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## Explaining and predicting suggested relationships between human social capital, citizen political trust, and citizen political engagement

James A. Gilmore, Jr.

*Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College*

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EXPLAINING AND PREDICTING SUGGESTED RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN HUMAN  
SOCIAL CAPITAL, CITIZEN POLITICAL TRUST, AND CITIZEN POLITICAL  
ENGAGEMENT

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of  
Louisiana State University and  
Agricultural and Mechanical College  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

in

The School of Human Resource Education and  
Workforce Development

by

James A. Gilmore, Jr.  
B.A., Southern University 1999  
MPA, Louisiana State University, 2001  
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## **ABSTRACT**

The United States of America was built on the foundation of a representative democracy. Citizens engage in various political activities to elect representation to create policies and programs that may benefit individuals, groups of individuals, and special interests. A citizen's type of political engagement and level of political engagement may be influenced by the individual and group resources a citizen possesses, as well as the citizen's level of trust in government to respond to their individual or group needs.

This study contributes to the literature on political engagement by suggesting factors that predict political engagement in the United States. The goal of this study was to explore predictors of political engagement in the United States. Data from the National Politics Survey 2004 was used to analyze and interpret findings related to the nine hypotheses in this study. Survey items were selected from the survey to measure political trust, social capital, and political engagement. Citizen level of trust in the national government was used to measure political trust. Individual and group resource variables such as income, educational level, ethnic mix of friends, ethnic mix of neighborhood, closeness of ideas and interests to people, and maintaining or blending cultures were used to measure social capital. Three dependent variables were used to measure political engagement; voting, talking to others to persuade them to vote for or against a party or candidate, and attending a political rally in support of a particular candidate. Each dependent variable was measured separately against the independent variables in a hierarchical regression analysis.

The results indicated that certain Socioeconomic Status variables, social capital variables, and the political trust variable failed to meaningfully predict citizen political engagement related to voting and attending political meetings or rallies, and had minimal meaningful predictability

to talking to others to persuade citizens to vote for a specific party or candidate. The results also indicated noteworthy biases in the dataset that contributed to the model's inability to meaningfully predict political engagement based on the variables suggested in this study.

## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

Across the United States of America, thousands of local, state, and nationally elected officials and government agencies function to serve the needs of every American citizen, regardless of race, creed, color, or socioeconomic status. Elected officials often impose personal beliefs while creating laws and policies that govern government agencies. As government agencies design and administer programs to serve citizens, often times input from citizens is minimal or nonexistent. In the United States, citizens are born with the freedom to advocate for or against government policies and programs and vote based on their own personal beliefs and attitudes towards government agencies and elected officials without legal repercussions from government agencies or elected officials. These inalienable rights are given to Americans through the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States.

Candidates vying for political offices campaign to persuade eligible and registered voters to support their political platform or belief system. Months prior to an election, political consultants, public policy experts, research think-tanks, lobbyists, and political action groups debate issues through media advertisements and published reports to increase citizen awareness about a candidate's policy preferences on issues. The behaviors in which citizens exercise their own beliefs systems and opinions towards these candidates and issues are defined as political engagement. Political engagement may include activities such as lobbying, voting, contributing to a campaign, volunteering on a campaign, signing a petition, or any other form of individual or organized engagement in politics. Putnam (2000) reveals stagnated growth and even declines in various forms of civic and political engagement during a twenty to thirty year period in history.

“American democracy is at risk. The risk comes not from some external threat but from disturbing internal trends: an erosion of the activities and capacities of citizenship.

Americans have turned away from politics and the public sphere in large numbers, leaving our civic life impoverished. Citizens participate in public affairs less frequently, with less knowledge and enthusiasm, in fewer venues, and less equally than is healthy for a vibrant Democratic polity” (Macedo, Alex-Assensoh, Berry, Brintnall, Campbell, Fraga, Fung, Galston, Karpowitz, Levi, Levinson, Lipsitz, Niemi, Putnam, Rahn, Reeves, Reich, Rodgers, Swanstrom, Walsh, 2005, p.1).

### **Political Engagement**

Various factors motivate citizens to become politically active. Political engagement literature mostly describes the demographic and economic make-up of politically engaged citizens but lacks in explaining the individual and group social factors that influence citizen political engagement. Shah, Mcleod, and Yoon (2001) argue that the social structure of a society influences citizen participation in politics. Socioeconomic status, as defined by education, income, homeownership, etc. is often described in the literature to have an effect on citizen political engagement (Smith, Schlozman, Verba, & Brady, 2009; Timpone, 1998). Education has especially been found to have a positive effect on political engagement among minorities (Farmer, 2006). The higher an individual’s educational level, the more likely they will engage in politics. Shah, Mcleod, & Yoon (2001) reveal that education, income, age, and gender are all factors that influence citizen political engagement. Other factors that influence citizen political engagement, excluding race and socio economic status, may include personal and political self-efficacy, social trust, political trust, and social capital (Sekou, 2008; Mishler & Rose, 2005); Kwak, Shah, Holbert, 2004).

The Roper Social and Political Trends Survey (1973-1994) (See Table 1.1) revealed that all forms of civic engagement listed in the survey were on the decline, as examined by Putnam

(2000). “Dramatic declines in traditional forms of civic participation over the past 30 years as reported by Robert Putnam (Putnam, 1995a, in press) potentially pose a threat to the fabric of American society” (Scheufele & Shah, 2000, p. 108).

**Table 1.1: Trends in political and community participation**

	<b>Relative change 1973-74 to 1993-94</b>
Served as an officer of some club or organization	-42%
Worked for a political party	-42%
Served on a committee for some local organization	-39%
Attended a public meeting on town or school affairs	-35%
Attended a political rally or speech	-34%
Participated in at least one of these twelve activities	-25%
Made a speech	-24%
Wrote a congressman or senator	-23%
Signed a petition	-22%
Was a member of some "better government" group	-19%
Held or ran for political office	-16%
Wrote a letter to the paper	-14%
Wrote an article for a magazine or newspaper	-10%

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“A large body of research maintains that there is a long-term decline in virtually all forms of political activity (Hibbing & Theiss-Morse, 2002; Macedo, S., et al, 2005; Putnam, 2000; Rosenstone & Hansen, 1993; Wattenberg, 2006)” Dalton (2008 p. 89).

### **Political Trust**

“There is no shortage of pundits and political analysts who proclaim that too few of us are voting, we are disconnected from our fellow citizens, we lack social capital and we are losing faith in our government (e.g. Craig, 1996; Dionne, 1991; Hibbing and Theiss-Morse, 2002; Wattenberg, 2002)” (Dalton, 2008, p. 77). A Pew Research Center Study (2010) revealed that a

mere 22% of Americans surveyed indicated that they trust government ‘almost always’ or ‘most of the time.’ Literature demonstrates the value of political trust to sustaining a democratic government. Hetherington (1998) cited Stokes (1962) and Miller (1976b) by defining political trust as an evaluation of how government is operating according to the expectations of citizens. “Trust evaluations may be traced to citizen perceptions that politicians lack integrity (Lipset and Schneider, 1987; Black and Black, 1994), make decisions inefficiently, or are too easily influenced by special interests (Blendon et al., 1997)” (Gershtenson & Plane, 2007 p. 5). Mishler & Rose (2005) argue that the system of government as a whole shapes citizen trust perceptions of government, especially as it relates to the (un)ethical behaviors of the appointed and elected officials in government who are making decisions and engaging in unethical behaviors when making decisions. Hetherington & Golobetti (2002) cited (Citrin, 1974; Miller, 1974) in suggesting a need for further explorations into the consequences of political trust.

“A democratic society is unlikely to emerge without political trust (Dahl, 1971). Trust makes everyday life easier, less complex, and more orderly-increasing democratic stability and lowering citizen angst (Barber, 1983). In addition, trust increases voluntary compliance with laws, without which democratic government would be untenable (Tyler, 1990; Tyler & Degoe 1995; Levi 1997; Scholz & Lubell 1998)” (Gershtensen & Plane, 2007, p. 1).

A review of literature reveals that research as it relates to the more social influences of political engagement is understudied and literature related to the influence political trust has on political engagement most often focuses on periods of social and civil unrest such as the civil rights movement, women’s rights movement, and the level of trust and satisfaction citizens possess after the attacks on September 11, 2001. During the 1950s and 1960s citizen participation in campaign activities was at an all time high, yet participation began to decline

after 1968 “hitting an all time low” in 1996 (Putnam, 2000 p. 38). Levi & Stoker (2000) discuss two theories related to trustworthiness in elected officials and government that are factors which motivate citizens to become politically engaged or disengaged: 1) individuals who trust government engage in politics more often than those who do not trust government, and 2) individuals who support and trust government are active in politics to ensure that the current system of government in place continues. Levi & Stoker (2000) also argue that distrust in an elected official or the government system as a whole may motivate individuals to become engaged or disengaged in politics. For example, citizens that become distrustful of government may become politically engaged to change the current system of government and elect new leadership to manage government. Distrustful citizens may feel as if government is inherently corrupt, inefficient, or works only on behalf of a certain population of people, such as the wealthy or poor, and therefore these citizens find no reason to actively engage in supporting government, electing government officials, or holding government accountable. Citizens who do not trust government may choose not to engage because of their personal belief that government will never change and that they, as individuals, are incapable of influencing government. After a review of literature, there are many researchers that support these theories related to citizen trust and distrust (Abravanel & Busch, 1975; Schneider, 2007; Stolle, Hooghe, and Micheletti, 2005).

### **Social Capital**

Another factor that influences citizen engagement in politics is social capital. There are several aspects to social capital which make it challenging to define and measure. Putnam (2000) describes social capital as the development of trust, networks, understanding of other traditions, and norms of society that result in connections that foster relationships and mutual benefits. Bourdieu (1986) defined social capital in five dimensions: networks, reciprocity, trust, social

norms, personal and collective efficacy.

The literature on social capital (Putnam, 2003; Sekou, 2008) describes antecedents or categories of social capital as ‘individual or group level resources’. Individual level resources might include self efficacy, income, and education. Group level resources might include membership and participation in social, political, and other types of organizations, events, and the connections, trust, traditions, norms, and relationships that develop as a result of participating in these groups. Putnam (2000) cited the results of the Roper Survey and the American Use of Time Survey to present data related to networking trends in social settings among Americans. The results (Putnam, 2000) reveal that the percentage of time Americans spent in social settings dropped from 65 percent to 39 percent between 1965 and 1995.

“Group-level resources are particularly important because they provide the foundation societies need to build social capital (Putnam, 2000)” (Sekou, 2008 p. 6). Participating in the development and execution of a public march, campaign rally, or voter registration drive would be considered a group- level resource that helps build social capital. “Those involved in associational activities are even more likely to become civic participants when they hold trusting attitudes toward others” (Kwak, Shah, Holbert, 2004 p. 643).

The social capital resource-based approach supports theories related to factors that influence citizen political engagement. The resource-based approach to social capital (Sekou, 2008), theorizes that income and education, coupled with a social network, are a catalyst to political engagement. These factors provide citizens with the resources necessary to gain knowledge, build trust, and enhance personal political self-efficacy. Education, as an individual resource, provides citizens with the knowledge necessary to understand how policies are created through various branches of government, and educates citizens on the rights and privileges they

are given to influence public policy and hold government officials accountable. Income, as an individual resource, provides citizens with the resources necessary to financially support organizations and individuals (i.e. political candidates) that align with the political ideologies of a citizen or groups of citizens. “Individual-level resources are thought to increase the likelihood that one will possess the skills, time, knowledge, and attitudes needed to effectively engage in politics (Verba & Nie 1972; Milbrath & Goel, 1977; Rosenstone & Hansen, 2003; Verba, Schlozman, & Brady, 1995). Meanwhile, group-level resources are thought to increase the likelihood that people will be active in politics by, for example, enhancing one’s civic skills – such as, the ability to organize and run a meeting (Verba and Nie 1972; Shingles 1981; Miller 1982; Tate 1994)” (Sekou, 2008, pg 5).

The social capital literature focuses heavily on the positive benefits that social capital brings to individuals and groups of individuals who are connected to social or cultural organizations and affiliations, yet these studies lack an in-depth focus on political organizations and affiliations. Further exploration should be performed to examine the positive and negative effects of social capital as it relates to citizen engagement in politics and citizens’ ability to influence politics.

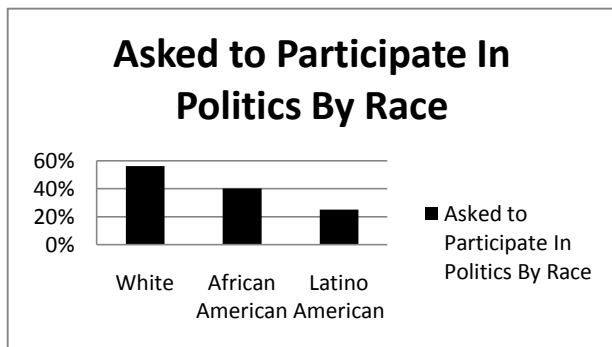
Putnam’s research (2000) demonstrates that citizens are spending less time with family and friends, and even less time seeking networks outside of family and friends. “We generally do not spend enough time in civic groups or informal social settings with people who are different from ourselves and, if there is any causal flow at all, it is from trust to civic engagement rather than the other way around” (Uslaner & Conley, 2003 pg 352). In other words, Uslaner & Conley (2003) believe that citizens do not gain trust by participating in political or civic activities, but rather that trust must come first and then citizens will choose to engage in social

activities. Putnam (2000) proclaims that political disengagement may be a result of decreasing social capital.

### **Minority Political Participation**

“Democracy could not survive unless citizens continued to participate actively, joining with others of similar mind and interest to address matters of common concern, (Tocqueville, 1969)” (Smidt, 1999 p. 177). A disengaged population whose needs are often not heard are often not addressed. The Annie Casey Foundation published a fact sheet entitled Race Matters: Unequal Opportunities for Civic Participation (Annie Casey Foundation, 2006) that cited findings from a study conducted by Verba, Schlozman, & Brady (1995). The fact sheet indicated that ethnic minorities are less likely to be asked to participate in politics (See Table: 1.2) and whites are more likely to be active in non-political organizations (See Table: 1.3).

Table 1.2: Asked to Participate in Politics By Race

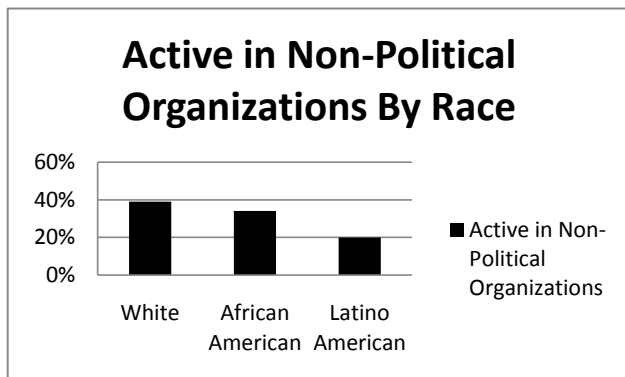


“Moreover, social capital has strong direct and indirect effects on the rejection of undemocratic regimes, and as hypothesized by Putnam (1993, 2000), has strong direct effects on democratic ideals” (Mishler & Rose, 2005 pg. 19).

If minorities were to become engaged in rejecting the poor economic and social outcomes within their community, and participate in the political system demanding better outcomes, these

acts of engagement will not only benefit minorities but sustain the ideals of democracy the nation was founded upon.

Table 1.3: Active in Non Political Organizations By Race



Ethnicity can play an essential role in who people gather with and the types of discussions people have with others. Uslaner & Conley (2003) examined the relationships people have among ethnic groups. The researchers contend that people who feel more connected to their own ethnic traditions and norms are more likely to reject engagement with other ethnic traditions and norms and “are more likely to participate in social and political activities” related to their own ethnic group (Uslaner & Conley, 2003 p. 346). Their research also revealed that people who are less connected to their ethnic groups are more participatory in traditions and norms of other ethnic groups. Sekou (2008) argues that social capital benefits both individuals and society. Therefore, a democratic culture should encourage individuals in society not to isolate themselves and become disconnected from others, especially people of different ethnic backgrounds, but join organizations and create bonds and networks with people from different backgrounds. “Generally speaking, students of politics have not devoted as much attention to group-level resources as determinants of political engagement as they have to individual-level resources” (Sekou, 2008, p. 4).

Hero (2003) argues that a weakness in social capital research is its lack of contributing knowledge about the benefits, as well as detriments of social capital, especially among minorities. Instead, much of the social capital research describes various characteristics of social capital people possess and lack detail about the relationships and the benefits that accrue from the relationships, especially as it relates to race and social capital. The author contends that social-capital researchers underestimate the “importance of race and ethnicity” in their studies (Hero, 2003 p. 120). Research related to social capital focuses “almost entirely on aggregate outcomes and absolute” gains (Hero, 2003, p. 113). Hero’s (2003) assessment of Putnam’s (1990) social capital index revealed that social capital can have a negative effect on minorities where whites are the majority and possess high levels of social capital. Sekou (2008) also agrees with Putnam’s (1990) findings that states with high social capital tend to have poor social, health, and economic outcomes for minorities.

### **Proposed Model**

Related literature on political involvement (Hero, 2003; Kwak, Shah; Leighley & Nagler, 2007; & Holbert, 2004) presents a need for further study of antecedents to political engagement. This study examines social capital characteristics related to ethnicity, neighborhood characteristics, and norms as identified through cultural beliefs (Adler & Kwon, 2002; Coleman, 1987; Coleman, 1988; McDonald, Lin, & Ao, 2009; Xu, Perkins, & Chow, 2010). This study also examines political trust (Coleman, 1988; Dahl, 1971) and ties in social networks (Granovetter, 1973; Lin, 1999) as antecedents or predictors of political engagement. The model in this study has not been used in studies about factors that predict citizen political engagement (See Figure 1.1). Variables such as socioeconomic status, citizen political orientations, and citizen political efficacy are over-studied in literature related to political engagement. This study

adds value to political engagement literature by suggesting other factors such as social capital and political trust that may predict citizen political engagement.

### **Social Capital**

Social capital has many elements that can be beneficial or detrimental to society. Granovetter (1973) explains that social networks and interpersonal ties can lead to social action such as political engagement, assuming the ties are positive and symmetric. Putnam's (2003) research on social capital demonstrates strong direct effects of social capital on involvement in politics.

Social resources theory (Lin, 1999) describes social capital antecedents as personal resources and social resources. Putnam (2003) describes social capital resources in a very similar fashion as individual and group resources. Individual resources such as education, income, gender, marital status, and race are resources that provide individuals with the capacity and increased capability to build relationships and access networks which they might not have accessed otherwise (Coleman, 1988; Lin, 1999; Putnam, 2003). Literature (Xu, Perkins, Chow, 2010; Coleman 1987; Putnam, 2003) describes group resources as ties created through neighboring, religious affiliations, and organizational affiliations. Coleman (1988) describes characteristics of social capital as simplex and multiplex (Coleman, 1988). A multiplex individual is a person connected to a neighbor, coworker, or is a parent whereas a simplex individual is linked through one of these relations (Coleman, 1988). This study focuses on ethnic and cultural social capital characteristics and their positive benefits they bring to society – including a politically engaged citizenry.

### **Social Capital – Individual Resources: Race, Gender, Age, Education, Employment**

McDonald, Lin, and Ao (2009) use characteristics such as the proportion of white male

friends, English as (or not as) a first language, education, age, and employment in measuring social capital. Their findings (McDonald, Lin, & Ao 2009) revealed significant advantages of being a white male when seeking job leads because white males possessed levels of social capital that exposed them to information resources that led to job opportunities. The results (McDonald, Lin, & Ao, 2009) showed deficits in the level of social capital among women and Hispanics and thus their ability to access information to assist in finding job opportunities (McDonald, Lin, & Ao, 2009). The results (McDonald, Lin, & Ao, 2009) also revealed that Hispanics have fewer resources in their network than white males and people for whom English is not the primary language of use received 60 percent fewer job leads than primary English speakers (McDonald, Lin, & Ao, 2009). Higher educated individuals receive more job leads, but age was not a significant predictor of job leads (McDonald, Lin, & Ao, 2009). The research (McDonald, Lin, & Ao, 2009) demonstrates that social networks “are gender and race homophilous and that these gender and racialized networks vary in the extent to which they contain different social resources” (McDonald, Lin, & Ao, 2009).

### **Social Capital – Group Resources: Norms**

Citizen norms are considered to be a social capital group resource and influence effective social capital (Coleman, 1988). Effective norms might include citizens agreeing to file taxes or obey laws that prevent crime. An example used in the NPS (2004) survey that would be considered a norm includes the item that asks respondents whether they believe society should blend or maintain distinct cultures. This type of social capital norm is one that “forgoes self-interests and act in the interests of the collectivity,” (Coleman, 1988 p.104). Coleman (1988) believes that these types of norms result in rewards to society only if there is a cohesive effort of social support. As it relates to this study and the proposed theoretical model, a reward would be

increased political engagement and a sustainable and viable democracy.

The relationships and networks that result from individual and group resources not only help build social capital, but create an environment for citizens to build social trust among each other - which may lead to discussions and the sharing of information that leads to civic and political engagement. If humans create or expand their network with others of similar or different backgrounds, and do not live and function in isolation, social capital and social trust develops. Coleman (1988) indicated that through family, community, and religious affiliation connections, transactions of trust are facilitated that create ties that are necessary for social capital to develop and for certain individual or group actions to occur. These ties facilitate social movements that are rewarding for individuals, groups, and the public as a whole (Coleman, 1988). Granovetter's (1973) examination of strong and weak ties conclude that weak ties are more beneficial to building social capital and individual or group mobilization because people with strong ties tend to stay in cliques, whereas those with weak ties tend to connect with other weak ties. Social trust brings about the sharing of information and ideas, including ideas related to politics and attitudes towards government and the people elected or appointed to operate government. Coleman (1988) argues that information is acquired by social relations that could be used for various purposes.

