across cities (see Table 3) including: (a) a range of populations (481,394 to 7,039,362 people in the metropolitan area); (b) 8 of the 9 U.S. Census regions; (c) a wide range of demographics within the CBG such as a low or a high percentage of specific racial groups (6.8 to 38.1 percent African Americans and 1.9 to 58.7 percent Latinos/Latinas), poverty (11.4 to 30.6 percent below the poverty rate), female headed households (10.8 to 25.2 percent), below 18 years old (15.6 to 30.1), and owner occupied housing (24.6 to 64.7 percent). The study sample included mostly racial minorities residing in neighborhoods with a concentration of poverty, which may have an impact on NSC due to their experiences coping with long-term segregation at the intersections of both race and class. The 10 cities were selected because they demonstrated the ability to help the AECF meet the goals of collecting data and improving outcomes for children and families.

Household-level surveys were collected at three different time points. The first survey wave was administered between

Table 3. United States Census 2000 Demographics for Cities

| City | Population (City) | Population (Metropolitan Area) | National Rank | Census Region | White (%) | African American (%) | Latino/Latina (%) | Below Poverty (%) | Female Headed Households (%) | Below 18 Years Old (%) | Owner Occupied (%) |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------|---------------|---------------|-----------|----------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| Denver | 554,636 | 2,581,506 | 18 | M | 65.3 | 11.1 | 31.7 | 14.3 | 10.8 | 22.0 | 52.5 |
| Des Moines | 198,682 | 481,394 | 85 | WNC | 82.3 | 8.1 | 6.6 | 11.4 | 12.6 | 29.5 | 64.7 |
| Hartford | 121,578 | 1,183,110 | 47 | NE | 27.7 | 38.1 | 40.5 | 30.6 | 12.4 | 30.1 | 24.6 |
| Indianapolis | 781,870 | 1,607,486 | 33 | MW | 69.1 | 25.5 | 3.9 | 11.9 | 15.1 | 25.7 | 58.6 |
| Louisville | 256,231 | 1,025,598 | 43 | ESC | 62.9 | 33.0 | 1.9 | 21.6 | 8.6 | 23.7 | 52.6 |
| Milwaukee | 940,164 | 1,689,572 | 35 | MW | 65.6 | 24.6 | 8.8 | 21.3 | 16.3 | 26.4 | 45.3 |
| Oakland | 399,484 | 7,039,362 | 13 | P | 31.3 | 35.7 | 21.9 | 19.4 | 24.4 | 25.0 | 41.4 |
| Providence | 173,618 | 1,188,613 | 39 | N | 54.5 | 14.5 | 30.0 | 29.1 | 20.5 | 26.1 | 34.6 |
| San Antonio | 1,444,646 | 1,592,383 | 26 | WSC | 67.7 | 6.8 | 58.7 | 17.3 | 16.4 | 28.5 | 58.1 |
| Seattle | 563,374 | 3,554,760 | 14 | P | 81.8 | 8.4 | 5.3 | 11.8 | 25.2 | 15.6 | 46.0 |
| <i>United States Totals</i> | 105,480,101 | -- | -- | -- | 75.0 | 12.3 | 12.5 | 12.4 | 12.2 | 26.0 | 66.2 |

Note. The cities sampled include: (a) a range of populations, (b) 8 of the 9 U.S. Census regions including: East South Central (ESC), Midwest (MW), Mountain (M), New England (NE), Northeast (N), Pacific (P), West North Central (WNC), and West South Central (WSC), and (c) a wide range of the percent of racial/ethnic populations, poverty, female headed households, below 18 years old, and owner occupied housing.

2002 and 2004, the second survey wave was administered between 2005 and 2007, and the third survey wave was administered between 2008 and 2011. Local community-based research teams had slightly different timelines in the ten study cities, which was the result of locally-driven data collection teams that had to track study participants who had a high rate of residential mobility. In total, the data set provides survey information for 7,495 households at the first point of data collection.