Through the development of social capital there may also be a likelihood that social capital and political attitudes towards government will predict citizen political engagement – as citizens who share information may share ideals about politics and community and become engaged. Coleman (1988) argues that system-level outcomes occur when individual and group social capital resources are combined and produce results.

### **Political Trust**

Political trust literature (Dahl, 1971) describes or explains political trust as a consequence of an individual's perception or attitude towards government integrity, effectiveness, and responsiveness to individual or group needs. Granovetter (1973) believes that leaders are not responsive to those that in whom they have no trust or with whom they have no direct relationships (Granovetter, 1973). "I would propose that whether a person trusts a given leader depends heavily on whether there exists intermediary personal contacts who can, from their knowledge, assure him that the leader is trustworthy, and who can, if necessary, intercede with the leader or his lieutenants on his behalf," (Granovetter, 1973 p. 1374). Citizen social networks can help build trust or distrust in political leaders which may lead to political engagement or disengagement. Davis, Holland, Leinhardt (1971) describes the relationship between trust and social capital as an influence on choices and individual or group actions – if P chooses O and O chooses X, then P is likely to Choose X. This model (Davis, et. al., 1971) supports the theoretical model proposed in this study that if an individual chooses to become politically engaged, their peers may also choose to become politically engaged because of citizens social or their political trust discussed in their relationship. McClurg (2003) explains that social networks allow for citizens to find out who candidates are and where the candidates stand on issues, thus encouraging the likelihood of citizens to participate in politics.

### **Model Summary**

This model aims to suggest that social capital and political trust may increase the likelihood of an individual's engagement in politics based on the individual and group resources a person possesses and their level of political trust in government.

The proposed theoretical model will be used to test hypotheses that suggest relationships between social capital and political engagement, and political trust and political engagement –

controlling for race and certain types of individual resources that build social capital such as income and education. Community (group) and individual variables, types of ethnic relationships and networks, and citizen norms or attitudes towards the American culture will be examined as social capital variables in this study and are supported by the literature (Lin, 1999; Putnam, 2003; Xu, Perkins, & Chow, 2010).

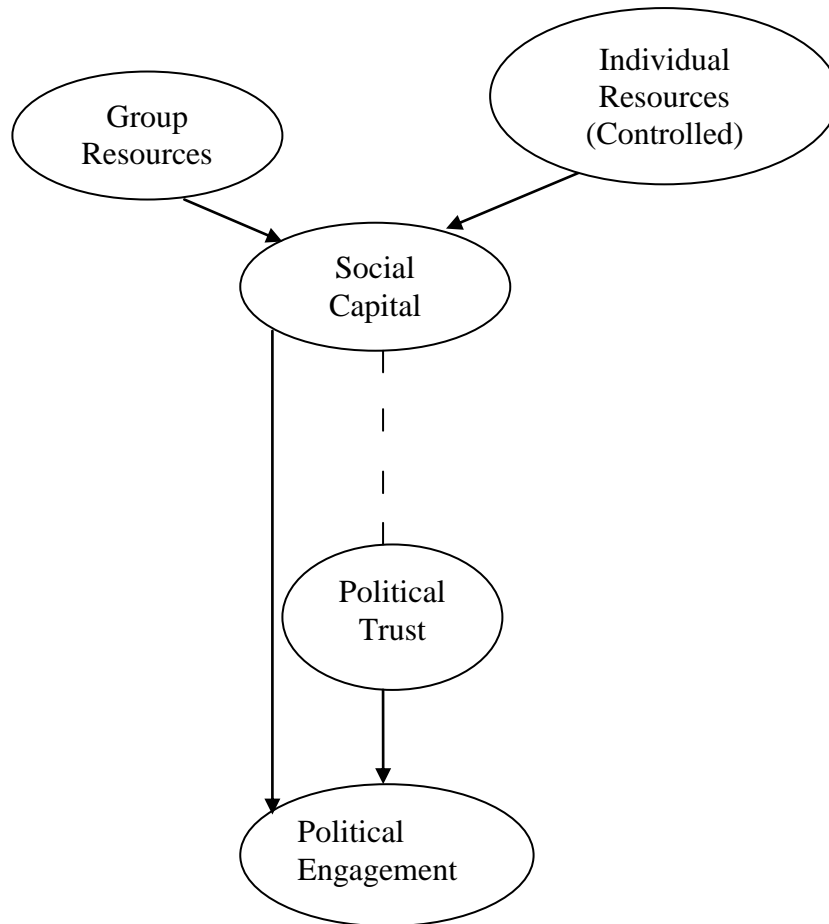


Figure: 1.1 Proposed Theoretical Model

The dotted line between social capital and political trust symbolizes that there is some interaction between both variables. However this study does not test the relationship between social capital and political trust. This study is a first step in suggesting relationships between

certain independent variables and the dependent variable political engagement.

As discussed above, social capital is not a single construct but a variety of different constructs (Coleman, 1988). Chapter three of this study outlines a complete list of questions on the NPS survey that relate to individual and group (community) social capital based on literature found in (Adler & Kwon, 2002; Coleman, 1987; Lin, 1999; Putnam, 2003; McDonald et. al, 2009; Xu et. al, 2010;). This study will focus on ethnic and cultural social capital characteristics and how these networks and resources explain or predict political engagement.

It should be noted that the proposed model in this study is an understudied theory which may contribute significantly to theories of relationships between social capital, political trust, and political engagement, especially as it relates to ethnicity. “Social capital is productive, making possible the achievement of certain ends that in its absence would not be possible,” (Coleman, 1988 p. 98).

## **Purpose**

“Public participation in politics is broadly considered to be a defining element of democratic citizenship (Dahl, 1998; Verba et al., 1995)” (Dalton, 2008, p 78). Research on civic and political engagement needs to further explain, experiment, and predict relationships to civic culture, beliefs, behaviors, and perceptions toward government and elected officials. Kwak, Shah, & Holbert (2004) and Hetherington & Globetti (2002) challenge researchers to further understand the relationships between trust and civic engagement. “Continuing empirical investigation of this interactive relationship of trust with other important variables in public participation should allow us to have a more nuanced understanding of the role it plays in civic engagement” (Kwak, Shah, Holbert, 2004, p. 649).

The primary purpose of this study is to better understand predictors of political

engagement using political trust and social capital as predictor variables, based on data collected in the 2004 National Politics Study. This study adds value to the field of political science, public administration, and human resource development by providing a better understanding of how citizen levels of trust in government and citizen social resources predict citizen engagement in politics. Ultimately, findings and recommendations of this research report will: 1) assist elected officials and government agencies in identifying strategies to increase citizen political engagement in programs and policy making; 2) serve to help increase the level of trust and political engagement, specifically among ethnic minority communities; 3) help hold elected officials and government agencies responsible for listening and understanding the critical policy issues that come about through increased political participation; 4) therefore, creating an opportunity to create public policy that addresses concerns of all citizens, through political engagement.

### **Statement of the Research Problem**

The primary problem this research addresses is explaining whether variables of social capital and political trust can predict political engagement. Though there are many studies that explore citizen trust in government, there have been no studies found that explore the relationship between these constructs.

### **Objectives**

Specific objectives formulated to guide the research include:

- 1) What levels of citizen political engagement are reported, both overall and based on:
  - a. Age
  - b. Race
  - c. Gender

d. Educational Level

2) What levels of citizen political trust are reported, both overall and based on:

a. Age

b. Race

c. Gender

d. Educational Level

3) What levels of social capital are reported among citizens both overall and based on:

a. Age

b. Race

c. Gender

d. Educational Level

## Hypotheses

<b>Hypothesis 1: Control variables (Education, Income and Race) will contribute significantly to the prediction of political engagement.</b>
H1a: Control variables will contribute significantly to the prediction of citizens who talk to people and try to persuade them to vote for or against one of the parties or candidates.
H1b: Control variables will contribute significantly to the prediction of citizens who attend political meetings, rallies, speeches, dinners, or things like that in support of a particular candidate.
H1c: Control variables will contribute significantly to the prediction of citizens who vote.
<b>H2: Social capital group resources characteristic variables will make a significant contribution to the prediction of political engagement over and above control variables.</b>
H2a: Social capital group resources characteristic variables will make a significant contribution over and above control variables to the prediction of citizens who talk to people and try to persuade them why they should vote for or against one of the parties or candidates.

H2b: Social capital group resources characteristic variables will make a significant contribution over and above control variables to the prediction of citizens who go to political meetings, rallies, speeches, dinners, or things like that in support of a particular candidate.

H2c: Social capital group resources characteristic variables will make a significant contribution over and above control variables to the prediction of citizens who vote.

**H3: Political trust will make a significant contribution to the prediction of political engagement over and above control variables and social capital group resources characteristic variables.**

H3a: Political trust will make a significant contribution to the prediction of citizens who talk to people and try to persuade them why they should vote for or against one of the parties or candidates, over and above control variables and social capital group resources characteristic variables.

H3b: Political trust will make a significant contribution to the prediction of citizens who go to political meetings, rallies, speeches, dinners, or things like that in support of a particular candidate, over and beyond control variables and social capital group resources characteristic variables.

H3c: Political trust will make a significant contribution to the prediction of citizens who vote, over and beyond control variables and social capital group resources characteristic variables.

### **Limitations of the Study**

There were some limitations to this research study related to the study's meaningfulness, population generalization, point-in-time of the survey, and contemporary history. Due to the large sample (3,339) in this study, the high statistical power detects even the smallest effects in variance.

This study can only be generalized to the population from which the sample was collected by the National Politics Study 2004. The data reflects a point in time, September 2004 – February 2005. During this period in America, an election was being held for President and other national, state, and local positions. The political climate during this time could have influenced citizen perceptions and feelings towards government and society as a whole, as compared to periods when elections are not being held. This study does not examine the

influences of more contemporary issues occurring at the time of the interpretation of the results, such as the election of the first African American President of the United States, citizen policy preferences related to healthcare reform, economic downturn, immigration reform efforts, the Wall Street bailout, federal response to natural disasters, and other national and international affairs that may influence public trust and citizen political engagement.

This dissertation does not fully examine the impact of significant events such as the War in Iraq, 9/11, and hurricane Katrina, each of which could have several influences on citizen trust in government and political engagement, because they each involved leadership from the federal government in response to citizen concerns and needs.

Literature also supports the theory that distrust influences political engagement or disengagement. This study did not focus on variables related to citizen distrust in government and its suggested predictability to political (dis)engagement. Similarly, this study did not focus on social distrust, and its impact on citizen social capital.

As it relates to content, this research attempted to suggest relationships between political trust, social capital, and civic engagement. This study describes, explains, and suggests predictability in relationships between multiple independent variables and one dependent variable, but does not test non-linear relationships. This study does not measure relationships between social capital and political trust. The purpose of this study is not to examine the differences between social capital and political trust and the ability of those differences to predict political engagement. The hierarchical logistic statistical analysis used, suggests measures of strength and direction but does not measure cause and effect.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

The theoretical background of this literature review focuses on antecedents and consequences of social capital, trust (political and interpersonal), and political engagement. In a review of JSTOR (Journal Archive Service), Education Resources Information Center (ERIC) database, Academic Search Complete and other peer reviewed journal databases, literature was found among research related to the fields of political science, sociology, public administration, and organizational theory.

Most related literature explains political engagement for Americans as an entire community aggregated based on variables such as age, education, and income. A review of literature reveals only a minimal amount of literature that explains how factors such as social capital and political trust are related to political engagement. “A number of scholars (e.g., McLeod et al., 1999; Nie, Junn, & Stehlik-Barry, 1996; Verba, Schlozman, & Brady, 1995) have suggested that the traditional Social Economic Status (SES) model, which hypothesizes a direct link between SES and participation, might be too simplistic” (Scheufele & Shah, 2000 p. 109). Scheufele & Shah (2000) argue that socioeconomic status is only one of many factors that may influence political engagement. Other factors that may influence political engagement include social networks, the media, and other individual resources. This literature review includes theories and research related to engagement, trust, and social capital across various age groups, ethnicities, nationalities, and provides additional literature related to social capital and political trust that serve as a foundation to the rationale, purpose, and proposed theoretical model for this study.

### **Political Engagement**

Political engagement is considered to be an essential characteristic of a democracy

and has many definitions and descriptions. Most research on political engagement describes or defines political engagement as electoral and non-electoral behaviors such as memberships and participation in political organizations, voting, and advocacy for or against political issues or political candidates. Stolle & Howard (2008) cited (Billiet & Cambre, 1996) in stating that when citizens join and participate in organizations, the exposure and experiences of connecting with people of similar or different backgrounds and organizing around certain issues builds citizen political efficacy in their belief that they can engage in politics and influence politics.

### **Measuring Political Engagement**

The General Social Survey (<http://www.norc.uchicago.edu/GSS+Website/>), Social Capital Benchmark Survey (<http://www.cfsv.org/communitysurvey/>), and American National Election Studies (<http://www.electionstudies.org/>) are well-known and tested instruments that measure political engagement and also collect information about citizen social behaviors and knowledge about politics. The instruments include items that measure whether respondents contribute money to campaigns, attend rallies or protests, vote, write letters to Congress, and their levels of social trust and levels of political trust.

### **Political Engagement and Race**

Bilal Sekou (2008) examined the effects bridging and bonding organizations have on black and white racial groups. Bridging and bonding organizations are two types of affiliations often referenced by Robert Putnam (2000) in explaining citizen relationships as they relate to group level resources. Group level resources contribute to building social capital among individuals. Bridging organizations are organizations that are created for the purpose of inviting individuals from diverse racial, economic, and social backgrounds. Bonding organizations are organizations that are more limited to individuals that are of a certain race, class, or profession.

Bonding social capital organizations are “good for undergirding specific reciprocity and mobilizing solidarity” (Putnam, 2000 p. 22). Bridging social capital organizations are good for “linkage to external assets and for information diffusion” (Putnam, 2000, p.22).

Sekou (2008) used a binary regression analysis to examine the level of engagement in voluntary associations of 3,003 survey respondents, focusing on closing the racial gap in political participation. The researcher used an independent sample t-test to analyze citizen participation in bonding and bridging organizations, by race. The study provided important findings that contribute to the literature related to race, social capital and organizational affiliation. Most significantly, the study found there were minimal differences in the rates blacks and whites participated in bonding and bridging organizations. However, those minimal differences are worth noting.

As it relates to electoral political behavior, a study by Sekou, (2008) revealed that more whites voted in 1996 than blacks, but the percentage of whites and blacks that responded that they attended a political meeting was about equal. This created a question as to whether attending a political rally or meeting is a predictor of voting. Whites reported that they were more likely to sign a petition than blacks (Sekou, 2008). As it relates to non-electoral behavior (political behavior that did not involve voting) more blacks in the study claimed to have participated in a public march than whites (Sekou, 2008). The results showed some racial differences in participation in organizations:

- “Whites were substantially less likely to report involvement in an ethnic, nationality, or civil rights organization than were blacks.
- Whites were much more likely to report involvement in a professional, trade, foreign, or business group than blacks.

- Blacks and whites had similar rates of participation in voluntary groups.
- Whites that participated in bonding social capital organizations were more likely to vote than whites active in bridging social capital organizations.
- Whites that participated in bridging social capital organizations were more likely to sign a petition than whites that participate in bonding organizations.
- Black and white bridging social capital organizations were more likely than bonding social capital organizations to attend a political meeting or rally or participate in a public march” (Sekou, 2008 p. 17).

The results (Sekou, 2008) concluded that the gap between black and white political participation is not closing, even when explained by the two types of political or non-political social capital organizations.

### **Political Engagement and Income**

Frederick Solt (2008) studied the effect national economic inequality had upon citizen political engagement. In his article Solt (2008) claims that “..economic inequality powerfully depresses political interest, discussion of politics, and participation in elections among all but the most affluent and this negative effect increases with declining relative income” (Solt, 2008, p. 48).

Solt (2008) conducted this study to test how relative power theory, conflict theory, and resource theory related to politics and income inequality. Relative power theory is based on the principle that economic inequality within a country will have a negative effect on the level of political participation among citizens in that country. Conflict theory is based on the principle that economic inequality will increase people's engagement in politics. Resource theory contends that depending on an individual's income, citizens will be politically engaged or

politically disengaged.

The theories suggest that as national income inequality increases, the relative power of higher income citizens to become politically engaged and set political agendas increases. On the opposite side of the spectrum, the theories suggest that national income inequality depresses the ability of lower-income citizens to advance a political agenda, which may also suggest that low-income citizens in the bottom percentile of income-inequality index are less likely to engage in politics.

The author (Solt, 2008) used cross-national surveys of 22 democratic nations to test the hypothesized theories related to income inequality and political engagement. The variables included in the cross-national surveys were political interest, political discussion, and electoral participation as measured by the World Values Survey (<http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/>), the Eurobarometer ([http://ec.europa.eu/public\\_opinion/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/index_en.htm)), and the European Election Survey (<http://www.ees-homepage.net/>) (Solt, 2008). Political discussion was characterized and measured based on the frequency with which people discussed politics with other people. Electoral participation was characterized and measured by voting in the most recent national election. The independent variables were economic inequality and income, as measured by the Luxembourg Income Study (<http://www.lisproject.org/>), which calculates the income inequality among countries. The author used education and age as control variables because education is the most proven predictor of political engagement (Solt, 2008).

The results (Solt, 2008) proved relative power theory true in that lower income citizens that live in nations with income inequality are more likely to not engage in politics as often as the rich that live in nations with income inequality. However, the results (Solt, 2008) also suggest that income inequality does nothing to stimulate citizen engagement, regardless of income. This

implies that income inequality is a depressor, not a motivator, of political engagement.

### **Political Engagement and Consumerism**

Citizen political engagement can be defined in many ways, including traditional and nontraditional politically related behaviors such as voting, attending a political meeting or rally, and signing e-petitions. Stolle, Hooghe, and Micheletti (2005) explored a not-so traditional approach to political engagement centered on citizen buyer choices – also called political consumerism. Stolle, Hooghe, & Micheletti (2005) cited (Micheletti, Follesdal, Stolle, 2003) in explaining that political consumerism occurs when consumers choose to purchase goods based on “political or ethical considerations”. Examples of political consumerism might include purchasing products produced by companies that use environmentally friendly or organic materials, purchasing energy efficient cars, or purchasing conflict free diamonds. Political consumerism is a type of political engagement that is rarely studied in the literature as a predictor of political engagement because of its broad scope of activities which poses difficulty in measuring it consistently (Stolle, Hooghe, & Micheletti, 2005).

Stolle, Hooghe, & Micheletti (2005) cited (Bennett, 1998; Eliasoph, 1998; Lichterman, 1996) in explaining why youth were choosing not to participate in formal political engagement activities such as mass demonstrations and protests, but were choosing to participate in more non-traditional types of engagement such as using social networking websites to blog or express political views or volunteering in support of a social cause, and advocacy-texting. This study (Stolle, Hooghe, & Micheletti, 2005) examined a pilot survey that used a political consumerism index administered to 1,015 Canadian, Belgian, and Swedish students. The index measured how frequently students used their buying power to exercise their political power. The authors used a multivariate analysis to examine student political consumerism.

The findings (Stolle, Hooghe, Micheletti, 2005) revealed that 1) respondents purchased products based on their ethical and political beliefs; 2) respondents exercised political consumerism in purchasing things like clothing, groceries, and shoes; 3) respondents who purchased goods based on ethical and political beliefs exhibited higher levels of trust for their peers, than for institutions; 4) women acted as political consumers more often than men; and, 5) income influenced a person's ability to purchase products based on their ethical, political, or environmental beliefs. The researchers (Stolle, Hooghe, Micheletti, 2005) emphasized that political consumerism is a type of political engagement that is predicated on citizen income-- the less a consumer's income, the more likely the consumer will not be able to engage in political consumerism. Lower income citizens, who possess minimum personal spending power, have fewer products to choose from when purchasing goods which limits their ability to engage in political consumerism.

Political consumerism is a form of political engagement that garners the attention of social science and economic researchers. Though formal organizing in groups is a frequent activity among group level activists, Stolle, Hooghe, and Micheletti's (2005) research demonstrated that consumers make choices when they purchase products based on political views and that understanding how they determine what products to buy and how often citizens engage in political consumerism could be a significant factor that adds value to understanding political engagement. "Both anecdotal and case study evidence have long suggested that consumer behavior such as the buying or boycotting of products and services for political and apolitical reasons can take on political significance" (Stolle, Hooghe, Micheletti, 2005 p. 245).

### **Political Engagement and Immigrants**

Uslaner and Conley (2003) analyzed data collected by the Los Angeles Times in May of

1997. The survey was conducted via telephone. The sampling frame of the survey included ethnic Chinese that were 18 years of age or older. A total of 773 responses were received. The survey focused on civic and political engagement of the ethnic Chinese community in American organizations and politics. The results offer insight into factors that may influence immigrant engagement in American culture.

The results revealed that Chinese immigrants that view Chinatown as a significant component of their culture are 43 percent less likely to be engaged in American politics, probably because these individuals felt most connected to their Chinese roots. Engaging in American culture was 8.6 percent less likely for ethnic Chinese who felt closest to their Chinese heritage, compared to those who may be engaged in American cultures. American ethnic Chinese were 16 percent more likely to participate in both American and Chinese organizations. Kwak, Shah, & Holbert (2004) cited (Liu et al., 1998; Olsen, 1972) that people who feel most close to their own ethnic traditions and norms are least likely to engage with people of different ethnic traditions and norms.

The study (Uslaner & Conley, 2003) also focused on particularized trusters among ethnic Chinese. Particularized trusters are people who trust others of the same ethnicity or nationality. The study revealed that Chinese particularized trusters believed that ethnic Chinese were not contributing to the sustainability of the ethnic Chinese culture, such as Chinese religion and traditions. The authors (Uslaner & Conley, 2003) also noted in their results that though older ethnic Chinese were more particular about preserving their culture, younger Chinese growing up in America were more likely to engage in American culture. For example, an 18-year-old ethnic Chinese was 9 percent more likely to participate in American politics and be active in their own culture too when compared with a 50-year-old ethnic Chinese (Uslaner and Conley, 2003).

Fifty-nine (59%) percent of ethnic Chinese between the ages of 18 and 24 reported being politically engaged in American political life, compared to around 35 percent of respondents between the ages of 40 and 69 years of age (Uslaner & Conley, 2003).

Predictors of Chinese engagement in American democracy include the existence of Chinatown, education, length of time as a citizen, and religion (Uslaner & Conley, 2003). The results also found that 37.2 percent of ethnic Chinese did not engage in the ethnic Chinese or American culture. Further research to explore how immigrants integrate into the American culture, including political culture, is essential to ensuring that every American citizen appreciates, understands, and participates in the American democratic system of government.

### **Trust and Civic Engagement Outside the United States**

“Being closer to the Canadian border means more social capital” (Putnam, 1995b, p. 10). Exploring political engagement outside of the United States, Smidt (1999) performed a comparative analysis of 3,000 Americans and 3,000 Canadians surveyed in 1996. The sample was statistically analyzed based on gender, age, and country, with some emphasis on non-whites. There were a number of American and Canadian citizen behaviors and attitudes analyzed such as attitudes of social trust and behavior in membership organizations. This study contributed to the literature in a variety of ways, but is most significant because it compares citizen group-level engagement of two democratic neighboring countries. Significant results in the study (Smidt, 1999) revealed that 1) Canadians are more trusting of one another than Americans; 2) Americans are more engaged in social organizations than Canadians; 3) Americans hold lower levels of social capital than Canadians; 4) Whites in America are more trusting and socially engaged than non-whites in America; and, 5) Americans attend church at higher rates than Canadians (Smidt, 1999 p. 180).

Putnam's (1995b) examination of social capital based on geography determined that southern states within the United States possessed lower levels of social capital, as compared to northern states with higher levels of social capital. "The single predictor of the level of social capital in American states is distance to the Canadian border" (Putnam, 1995b pg 10). Putnam (1995b) study compared social capital among states in the U.S., and revealed that lower levels of social capital, lower levels of academic achievement, and worst health outcomes exist in the southern United States.

### **Political Engagement and Youth**

Soule (2001) investigated youth political knowledge, youth political participation, and youth political attitudes. It is important for researchers to examine the political attitudes and political knowledge of youth because these attitudes may carry into adulthood. The study examined youth born between 1965 and 1978 (also called generation X), and those born after 1978 (also called generation Y). Soule (2001) argued that youth become more responsible as they age, and in their mid-thirties begin to accept adult responsibilities, such as voting. Soule (2001) suggested that many young adults born as generation Xers and Yers may not be as engaged as previous generations of youth because Xers and Yers have been exposed to minimal civil strife. Generation X and Y did not experience social and political moments in American history such as the Vietnam War, Watergate, World Wars, and the Civil Rights Movement. Most social and political turbulence experienced by Generation X and Y has involved international crises related to natural disasters, the Desert Storm War, and more recent debates related to healthcare reform, immigration reform, and terrorism.

Soule (2001) cited a survey (Panetta Institute Survey, New York Times, 1-12-2000) which conveyed that youth were volunteering in community activities more so than engaging in

political activities, and the types of community and social activities are less related to political issues and more related to addressing social needs of the community surrounding the youth. Whereas voting was a significant form of political expression to generations before Xers and Yers, voting is not a significant form of engagement as much for Generation X and Y. Soule (2001) cited research (Keeter et al., 2002; Lopez & Kirby, 2003) that indicated youth were registering to vote, voting, and engaging in political activities at rates lower than the adult age population in America. Research suggests (Putnam, 2003) that in the period during and immediately after the Civil Rights movement, the country, and especially youth, were most civically engaged. Reflecting back to 1940 and 1965, citizen engagement was higher than ever before in America (Putnam, 2003). However, Oritsejafor & Guseh (2004) cited (Janger, 1998) in stating that youth American engagement in politics is 'abysmal'.

Soule (2001) reports that young Americans do not vote because “1) most believe that their vote doesn't make a difference, 2) they don't have enough information about the candidates, 3) are too pressed for time, 4) are turned off by negative campaigns 5) they exercise political engagement through protest by not voting 6) they see no difference in the candidates, 7) they changed their address and some fail to register” (Soule, 2001 p. 9). Soule (2001) reports that young American citizens do vote because “1) their opinion matters and can make a difference 2) can't complain unless you vote 3) every vote counts 4) civic responsibility or duty 4) support or opposition to a specific candidate or cause 5) for partisan reasons (National Association of Secretaries of State, 46) “ (Soule, 2001, p. 9).

### **Political Engagement and Young Adults**

In Abravavanel and Busch's (1975) report on college students' levels of political trust and political competence, the researchers examined 661 university students and the findings

were revealing. The study was conducted in 1972 with the objective of comparing college students to the general public on their levels of interpersonal trust, political competence, political activity, and political trust. To measure student political action, the authors asked if students felt they had the ability to create or implement a plan or strategy to influence Congress. The survey also used open-ended responses to provide students the opportunity to explain the type of political activities they would engage in such as protests, writing a congressman, voting, etc. The author clearly distinguished between the two types of engagement, political and civic, which in many studies were used interchangeably and was a weakness of those studies.

The results revealed that:

- “Students who were sensitive to the Vietnam War were more distrustful of government than the general public.
- Students were less likely than the general public to expect success with Congress.
- Seventy-one percent did not believe they could influence Congress, compared to 58 percent of the general public in 1966 and 47 percent in 1968.
- Students were found to be more politically self-confident.
- Students who had distrust for government were somewhat more likely than the general public to report they could or would attempt to influence the legislature” (Abravanel & Busch, 1975 p. 69).

“Findings that demonstrate that young adults trust people less and participate less in their community replicates many previous studies” (Shah et al., 2001, p. 492).

## **Trust**

Based on a review of literature, trust is a difficult concept to define and measure. Trust has been studied among researchers in the fields of sociology, political science, organizational

development, and psychology. “If A and B are actors and X is the action that is in A’s interest, then if A believes B will do X, A trusts B. Trust then is someone’s (A) belief about the likely action (X) of someone else (B)” (Cleary & Stokes, 2006, pg. 11). Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman (1995) summarized three antecedents to trust as integrity, ability, and benevolence.

The social structure and culture of a democracy, also termed “civic culture” plays a significant role in citizen social and political trust. A civic culture can be defined as norms, traditions, and beliefs that encourage free expression of views, participation in electoral and non-electoral types of political engagement, obeying of rules established by government, and awareness and knowledge about current and historical social and political issues. Mishler & Rose (2005) summarized three areas of trust related to culture theories as “1) social and governmental trust brings about support for the systems and branches of government; 2) social and political trust results in greater support for values such as voting, obeying the law, and other characteristics that make democracy a success; and (Norris, 1999) 3) trust stimulates political engagement as cited by (Brehm & Rahn, 1997; Norris, 1999; Putnam, 1993, 2000).” Cultural theories establish a hierarchy of trust that begins with trust among family, then trust among peers or people outside the family, and at the top of the hierarchy is trust in institutions such as government or business (Mishler & Rose, 2005). Institutional theories believe that support for democratic regimes is the result of a person’s perception of the economic and political performance of the institution (Mishler & Rose, 2005).

Citizen views of government and the elected, appointed, or civilian employees working for government agencies are often developed based on the behaviors of these individuals in keeping their word, performing their jobs, and kindness towards constituents. Mishler & Rose (2005) cited (Allmond & Verba, 1963 & Putnam, 1995) in stating that democracies with high

levels of social and political trust operate more effectively.

Brehm and Rahn (1997) analyzed data from the General Social Survey (<http://www.norc.uchicago.edu/GSS+Website/>), collected between 1972 and 1994 and hypothesized that social capital is developed through citizen cognitive abilities and other group and individual resources. The results (Brehm & Rahn, 1997) revealed that civic engagement and interpersonal trust had a positive relationship with one another. Therefore, citizens who engaged in their community had stronger levels of interpersonal trust for their peers. Citizens who are not engaged within their community were least likely to have interpersonal trust for their peer groups.

## **Political Trust**

“A democratic society is unlikely to emerge without political trust (Dahl, 1971). Trust makes everyday life easier, less complex, and more orderly-increasing democratic stability and lowering citizen angst (Barber, 1983)” (Gershtenson & Plane, 2007, p.1).

### **Measuring Political Trust**

Based on a review of related literature, political trust has rarely been studied since the women's' rights and civil rights movements. One of the first well documented use of a trust index related to political trust was created in 1974 by Citrin (1974) and Miller (1974). Over the years the index has evolved into the American National Election Survey (<http://www.electionstudies.org/>) comprised of these four questions: 1) Do you trust the government to do what's right? 2) Is government run by a few big interests? 3) How much tax money do you believe government wastes? 4) Are those running government crooked?

More recently, the American National Election Studies (<http://www.electionstudies.org/>) has piloted the trust index to retrieve more valid and reliable results on voting patterns, public

opinion of government, and political participation. These pilot tests have served researchers and policymakers well by providing results that paint a clearer picture of the attitudes and beliefs citizens possess towards government in specific areas of evaluation such as fiscal responsibility, influence of interests groups, and integrity. A weakness of the National Election Survey is that it defines government in a broad sense, on the national or federal level, and does not ask citizens about their levels of trust towards local and state government (Gershtenson & Plane, 2007). Questions used from the American National Election Survey (<http://www.electionstudies.org/>) for the purposes of measuring trust included:

- 1) How much of the time do you think you can trust the government in Washington to do what is right: just about always, most of the time, or only some of the time?
- 2) Do you think that people in government waste a lot of the money we pay in taxes, waste some of it, or don't waste very much of it?
- 3) Would you say the government is pretty much run by a few big interests groups or individuals looking out for themselves, or that it is a run for the benefit of all the people?
- 4) Do you think that quite a few of the people running the government are crooked, not very many, or do you think hardly any of them are crooked (<http://www.electionstudies.org/>) ?

### **Challenges to Measuring Political Trust**

In the 2006 American National Election Studies (ANES): The Pilot Report (Gershtenson & Plane 2007), the authors evaluated citizens' frequency of trust. The researchers (Gershtenson & Plane, 2007) argued that political trust has no consensus in definition and weaknesses in its current most widely used form of measurement. The researchers (Gershtenson & Plane, 2007) evaluated the National Election Studies (<http://www.electionstudies.org/>) survey to examine its reliability. They argued that a major problem with the standard NES trust questions is that the

items are weak in measuring frequency at which individuals trust government. Gershtenson & Plane (2007) argue that the responses do not offer respondents the opportunity to answer on both sides of the scale. For example though there is a 'just about always' option there is not a 'just about never option' and though there is a 'most of the time' option there is no option for 'little of the time'. The authors (Gershtenson & Plane, 2007) also argue that the responses can encourage citizens to respond more often to the "more desirable outcome for survey designers." (Gershtenson & Plane, 2007 p. 3).

### **Political Distrust**

"The existence of distrustful citizens who are convinced that government serves the interests of few rather than the interests of all is a barrier to the realization of the democratic ideal" (Aberbach & Walker, 1970, p. 1199). An essential component of a representative democracy is trust among its citizens that democracy is working on behalf of the people and not on behalf of the self interest of government, government officials, and special interests groups. "This is even more important in the American society where racial and ethnic minorities are actively searching for new and more dignified role as political equals" (Aberbach & Walker, 1970, p. 1199). Social and political distrust has led to mass demonstrations and riots by people who felt betrayed or treated unfairly by government or organizations outside of government. Farmer (2006) cited (Cook, Hardin, & Levi, 2005) about the creation and use of organizations to serve as the voice of politically disengaged people and populations. These organizations, which could be bridging and bonding organizations, not only serve as a voice for citizens who may lack the political efficacy, skills, and ability to be politically engaged, but the organizations also serve to train and develop citizens in advocacy, promote voter registration, and assist citizens in connecting to networks that can champion their cause. One example would be the National Association for the

Advancement of African Americans. Putnam (2003) notes that even these organizations are on the decline as it relates to membership and that fewer of these organizations are being created now than during more heightened periods of civic turbulence in the United States.

Examining literature on the consequences of political distrust, Hetherington and Globetti (2002) explain how policy preferences may lead to political distrust. The study tests policy consequences of political trust by focusing on policy preferences that are racially motivated. The researchers hypothesized that because African Americans are beneficiaries of certain policy preferences, they should trust government to a greater extent than whites who often are asked to make sacrifices for policy preferences.

The researchers (Hetherington & Globetti, 2002) used National Election Study (<http://www.electionstudies.org/>) data collected between 1990 and 1994 to construct models to explain racial policy preferences. Hetherington & Globetti (2002) cited (Sniderman & Piazza, 1993) to emphasize that though citizens object to policy preferences, this does not mean that citizens object to the individual for which the policy preferences have been created to benefit. “Even if people support progressive public policy goals, they do not support the policies themselves because they do not believe that the government is capable of bringing about the desired outcomes” (Hetherington, 2005 p. 3). In other words, people who actively advocate for or against certain policy preferences, such as tax breaks for the wealthy and welfare for the poor, may not necessarily distrust or dislike the wealthy or poor person benefiting from the policy preferences. Citizens may possess a lack of support for the policy preference or a lack of trust that government can effectively deliver on the policy preference (Hetherington & Globetti, 2002). The researchers (Hetherington & Globetti, 2002) used simultaneous equation modeling to test their hypothesis related to the effects of policy preferences on citizen trust. The preferences

were categorized as race-consciousness, social welfare, and equal treatment policy agendas (Hetherington & Globetti, 2002). The researchers (Hetherington & Globetti, 2002) analyzed white and black respondents and the racial policy agendas separately. Specific items included a) support for affirmative action and the use of racial quotas in college admission (race-conscious agenda), b) support for government aid to blacks and spending to assist blacks (social welfare agenda), and c) support for government ensuring school integration and equal treatment in hiring (equal treatment agenda) (Hetherington & Globetti, 2002).

The independent variables in the study (Globetti and Hetherington, 2002) were political trust, partisanship, and racial resentment. The researchers used the National Election Study four-item trust scale to measure trust in government. To measure partisanship, the researchers used a seven-point scale that ranged between respondents identifying themselves as a strong democrat to a strong republican. Liberal to conservative views were also measured on a self-reported scale of measurement. A Likert-type scale was used to measure racial resentment as it relates to preferential policies for blacks.

The results (Hetherington & Globetti, 2002) of the analysis revealed that among white respondents trust causes racial policy preferences rather than the racial policy preferences causing trust. The results also revealed that political trust has a statistically significant effect on all policy preferences except for equal treatment in hiring. For African Americans, trust had no effect on preferences for affirmative action, aid to blacks, or school integration (Hetherington & Globetti, 2002). The authors argued that because blacks benefit from certain policy preferences, blacks may view government as doing an effective job in creating and implementing these programs and policy preferences. Other findings include:

- Preference for aid to blacks and school integration revealed a statistically

significant effect on political trust;

- Preference for affirmative action was not significant; and
- Affirmative action and aid to blacks on political trust are negatively significant, implying that supporters of these policies and programs are less trustful of the government to implement these policies (Hetherington & Globetti, 2002).

In summary the study reveals that policy preferences have an effect on political trust, in some instances, among both blacks and whites.

### **Political Trust Outside of the United States**

Veenstra (2002) studied eight health districts in Saskatchewan by randomly selecting citizens and measuring their trust in government and trust among each other. A random sample was obtained and the study received a response rate of 40.3 percent, totaling 534 returned questionnaires.

To identify citizen levels of personal trust, surveyors asked participants to agree or disagree with the statement “most people can be trusted” (Veenstra, 2002). To identify a citizen’s level of political trust the surveyors asked respondents to respond to items that measured trust across four levels of government in Saskatchewan: municipal government, Health Board, provincial, and national government. It is rare to find a study related to political trust in government that does not focus entirely on citizen level of trust towards the national government.

Participants were asked to rate all levels of government in problem solving, making decisions, and whether government had the public's best interest at heart (Veenstra, 2002). The survey also measured trust in professionals, or trust in experts. Measuring trust in professionals or experts is also a rare find in studies related to political trust and interpersonal trust. To measure trust in experts, participants in the survey were asked whether experts and professionals

could aid in solving community problems. There is often a debate as to whether government should privatize, is too bureaucratic, and too inefficient to perform certain services for the public. Examining and comparing citizen level of trust in government and professionals adds value to the debate.

The findings of the study revealed that citizens had greater trust in each other than in professionals, and greater trust in professionals over government (Veenstra, 2002). Eighty-nine percent of respondents had some level of trust for their neighbors, as compared to fifty-three percent (53%) of respondents expressing trust for the government (Veenstra, 2002). “Regardless of the popularity of its leaders or how overt they are in soliciting opinions and encouraging participation in the process of policy making, there are always those who see inequalities and injustices in society and harbor suspicions of government motives and intentions” (Aberbach & Walker, 1970 p. 1199).

Based on geographic distribution and demographics, the results revealed that social trust was stronger in rural communities than in larger, more urban communities (Veenstra, 2002). Older respondents were more trusting of others and government (Veenstra, 2002). Those respondents that were widowed, married, and common-law married revealed greater social trust than those respondents that reported being divorced, separated, and single (Veenstra, 2002). Homeowners were more trusting than non-homeowners and respondents with children were more trusting than those without children (Veenstra, 2002). Interestingly, income and education were not related to trust (Veenstra, 2002).

### **Social Capital**

Pasek, Kenski, Romer, & Jamieson (2006) cited Coleman’s (1990) argument that social capital is essential to social trust which is a necessity for a democracy. In order to have social

capital, research by Timpone (1998) reveals that being married, attending parties, or possessing some form of social network is important because these experiences provide opportunities for interpersonal trust to build. However, literature (McClurg, 2003) also reveals that citizens who are part of a social network that does not encourage voting or other political activities are not necessarily a good predictor of social networks' ability to influence voter turnout or other political involvement. "Decreasing social capital may be an important source of political disengagement (Putnam 2000)" (Pasek, Kenski, Romer, Jamieson, 2006, p. 116).

### **Social Networks**

Social networking is an antecedent of social capital. McClurg (2003) presented data that showed the value of social interaction in building social networks and how it leads to citizen political participation. The author analyzed data collected from citizens in South Bend, Indiana. This is one of few studies found that collects in-depth information about social networks and the role they play in political engagement. The study quantifies the relationship of social interaction's effect on political engagement by the number and type of discussions held with discussants in social networks. McClurg (2003) rationalizes that group political participation in networks, not simply a citizen's education, income, and race influences civic and political engagement. His study argued that there are other factors related to a citizen's level of interaction and political engagement in those groups, regardless of race, gender, income, or education, which provides the possibility for political participation.

The research (McClurg, 2003) explains that social networks allow for citizens to find out who candidates are and where the candidates stand on issues, thus encouraging the likelihood of citizens to participate in politics. Questions asked in the study (McClurg, 2003) to assess political participation included whether citizens worked for a candidate in an election, attended a

meeting or rally for a candidate, put up a political sign or bumper sticker, or donated money. An index (McClurg, 2003) of electoral involvement was created by adding together each of these variables, where “1” signified significant participation and “0” signified non-participation. To measure social interaction (McClurg, 2003), each respondent was asked to name up to three people they had held political discussions with. The survey (McClurg, 2003) questions asked about the nature of their discussions and how often they spoke specifically about politics. The respondents were provided four response options, including: “never” “once in a while” “sometimes” or “fairly often.” The hypotheses (McClurg, 2003) tested whether:

- A. “Social interaction only effects participation when there is an exchange of political information (McClurg, 2003 p. 10).
- B. Conversations which carry politically-relevant information make participation more likely regardless of participation in formal social organizations” (McClurg, 2003 p. 11).

The results of the study showed that social interaction only effects participation when there is an exchange of political information. Education, party mobilization, and membership in an organized group were statistically significant predictors of political participation. The results also showed that interaction is only statistically significant when it explicitly contained political substance.

The results of this study suggested that the political content and political substance of social interaction is important to explaining or predicting the effects of social networks on social capital and political engagement. The study concluded that citizens who are relatively better off in terms of individual civic resources are still not very likely to participate unless they engage in politically relevant discussion within their social networks. These findings add value because the results encourage more in-depth research into how politically relevant social networks empower

citizens to become politically engaged.

### **Social Capital and Personality Strength**

Scheufele and Shah (2000) collected data via a mail survey to examine personality strength and social capital. Five-thousand persons received the survey. The final analysis included variables relating to gender, education level, and household income. Four antecedents examined in the study included interest in politics, personality strength, amount of news watched on TV or read in the newspaper, and amount of news watched on television. The analysis also included variables such as social trust, life satisfaction, and civic engagement. Interrelationships among these variables were measured using structural equation modeling. This was a useful and applicable technique for the study on interrelationships because the technique allows for relationships' effects to be measured.

The results (Scheufele & Shah, 2000) demonstrated that the older participants of the study were interested in politics at a greater level than younger survey participants and were more likely to watch the news and read the newspaper to gather information. Older respondents were more satisfied with their life, had higher levels of trust for their peers and were more civically engaged (Scheufele & Shah, 2000). Male respondents were more interested in politics than female respondents and were more likely to have personality strength than females (Scheufele & Shah, 2000). Females read the newspaper and watched television for news programming more than males, but were not as likely as males to engage in political activities (Scheufele & Shah, 2000).

Respondents of the study (Scheufele & Shah, 2000) who identified themselves as possessing personality strength exposed themselves more to political content on television and print news and they were also more trusting and possessed high levels of civic engagement.

Education was linked to political interest and civic engagement, and high income was linked to high levels of interpersonal trust (Scheufele & Shah, 2000). Reading and listening to print and television news held only a small significant indirect effect on civic engagement (Scheufele & Shah, 2000). When a correlation analysis was performed, social trust and civic engagement were related, providing readers of the study (Scheufele & Shah, 2000) the opportunity to understand how citizens receive information related to public policy and how the news correlates to citizen political engagement.