U.S. CBG, as a proxy for neighborhoods, are places where families live, socialize, interact, raise their children and carry out their daily lives (Dinesen & Sonderskov, 2015). A U.S. CBG is an imperfect proxy for how all residents conceptualize their neighborhood; however, the choice to analyze U.S. CBG-level data provides a practical means to align NSC data with neighborhood level demographic controls collected in all U.S. locations. The researchers of this study aggregated the MCI household-level NSC data to CBGs, with whatever data was available for each CBG, without imputing the missing data.

The MCI sample includes approximately 800 households selected from the target neighborhoods in each of the MCI cities. MCI established the study as a panel study with replacement households as means to decrease the missing data rates given the known high mobility rates. Therefore, if a different individual or family occupied the household address during the second or third survey administration, then the new residing individual or family was invited to complete the survey. If no individual or family from an originating address was available to complete the second or third wave of the study, a new address was randomly chosen to replace the wave 1 address.

Neighborhoods were operationalized as U.S. CBG in 2000. At wave 1 the dataset contained 7,495 households and 418 CBGs; at wave 2 the dataset contained 6,957 households in 417 CBGs. Three cities did not participate in the wave 3 surveys and as a result the dataset contains 4,315 households in 321 CBGs at wave 3. The cities not included in the wave 3 data were not excluded in the current analyses to improve the generalizability of findings. The response rates at each wave of data collection varied between 63% and 87%. In some cases new household addresses sampled at waves 2 and 3 were within CBG boundaries that were previously not sampled. For this reason, the total

number of neighborhoods across the three waves of the survey was 430, which was higher than the total neighborhoods sampled for any single wave of the survey. Therefore the study sample size is 430 U.S. CBG that are an aggregate of over 7,495 household-level surveys (the exact number of households included in replacement households is not reported).

The demographic data for each U.S. CBG included in the study are available in Table 3. The sample of this study includes neighborhoods with an average of 77 percent individuals representing non-White ethnic/racial groups residing in Making Connections Initiative (MCI) focused communities with high rates of mobility (more than half of residents moved in the 3 years between the first and second waves of data collection in 8 out of 10 of the cities) (Coulton, Theodos, & Turner, 2012).

Neighborhood Measures

The study compares aggregate U.S. CBG from the year 2000 with aggregate NSC as captured in the MCI survey at all three waves of data collection (Abascal & Baldassari, 2015). NSC was measured using five items from the Project on Human Development in Chicago Neighborhoods (PHDCN) (Earls et al., 2007). The five NSC items are: (a) I live in a close knit neighborhood; (b) People in my neighborhood are willing to help their neighbors; (c) People in my neighborhood generally do not get along with each other; (d) People in my neighborhood do not share the same values; and (e) People in my neighborhood can be trusted. All items were measured on a five-point Likert scale where one was equal to strongly disagree, two was equal to disagree, three was equal to neither agree nor disagree, four was equal to agree, and five was equal to strongly agree. The two negatively worded items were reverse coded in the construction of the NSC scale. An aggregation of all surveys within a given U.S. CBG represents the NSC score for each U.S. CBG. The mean NSC score for the 418 CBGs at wave one of data collection was 3.24 (sd = .33), which represents a range of 2.25 (between disagree and neutral) to 4.23 (between agree and strongly agree) within the CBGs. The scale has a reliability coefficient alpha of .71.

Table 4. United States Census 2000 Block Group Characteristics: Descriptive Statistics and Correlations with Wave One Neighborhood Social Cohesion (NSC) Scores

| U.S. Census. Block Group Characteristics | Mean (sd) | Correlation with Wave One NSC |
|---|-----------|-------------------------------|
| Percent homeowners | 45 (25) | .39* |
| Percent Latino/Latina | 43 (39) | .30* |
| Percent all non-White | 77 (29) | .10* |
| Percent foreign born | 19 (16) | .01 |
| Percent employed | 48 (12) | -.01 |
| Percent male | 49 (6) | -.04* |
| Total housing units | 372 (194) | -.10* |
| Percent White | 23 (29) | -.10* |
| Percent less than a high school education | 73 (.14) | -.13* |
| Percent living below poverty | 31 (15) | -.20* |
| Percent African American | 24 (31) | -.21* |
| Percent below 18 | 33 (10) | -.24* |
| Percent female headed household | 26 (15) | -.24* |
| Percent moved | 47 (16) | -.30* |

Note. Mean scores are listed as percentages. The Census Block Groups in this study include a wide range in variables including the percent of racial/ethnic populations, poverty, female-headed households, below 18 years old, and owner occupied housing. However, the average percent of the variables are above the national average and therefore the sample is representative of neighborhoods with a high percentage of African American and Latino/Latina residents that reside in neighborhoods of concentrated disadvantage. * $p < .05$.