### **Social Capital and Racial Equality**

Hero (2003) is one of the most prolific authors discovered in a review of literature related to race and social capital. Hero (2003) provides the most in-depth analysis into the positive and negatives effects of social capital on ethnic minorities. Hero's (2003) analysis of Putnam's (1990) social capital index complements Putnam's findings. Putnam's study of human social capital and well-being, based on geographic location within the United States, aligns with Hero's arguments on the benefits and detriments of social capital as it relates to the race, well-being, and State of residency within the United States. "Most analyses of social capital do not adequately confront conditions associated with race and as a result they come to conclusions more benign than a fuller assessment warrants" (Hero, 2003 p. 113). Hero (2003) examined the 1990 social capital index created by (Putnam, 1990) to explain the important role social capital plays in race and equality within the United States. Putnam (2000) established a variety of hypotheses on race and social capital examining variables related to voting, poverty ratios, income, minority school graduation rates, incarceration rates, and infant mortality rates.

Significant findings (Hero, 2003) reveal that 1) social capital does not have a positive relationship to black and white poverty ratios 2) social capital is not related to more equal black

and white voter registration ratios 3) social capital has a positive relationship to black and white per capita income ratios 4) states with high levels of social capital do not necessarily have high rates of voter registration for blacks 5) states with high levels of social capital have a positive relationship to lower black poverty rates 6) the income gap between blacks and whites is greater in states with high social capital 7) states with high social capital have high incarceration rates for blacks (Hero, 2003).

The results of Hero's (2003) analysis reveal that in states where there was more diversity, there were higher levels of social capital – except among the majority White race population. This resulted in negative effects on the minority population who possessed less social capital and probably were least likely to be politically engaged. This study could lead one to believe that states that contain social capital at high levels are socially and economically better for blacks – but only in certain circumstances. The research revealed that social capital can arguably hurt African Americans in states where Caucasians have high levels of social capital.

The social and economic conditions of African Americans may be a result of the African American community's lack of responsibility for their own behaviors and issues that impact their community. On the other hand, the social conditions that permeate the African American community, particularly the high rates of poverty, incarceration, and single heads of households, may not be about irresponsibility but about social injustices coupled with failed government programs and policies that hinder the community's ability to improve their social conditions. Regardless of either argument, increased engagement among African Americans, both civically and politically, might be one solution to addressing issues that negatively impact the community as a whole. Due to the lack of detailed literature and the need for further exploration of social capital based on race, additional research is necessary.

## **Literature Review Interpretations**

There are many historical, cultural, and personal factors that explain or predict civic and political engagement including social capital and political trust—the purpose of this study. This review of literature provides readers with an understanding and appreciation of the complexity and commonalities of political trust, social capital, and political engagement, and how they are connected to human development and social advancement. The review of literature explains how social capital functions as source of family support, a source of access and control, and a source of benefiting from networks that are familiar or unfamiliar. Social capital has many consequences. This research explores one suggested consequence, political engagement.

A recurring theme in the review of literature was the concern that the American democracy would have economic and social inequality if citizen trends of engagement, social capital, and trust continue downward, especially in a country as ethnically diverse as America. The literature also explains that when citizens of economic means and greater social capital move to the suburbs and geographically separate themselves from those of lower economic status, this can lead to segregated communities with citizens who live in poverty and have limited individual and group resources to pull themselves out of poverty.

The literature review demonstrates how economic trends, political unrest, and threats to human resource development lead to some form of personal or institutional trust (distrust), creates or weakens social networks (including family ties), and engages or disengages citizens in the political process. Researchers must be clearer in their definitions of social capital and political trust and move beyond race, gender, and socioeconomic status (Brady, Verba, & Schlozman, 1995) in their exploration and explanation about the influences on citizen political behavior. On the opposite side of the spectrum, researchers should also consider broadening

their definition of political engagement and design measures that assess and compare relationships using nontraditional forms of engagement such as e-petitions, boycotting, blogging, and texting.

Government officials who are interested in public life would benefit from engaging citizens in policy making and should be concerned when citizens are not engaged. Disengagement may suggest that citizens lack trust in government, are becoming too isolated, do not care about their fellow citizens, or reveal that democracy is not working efficiently and effectively for all. Government agencies and elected officials must not ignore and be frightened by politically engaged citizens. In fact, government organizations and officials should embrace the beliefs, and differences in beliefs, of citizens. Citizens benefit from engaging with, for or against, government officials and the policies officials create. Citizens also benefit from engaging with one another in formal and informal settings. Hopefully, these processes of engagement build trust.

### **CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY**

The primary objective of this research was to determine whether factors related to political trust and social capital would predict political engagement. This chapter describes the secondary data that was analyzed for this study, as well as the research design, data collection methods, population, sample, survey methodology, and statistical analysis methodology.

#### **Data Used for This Study**

The data used for this study comes from the National Politics Survey (NPS) (Jackson, Hutchings, Brown, & Wong, 2004) led by investigators of the Program for Research on Black Americans and Center for Political Studies (CPS) and included James Jackson (University of Michigan), Vincent Hutchings (University of Michigan), Ronald Brown (Wayne State University), and Cara Wong (University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign). The NPS study serves as a collection of data related to ethnic minority and non-minority political and social attitudes and behaviors, membership in organizations, and citizen connectivity with others. The NPS provides researchers with the opportunity to use the data to conduct further studies that contribute to the fields of political science, sociology, and human resource development.

The Louisiana State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) was not required for this study because secondary data was analyzed. However, the initial researchers received IRB approval (B04-00005938-R1).

#### **Instrument Reliability**

Survey items used in this study are all single item measures, therefore tests of reliability such as Cronbach's Alpha were not applicable.

#### **Instrument Validity**

The NPS was sponsored by the National Science Foundation, the University of Michigan,

and the Carnegie Corporation. The study built upon the work and methodologies used in the following studies (Jackson et. al., 2004):

- National Survey of American Life (NSAL)
- National Latino and Asian American Survey (NLAAS)
- National Black Election Panel Study, 1984 and 1988 (ICPSR 9954)
- National Black Politics Study, 1993 (ICPSR 2018)
- Latino National Political Survey, 1989-1990 (ICPSR 6841)
- National Asian American Political Survey, 2000-2001

### **Data Collection**

The data for this survey was collected via computer-assisted telephone interview (CATI) by an outside firm, DataStat. From September 2004 to February 2005, a total of 3,339 telephone interviews were completed with persons throughout the United States. The sample consisted of 919 non-Hispanic Whites, 756 African Americans, 757 Hispanic Americans, 404 Caribbean Black, and 503 Asian Americans. Fifty-seven percent (57%) of the survey respondents were women and forty-three percent (43%) were men. The age of participants ranged from 18 to 100 years old.

### **Study Sample**

The sample of 3,339 was taken from a stratified random national sample of 9,548 households who responded to the Center for Politics Study at the University of Michigan National Survey of American Life (NSAL) (Jackson et. al., 2004). The remaining households not used in this study were unable to be reached due to nonworking numbers or refusal to answer NPS survey items. An interview was attempted at each household and the researchers were careful to avoid interviewing the actual National Survey of American Life participant due to

concerns about respondent burden. Many NSAL households had moved during the time between the NSAL and NPS study. This resulted in the unanticipated contacting and interviewing of many new (non-NSAL) households that were not in the original NSAL sample.

The researchers used a stratified random sampling technique that intentionally oversamples for minority populations. Stratified sampling divides the population into mutually exclusive categories based on some related characteristic. Then, a sample is drawn randomly from relatively homogeneous sub-groups. The sample can then be generalized to sub-groups if the sample is large enough. Generally, stratification reduces sampling error. The sample from the National Politics Study included Whites, Blacks, Hispanics, Asians, and Caribbeans. The overall response rate was 30.63%. Whites' responded at a rate of 34.14%, African Americans 29.61%, Hispanics 28.54%, Asians 32.45%, and Caribbeans 30.45%.

### **Statistical Methodology**

Logistic regression predicts the probability of an event occurring (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, Tatham, 2006). Logistic regression uses a single dichotomous dependent variable and a single or multiple independent variables, and does not assume normality. This study included three dichotomous dependent variables that were each measured separately against predictor (independent) variables. Logistic regression predicts a dependent variable probability value, constrained to the range between 0 and 1 (Hair et al., 2006). The probability can be restated as odds. The exponential betas were used in this study to calculate probability or odds of suggested prediction of independent variables on the dependent variable. The formula used to calculate probability is,  $p = \exp(b)/(1 + \exp(b))$ .

A minimum of five, and some studies suggest twenty, observations are recommended per independent variable (Hair, et al., 2006 p. 288) The ratio for this study is 30:1; therefore, meeting

the logistic regression guidelines.

In addition, logistic regression allows the researcher to enter independent variables in a hierarchical fashion and assess how much the additional variables increase or improve upon the likelihood of prediction, and can also assess whether the predictors go above and beyond previous predictors or control variables entered into the hierarchy (Petrocelli, 2003). These tests are often conducted using a type of regression called hierarchical logistic regression. The hierarchical logistic regression technique was used to analyze the linear relationships for the variables in this study.

Hierarchical regression allows researchers to specify a fixed order of entry for independent variables into a model in order to control for the effects of covariates or test the effects of certain predictors, independent of the influence of others. Hierarchical regression allows any observed effects to be seen beyond the effects of controlled variables (Cohen, Cohen, West, & Aiken, 2003).

Some variables take precedence in the hierarchy order of entry into the model. Entry of variables into a hierarchical logistic regression can be based on ‘causal priority’ or ‘research’ (Cohen, et al, 2003). The order independent variables are entered in the model influences the results and interpretations. For the purpose of this study, predictor variables were determined based on a review of literature and theory. The variables were entered into SPSS based on presumed causal priority.

Not only was the model tested for predictor significance, but the strengths of the significance were also determined by using the Wald statistic. The Wald statistic is a test for significance between an independent variable and a dependent variable. The negative or positive results of the original coefficients, indicates the direction (positive or negative) of the

relationship (Hair et al., 2006).

### **Variables Used in the Study**

Individual discussions were held with each member of the dissertation research committee related to the use of secondary data from the National Politics Study. Dissertation committee members also reviewed and approved the selected survey questions that were used to measure the variables identified in this study. The final approval was obtained from the entire dissertation committee.

#### **Control Variables: Income, Educational Level, and Race**

Individuals that possess the personal resources to access groups and certain networks have access to resources that potentially positions them in a better place to engage in politics. “Some studies show that individual-level resources such as one’s socioeconomic status (e.g., race, income, education, and occupation) or one’s psychological orientation towards politics (e.g., interest in politics, knowledge of politics, political efficacy, and sense of civic duty) affects the likelihood one will become involved in the political system (Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes, 1960; Verba and Nie, 1972; Conway, 2000)” (Sekou, 2008, p. 4).

Research has focused heavily on predicting political engagement using socioeconomic status as predictor variables. This approach is known as the standard socioeconomic model (Brady, Verba, & Schlozman, 1995; Verba & Nie, 1972).

Using the hierarchical method, control variables were entered first in the analysis, then the independent or predictor variables were entered. For the purpose of this study, control variables included race (White, Black, Hispanic, Asian, and Caribbean), educational level (less than high school, high school, some college, college, and graduate degree) and individual income. These control variables were used as the baseline predictive model for the hierarchical

logistic regression. Education and race were considered nominal scales by the NPS study authors and it was decided to use them as nominal scales in this study by identifying each as a categorical-nominal variable in SPSS. Income was considered a metric scale by the NPS study authors and it was decided to use it as a metric scale in this study by identifying it as such in SPSS.

### **Independent Variable Block 1: Social Capital Characteristic Variables**

As citizens create or identify networks based on traditions and norms, they build upon those networks through trust and reciprocity to create social capital. Social relationships act as a means through which individuals, households, small groups, and communities secure (or are denied) access to resources. Schneider (2007) cited Portes (1998) and Boudieu (1986) in their definition of social capital as the means to accessing networks, traditions, and norms through individual and group resources. These networks provide opportunity for interaction on issues that impact the individual or the individual's community (i.e., economically, socially, politically, and culturally). A review of literature reveals a litany of characteristics of social capital, yet no single defined measure emerged because all persons possess some type of resources through family, friends, or membership in organizations that create social capital.

A review of the NPS 2004 survey was conducted by the researcher and based on the literature and in consultation with committee members several survey items were discovered that were related to social capital. The NPS includes 21 possible survey items that were related to social capital as defined by an individual's networks, traditions, norms, and the individual's access to groups that provide access to resources, networks, traditions, and norms. The following NPS 2004 survey items are considered types of individual or group resources related to social capital:

### **Age & Family**

The following questions are characteristics of social capital as it relates to age (McDonald et. al, 2009; Putnam, 2003) and family networks (Coleman, 1987; Lin, 1999, Granovetter, 1973; Xu, et. al., 2010):

- 1) How many people, 18 years of age or older, currently live in your household?
- 2) Are you currently married, living with a partner, separated, divorced, widowed, or have you never been married?
- 3) Have you or anyone in your family ever served in the U.S. Military, the National Guard, or military reserves?

### **Community/Neighboring**

The following questions are characteristics of social capital as it relates to community or neighboring (Putnam, 2003; Xu, et. al., 2010; Coleman, 1987)

- 1) Where did you live mostly while you were growing up, in the US or outside the U.S.?
- 2) How would you describe the ethnic mix of your current neighborhood where you live?

### **Norms (American/Cultural)**

The following questions are characteristics of social capital as it relates to ethnic, cultural, and American norms (Uslaner, 2001, Coleman, 1988).

- 1) I would approve if someone in my family married a person of a different racial or ethnic background than mine?
- 2) Do you think a (specific race group) faces a lot of discrimination some, a little, or not at all?
- 3) It is not really a big problem if some people have more of a chance in life than others?
- 4) I am very proud to be an American?

- 5) Where would you rate (various race groups) on a scale from “1” to “7” when “1” means that you think almost all the people in that group tend to be lazy and “7” means that you think almost all the people in that group tend to be hardworking?
- 6) Which would you say is more important to you – being an American, being of a specific race, or both equally important to you?
- 7) How close do you feel in your ideas, interests and feelings to white people, African Americans, Hispanics, Asian Americans, and Caribbean's?
- 8) Some people believe that it is better for America if different racial and ethnic groups maintain their distinct cultures. Others believe that it is better if groups change so that they blend into the larger society. Which do you believe?

### **Religious Affiliations**

The following questions are characteristics of social capital as it relates to religious affiliations (Putnam, 2003; Coleman, 1988).

- 1) How religious would you say you are?
- 2) How often do you usually attend religious services?
- 3) How would you describe the ethnic mix of your place of worship?
- 4) Do you hold any positions at your place of worship?
- 5) What is your current religion or religions preference?

### **Race**

The following questions are characteristics of social capital as it relates to race (Uslaner, 2003; McDonald, et. al., 2009; Hero, 2003).

- 1) It is important for people to work together to improve the position of their racial or ethnic group?

2) How would you describe the ethnic mix of your group of friends?

### **English Speaking**

The following questions are characteristics of social capital as it relates to English as a first language, and speaking multiple languages (McDonald, Lin Ao, 2009; McDonald, et. al., 2009).

1) Do you speak a language other than English?

### **Social Capital Items Used in this Study**

Ultimately, the following four survey items were determined by the researcher to be the best measures of social capital for the purposes of this study. The researcher selected the NPS study because of its large sample of ethnic minorities and the researcher's proposed theoretical model that examines the predictability of political engagement based on ethnicity and cultural norms.

1) How would you describe the ethnic mix of your current neighborhood where you live?

The NPS Survey 2004 initially coded the data in the following manner:

1 - Mostly White

2 – Mostly Black

3 – Mostly Hispanic

4 – Mostly Asian

5 – Other Black and White

6 – Other Black and Hispanic

7 – Other White and Hispanic

8 – Other Black, White, and Hispanic

9 – Other Black and Asian

10 – White and Asian

11 – Other Black, White and Asian

12 – Other White, Hispanic, Asian

13 – Other Black, Hispanic, Asian

14 – Other Hispanic and Asian

15 – Other all races

For the purposes of this study, the data was dummy coded to determine the race of the respondent as it relates to the response the respondent provided when asked about their neighborhood mix. If the respondent responded that they live in a neighborhood of people mostly of their same race, then the response was recoded 0 for no ethnic mix in neighborhood. If the respondent responded that the makeup of their neighborhood consisted of people of a different race from than their own, then the response was coded 1 for neighborhood mix.

2) How would you describe the ethnic mix of your group of friends?

Data was initially coded in the NPS survey in the following manner:

1 - Mostly White

2 – Mostly Black

3 – Mostly Hispanic

4 – Mostly Asian

5 – Other Black and White

6 – Other Black and Hispanic

7 – Other White and Hispanic

8 – Other Black, White, and Hispanic

9 – Other Black and Asian

10 – White and Asian

11 – Other Black, White and Asian

12 – Other White, Hispanic, Asian

13 – Other Black, Hispanic, Asian

14 – Other Hispanic and Asian

15 – Other all races

For the purposes of this study, the data was dummy coded to determine the race of the respondent as it relates to the response the respondent provided to ethnic mix of friends. If the respondent responds that they have friends mostly of their same race, then the response was recoded 0 for no ethnic mix of friends. If the respondent responded that the makeup of their friends were people of a different race from their own, then the response was coded for 1 for ethnic mix of friends.

3) How close do you feel in your ideas, interests and feelings to white people, African Americans, Hispanics, Asian Americans, and Caribbean's?

This item was measured using a 4-point anchored scale coded in the NPS study in the following manner:

1 - Very Close

2 – Fairly Close

3 – Not Too Close

4 – Not Close At All

This response scale was considered a nominal scale by the NPS study authors and it was decided to use it as a nominal scale in this study by identifying it as a categorical-nominal variable in SPSS.

4) Some people believe that it is better for America if different racial and ethnic groups maintain their distinct cultures. Others believe that it is better if groups change so that they blend

into the larger society. Which do you believe?

Data was initially coded in the NPS study the following manner:

- 1 – Maintain Distinct Cultures
- 2 – Blend into Larger Society
- 3 – Both

This response scale was considered a nominal scale by the NPS study authors and it was decided to use it as a nominal scale in this study by identifying it as a categorical-nominal variable in SPSS.

### **Independent Variable Block 2: Political Trust**

The second independent variable added to the model was political trust. The item used in this study is the only true measure of political trust on the NPS 2004 Survey and has been used in the American National Election Study since 1958. Though its vagueness has been heavily debated (Gershtenson & Plane, 2007), it has been determined to be the best measurement of political trust in America.

Political trust for this study was measured by the respondent's level of trust towards the federal government in Washington, D.C. This includes nationally elected officials and federal government agencies. This single item was:

- 1) How much of the time do you think you can trust the government in Washington?

This item was measured using a 4-point anchored scale. Data was coded:

- 1 - Just about always
- 2 - Most of the time
- 3 - Only some of the time
- 4 - Never

This response scale was considered an ordinal scale by the study authors and it was decided to use it as an ordinal scale in this study by identifying it as a categorical-ordinal variable in SPSS.

### **Dependent Variables: Political Engagement**

There were three dependent variables that measure political engagement for this study and each were analyzed separately with the independent variables. Thus, three separate hierarchical logistic regression models were created, each having the three blocks of independent variables described above.

Based on a review of literature by the researcher, there are eight NPS 2004 survey items that measure political engagement. After several discussions with the dissertation committee, it was determined that the following three survey items would be most useful in this study to measure political engagement.

- 1) Did you talk to any people and try to show them why they should vote for or against one of the parties or candidates?

Data was coded as follows in the NPS study:

1 -Yes

5 - No

- 2) Did you go to any political meetings, rallies, speeches, dinners, or things like that in support of a particular candidate?

Data was coded in the following manner in the NPS study:

1 -Yes

5 - No

- 3) Did you vote in the elections this November?

Data was coded in the following manner in the NPS study:

1 -Yes

5 - No

All three of these scales were considered nominal scales by the NPS study authors and it was decided to use them as nominal scales in this study by identifying them as a categorical-nominal variable in SPSS.

The researcher's rationale for inclusion of these survey items to measure political engagement was based on a review of literature and discussions with the dissertation committee that the preferred traditional forms of political engagement activities within the American democratic culture such as voting and attending rallies would be more appropriate instead of the nontraditional methods such as blogging, e-petitions, text advocacy, and boycotting. Other NPS 2004 survey items that were determined to measure political engagement but were not used in this study include:

1. Have you ever worked for a political party or campaigned for a political candidate?
2. Did you give or help raise money for any of the candidates?
3. Did you help campaign for a racial minority candidate?
4. In the past twelve months have you:
  - a. Called, written, or visited a public official about a concern or problem?
  - b. Attended a meeting about an issue facing your community or schools?
  - c. Worked with any people to deal with some issue facing your community?
  - d. Participated in any groups or organizations that are working to improve the conditions of racial or ethnic minorities?
5. How much of your place of worship is involved in politics?

## **Data Analysis**

All data were coded and entered into Statistical Package for the Social Sciences. The Binary Logistic Regression procedure was used with the three sets of independent variables entered as blocks in the procedure. SPSS automatically produces the required statistics as it enters the variables in the prescribed order.

### **Model Estimation**

The model estimation is the process by which the 'most likely estimates for the coefficients' are determined (Hair et al., 2006). The maximum likelihood procedure tests the goodness of fit of the model. A model that is a good fit will result in a small likelihood value. A perfect fitting model will have a likelihood of zero. As additional independent variables are added, the maximum likelihood procedure attempts to achieve a better fit. The maximum likelihood procedure attempts to get closer and closer to zero, until a 'convergence' happens, which is the point where the likelihood of an event occurring no longer changes (Cohen et al., 2003).

The procedure recommended by Hair, et. al., 2006 was used to assess model fit.

Estimate a null model. The most common null models are without any independent variables.

1. Estimate the proposed model. This model contains the independent variables to be included in the logistic regression model. Model fit will improve if the model results in a lower -2LL.
2. Assess -2LL difference with Chi-square. Assess the statistical significance of the difference between the -2LL values of the null model and model containing independent variable(s) models. The chi-square test is used to interpret the improvement of the model once independent variables are entered into the model (Hair et al., 2006). If the chi-

square test results in statistically significant differences, then the model that includes the independent variables will be reported as statistically significant and a good fit (Hair et al., 2006).

3. Assess overall fit. The Hosmer & Lemeshow test measures overall fit of model to the data. If these test results in a significance value of greater than .05, this non-significant value indicates that the “model is acceptable” because there are no significant differences that remain between the actual data and the model so the fit is acceptable (Hair et. al., 2006 p. 372).
4. Examine classification accuracy. The percentage of cases classified correctly in hypothesized models is determined based on the percentage of difference from the baseline model. Logistic regression calculates the probability that a percentage of correctly classified cases belong to the proposed model. Percentage of classified cases correctly predicted should increase to discern improvement in the model (Hair et al., 2006).
5. Assess the pseudo R-squared statistic. Logistic regression has several pseudo R-squared measures that are similar to  $R^2$  in multivariate regression. They indicate the total improvement in the classification of the dependent variable accounted for by a set of independent variable predictors. For the purposes of this study the Nagelkerke Index will be used as the appropriate pseudo  $R^2$  because its values range from 0.0 to 1.0 (Hair et al., 2006).
6. Examine significance of predictors. The Wald statistic is the test for significance between an independent variable and the dependent variable. If the statistic is significant the coefficient is interpreted in terms of how it impacts the estimated probability and

prediction of group membership (Hair et al., 2006). The Wald statistic is provided in SPSS, and is calculated as  $(B/S.E.)^2$ .

7. Assess magnitude of predictor relationships. The Beta is used to interpret the probability of an event occurring (Hair, et al., 2006). The base probability of an event occurring is equal to 50 percent (with 50 percent chance of the event not occurring). Each base model log likelihood value of -2LL will provide the percentage of likelihood the cases are classified correctly, or the likelihood of the model being correct. In logistic regression, the dichotomous dependent variable predicts the percentage of 'yes' versus 'no' responses. The probability ranges from 0.0 to 1.0. The odds exceed 1.0 when the probability exceeds .5; the odds are less than 1 (but never negative), when the probability is less than .5 (Cohen et. al., 2003). The exponentiated Beta ( $\exp(B)$ ) is examined to determine the magnitude of the change in probability due to each independent variable.

### **Hypothesis Testing**

Hypotheses 1 – 3 in this study correspond to each of the blocks of independent variables.

Thus, each of the three dependent variables produced four blocks in the analysis:

- Block 0 – null model with no independent variables
- Block 1 – Control model with race, income and education variables entered
- Block 2 – Social capital independent variables entered
- Block 3 – Political trust independent variables entered

The significance of each model and its independent variables was evaluated using the above procedures.

## CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

This study was designed to explore whether political trust and social capital predict political engagement. This chapter presents results related to the study objectives including a description of the sample and hypotheses presented in chapter one.

### Characteristics of the Sample

The total sample for this study was 3,339. Fifty-seven percent (57%) of survey respondents were women and forty-three percent (43%) were men. The participants ranged from 18 to 100 years old. Figure 4.1 shows the racial distribution of the sample.

It is important to note that the sample overweights minority groups as whites make up 77% of the total U.S. population (US Census, American Community Survey, 2009), yet only 27% of the sample was White. Asians (23%) and Blacks (23%) are also notably overweighted in this sample, as they make up only 5% and 13% of the total population. Sixty-eight percent (68%) of the respondents were born in the United States and thirty-two (32%) percent at the time of the survey were currently applying to become a United States citizen or planning to apply for United States citizenship.

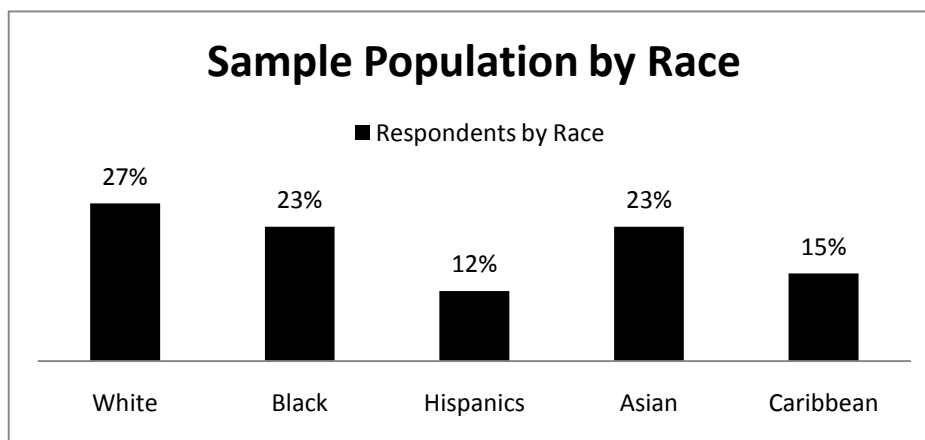


Figure 4.1: Sample Population by Race

Figure 4.2 shows the geographic distribution of the respondents. The South is clearly the

largest group and the Midwest is the smallest.

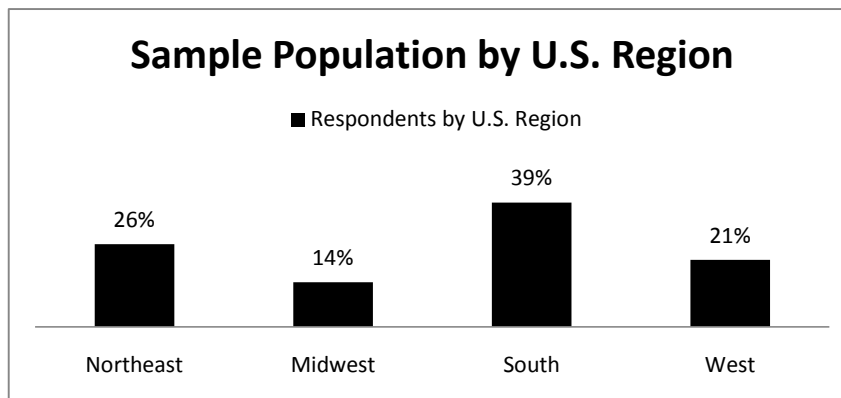


Figure 4.2: Geographic Distribution of respondents

Figure 4.3 shows the educational level of the respondents. The largest group were those with some college and the smallest group had less than a high school degree.

Total family income averaged \$60,000 per year in the Northeast, \$50,000 per year in the Midwest; \$45,000 in the South; \$50,000 in the west. Income was collected as interval data. The NPS investigators rounded responses to income up to the nearest thousand.

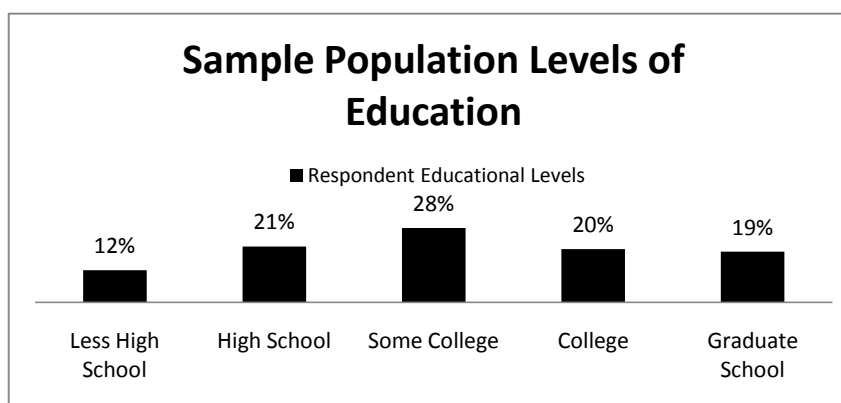


Figure 4.3: Sample Population Levels of Education

## Summary of Objectives

This section describes the results for the research objectives.

**What level of citizen political engagement are reported, both overall and based on age, race, gender, and educational level?**

As Figure 4.4 shows, forty-seven (47%) percent of the respondents indicated that they have talked to others to persuade them to vote for a particular candidate or party. Fifty-three (53%) percent indicated they did not talk to others to persuade them to vote for a particular candidate or issue. Fifty-one percent (51%) of males in the study responded that they talked to someone to persuade them to vote for a particular candidate. Forty-five percent (45%) of females in the study reported that they talked to someone to persuade them to vote for a particular candidate.

Table 4.1 shows that fifty-five percent (55%) of Whites and Hispanics forty percent of Hispanics (40%) reported they talked to someone to persuade them to vote for a particular candidate.

Table 4.2 shows that the percentage of respondents who talk to others to persuade them to vote for a candidate or party increased with age up to age 68. The youngest (18-34 years) and oldest (69-100 years) age groups had the same percentage (45%) of respondents who talked to others to persuade them to vote for a candidate or party.

Table 4.1: Talked to Others to Persuade Others to Vote for a Candidate or Party by Race

Race	Percentage
White	55%
Black	45%
Hispanic	40%
Asian	50%
Caribbean	47%

Figure 4.5 shows that overwhelmingly eighty-eight percent (88%) of the respondents voted or intended to vote for president in November 2004.

Figure 4.4: Talked to Persuade Responses in the Sample

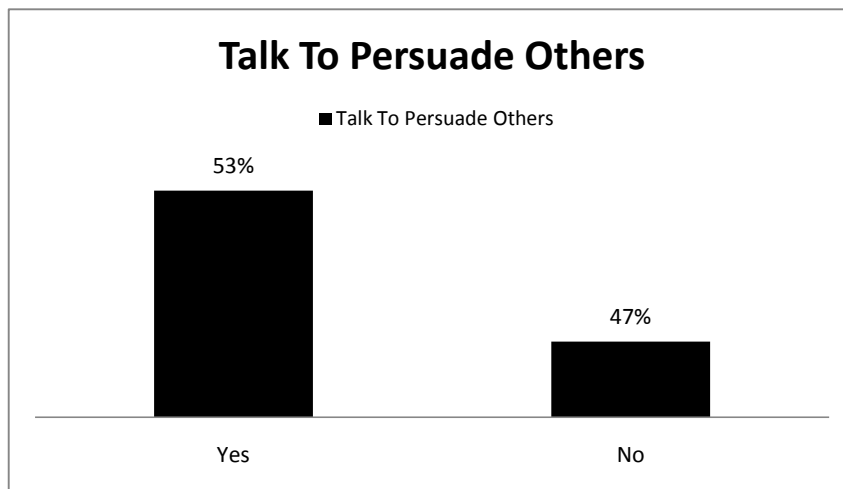


Table 4.2: Talked to Others to Persuade Others to Vote for a Candidate or Party by Age

Age	Percentage
18-34	45%
35-51	48%
52-68	52%
69-100	45%

Figure 4.5: Respondents Who Voted or Will Vote in the November 2004 Election

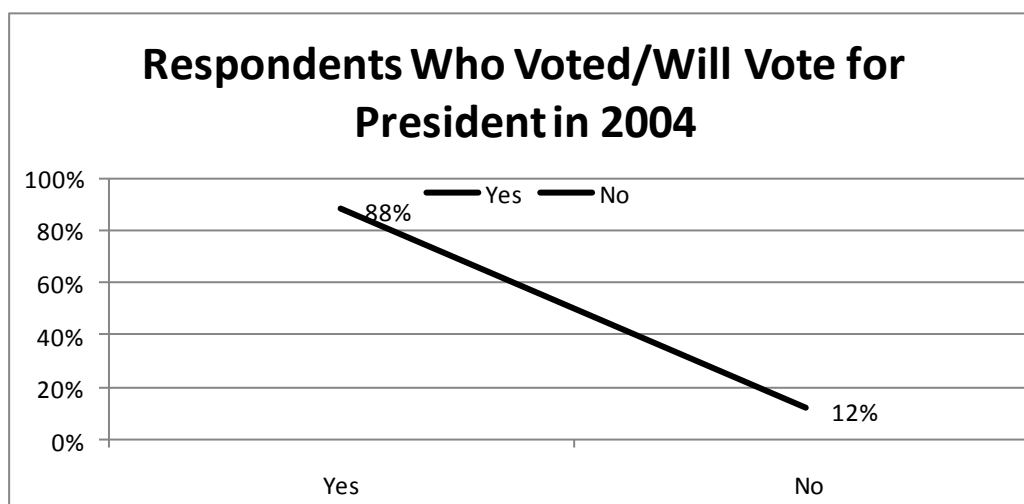


Table 4.3 shows that White respondents reported the highest percentage to have voted or will vote.

Table 4.3: Respondents Who Voted or Will Vote in the November 2004 Election by Race

Race	Percentage
White	95%
Black	87%
Hispanic	82%
Asian	84%
Caribbean	90%

Table 4.4 shows that the percentage of respondents who voted or will vote increased to 98% with age.

As it relates to attending political meetings, rallies, dinners, etc., eighty-three percent (83%) of respondents indicated that they have never attended a political meeting, rally, speech, dinner, or similar types of events to support a particular candidate.

Table 4.4: Respondents who Voted or Will Vote in the November 2004 Election by Age

Age	Percentage
18-34	81%
35-51	88%
52-68	94%
69-100	98%

Table 4.5 shows, percentage of respondents who attended political meetings, rallies, dinners, etc. by race. Whites, Blacks and Caribbeans were more likely to attend meetings than Hispanics or Asians.

Table 4.6 shows the percentage of respondents who attended political meetings, rallies, dinners, etc. increases by age. Respondents between the ages of 18-34 were least likely to attend political meetings or rallies, than all other age groups.

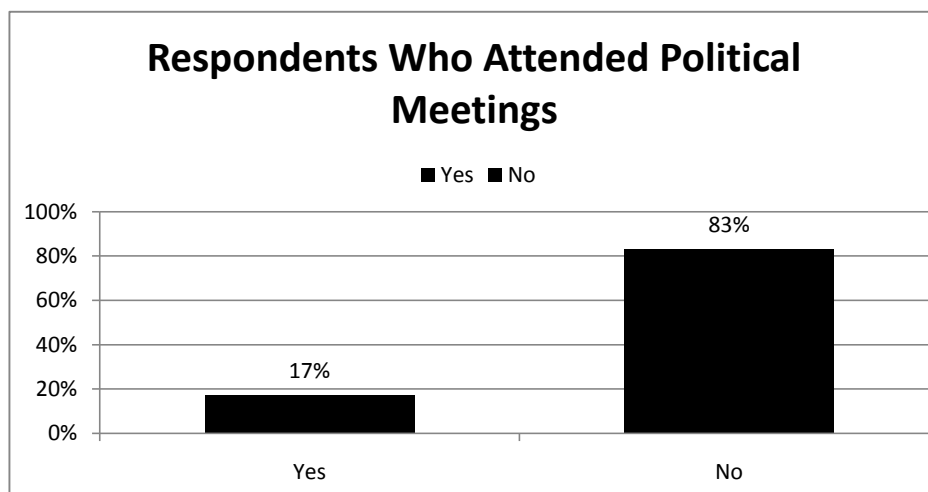


Figure 4.6: Respondents Who Attended Political Meetings

Table 4.5: Percentage of Respondents That Attended Political Meetings by Race

Race	Percentage
White	19%
Black	19%
Hispanic	13%
Asian	13%
Caribbean	19%

Table 4.6: Attended Political Meetings Responses by Age

Age	Percentage
18-34	13%
35-51	16%
52-68	21%
69-100	20%

**What levels of citizen political trust are reported, both overall and based on age, race, gender, and educational level.** Overall, citizen level of trust varies, particularly based on race. Figure 4.7 shows the overall level of political trust.

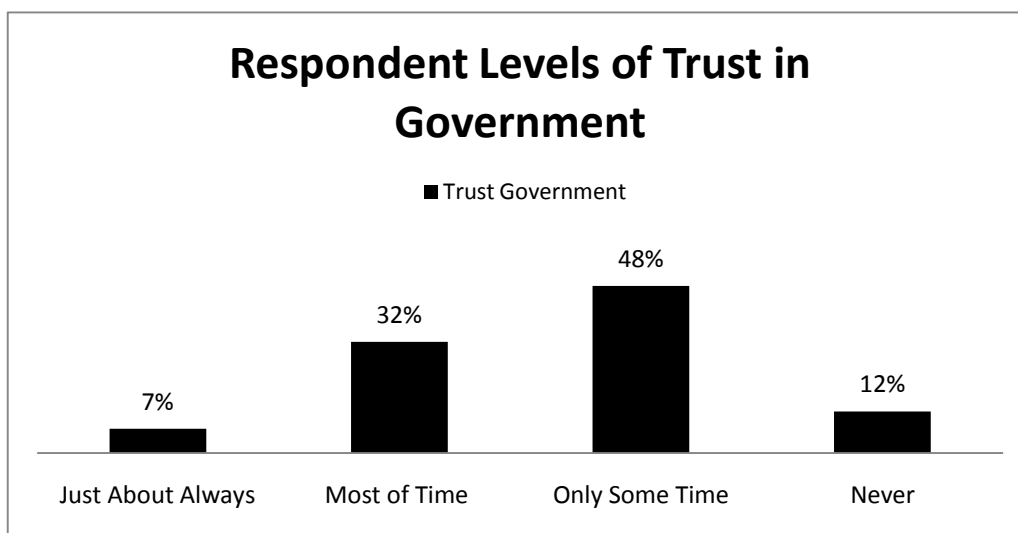


Figure 4.7: Respondent Level of Trust in Government

Figure 4.8 illustrates level of trust in Government by race. African Americans expressed the greatest amount of ‘never’ trusting government at twenty-two percent (22%), while Hispanics expressed the greatest amount of trust in government ‘just about always’ at fifteen percent (15%).

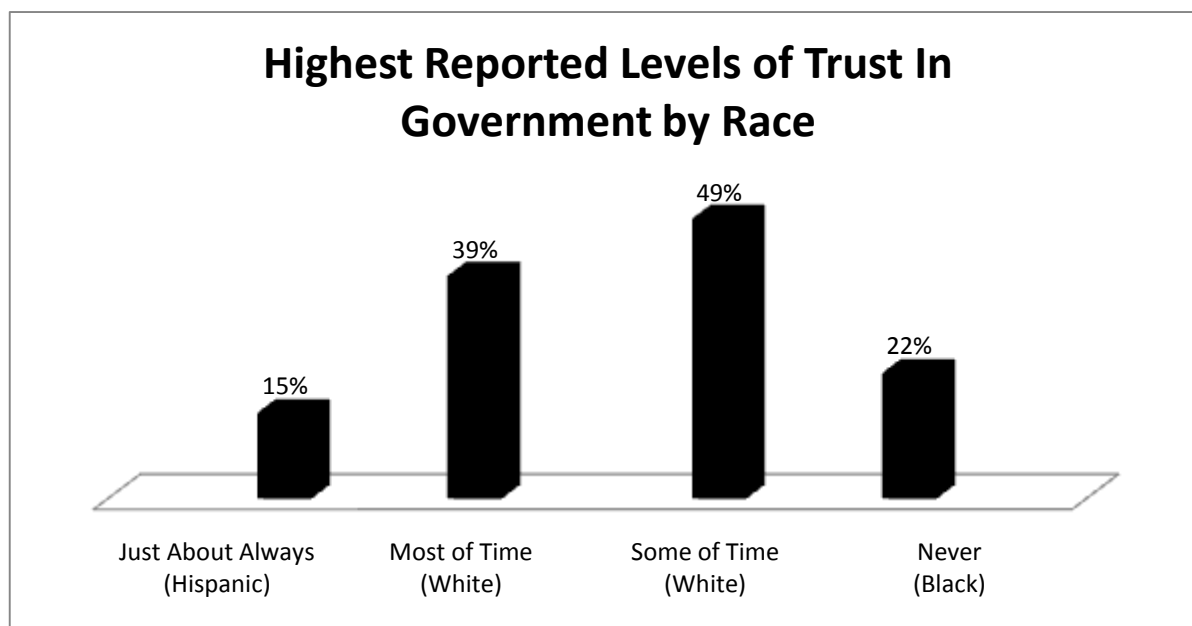


Figure 4.8: Highest Respondent Levels of Trust by Race

**What level of social capital are reported among citizens, both overall and based on age, race, gender, and educational level.**

Table 4.7 shows, Asians (93%) and Caribbeans (100%) are the only races that reported having over a majority of friends that are opposite of their own race.

Table 4.7: Social Capital as Measured by Respondents that have Friends of Ethnically Mixed by Age

Race	Percentage
White	49%
Black	46%
Hispanic	47%
Asian	93%
Caribbean	100%

Table 4.8 shows, that respondents who indicated they attended Graduate School reported the highest percentage of ethnically mixed friends. Respondents who responded that their highest level of education completed was High School, reported the smallest percentage of ethnically mixed friends among all educational levels categorized in the study.

Table 4.8: Ethnically Mixed Friends by Educational Level

Race	Percentage
Less HS	54%
High School	52%
Some College	59%
College	66%
Graduate School	72%

Table 4.9 shows that as respondents that indicated they attended some college and Graduate School reported the highest percentages of living in an ethnically diverse neighborhood. Figure 4.9, adapted from the National Politics Study Respondents Report (Krenz, 2006 p. 9), revealed that all races felt closest to their own race, except Caribbean blacks.

Table 4.9: Ethnically Mixed Neighborhood by Educational Level

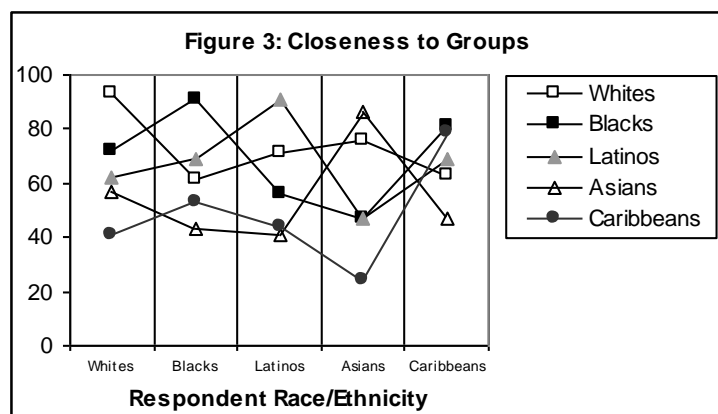
Race	Percentage
Less HS	42%
High School	52%
Some College	56%
College	53%
Graduate School	56%

Caribbean blacks felt close to African Americans. Whites felt least close to Caribbean blacks, as did Asians. African Americans, and Caribbean Blacks, and Latinos felt the least close to Asians.