The study U.S. CBG variables include: racial and ethnic composition (percent Latino/Latina, African American, White) and percent foreign born (Demireva, 2015; Van der Meer & Tolsma, 2014). Measures of concentrated disadvantage and advantage from the U.S. CBG are: density (total housing units), gender composition (percent male), percent of children and youth (below 18 years old), education level (percent less than high school education), poverty rates (percent below poverty rate), resident stability (percent moved), homeownership (percent), female-headed household (percent), and employment (percent employed). The U.S. CBG scores are from one time point in 2000, and therefore changes in neighborhood demographics were not accounted for in this study. Table 4 provides descriptive statistics for all study variables including the mean, standard deviation, and correlations with NSC at baseline (wave one).

The researchers tested the data linearity assumptions of the NSC and CBG demographic data were established prior to data analysis. Correlations between wave one NSC and neighborhood characteristics provide information about the cross-sectional bivariate relationship between study variables

(see Table 4). Correlations reveal a number of significant relationships between neighborhood characteristics and NSC. The following U.S. CBG variables all had a positive relationship with NSC (listed in order of the strongest correlation): percent homeowners, percent of Latino/Latina residents, the percent of non-White residents, and the percent foreign born. Neighborhood U.S. CBG characteristics that have a negative relationship with NSC are (listed in order of the strongest correlation): residents that have moved, resident below the age of 18, female-headed households, African American residents, households living below the poverty line, total housing units, adults with less than a high school education, White residents, male, and employed.

Analysis Plan

Hierarchical linear models (HLM) of NSC for each of the neighborhood characteristics were assessed with Stata software (Snijders & Bosker, 1999). Changes in NSC from 2004 to 2011 were modeled controlling for U.S. CBG variables for the year 2000 as baseline. The data analysis is an iterative HLM-building process that included four models. The first two models establish how much variation exists across the 430 neighborhoods (random intercepts model) and how much variation exists across the 430 neighborhoods over time (random slopes and intercepts model). The first two models are run as an initial exploration to establish the variability of NSC in the dataset, prior to running the analysis with the measures of concentrated race, advantage, and disadvantage.

The third model is the concentrated disadvantage and advantage model is conceptually based, using previous concentrated disadvantage (such as the percent of residents with less than a high school education) and advantage factors (such as homeownership). The concentrated disadvantage and advantage model neighborhood demographics are expected to be negative and statistically significant predictors of NSC because the variables are measures of concentrated disadvantage. The only exceptions are: (a) homeownership, which is a known positive predictor of longer-term relationships and commitments to the neighborhood, and (b) employment, which is hypothesized to have a negative association with NSC because households

have less time and energy and less need to build supportive relationships with neighbors. The third model is intended to test whether concentrations of African American and Latino/Latina residents are indicators of concentrated disadvantage (i.e., negative predictors of NSC where concentrations of African American and Latino/Latina residents predict lower NSC over time).

The fourth model tests whether the racial concentrations and homeowners are positive predictors of NSC, as studies in Europe have found, when statistically significant variables representing concentrated disadvantage are included in the model. Specifically, the fourth model is intended to test whether concentrations of African American and Latino/Latina residents are positive predictors of NSC over time and therefore an asset in multicultural neighborhoods with likely ongoing contact within and across diverse racial/ethnic groups during the 10-year period of this study. In the fourth model, the variables not exceeding a threshold for statistical significance are removed to create a more parsimonious and interpretable model. Models 1 and 2 establish that HLM is an appropriate data analysis plan for this data set. Models 3 and 4 will be compared with model fit statistics such as the Wald Chi Square test to determine the most parsimonious model.