Table 4.10 shows, that Asians and Caribbeans live in ethnically mixed neighborhoods at a higher percentage than other races.

Table 4.10: Ethnically Mixed Neighborhood Race by Race

Race	Percentage
White	40%
Black	47%
Hispanic	43%
Asian	64%
Caribbean	100%



Source: National Politics Study Respondents Report (Krenz, 2006)

Figure 4.9: Closeness to Groups

Table 4.11 shows the percentage of respondents who believe that it is better for America if different racial and ethnic groups maintain their distinct cultures . Asians are the least likely to believe that cultures should blend and the greatest percentage of respondents who believe that cultures should maintain distinctness.

Table 4.12 shows that regardless of level of education the majority of individuals surveyed believed that cultures should blend.

Table 4.11: Cultural Blending by Race

Race	Distinct	Blend	Both
White	33%	54%	13%
Black	38%	56%	6%
Hispanic	33%	59%	8%
Asian	46%	41%	13%
Caribbean	38%	56%	6%

Table 4.12: Cultural Blending by Educational Level

Education	Maintain	Blend	Both
Less HS	30%	66%	4%
High School	32%	66%	2%
Some College	45%	53%	1%
College	40%	47%	13%
Graduate School	40%	45%	15%

### **Hypotheses Testing**

The researcher proposed nine hypotheses to suggest the prediction of three dependent variables by multiple independent variables. A review of literature revealed that these hypotheses have never been tested, especially with such a large sample of ethnic minorities. While the hypotheses were grouped by theoretical construct (e.g. social capital, political trust, etc), the clearest way to present the hierarchical regression results is by each dependent variable. Thus, this section is organized in that manner.

**Political engagement dependent variable 1 – citizens who talk to people to persuade them to vote for a particular candidate or party.**

This section discusses the results for the first dependent variable, citizens who talk to people to persuade them.

**H1a: Control variables will contribute significantly to the prediction of citizens who talk to people and try to show them why they should vote for or against one of the parties or candidates.**

Table 4.13 shows the base model, also known as the null model, without predictor variables correctly predicted 51.4% of the cases. The control model resulted in a -2LL of 3850.993 which was a significant decrease from the base model as evidenced by Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients chi-square statistic (133.651,  $p < 0.05$ ; see Table 4.14).

Table 4.13: Classification Table<sup>a,b</sup> Base Model Talk to Persuade Without Predictor Variables

Observed			Predicted		
			Talk to persuade		Percentage Correct
			Yes	No	
Step 0	Talk to persuade	Yes	0	1397	.0
		No	0	1479	100.0
Overall Percentage					51.4

a. Constant is included in the model.

b. The cut value is .500

Table 4.14: Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients Talk to Persuade Control Variables

		Chi-square	df	Sig.
Step 1	Step	133.651	9	.000
	Block	133.651	9	.000
	Model	133.651	9	.000

The Hosmer and Lemeshow Test of goodness of fit (see Table 4.15) was acceptable (3.787,  $p>0.05$ ). The p-value is not significant, indicating that there are no significant differences between actual data and expected model values (Hair et al, 2006).

Table 4.16 shows that the Nagelkerke pseudo R-square (variance) is small (6%) while Table 4.17 shows that 58.4 percent of the cases were correctly predicted.

Table 4.15: Hosmer and Lemeshow Test for Talk to Persuade Control Variables

Step	Chi-square	Df	Sig.
1	3.787	8	.876

Table 4.16: Model Summary for Talk to Persuade Control Variables

Step	-2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square
1	3850.993 <sup>a</sup>	.045	.061

Table 4.17: Classification Table<sup>a</sup> for Talk to Persuade Control Variables

Observed			Predicted		
			Talk to persuade		Percentage Correct
			Yes	No	
Step 1	Talk to persuade	Yes	924	473	66.1
		No	724	755	51.0
Overall Percentage					58.4

a. The cut value is .500

Table 4.18 shows that race ( $p=.011$ ) and education ( $p<.001$ ) were significant in predicting the dependent variable. Possessing a college degree was the only insignificant educational level variable ( $p=.593$ ). Income was also not significant ( $p=.493$ ).

Table 4.18: Variables in the Equation Talk to Persuade Control Variables

	B	S.E.	Wald	Df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Step 1 <sup>a</sup>						
Overall Race			13.121	4	.011	
White	-.139	.131	1.128	1	.288	.870
Black	.108	.132	.665	1	.415	1.114
Hispanic	.171	.134	1.620	1	.203	1.186
Asian	.250	.151	2.719	1	.099	1.283
Overall			94.828	4	.000	
Education						
Less Hs	1.281	.159	65.213	1	.000	3.600
Hs	.727	.128	32.230	1	.000	2.070
Some College	.259	.119	4.739	1	.029	1.295
College	.066	.124	.286	1	.593	1.068
Income	.000	.000	.470	1	.493	1.000
Constant	-.408	.142	8.246	1	.004	.665

Based on this analysis we accept the hypothesis that the control variables will contribute to the prediction of citizens who talk to people and try to show them why they should vote for or against one of the parties or candidates.

**H2a: Social capital group resources characteristic variables will make a significant contribution over and above control variables to the prediction of citizens who talk to people and try to show them why they should vote for or against one of the parties or candidates.**

The social capital resources were added to the control model. There were four measures of social capital used for this study: ethnic mix of friends; ethnic mix of current neighborhood; level of close feelings of ideas and interests to people of opposite races; and if cultures should be distinct, blend, or both.

When social capital variables were added to the control model, the model resulted in a

-2LL of 3801.463 ( $p < .001$ ), which was a significant decrease from the control model as evidenced by Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients chi-square statistic for this block of variables (183.181,  $p < 0.05$ ; see Table 4.19).

The Hosmer and Lemeshow Test of goodness of fit was acceptable (4.451,  $p > 0.05$ ; see Table 4.20). The p-value is insignificant, indicating that there are no significant differences between actual data and expected model values (Hair et al, 2006).

Table 4.19: Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients Talk to Persuade Social Capital

		Chi-square	df	Sig.
Step 1	Step	49.530	21	.000
	Block	49.530	21	.000
	Model	183.181	30	.000

The Hosmer and Lemeshow Test of goodness of fit was acceptable (4.451,  $p > 0.05$ ; see Table 4.20). The p-value is insignificant, indicating that there are no significant differences between actual data and expected model values (Hair et al, 2006).

Table 4.20: Hosmer and Lemeshow Test Talk to Persuade Social Capital Variables

Step	Chi-square	Df	Sig.
1	4.451	8	.814

The variance predicted increased by .2% (see Table 4.21) above the control model, while there was a minimal increase of correctly predicted cases by 1.8% (see Table 4.22).

Table 4.23 shows that education ( $p < .001$ ) were significant in predicting the dependent variable. The significant variables were less than High School ( $p < .001$ ) and completed High School ( $p < .001$ ).

Table 4.21: Model Summary Talk to Persuade Social Capital Variables

Step	-2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square
1	3801.463 <sup>a</sup>	.062	.082

Table 4.22: Classification Table<sup>a</sup> Talk to Persuade Social Capital Variables

Observed			Predicted		
			Talk to persuade		Percentage
			Yes	No	Correct
Step 1	Talk to persuade	Yes	855	542	61.2
		No	603	876	59.2
Overall Percentage					60.2

Table 4.23 Variables in the Equation Talk to Persuade Social Capital Variables

		Variables in the Equation					
		B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Step 1 <sup>a</sup>	Overall Race			8.751	4	.068	
	White	-.273	.164	2.752	1	.097	.761
	Black	-.042	.155	.075	1	.785	.958
	Hispanic	.107	.163	.434	1	.510	1.113
	Asian	-.083	.189	.191	1	.662	.921
	Overall Education			78.909	4	.000	
	Less Hs	1.223	.163	56.333	1	.000	3.399
	Hs	.670	.131	26.184	1	.000	1.953
	Some College	.233	.121	3.727	1	.054	1.262
	College	.080	.125	.409	1	.523	1.083
	Income	.000	.000	.513	1	.474	1.000
	Friendmix(1)	.157	.091	2.988	1	.084	1.170
	Neighbormix(1)	-.051	.087	.346	1	.557	.950
	Whites Overall			4.617	3	.202	
	Closeness						
	Whites Very Close	-.206	.176	1.359	1	.244	.814
	Whites Fairly Close	-.033	.156	.045	1	.833	.968

Table 4.23 continued on next page.

Table 4.23 continued.

Whites Not Too Close	.099	.172	.329	1	.566	1.104
Blacks Overall Closeness			6.125	3	.106	
Blacks Very Close	-.280	.188	2.214	1	.137	.756
Blacks Fairly Close	-.341	.168	4.121	1	.042	.711
Blacks Not Too Close	-.120	.176	.465	1	.495	.887
Overall Hispanics Closeness			9.518	3	.023	
Hispanics Very Close	-.434	.185	5.485	1	.019	.648
Hispanics Fairly Close	-.248	.167	2.212	1	.137	.780
Hispanics Not Too Close	-.020	.174	.013	1	.908	.980
Overall Asian Closeness			3.474	3	.324	
Asian Very Close	.247	.182	1.826	1	.177	1.280
Asian Fairly Close	-.015	.138	.013	1	.911	.985
Asian Not Too Close	-.022	.135	.026	1	.873	.979
Overall Caribbeans Closeness			2.639	3	.451	
Caribbeans Very Close	-.222	.168	1.730	1	.188	.801
Caribbeans Fairly Close	-.013	.128	.011	1	.918	.987
Caribbeans Not Too Close	.034	.122	.077	1	.782	1.034
Overall Blend			4.777	4	.311	
Maintain Cultures	-.389	.360	1.167	1	.280	.678
Blend Cultures	-.309	.359	.742	1	.389	.734
Mix & Blend	-.530	.379	1.949	1	.163	.589
Don't Know	-.128	.409	.098	1	.754	.880

Table 4.23 continued on next page

Table 4.23 continued.

Constant	.572	.427	1.798	1	.180	1.772
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Based on this analysis we accept the hypothesis that social capital characteristic variables will make a significant contribution over and above control variables to the prediction of citizens who talk to people and try to show them why they should vote for or against one of the parties or candidates.

**H3a: Political trust will make a significant contribution to the prediction of citizens who talk to people and try to show them why they should vote for or against one of the parties or candidates, over and above control variables and social capital group resources characteristic variables.**

When the political trust characteristic variable was added to the model that included the social capital and control variables, the model resulted in a -2LL of 3774.338 , which was a significant decrease from the previous model as evidenced by Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients chi-square statistic for the block (210.306,  $p < 0.05$ ; see Table 4.23).

Table 4.24: Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients Talk to Persuade Political Trust Variable

		Chi-square	df	Sig.
Step 1	Step	27.125	3	.000
	Block	27.125	3	.000
	Model	210.306	33	.000

The Hosmer and Lemeshow Test of goodness of fit was not accepted. (chi square=19.939; see Table 4.25). The p-value was significant (.011), indicating that significant differences still remain between actual data and expected model values (Hair et al, 2006).

The variance explained increased by .12% above the model containing control variables

and social capital variables (see Table 4.26). There was a minimal decrease in the correctly predicted cases (59.9%) (see Table 4.27).

Table 4.25: Hosmer and Lemeshow Test Talk to Persuade Political Trust Variable

Step	Chi-square	df	Sig.
1	19.939	8	.011

Table 4.26: Model Summary Talk to Persuade Political Trust Variable

Step	-2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square
1	3774.338 <sup>a</sup>	.071	.094

Therefore this model did not improve the classification of correctly predicted cases.

Table 4.27: Classification Table<sup>a</sup> Talk to Persuade Political Trust Variable

Observed			Predicted		
			Talk to persuade		Percentage
			Yes	No	Correct
Step 1	Talk to persuade	Yes	855	542	61.2
		No	610	869	58.8
Overall Percentage					59.9

The significant variables included less than high school ( $p < .001$ ), high school ( $p < .001$ ), some college ( $p = 0.035$ ), very close level of closeness in ideas and interests to Hispanics ( $p = 0.018$ ), and trust in government 'just about always' ( $p < .001$ ) and most of the time ( $p < .001$ ). (see Table 4.28).

Table 4.28: Variables in the Equation Talk to Persuade Political Trust Variable

	B	S.E.	Wald	Df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Step 1 <sup>a</sup> Overall Race			8.254	4	.083	

Table 4.28 continued on next page.

Table 4.28 continued.

White	-.315	.166	3.623	1	.057	.729
Black	-.008	.156	.002	1	.961	.992
Hispanic	.011	.165	.005	1	.946	1.011
Asian	-.146	.191	.582	1	.445	.864
Overall Education			77.486	4	.000	
Less Hs	1.222	.165	55.126	1	.000	3.394
Hs	.691	.132	27.556	1	.000	1.996
Some College	.256	.121	4.446	1	.035	1.291
College	.077	.126	.378	1	.539	1.080
Income	.000	.000	1.003	1	.317	1.000
Friendmix(1)	.147	.091	2.615	1	.106	1.159
Neighbormix(1)	-.056	.087	.413	1	.521	.945
Overall Whites			7.295	3	.063	
Closeness						
Whites Very Close	-.316	.178	3.143	1	.076	.729
Whites Fairly Close	-.123	.158	.600	1	.438	.885
Whites Not Too	.061	.173	.122	1	.727	1.062
Close						
Blacks Overall			5.909	3	.116	
Closeness						
Blacks Very Close	-.257	.189	1.857	1	.173	.773
Blacks Fairly Close	-.333	.169	3.903	1	.048	.717
Blacks Not Too	-.112	.176	.402	1	.526	.894
Close						
Hispanics Overall			8.976	3	.030	
Closeness						
Hispanics Very	-.443	.187	5.638	1	.018	.642
Close						
Hispanics Fairly	-.244	.168	2.112	1	.146	.784
Close						
Hispanics Not Too	-.041	.175	.055	1	.815	.960
Close						
Asian Overall			3.472	3	.324	
Closeness						

Table 4.28 continued on next page.

Table 4.28 continued.

Asian Very Close	.228	.183	1.543	1	.214	1.256
Asian Fairly Close	-.039	.139	.078	1	.780	.962
Asian Not Too Close	-.033	.136	.057	1	.811	.968
Carribbeans Overall Closeness			2.518	3	.472	
Carribbeans Very Close	-.215	.169	1.614	1	.204	.807
Carribbeans Fairly Close	-.020	.129	.025	1	.875	.980
Carribbeans not Too Close	.040	.123	.103	1	.748	1.040
Overall Culture			3.901	4	.420	
Maintain Cultures	-.403	.359	1.258	1	.262	.669
Blend Cultures	-.341	.357	.911	1	.340	.711
Mix & Blend	-.517	.378	1.866	1	.172	.596
Don't Know	-.149	.408	.134	1	.714	.861
Overall Trust			26.859	3	.000	
Just About Always	.699	.194	12.980	1	.000	2.011
Most Of The Time	.602	.138	18.964	1	.000	1.826
Only Some Of The Time	.273	.127	4.581	1	.032	1.313
Constant	.331	.435	.580	1	.446	1.392

Based on this analysis we reject the hypothesis that political trust will make a significant contribution to the prediction of citizens who talk to people and try to show them why they should vote for or against one of the parties or candidates, over and above control variables and social capital group resources characteristic variables.

#### **Political engagement dependent variable 2 – citizens who attend meetings and rallies.**

This section discusses the results for the second dependent variable, citizens who attend meetings and rallies.

**H1b: Control variables will contribute significantly to the prediction of citizens who go to political meetings, rallies, speeches, dinners, or things like that in support of a particular candidate.**

The base model, also known as the null model, without predictor variables correctly predicted 82.8% of the cases (see Table 4.29). The control model resulted in a -2LL of 2563.915, which is a significant decrease from the base model as evidenced by Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients chi-square statistic (86.458,  $p < 0.05$ ; see Table 4.30).

Table 4.29: Classification Table<sup>a,b</sup> Base Model Attend Political Meetings Without Predictor Variables

Observed			Predicted		
			Attend Meeting		Percentage
			Yes	No	
Step 0	Attend Meeting	Yes	0	497	.0
		No	0	2386	100.0
Overall Percentage					82.8

a. Constant is included in the model.

b. The cut value is .500

Table 4.30: Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients Attend Political Meetings Control Variables

		Chi-square	df	Sig.
Step 1	Step	86.458	9	.000
	Block	86.458	9	.000
	Model	86.458	9	.000

The Hosmer and Lemeshow Goodness of Fit Test was acceptable (4.441,  $p > 0.05$ ; see Table 4.31). The p-value is insignificant, indicating that there are no significant differences between actual data and expected model values (Hair et al, 2006).

Table 4.31: Hosmer and Lemeshow Test Attend Political Meetings Control Variables

Step	Chi-square	df	Sig.
1	4.441	8	.815

Though the variance predicted is 4.9% (see Table 4.32), Table 4.33 shows that 82.8 percent of the cases were correctly predicted. One-hundred percent (100%) of the correctly predicted cases responded ‘no.’ Therefore, this model can predict only for those that responded that they do not attend political meetings, rallies, speeches, dinners, or things like that in support of a particular candidate.

Table 4.34 shows the Asian race ( $p < .001$ ) and education ( $p < .001$ ) were significant at predicting the dependent variable.

Table 4.32: Model Summary Attend Political Meetings Control Variables

Step	-2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square
1	2563.915 <sup>a</sup>	.030	.049

a. Estimation terminated at iteration number 5 because parameter estimates changed by less than .001.

Table 4.33: Classification Table<sup>a</sup> Attend Political Meetings Control Variables

Observed			Predicted		
			Attend Meeting		Percentage
			Yes	No	
Step 1	Attend Meeting	Yes	0	497	.0
		No	0	2386	100.0
Overall Percentage					82.8

a. Estimation terminated at iteration number 5 because parameter estimates changed by less than .001.

Table 4.34: Variables in the Equation Attend Political Meetings Control Variables

	B	S.E.	Wald	Df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Step 1 <sup>a</sup>			28.930	4	.000	
Overall Race						
White	.247	.167	2.186	1	.139	1.280
Black	-.055	.166	.109	1	.741	.947
Hispanic	.233	.176	1.757	1	.185	1.262
Asian	.879	.203	18.685	1	.000	2.409
Overall Education			69.930	4	.000	
Less Hs	1.442	.220	43.050	1	.000	4.229
Hs	1.086	.166	42.955	1	.000	2.963
Some College	.752	.145	26.773	1	.000	2.121
College	.310	.147	4.484	1	.034	1.364
Income	.000	.000	.059	1	.809	1.000
Constant	.715	.171	17.561	1	.000	2.044

Based on this analysis we reject the hypothesis that the control variables will contribute significantly to the prediction of citizens who go to political meetings, rallies, speeches, dinners, or things like that in support of a particular candidate.

**H2b: Social capital group resources characteristic variables will make a significant contribution over and above control variables to the prediction of citizens who go to political meetings, rallies, speeches, dinners, or things like that in support of a particular candidate.**

The social capital resources variables were added to the model containing control variables. There were four measures of social capital used for this study: ethnic mix of friends; ethnic mix of current neighborhood; level of close feelings of ideas and interests to people of opposite races; and if cultures should be distinct, blend, or both.

When social capital variables were added to the model, the model resulted in a -2LL

decrease 2511.779 which was a significant decrease from the base model as evidenced by Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients chi-square statistic for this block of variables (138.595,  $p < 0.05$ ; see Table 4.35).

Table 4.35: Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients Attend Political Meetings Social Capital Variables

		Chi-square	df	Sig.
Step 1	Step	52.136	21	.000
	Block	52.136	21	.000
	Model	138.595	30	.000

The Hosmer and Lemeshow Test for Goodness of fit was acceptable (6.855,  $p > 0.05$ ; see Table 4.36). The p-value is .552, indicating that there are no significant differences between actual data and expected model values (Hair et al, 2006).

Table 4.36: Hosmer and Lemeshow Test Attend Political Meetings Social Capital Variables

Step	Chi-square	df	Sig.
1	6.855	8	.552

The variance explained increased by .3% above the base model (see Table 4.37). The correctly classified cases decreased by .1% (see Table 4.38). The model is still much stronger at predicting (99.9%) those that do not attend political meetings or rallies than those that do attend political meetings or rallies. This model did not improve the classification of predicted variables.

Table 4.37: Model Summary Attend Political Meetings Social Capital Variables

Step	-2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square
1	2511.779 <sup>a</sup>	.047	.078

a. Estimation terminated at iteration number 5 because parameter estimates changed by less than .001.

Table 4.38: Classification Table<sup>a</sup> Attend Political Meetings Social Capital Variables

Observed			Predicted		
			Attend Meeting		Percentage Correct
			Yes	No	
Step 1	Attend Meeting	Yes	1	496	.2
		No	2	2384	99.9
Overall Percentage					82.7

a. The cut value is .500

Significant variables included: Asian race ( $p=.019$ ); less than high school ( $p<.001$ ), high school ( $p<.001$ ), some college ( $p<.001$ ), and college ( $p<.001$ ); very close ( $p=.022$ ) and fairly close ( $p=.038$ ) feelings, ideas, and interest to white people; very close ( $p=.018$ ) feelings, ideas, and interests to Hispanics (see Table 4.39).

Table 4.39: Variables in the Equation Attend Political Meetings Social Capital Variables

	B	S.E.	Wald	Df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Step 1 <sup>a</sup>			14.781	4	.005	
Overall Race						
White	.172	.210	.668	1	.414	1.187
Black	-.208	.196	1.125	1	.289	.812
Hispanic	.265	.213	1.556	1	.212	1.304
Asian	.589	.251	5.511	1	.019	1.803
Overall Education			61.882	4	.000	
Less Hs	1.389	.226	37.930	1	.000	4.013
Hs	1.065	.170	39.221	1	.000	2.900
Some College	.746	.148	25.488	1	.000	2.109
College	.324	.149	4.739	1	.029	1.383
Income	.000	.000	.006	1	.936	1.000
Friendmix(1)	-.072	.118	.374	1	.541	.930
Neighbormix(1)	.221	.114	3.736	1	.053	1.247
Whites Overall			13.243	3	.004	
Closeness						

Table 4.39 continued on next page.

Table 4.39 continued.

Whites Very Close	-.569	.248	5.256	1	.022	.566
Whites Fairly Close	-.469	.226	4.317	1	.038	.625
Whites Not Too Close	.000	.252	.000	1	1.000	1.000
Blacks Overall Closeness			.503	3	.918	
Blacks Very Close	.002	.263	.000	1	.993	1.002
Blacks Fairly Close	.002	.242	.000	1	.993	1.002
Blacks Not Too Close	.110	.257	.184	1	.668	1.116
Hispanics Overall Closeness			10.481	3	.015	
Hispanics Very Close	-.627	.266	5.561	1	.018	.534
Hispanics Fairly Close	-.328	.246	1.787	1	.181	.720
Hispanics Not Too Close	-.038	.260	.021	1	.883	.963
Asian Overall Closeness			1.891	3	.595	
Asian Very Close	.314	.244	1.648	1	.199	1.369
Asian Fairly Close	.075	.183	.168	1	.682	1.078
Asian Not Too Close	.075	.183	.167	1	.683	1.078
Carribbeans Overall Closeness			4.258	3	.235	
Carribbeans Very Close	-.281	.222	1.608	1	.205	.755
Carribbeans Fairly Close	-.236	.175	1.818	1	.178	.790
Carribbeans not Too Close	-.348	.171	4.150	1	.042	.706
Overall Culture			8.139	4	.087	
Maintain Cultures	-.302	.468	.415	1	.519	.739
Blend Cultures	-.016	.467	.001	1	.972	.984

Table 4.39 continued on next page.

Table 4.39 continued.

Mix & Blend	.068	.494	.019	1	.890	1.071
Don't Know	-.218	.530	.169	1	.681	.804
Constant	1.682	.575	8.566	1	.003	5.379

Based on this analysis we reject the hypothesis that social capital characteristic variables will make a significant contribution over and above control variables to the prediction of citizens who go to political meetings, rallies, speeches, dinners, or things like that in support of a particular candidate.

**H3b: Political trust will make a significant contribution to the prediction of citizens who go to political meetings, rallies, speeches, dinners, or things like that in support of a particular candidate, over and beyond control variables and social capital group resources characteristic variables.**

The political trust characteristic variable was added to the model that includes control variables and social capital variables which resulted in a -2LL of 2502.469 which was a significant decrease from the model containing the control and social capital variables as evidenced by Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients chi-square statistic for this block of variables (147.904,  $p < 0.05$ ; see Table 4.40).

Table 4.40: Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients Attend Political Meetings Political Trust

	Chi-square	Df	Sig.
Step 1 Step	9.310	3	.025
Block	9.310	3	.025
Model	147.904	33	.000

The Hosmer and Lemeshow Test of Goodness of Fit was accepted (6.350,  $p > 0.05$ ; see Table 4.41). The p-value is insignificant, indicating that there are no significant differences

between actual data and expected model values (Hair et al, 2006).

Table 4.41: Hosmer and Lemeshow Test Attend Political Meetings Political Trust Variable

Step	Chi-square	Df	Sig.
1	6.360	8	.607

There was a .5% increase in variance explained above the model containing the control and social capital variables (see Table 4.42). Correctly classified cases did not change (82.7%) (see Table 4.43). Of the 82.7 percent of cases classified correctly, 99.8 percent of those cases responded that they did not attend political meetings or rallies. Therefore, this model is much stronger at predicting those that do not attend political meetings or rallies than those that do attend political meetings or rallies.

Table 4.42: Model Summary Attend Political Meetings Political Trust Variable

Step	-2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square
1	2502.469 <sup>a</sup>	.050	.083

Table 4.43: Classification Table<sup>a</sup> Attend Political Meetings Political Trust Variable

Observed			Predicted		
			Attend Meeting		Percentage Correct
			Yes	No	
Step 1	Attend Meeting	Yes	2	495	.4
		No	4	2382	99.8
	Overall Percentage				82.7

Table 4.44 shows that significant variables in this model included Asian race ( $p=.035$ ), less than high school ( $p<.001$ ), high school ( $p<.001$ ), some college ( $p<.001$ ), college ( $p=.033$ ), very close in ideas and interests to Whites ( $p=.009$ ) and fairly close in ideas and interests to whites ( $p=.018$ ), very close in ideas and interests to Hispanics ( $p=.021$ ), and trust in government most of the time ( $p=.003$ ) Social capital variables related to very close in ideas and interests to Whites ( $\beta=-.651$ ), fairly close in ideas and interests to Whites ( $\beta=-.539$ ), very close in ideas and interests to Hispanics ( $\beta=-.616$ ) resulted in negative Betas.

Table 4.44: Variables in the Equation Attend Political Meetings Political Trust Variable

	B	S.E.	Wald	Df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Step 1 <sup>a</sup>						
Overall Race			10.896	4	.028	
White	.127	.210	.367	1	.545	1.136
Black	-.185	.197	.888	1	.346	.831
Hispanic	.196	.214	.835	1	.361	1.216
Asian	.530	.252	4.436	1	.035	1.700
Overall Education			63.542	4	.000	
Less Hs	1.409	.227	38.441	1	.000	4.090
Hs	1.084	.171	40.401	1	.000	2.956
Some College	.760	.148	26.288	1	.000	2.139
College	.319	.149	4.564	1	.033	1.376
Income	.000	.000	.044	1	.833	1.000
Friendmix(1)	-.081	.119	.467	1	.494	.922
Neighbormix(1)	.218	.114	3.644	1	.056	1.244
Whites Overall Closeness			15.813	3	.001	
Whites Very Close	-.651	.250	6.784	1	.009	.521
Whites Fairly Close	-.539	.228	5.605	1	.018	.583
Whites Not Too Close	-.032	.253	.016	1	.898	.968
Blacks Overall Closeness			.462	3	.927	

Table 4.44 continued on next page.

Table 4.44 continued.

Blacks Very Close	.003	.263	.000	1	.990	1.003
Blacks Fairly Close	.004	.242	.000	1	.987	1.004
Blacks Not Too Close	.107	.257	.174	1	.677	1.113
Hispanics Overall Closeness			9.732	3	.021	
Hispanics Very Close	-.616	.266	5.355	1	.021	.540
Hispanics Fairly Close	-.320	.246	1.687	1	.194	.726
Hispanics Not Too Close	-.052	.261	.040	1	.841	.949
Asian Overall Closeness			1.825	3	.609	
Asian Very Close	.298	.245	1.487	1	.223	1.347
Asian Fairly Close	.055	.184	.090	1	.765	1.057
Asian Not Too Close	.061	.184	.109	1	.741	1.063
Caribbean Overall Closeness			4.075	3	.253	
Caribbeans Very Close	-.273	.222	1.519	1	.218	.761
Caribbeans Fairly Close	-.245	.176	1.942	1	.163	.783
Caribbeans not Too Close	-.342	.172	3.981	1	.046	.710
Cultural Beliefs			7.839	4	.098	
Maintain Cultures	-.300	.467	.411	1	.521	.741
Blend Cultures	-.028	.466	.004	1	.953	.973
Mix & Blend	.088	.493	.032	1	.858	1.092
Don't Know	-.228	.529	.185	1	.667	.796
Overall Trust Government			9.300	3	.026	
Just About Always	.293	.249	1.380	1	.240	1.340

Table 4.44 continued on next page.

Table 4.44 continued.

Most Of The Time	.515	.176	8.594	1	.003	1.673
Only Some Of The Time	.250	.157	2.519	1	.113	1.283
Constant	1.480	.584	6.428	1	.011	4.395

Based on the analysis we reject the hypothesis that political trust will make a significant contribution to the prediction of citizens who go to political meetings, rallies, speeches, dinners, or things like that in support of a particular candidate, over and beyond control variables and social capital group resources characteristic variables.

### **Political engagement dependent variable 3 – citizens who voted or will vote**

This section discusses the results for the third dependent variable, citizens who voted or will vote.

**H1c: Control variables will contribute significantly to the prediction of citizens who vote.**

Table 4.45 shows the base model, also known as the null model, without predictor variables correctly predicted 88.1% of the cases. The control model resulted in a -2LL of 1646.780 which was a significant decrease from the base model as evidenced by Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients chi-square statistic (150.972,  $p < 0.05$ ; see Table 4.46).

Table 4.47 shows the Hosmer and Lemeshow Test of Goodness of Fit was acceptable (6.231,  $p > .05$ ).

The p-value is insignificant, indicating that no significant differences still remain between actual data and expected model values (Hair et al, 2006).

Table 4.48 shows that variance explained is 12%, while Table 4.49 shows that 88.1 percent of the cases were correctly predicted. The analysis revealed that 100% of those who

responded 'yes' were correctly predicted. Therefore, this model is strongest at predicting those who will/did vote. The model is missing 874 cases due to missing data, which could have a significant impact on the cases predicted correctly, even as additional variables are added to analyze improvement of the model.

Table 4.45: Classification Table<sup>a,b</sup> Base Model Vote/Will Vote Without Predictor Variables

Observed			Predicted		
			Vote/will vote		Percentage Correct
			Yes	No	
Step 0	Vote/will vote	Yes	2172	0	100.0
		No	293	0	.0
	Overall Percentage				88.1

Table 4.46: Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients Vote/Will Vote Control Variables

		Chi-square	Df	Sig.
Step 1	Step	150.972	9	.000
	Block	150.972	9	.000
	Model	150.972	9	.000

Table 4.47: Hosmer and Lemeshow Test Vote/Will Vote Control Variables

Step	Chi-square	Df	Sig.
1	6.231	8	.621

Table 4.48: Model Summary Vote/Will Vote Control Variables

Step	-2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square
1	1646.780 <sup>a</sup>	.059	.115

a. Estimation terminated at iteration number 6 because parameter estimates changed by less than .001.

Table 4.49: Classification Table<sup>a</sup> Vote/Will Vote Control Variables

Observed			Predicted		
			Vote/will vote		Percentage Correct
			Yes	No	
Step 1	Vote/will vote	Yes	2172	0	100.0
		No	293	0	.0
	Overall Percentage				88.1

a. The cut value is .500

Table 4.50 shows significant predictors included Hispanic race ( $p=.001$ ), less than high school ( $p<.001$ ), high school ( $p<.001$ ), some college ( $p<.001$ ), and college ( $p=.023$ ).

Table 4.50: Variables in the Equation Vote/Will Vote Control Variables

	B	S.E.	Wald	Df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Step 1 <sup>a</sup> Overall Race			55.785	4	.000	
White	-.114	.262	.189	1	.664	.892
Black	.434	.239	3.289	1	.070	1.543
Hispanic	.814	.243	11.169	1	.001	2.256
Asian	1.431	.278	26.443	1	.000	4.183
Overall Education			89.700	4	.000	
Less Hs	2.284	.292	61.298	1	.000	9.820
Hs	1.843	.272	46.067	1	.000	6.317
Some College	1.155	.269	18.426	1	.000	3.173
College	.643	.283	5.174	1	.023	1.903
Income	.000	.000	.311	1	.577	1.000
Constant	-3.749	.321	136.789	1	.000	.024

Based on this analysis we reject the hypothesis that control variables will contribute significantly to the prediction of citizens who vote.

**H2c: Social capital group resources characteristic variables will make a significant**

**contribution over and above control variables to the prediction of citizens who vote.**

The social capital characteristics were added to the model containing control variables. There were four measures of social capital used for this study: ethnic mix of friends; ethnic mix of current neighborhood; level of close feelings of ideas and interests to people of opposite races; and if cultures should be distinct, blend, or both.

When social capital resources were added to the model, the model resulted in a -2LL of 1613.496 which was a significant decrease from the control model as evidenced by Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients chi-square statistic for this block of variables (184.256,  $p < 0.05$ ; see Table 4.51).

Table 4.51: Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients Vote/Will Vote Social Capital Variables

		Chi-square	Df	Sig.
Step 1	Step	33.284	21	.043
	Block	33.284	21	.043
	Model	184.256	30	.000

The Hosmer and Lemeshow Test of Goodness of fit was acceptable (4.606,  $p > .05$ ; see Table 4.52). The p-value is insignificant, indicating that no significant differences remain between actual data and expected model values (Hair et al, 2006).

Table 4.52: Hosmer and Lemeshow Test Vote/Will Vote Social Capital Variables

Step	Chi-square	Df	Sig.
1	4.606	8	.799

The variance explained increased by 2.4 percentage points above the model containing the control variables (see Table 4.53). The percentage of cases correctly classified increased by .1% (see Table 4.54).

Table 4.55 shows significant predictors included Hispanic ( $p=.014$ ) and Asian ( $p<.001$ ) race, less than high school ( $p<.001$ ), high school ( $p<.001$ ), some college ( $p<.001$ ), college ( $p=.031$ ), very close in ideas and interests to Whites ( $p=.006$ ) and fairly close in ideas and interests to Hispanics ( $p=.048$ ), and culture blending ( $p=.026$ ).

Table 4.53: Model Summary Vote/Will Vote Social Capital Variables

Step	-2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square
1	1613.496 <sup>a</sup>	.072	.139

a. Estimation terminated at iteration number 6 because parameter estimates changed by less than .001.

Table 4.54: Classification Table<sup>a</sup> Vote/Will Vote Social Capital Variables

Observed			Predicted		
			Vote/will vote		Percentage Correct
			Yes	No	
Step 1	Vote/will vote	Yes	2170	2	99.9
		No	290	3	1.0
Overall Percentage					88.2

a. The cut value is .500

Several of the significant variables revealed negative Betas: very close in ideas and interests to Whites ( $\beta=-.544$ ) and fairly close in ideas and interests to Hispanics ( $\beta=-.629$ ) and cultural blending ( $\beta=-.498$ ) – which suggests these variables reduce predictability to the dependent variable.

Based on this analysis we accept the hypothesis that social capital group resources characteristic variables will make a significant contribution over and above control variables to the prediction of citizens who vote.

Table 4.55: Variables in the Equation Vote/Will Vote Social Capital variables

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Step 1 <sup>a</sup>						
Overall Race			36.494	4	.000	
White	-.177	.313	.322	1	.570	.837
Black	.436	.276	2.493	1	.114	1.546
Hispanic	.710	.290	5.992	1	.014	2.033
Asian	1.276	.335	14.499	1	.000	3.581
Overall Education			74.346	4	.000	
Less Hs	2.152	.298	52.202	1	.000	8.605
Hs	1.712	.275	38.643	1	.000	5.541
Some College	1.072	.272	15.559	1	.000	2.922
College	.616	.285	4.676	1	.031	1.851
Income	.000	.000	.308	1	.579	1.000
Friendmix(1)	.132	.152	.752	1	.386	1.141
Neighbormix(1)	-.058	.144	.163	1	.686	.944
Whites Overall Closeness			7.699	3	.053	
Whites Very Close	-.544	.267	4.140	1	.042	.581
Whites Fairly Close	-.629	.227	7.646	1	.006	.533
Whites Not Too Close	-.486	.255	3.633	1	.057	.615
Blacks Overall Closeness			6.541	3	.088	
Blacks Very Close	-.250	.308	.661	1	.416	.779
Blacks Fairly Close	.194	.272	.505	1	.477	1.214
Blacks Not Too Close	.322	.286	1.271	1	.260	1.380
Hispanics Overall Closeness			4.716	3	.194	
Hispanics Very Close	-.343	.285	1.455	1	.228	.709
Hispanics Fairly Close	-.498	.252	3.915	1	.048	.608

Table 4.55 continued on next page.

Table 4.55 continued.

Hispanics Not Too Close	-.517	.268	3.736	1	.053	.596
Asian Overall Closeness			1.085	3	.781	
Asian Very Close	.317	.305	1.083	1	.298	1.373
Asian Fairly Close	.150	.231	.424	1	.515	1.162
Asian Not Too Close	.112	.220	.261	1	.610	1.119
Carribbeans Overall Closeness			.083	3	.994	
Carribbeans Very Close	-.059	.300	.039	1	.844	.943
Carribbeans Fairly Close	-.057	.210	.073	1	.786	.945
Carribbeans not Too Close	-.023	.198	.013	1	.908	.977
Cultural Beliefs			11.016	4	.026	
Maintain Cultures	.680	.759	.802	1	.370	1.973
Blend Cultures	.935	.754	1.539	1	.215	2.548
Mix & Blend	.446	.804	.308	1	.579	1.562
Don't Know	1.453	.797	3.322	1	.068	4.276
Constant	-3.735	.855	19.071	1	.000	.024

**H3c: Political trust will make a significant contribution to the prediction of citizens who vote, over and beyond control variables and social capital group resources characteristic variables.**

The political trust characteristic variable was added to the model containing social capital and control variables. The model resulted in a -2LL of 1600.083 as evidenced by Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients chi-square statistic for this block of variables (197.670,  $p < 0.05$ ; see Table 4.56).

The Hosmer and Lemeshow Test of goodness of fit was acceptable (4.059,  $p > 0.05$ ; see

Table 4.57).

Table 4.56: Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients Vote/Will Vote Political Trust Variable

		Chi-square	Df	Sig.
Step 1	Step	13.414	3	.004
	Block	13.414	3	.004
	Model	197.670	33	.000

The p-value is insignificant, indicating that there are no significant differences between actual data and expected model values (Hair et al, 2006).

Table 4.57: Hosmer and Lemeshow Test Vote/Will Vote Political Trust Variable

Step	Chi-square	df	Sig.
1	4.059	8	.852

The variance explained increased by .1% (see Table 4.58). The correctly classified cases decreased by .1 % (see Table 4.59). Therefore, the political trust model did not improve classification of correctly predicted cases.

Table 4.58: Model Summary Vote/Will Vote Political Trust Variable

Step	-2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square
1	1600.083 <sup>a</sup>	.077	.149

a. Estimation terminated at iteration number 6 because parameter estimates changed by less than .001.

Table 4.60 shows significant predictors included Hispanic race ( $p=.009$ ) and Asian race ( $p<.001$ ), less than high school ( $p<.001$ ), high school ( $p<.001$ ), some college ( $p<.001$ ), college ( $p=.028$ ), closeness in ideas and interests to Whites ( $p=.048$ ), blending cultures ( $p=.018$ ), and trust in government most of the time ( $p=.018$ ) and only some of the time ( $p=.007$ ).

Table 4.59: Classification Table<sup>a</sup> Vote/Will Vote Political Trust Variable

Observed			Predicted		
			Vote/will vote		Percentage Correct
			Yes	No	
Step 1	Vote/will vote	Yes	2166	6	99.7
		No	288	5	1.7
Overall Percentage					88.1

a. The cut value is .500

Several significant variables resulted in a negative beta including very close in ideas and interest to whites ( $\beta = -.534$ ), fairly close in ideas and interest to Hispanics ( $\beta = -.580$ ), trust in government most of the time ( $\beta = -.498$ ) and trust in government only some of the time ( $\beta = -.519$ ) which suggests these variables decrease predictability to the dependent variable.

Based on this analysis the hypothesis was rejected that political trust will make a significant contribution to the prediction of citizens who vote, over and beyond control variables and social capital group resources characteristic variables.

Table 4.60: Variables in the Equation Vote/Will Vote Political Trust

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Step 1 <sup>a</sup>			36.092	4	.000	
Overall Race						
White	-.107	.314	.116	1	.734	.899
Black	.459	.277	2.744	1	.098	1.583
Hispanic	.763	.293	6.808	1	.009	2.145
Asian	1.330	.338	15.523	1	.000	3.781
Overall Education			68.638	4	.000	
Less HS	2.091	.299	48.955	1	.000	8.090
HS	1.687	.276	37.381	1	.000	5.405

Table 4.60 continued on next page

Table 4.60 continued.

Some College	1.072	.272	15.512	1	.000	2.922
College	.626	.285	4.808	1	.028	1.870
Income	.000	.000	.213	1	.644	1.000
Friendmix(1)	.120	.153	.613	1	.434	1.127
Neighbormix(1)	-.060	.144	.172	1	.678	.942
Whites Overall Closeness			6.503	3	.090	
Whites Very Close	-.534	.270	3.918	1	.048	.586
Whites Fairly Close	-.580	.230	6.363	1	.012	.560
Whites Not Too Close	-.445	.256	3.010	1	.083	.641
Blacks Overall Closeness			6.829	3	.078	
Blacks Very Close	-.178	.310	.328	1	.567	.837
Blacks Fairly Close	.261	.276	.897	1	.343	1.298
Blacks Not Too Close	.394	.289	1.861	1	.173	1.483
Hispanics Overall Closeness			4.892	3	.180	
Hispanics Very Close	-.397	.286	1.928	1	.165	.672
Hispanics Fairly Close	-.527	.253	4.324	1	.038	.590
Hispanics Not Too Close	-.525	.269	3.808	1	.051	.591
Asian Overall Closeness			1.406	3	.704	
Asian Very Close	.362	.306	1.400	1	.237	1.436
Asian Fairly Close	.155	.232	.447	1	.504	1.168
Asian Not Too Close	.115	.221	.273	1	.602	1.122
Caribbeans Overall Closeness			.072	3	.995	
Caribbeans Very Close	-.071	.300	.056	1	.813	.932
Caribbeans Fairly Close	-.046	.211	.048	1	.827	.955
Caribbeans not Too Close	-.029	.199	.021	1	.886	.972
Cultural Beliefs			11.771	4	.019	
Maintain Cultures	.718	.765	.881	1	.348	2.050
Blend Cultures	.992	.760	1.706	1	.191	2.697
Mix & Blend	.481	.810	.353	1	.552	1.618
Don't Know	1.515	.804	3.551	1	.060	4.548
Overall Trust			14.085	3	.003	

Table 4.60 continued on next page.

Table 4.60 continued.