Results

All HLM models indicated significant variation in NSC between neighborhoods ($p < .001$); however, NSC did not change over time at statistically significant levels when the CBG variables were controlled (see Table 5). The mean NSC scores for Model 1 (random intercepts) and Model 2 (random intercepts and slopes) were 3.23. Forty-eight percent of the variance in the random intercepts model is explained by differences between neighborhoods. In the random intercepts and slopes model, forty-five percent of the variance is explained by the differences between neighborhoods, and 4 percent of the variance is explained by variation in growth over time.

The concentrated disadvantage and advantage model (variation across neighborhoods and over time controlling for U.S. CBG variables) had a mean NSC ($m = 3.68$) that was higher than the random intercepts (variation across neighborhoods) ($m =$

Table 5. Growth Curve Models for United States Census Block Groups and Neighborhood Social Cohesion

| Census Block Group Characteristics (% unless noted) | Model 1: Random intercepts | Model 2: Random intercepts and slopes | Model 3: Neighborhood disadvantage and advantage model | Model 4: Final model |
|--|----------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|----------------------|
| Intercept | 3.23*** (.02) | 3.23*** (.02) | 3.68*** (.15) | 3.52*** (.06) |
| Time (Years) | .006* (.003) | .005 (.003) | .004 (.003) | .004 (.003) |
| Latino/Latina | -- | -- | .003*** (.0004) | .003*** (.0004) |
| African American Homeowners | -- | -- | .001* (.0006) | .001** (.0004) |
| Below 18 | -- | -- | .004*** (.0001) | .004*** (.0004) |
| Less than a high school education | -- | -- | -.010*** (.001) | -.007*** (.001) |
| Moved | -- | -- | -.010*** (.001) | -.006*** (.001) |
| Foreign born | -- | -- | .001 (.001) | -- |
| Households below poverty | -- | -- | .001 (.001) | -- |
| Female headed households | -- | -- | .0004 (.001) | -- |
| Employed | -- | -- | -.0003 (.001) | -- |
| Total households | -- | -- | -.002 (.001) | -- |
| Neighborhood variance | 48% | 45% | -.008 (.01) | -- |
| Growth over time variance | -- | 4% | 35% | 35% |
| Wald Chi Sq. | 4.14 | 3.23 | 244.34 | 234.44 |
| N | -- | 430 | 430 | 430 |

Note. * p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001

3.23) and random intercepts and slopes model (variation across neighborhoods and over time) ($m = 3.23$). The concentrated disadvantage and advantage model explained 5 percent of the variation in NSC over time and 35 percent of the variation between neighborhoods when controlling for U.S. CBG characteristics. The percent African American and Latino/Latina had a positive and statistically significant relationship with NSC over time. The percent below 18 years old, less than a high school education and the percent employed had a negative relationship with NSC over time, controlling for the other variables in the model. Six variables were not statistically significantly related to NSC over time and were therefore omitted in the fourth model. The concentrated disadvantage and advantage model and the fourth model have a similar percent of variance explained and percent of variance over time, but the fourth model was selected as the final model because it is a more parsimonious model and has better model fit as indicated by the Wald Chi Square results.

The fourth model had a mean NSC score that was in-between Model 3 (random intercepts and slopes) and Model 4 (concentrated disadvantage and advantage) ($m = 3.52$). Thirty-five percent of the variance in the model is attributable to differences in NSC across neighborhoods and 5 percent of the variance is attributable to changes in NSC over time. The U.S. CBG variables in the fourth model include the percent: Latino/Latina, African American, below 18 years old, less than a high school education, and homeowners. The percent below 18 in the neighborhood and the percent with less than a high school education are both associated with lower NSC scores. A ten-percentage point increase in residents below 18 years of age is associated with a .07 lower average NSC score over time, controlling for all other variables in the model. A ten-percentage point increase in household heads with less than a high school education is associated with a .06 lower average NSC score over time, controlling for all other variables in the model. The other variables in the model have a positive relationship with NSC over time, controlling for the other variables in the model. A ten-percentage point increase in homeowners is associated with a .04 higher average NSC score over time, controlling for all other variables in the model. A ten-percentage point increase in Latino/Latinas is related to a .03 higher average NSC score over

time. A ten-percentage point increase in African American's in the neighborhood is associated with a .01 higher average NSC score over time.

Discussion

The results of this study provide a longitudinal description of the positive impact of concentrations of African American and Latino/Latina on NSC in high-to-extreme poverty neighborhoods in ten multiracial/multiethnic U.S. cities. The study data provide evidence that supports the hypothesis that aligns with European research demonstrating that concentrations of African American and Latino/Latina residents are positive predictors of NSC when controlling for measures of concentrated disadvantage (Cantle, 2005; Demireva, 2015; Laurence & Heath, 2008; Letki, 2008; Sturgis et al., 2010; Sturgis et al., 2014). The study provides evidence that concentrations of African American and Latino/Latina households within high-to-extreme poverty neighborhoods may be inherent strengths that buffer the impact of concentrated disadvantage when communities of color live among one another and work together on initiatives that develop their NSC in multicultural neighborhoods.

The findings of this study are compared with previous research are discussed below within the context of the demographics of the neighborhoods in the study sample. Then study results are integrated with theoretical explanations for why concentration of African American and Latino/Latina residents in high-to-extreme poverty neighborhoods may, in fact, increase trust within and between ethnic groups over time, which may result in higher U.S. CBG NSC scores. The discussion seeks to explain the known strengths and challenges that may result in concentration of African American and Latino/Latina residents increasing NSC in multiracial/multiethnic high-to-extreme poverty neighborhoods.

The two significant concentrated disadvantage variables (the percent below the age of 18 years old and the percent of adults with less than a high school education) and the percent homeowners (a measure of concentrated advantage) align with previous findings and directions of relationships with NSC

(Browning & Cagney, 2003; Elliott et al., 2006; Forrest & Kearns, 2001). In the U.S. Census year 2000, the MCI neighborhoods had a large percentage of residents with less than a high school education (13 percent less than the U.S. population average) and a large percentage of children under the age of 18 years old (9 percent higher than in the U.S. population). These two neighborhood characteristics are the strongest concentrated disadvantage predictors of NSC in this study. Together they account for .13 combined lower NSC scores on average. The high percentage of adults without a high school education and the high percentage of children and youth in these neighborhoods with high-to-extreme poverty rates are known contributors to challenges to parenting and positive youth development, which may lower NSC, particularly for younger residents (Abada et al., 2007; Browning & Cagney, 2003; Hewstone, 2015; Manjarrez, 2005; Rotolo, Wilson, & Hughes, 2010; Sampson & Graif, 2009; Sturgis et al., 2014; Uslander, 2011; Wilson, 1987).

In contrast, the percent homeowners (19 percent below the U.S. population), Latino/Latina (27 percent above the U.S. population), and African American (11 percent above the U.S. population) account for a combined .08 increase in NSC over time. These three variables are stabilizing factors in MCI neighborhoods that help increase NSC, despite high mobility and concentrated disadvantage (Coulton et al., 2012; Manjarrez, 2005; Rotolo et al., 2010; Sampson & Graif, 2009; Sampson et al., 1999). Therefore, concentrations of Latinos/Latinas and African Americans in high poverty neighborhoods are not an indicator of concentrated disadvantage, but instead are positive predictors of NSC over time.

The positive association of the percent Latinos/Latinas and African Americans and NSC match Wilson's (2009) and Uslander's (2011) assertions that historic concentrations of ethnic minorities have the potential to develop diverse social networks and coalitions of residents that build trust and work together in local organizations. Five possible reasons for long-term benefits to maintaining or developing NSC in neighborhoods with a high percentage of African American and Latino/Latina networks are described below.

First, African American and immigrant networks frequently rely on informal social supports and networking for information

about housing and employment opportunities and therefore personally benefit from helping one another, which builds closeness and trust (Keller, 2011; Kleit & Galvez, 2011; Krysan, 2008; Varady et al., 2001). Second, residents of high and extreme poverty neighborhoods often describe individual experiences of NSC as being more racially mixed if they are younger, have lived in the neighborhood longer, or interact with others where they get to know their neighbors of different races (Hewstone, 2015; Hudson et al., 2007; Laurence, 2011; Uslaner, 2011). Third, African American networks describe an increase in social interactions in more recent years, while racial acceptance has increased for longer term Black residents. This may be a result of increased contact between groups that work together on common goals, reduce prejudices, and increase bridging ties and NSC across ethnic groups (Allport, 1954; Cook, 1988; Dinesen & Sonderskov, 2015; Gijssberts et al., 2012; Hewstone, 2015; Hudson et al., 2007; Laurence, 2011; Pettigrew 1998; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008; Sturgis et al., 2014; Uslaner 2011); Fourth, African American and Latino/Latina networks may have developed communal trust/solidarity, wisdom, strengths, and power over time as they generationally resisted oppression in a manner that has resulted in building ties to establish power and maintaining more collective cultures in an individualistic dominant U.S. culture (Collins, 2000; Harding, 1993; Tuck & Yang, 2012; Uslaner, 2011; Van der Meer & Tolsma, 2014). And fifth, NSC is conceivably higher on specific blocks or in specific resilient networks where long-term residents name social ties as a reason to remain in the neighborhood (Hudson et al., 2007).

Therefore, being a long-term U.S. resident of a particular MCI neighborhood with a concentration of African American and Latino/Latina residents may increase trust within and between ethnic groups over time, which may result in higher U.S. CBG NSC scores. The positive association of a concentration of African American and Latino/Latina residents is a finding in contrast to previous studies (Abada et al., 2007; Abascal & Baldassari, 2015; Bakker & Dekker, 2012; Demireva, 2015; Hewstone, 2015; Uslaner, 2011). The possibility of improved outcomes for individual residents was the goal of the MCI, and therefore the positive association between NSC and racial concentrations of residents that the AECF invested in building the capacity

of is important (Hewstone, 2015; Koopmans & Schaeffer, 2014; Schaeffer, 2014).

NSC grew over time, and the growth was explained by neighborhood characteristics. Additionally, this study explained more variance in NSC over time (5%) than previous studies of this nature (1-4%). Therefore results indicate NSC is malleable over time in neighborhoods with high poverty (Sampson & Graif, 2009; Sampson et al., 1999). Additionally, the 47 percent mobility rate and the maintenance of NSC over time is an accomplishment of the MCI, particularly given the racial heterogeneity of neighborhoods.

These findings contrast with many other studies that define heterogeneous racial segregation within neighborhoods as a measure of concentrated disadvantage that results in low levels of communication across racial/ethnic groups, lower levels of trust, and higher levels of social disorganization (Browning & Cagney, 2003; Elliott et al., 2006; Kingston, Huizinga, & Elliott, 2009; Van der Meer & Tolsma, 2014). The NSC in the neighborhoods may have decreased over time given the high mobility; however, the trust established within the CBGs with concentrated African American and/or Latino/Latina populations provides an explanation for maintaining and/or increasing NSC (at a non-significant level when controlling for U.S. CBG variables). Therefore, neighborhoods comprised of historic and ongoing African American and Latino/Latina populations may in fact become assets to high poverty neighborhoods seeking to build NSC (Chaskin & Joseph, 2010). The MCI invested in resident, public, and private participants building trust and a common vision for the future of the families that live within the MCI neighborhoods (AECF, 2013). The community investment likely builds on the existing cultural strengths within the African American and Latino/Latina populations that interact within neighborhood blocks, schools, and other neighborhood institutions over time.

Study Strengths, Limitations, and Future Research

The study has several strengths, including the use of a stratified, random, longitudinal sample of high poverty neighborhood residents in 10 cities (Bécares et al., 2010; Gijssberts

et al., 2012). The study also has several limitations. First, MCI neighborhoods are all high poverty neighborhoods, and therefore results cannot be generalized to higher income neighborhoods. For example, previous studies found more variance between neighborhoods (48-73%) than this study (35%) and also include more income diversity in their sampling (Sampson & Graif, 2009; Sampson et al., 1999). Second, the sample did not include a large percentage of Native American or Asian American populations and therefore repeats a common limitation of studies rendering these identities invisible or non-significant despite their presence (Tuck & Yang, 2012). Third, our analysis did not focus on youth and therefore cannot assess the unique experiences of Latino/Latina and African American youth who may experience increased NSC in diverse neighborhoods and decreased NSC in racially segregated neighborhood (Sturgis et al., 2014). And fourth, some aggregated NSC data included fewer than five cases, and therefore the U.S. CBG with less than five cases may not be as representative, due to either missing data or following residents that moved to U.S. CBG that were outside the initial study parameters.

The study has additional limitations related to measures including: (a) the use of the U.S. CBG measure of employment rather than unemployment as utilized in previous research; (b) not including additional measures of diversity (such as Simpson's Diversity Index) that take into account the number of racial/ethnic groups or segregation (Laurence, 2011; Sturgis et al., 2014; Uslaner, 2011); (c) not including interactions between NSC and neighborhood characteristics; and (d) not including non-Census-related variables like crime or social control (Silver & Miller, 2004). The inclusion of these study measures could have more clearly differentiated the impact of concentrations of specific race/ethnicities with U.S. CBG from the impact of other measures of concentrated disadvantage, the impact of diversity or segregation, and other social factors known to impact NSC. As a result, the nuanced variation within U.S. CBG with concentrations of racial/ethnic groups was not described within this study.

Also, the decision to aggregate NSC to CBG results in a macro-level analysis of repeated cross-sectional data (Van der Meer & Tolsma, 2014). As a result, the study does not control

for NSC ratings by individual demographic variation (such as race/ethnicity, income, education, age, and length of time residing in the neighborhood), individual resident attitudes about other racial/ethnic groups, or individual resident contact across groups (Bakker & Dekker, 2012). Therefore, there may be some bias in study results from contextual explanations rather than the experiences of individuals over time (Lundåsen & Wollebaek, 2013). Future research could include: individual (within person variation), waves (time variation), neighborhoods (within neighborhood variation), and cities (within cities variation) (Abascal & Baldassari, 2015; Lundåsen & Wollebaek, 2013; Van der Meer & Tolsma, 2014). A multilevel modeling process could provide more nuanced experiences of social trust among individuals and within communities (Lundåsen & Wollebaek, 2013). Multilevel modeling could also specify time varying characteristics such as CBG changes in income, education, mobility, and race/ethnicity that may contribute to changes in NSC over time. Combining neighborhood- and individual-level units of analysis could help describe why NSC is higher or lower in low-income neighborhoods with concentrations of African Americans and Latinos/Latinas (Abascal & Baldassari, 2015; Van der Meer & Tolsma, 2014).

Conclusion and Study Implications

The MCI and related longitudinal dataset provided an opportunity to study the impact of racial concentrations in the U.S., on NSC over time, while controlling for other neighborhood demographics. NSC is often thought of as a stable concept in neighborhoods, but NSC changes over time in high poverty neighborhoods. The impact of a large composition of specific racial groups in high poverty neighborhoods was not well established with research prior to this study (Hewstone, 2015; Koopmans & Schaeffer, 2014; Schaeffer, 2014). Racial concentrations are sometimes described as racial segregation and are considered a measure of disadvantage with a negative impact on NSC, particularly in the U.S. (Abada et al., 2007; Hewstone, 2015; Sturgis et al., 2014; Uslaner, 2011; Wilson, 1987). Yet, racial concentrations of Latinos/Latinas and African Americans in MCI neighborhoods within the U.S. were associated with

higher levels of NSC. This finding is supported by previous research from outside the U.S. (Cantle, 2005; Demireva, 2015; Laurence & Heath, 2008; Hewstone, 2015). The U.S.-focused dataset of this research may represent a higher composition of African American and Latino/Latina residents than European samples, and therefore may represent neighbors that are more similar when they build trust within racial/ethnic groups (Abascal & Baldassari, 2015). Generations of collective resistance by Latinos/Latinas and African Americans in MCI neighborhoods may have developed communal trust/solidarity, wisdom, strengths, and power over time, and therefore the stigma associated with concentrations of racial minorities in neighborhoods should be challenged (Collins, 2000; Harding, 1993; Tuck & Yang, 2012).

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