Just About Always	.161	.281	.328	1	.567	1.174
Most of the Time	-.498	.210	5.603	1	.018	.608
Only Some of the Time	-.519	.192	7.353	1	.007	.595
Constant	-3.506	.866	16.401	1	.000	.030

## **CHAPTER FIVE: CHARACTERISTICS OF DATASET, INTERPRETATIONS, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This chapter discusses biases of the NPS dataset related to the dependent variables used in this study, lack of meaningfulness of the data, key findings related to statistical significance of certain predictors, and opportunities for further research utilizing these study measures and other measures of social capital and political trust to predict electoral and non-electoral forms of political engagement.

### **Characteristics of the Dataset**

The NPS dataset has certain characteristics that fundamentally shape the interpretation of this study's findings. Thus, it is important to review these characteristics before interpreting the findings.

#### **Dependent Variable Variance Issues**

Two of the dependent variables for this study had low variance in the responses making it difficult to improve upon the prediction from the null model.

First, for the political engagement variable 'attend political meetings or rallies,' eighty-three percent (83%) of respondents responded that they did not attend political meetings or rallies. Not surprisingly, the logistic regression analysis in this study found that eighty-three percent (83%) of the cases were correctly predicted and one-hundred percent (100%) of the correctly predicted cases represented those who responded 'no' to attending political meetings or rallies. Thus, there was only a minimal opportunity for improvement in the predictive model related to attending political meetings or rallies, even after social capital and political trust variables are added to the model.

Second, similar issues were found with the dependent political engagement variable for voting. Eighty-eight (88%) of the respondents indicated they voted or intended to vote, which is

a twenty-two percentage point (22%) increase from the overall voter turnout in the 2004 Presidential election of 64% (<http://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/voting/cb05-73.html>, US Census Bureau Reports, 2005). Eighty-eight (88%) percent of the cases were correctly predicted by the null model, providing minimal opportunity for improvement in prediction. One-hundred percent (100%) of the correctly predicted cases were biased towards those who responded ‘yes’ to voted or will vote. Unsurprisingly, once social capital and political trust variables were added to the voting model, the overall percentage of correctly predicted cases was unchanged (88%) – which demonstrates no improvement in predictability beyond the control variables.

It is also important to note that the NPS data included a significant number of missing cases related to voting. Respondents that responded ‘don’t know’ or ‘refused to answer’ to voting were not included in the logistical regression analysis, resulting in eight-hundred and seventy-four (874) missing cases. If the 874 cases had responded ‘yes’ or ‘no’ instead of ‘don’t know’ or ‘refused,’ the model could have resulted in a higher variance among cases and a stronger predictive model.

Unlike the political engagement activities related to ‘voted/will vote’ and ‘attending political meetings,’ the dependent variable ‘talking to others to persuade them to vote for a candidate or party’ had a more equal balance of ‘no’ and ‘yes’ responses. The overall percentage of cases correctly predicted for the null model was 51.4%, unlike ‘voting’ (83%) and ‘attending political meetings variables’ (88%). Talking to others to persuade them to vote for a party or candidate provided a better opportunity for the logistic regression to improve predictability once social capital and political trust variables were added to the model.

### **Large Sample Size.**

The NPS sample for this study was large (n=3,339) which provided unique opportunities for this study. However, it is also important to note that it gave this study very high statistical power enabling even the smallest effect sizes to be detected as significant. One has to be very careful in interpreting the findings because the high power results in some statistically significant predictors that have no practical meaning.

### **Interpretations of Key Findings**

Because of the issues discussed above, the key findings of this study will be discussed by dependent variable.

#### **Attend Political Meetings or Rallies**

Unfortunately the predictors used in this study did not result in any improvement in predicting this dependent variable. As noted above, 83% of the respondents to the NPS study reported not attending political meetings or rallies which provided the baseline comparison prediction ratio. The final predictive model did not improve upon this.

Thus, even though steps in the hierarchical regression were significant and there were some statistically significant predictors, they have no practical meaning. They are due entirely to the high power of the study. The simple fact is our prediction without any predictor variables—that 83% would not attend a meeting or rally—is as good as the final prediction model. The key variables of interest in this study (social capital and political trust) failed to add to the accuracy of predicting whether people would attend a meeting or rally.

#### **Vote or Will Vote**

Unfortunately the predictors used in this study did not result in any improvement in predicting this dependent variable. As noted above, 88% of the respondents to the NPS study reported they voted or will vote which provided the baseline comparison prediction ratio. The

final predictive model did not improve upon this.

Thus, even though steps in the hierarchical regression were significant and there were some statistically significant predictors, they have no practical meaning. They are due entirely to the high power of the study. The simple fact is our prediction without any predictor variables—that 88% would vote or plan to vote—is as good as the final prediction model. The key variables of interest in this study (social capital and political trust) failed to add to the accuracy of predicting whether people did or would vote.

### **Talking to Others to Persuade Them to Vote for a Candidate or Party.**

This dependent variable was the only one for which there was any improvement in the classification ratio—and for which there was any substantial opportunity to improve upon the classification. Unfortunately, the improvement from adding social capital and political trust was small. Overall, the best model correctly classified 60.2% of the cases, an increase of 8.8% over the null model. Interestingly, our prediction of “yes” responses got worse while the prediction of “no” responses improved. It is questionable whether these results have much practical significance since the improvement was relatively small.

Despite the small improvement in classification, it is the only model for which it is meaningful to talk about individual predictors though the reader is cautioned to remember that the effect of these predictors is small. Results from this model show that:

- Asians are more likely to talk to persuade others. This finding is consistent with other literature which shows that ethnic Chinese who have made the effort to become American citizens have stronger incentives to join organizations of both varieties and are 16 percent more likely to participate in both American and Chinese culture (Uslaner & Conley, 2003). Astonishingly, the same study (Uslaner & Conley,

2003) revealed that fifty-nine percent (59%) of ethnic Chinese between the ages of 18 and 24 take part in American national political life, compared to 35 to 40 percent of middle-aged respondents (40-69 years old) and 20 percent of people 70 and older (Uslaner & Conley, 2003).

- Income was not a significant predictor. This finding is not consistent with most literature related to income and political engagement. A Pew Research Center Study (2010) revealed that income and education have a positive correlation to political engagement (Smith, Schlozman, Verba, Brady, 2009). Though income does influence political engagement, especially as related to political consumerism, Solt (2006) cited (Schlozman, Burns, & Verba, 1999) theory that social networks established while employed encourages engagement because the connections and relationships citizens build while at work often lead to social and politically relevant discussions and activities at work or outside of work.

- Education was a significant predictor. When control variables were added to the baseline model, the results revealed that education had significant levels of prediction to talking to persuade others to vote for a candidate or party. Literature shows education as a significant factor that influences political engagement (Solt, 2006; Farmer, 2006). The findings from the NPS data suggest that education is a significant predictor among those who engage in politics by talking to others to persuade them to vote for a particular candidate or party, when income, race, social capital, and political trust are the independent variables. Therefore, the American educational system should focus on providing resources to ensure that every citizen is educated and encourage citizens to further their education to increase the likelihood that citizens will be politically engaged.

- Social Capital variables related to closeness of ideas and interests to other races were negative predictors. Social capital variables related to closeness of ideas and interests to other races were negatively related. For example, respondents who felt very close in ideas and interests to blacks had a 42% less chance of talking to others to persuade them to vote for a particular candidate or party. Respondents who indicated that they were very close to the ideas and interests of Hispanics had a 39% less chance of talking to others to persuade them to vote for a particular candidate or party. These findings suggest that closeness in ideas and interests to other races decreases the likelihood that a person will talk to others to persuade them to vote.

- Friendship ethnic mix and neighborhood ethnic mix were not significant predictors. The 2001 Social Capital Community Benchmark survey ([http://www.cfsv.org/communitysurvey/results\\_pr.html](http://www.cfsv.org/communitysurvey/results_pr.html)) supports the findings in this study that friendship and neighborhood ethnic mix have no significant relationship to political engagement. The Social Benchmark Survey results show that the more diverse a community, the less likely residents are to trust other people, connect across ethnic lines, and participate in politics. The results also showed that people of more ethnically diverse communities are more likely to feel that ‘people running my community don’t really care much what happens to me’ (Social Capital Community Benchmark Survey, 2001). Diverse neighborhoods had lower levels of trust for their neighbors, did not attend meetings or rallies, were less likely to vote, less likely to participate in demonstrations or protests, and were less likely to sign petitions (Social Capital Community Benchmark Survey, 2001). This may suggest that having ethnically diverse friends and living in

ethnically neighborhoods are predictors of political disengagement, instead of political engagement.

- Political trust was related to talking to others. Political trust was positively related to talking to others to persuade them to vote for a candidate or party. Based on the results of this study, higher levels of political trust such as ‘just about always,’ ‘most of the time’, and ‘some of the time’ positively influenced talking to others to persuade them to vote for a candidate or party and attend political meetings or rallies. This may suggest that the higher the level of trust people have in government the greater likelihood they will talk to others to persuade them to vote for a candidate or party. A Pew Research Study (2010) recently revealed that 8 in 10 Americans don’t trust the federal government (Smith, Schlozman, Verba, Brady, 2009). The study also revealed that more than 6 in 10 Americans (62%) believe that the government is unfair to certain people or groups and fifty-six percent (56%) believe that government does not do enough to help the average American (Smith, Schlozman, Verba, Brady, 2009). Unfortunately, very minimal literature and research has attempted to explain the predictability of political trust on political engagement.

### **Summary of Interpretations**

As previously stated, due to the large sample (n=3339) in this study, statistical power was high enough to detect even the smallest changes in variance explained. As power increases, the chances of accepting a false null hypothesis (Type II error) decreases. The power of this study is so high that the significant predictors are not meaningful to the purposes of this study.

Concluding that the hypotheses are significant, without recognizing and understanding the biases in the study could lead to false conclusions regarding the ability of social capital and

political trust to predict political engagement. Though some of the results are statistically significant, the minimal improvement of each model does not support the practical purposes of this study to empower and encourage elected officials, public administrators, and government agencies with the information needed to build trust among constituents, create programs that provide individual and group resources to expand citizen social capital, and ultimately to create opportunities for citizens to engage politically to address issues related to the responsiveness of government to their needs.

The significant results in this study offer opportunities for further exploration into the theory that social capital and political trust predict certain types of political engagement, despite two dependent variables having little chance of improvement. Though the results found that social capital and political trust did not have predictive power, there are opportunities for further research related to these variables and their ability to predict political engagement.

### **Further Research**

This section outlines recommendations for future research.

#### **Non-biased Dataset**

If this study is performed in the future, it is recommended that a sample that is less biased in responses be used. In searching the Inter-University Consortium for University Research (<http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/ICPSR/index.jsp>) database, one other dataset besides the National Politics Study was retrieved that included the variables related to this study. The United States Citizenship, Involvement and Democracy Survey (CID) (Howard, Gibson, Stolle, 2005) dataset may offer a less biased sample than the National Politics Study, and offers a closer representation of the U.S. population among these ethnic minorities and white Americans. However the CID Study does not offer the unique opportunity to study a large sample of ethnic

minorities, since the study includes 111 Black respondents, 124 Hispanic respondents, and 706 White respondents (<http://www8.georgetown.edu/centers/cdacs/cid/trust.pdf>, 2005 p. 1).

### **Statistical Methodology**

Future research should also consider using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) or Latent Class Analysis to study relationships among variables in this study. Structural Equation Modeling is a technique that analyzes relationships between multiple independent and dependent variables based on hypothesized constructs. Structural Equation Modeling moves beyond simply measuring relationships allowing direct and indirect effects among independent and dependent variables to be measured by producing a simultaneous estimation of all coefficients in the model. Latent Class Analysis does the same thing but for nominal or ordinal data.

### **Political Engagement**

Michael Donald and Samuel Popkin (2001) argue that a vast amount of statistics related to political engagement, specifically voter turnout, tends to overestimate the decline. Donald & Popkin (2001) argue that the statistics include ineligible voters and the research shows overall voting rates have decreased. However the rate of decrease is less when excluding the non-eligible voters and voting rates have not been diminishing as reported (McDonald & Popkin, 2001).

A fact sheet published by the Annie Casey Foundation entitled Race Matters: Unequal Opportunities for Civic Participation (Annie Casey Foundation, 2006) cited (Frasure & Williams, 2002) that Latinos are more likely not to be engaged in political activities because of citizenship status in the United States, which make them non-eligible voters. Although residency is a barrier to voting and participation in American civic activities, Bedolla (2004) cited (Leighley and Vedlitz, 1999; Garcia, 1997; Garcia, Falcon and de la Garza, 1996) that there is

still a gap in Latino political participation even when controlling for socioeconomic status and citizenship status.

Further research should explore contemporary non-electoral types of political engagement. Voting has been over-studied as a variable of political engagement. Though the variables in this study focused on traditional forms of electoral and non-electoral political engagement, there is opportunity for further research to examine nontraditional and more contemporary forms of political engagement such as e-deliberation, e-petitions, contributing money online, political consumerism, political blogging, etc. Citizenship norms are changing and affecting the way citizens are choosing to influence politics. Citizens are using informal networks to build social capital and become politically engaged by meeting other people in informal settings to share ideas, and mobilize for causes.

Many of these informal networks are initiated via online social networking websites. A study by the Pew Research Center (Smith, Schlozman, Verba, & Brady, 2009) found that 33% of internet users participated in online social networking websites and that these users also engaged in political activities while online. Further research should explore whether these informal connections lead to more formal organized networks and if these informal social networks predict political engagement. If people in general, including younger generations, are joining social networking sites and continue to use these sites as tools to build social capital, the question must be answered if these social networking sites actually predict political engagement even into adulthood. Further research should also explore how the digital divide among whites and ethnic minorities, as well as low income and higher income Americans, impact citizens' ability to engage in social networking and internet based political engagement. Americans may have flat or decreasing electoral participation in voting but increasing participation in other forms of non-

electoral activities.

### **Social Capital**

In this study racial minorities were analyzed to identify their types of social capital as measured by friendship ethnic mix, neighborhood ethnic mix, closeness in ideas and interests to other races, and belief in maintaining or blending cultures. Interacting with members of one's own ethnicity requires an identification and understanding of one's collective identity and closeness of ideas and interests to one's own race.

The results showed that race was not a strong predictor and these levels of significance did not improve when social capital variables were added to the model. One may interpret this and argue that citizens who have ethnically diverse friends, live in ethnically diverse neighborhoods, share some level of ideas and interests of others, and who believe in cultural blending, do not benefit enough to predict political engagement unless these relationships involve political ties. Research (McClurg, 2003) suggests that if a citizen's social network does not consist of discussions and activities that encourage political participation, then that type of social network is not necessarily a good predictor of political engagement. Social networks that provide civic and political resources allow citizens to find out who candidates are and where candidates stand on issues, thereby increasing the likelihood that citizens will become politically engaged and maybe even vote. Further research should examine social capital as it relates to social connections and relationships, but also social capital as it relates to social political activities such as political discussions in social networks, political traditions in social networks, and political norms in social relationships. Social capital, as it relates to social activities centered on politics, may yield better prediction of political engagement.

### **Political Trust**

Measuring trust in government is multifaceted and demands more research, especially as it relates to human social capital, government decision making processes, citizen policy preferences, and government performance.

Unfortunately, very minimal literature was found that attempts to explain how political trust predicts political engagement. Evaluations are based on government performance indicators such as its ability to respond to the needs of individuals or groups of individuals, its ability to be fiscally responsible with taxpayer dollars, and the integrity of government workers and officials. A Pew Research study (2010) recently revealed that nearly 8 in 10 Americans say they don't trust the federal government (Schlozman, Verba, & Brady, 2009). However, declining trust in institutions is not only limited to government (Nye, 1997).

Gershtenson & Plane (2007) believe that the national government is too often the single focus of studies related to political trust. The American federal government is very visible, yet citizen perceptions towards government and levels of trust might also be created through media and other non-governmental or social factors. However, there are other levels of government that should be explored and other types of institutions that may influence citizen trust in government. In the American democratic system, state governments retain some authority over political and policy decisions that impact the lives of citizens, and local and state governments have an influence on the programs and products of private and non-profit organizations.

Though this study focused on political trust in Washington, further research should examine citizen trust towards local and state government as well as non-governmental institutions.

“For individuals, social capital has been linked to improved health, earnings, and happiness (Putnam, 2000:319,326), while at the organizational level, researchers have

found strong associations between social capital and 'corporate entrepreneurship' (Chung and Gibbons, 1997), firm mortality (Pennings, Lee, and Witteloostuijn, 1998), the creation of human and intellectual capital (Coleman, 1988), the formation of start-up companies (Walker, Kogut, and Shan, 1997), the strength of supplier relations (Baker, 1990; Uzzi, 1997), interfirm learning (Kraatz, 1998), the expansion of regional production networks (Romo and Schwartz, 1995), and the formation of strategic alliances (Chung, Singh, and Lee, 2000)" (Chung & Gibbons 1997 p. 17).

Citizens often expect government to set policies that regulate both private and non-profit organizations and citizen confidence in the government's ability to do such could influence citizen trust in government and these institutions.

### **Focus on Ethnic Minorities**

Researchers must increase research related to factors that drive political activity in racial minority communities and this study suggests predictors that should be explored further beyond race, income, and education – especially among racial minorities. Other types of individual and group resources besides income, education, race, friendship mix, attitudes towards connecting with other races, and political trust may also predict political engagement among ethnic minorities. Researchers should further explore minority levels of trust towards organizations and institutions that were created to serve as a political voice and advocate on behalf of ethnic minorities, and whether the individual and group resources these organizations created and provided for citizens are effectively building citizen social capital that can predict citizen political engagement. Examples of such institutions may be the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, PolicyLink, ACORN, and Rainbow Push Coalition.

Based on a review of literature, political trust has rarely been studied since the women's

rights and civil rights movements. “The existence of distrustful citizens who are convinced that government serves the interests of few rather than the interests of all is a barrier to the realization of the democratic ideal” (Amberbach & Walker, 1970). A representative democracy cannot be successful until racial and ethnic minorities are actively engaged in policies and feel politically equal. During school desegregation and busing, the United States was divided across racial lines as blacks became politically engaged to demand equal access to education and the resources provided by government to educate their population. During this time, and into the 1970s (Damico, Conway, Damico, 2000), blacks were least likely to trust others because of injustices they felt were unfair and government’s lack of urgency to provide equal access to education. During this period in time, African Americans not only had interpersonal distrust for White Americans, but studies show there was a lack of trust for government (Loury, 1977).

Further research should be done to explain if ethnic minorities are more trusting of political leaders of their own race, which may explain the relationship between political trust and political engagement – maybe even in highly white populated communities where social capital is high. Or, are ethnic minorities more politically engaged in white communities being led by white political leaders when they feel disconnected or their concerns are not being heard.

### **Implications for Human Resource Development**

Civic and political engagement is an issue that garners the attention, resources, and research of Human Resource Development (HRD) and adult learning professionals. Human Resource Development, through research and interventions, can have a positive impact on civic and political engagement among individuals, organizations, and society (systems) as a whole. Human Resource Development professionals should study the roles political trust and social capital play in political engagement, and also the individual and group level resources needed to

build social capital and encourage political engagement. The evidence supported by research should then be followed by civic education and training programs in academic institutions, as well as government, nonprofit, and private organizations that will result in a stronger democracy for all American citizens.

Human Resource Development is an ever growing field of study that encompasses both individual and organizational development strategies through learning and performance improvement processes. “Human Resource Development is a process for developing and unleashing human expertise through organizational development and personnel training and development for the purpose of improving performance” (Swanson & Holton, 2001 p. 4). A study by Kaufman and Tepper (1999) noted that organizations that offer opportunities for formal interactions such as arts/cultural organizations, mutual benefit societies, and sporting clubs had a significantly positive relationship to higher voter turnout rates. Human Resource Development professional must create these opportunities within organizations to foster social and political engagement. “Explanations for the relationship between membership in social organizations and political involvement includes arguments that the membership stimulates a collective interest in politics (e.g., Putnam 2000), makes people available to elites for mobilization (e.g., Leighley, 1996), and helps people learn skills that make participation easier (e.g., Verba *et al.* 1995)” (McClurg, 2003 p. 4).

### **Social Learning Theory**

Gibson (2004) argues that the field of Human Resource Development has not reached its full potential in connecting learning and development to citizen environment(s). Social learning theory suggests that citizens can learn and develop through engagement and networking to resolve issues that impact their communities. Communities and neighborhoods, particularly poor

and minority communities, sometimes lack the social capital needed to reach their maximum personal and professional potential. People who lack the ability to access information, learn the necessary steps to take actions, who do not have the self-efficacy to become politically engaged, and who are unskilled at developing relationships, need to learn how to be politically engaged. This offers opportunity for HRD professionals to train, coach, and mentor elected officials, government agency employees, and community based organizations on:

- Community organizing;
- Advocacy and lobbying;
- Coalition building;
- Developing relationships;
- Developing socially responsible leadership;
- Conducting community needs assessments;
- Training citizens on how to exercise the various forms of civic engagement (i.e. voting, lobbying, writing letters to the editor, hosting town hall meetings, etc.)
- Measuring and tracking community development progress.

Political engagement requires information sharing and relationship development that will lead to a better informed and active citizenry. Political engagement involves engagement in community activities including membership in organizations, strategic planning around advocacy, coalition building, voting, lobbying, and other forms of individual and group or organizational engagement. Human Resource professionals can help organizational leaders engage personnel in activities that address community problems, as well as activities that connect organizations with constituents and society. A key priority for organizations is the enhancement of its leader pool (Rock & Garavan, 2006) and developmental relationships. Rock & Garavan

(2006) define development relationships as the act of initiating contact with others in hopes of connecting and building relationships. HRD professionals can help organizations and individuals develop skills in relationship building and create opportunities for organizations to connect with communities and neighborhoods to address social issues – including issues related to (mis)trust and (dis)engagement of local, state, and national government agencies. Human Resource Development can help governmental agencies assess community needs, address community needs, and identify gaps in services related to community needs – which will increase community engagement and build citizen trust in government agencies

### **HRD: Community and Societal Level of Analysis**

Garavan, McGuire, and O'Donnel (2004) suggest that HRD is evolving into a field that understands the link between social networks and how they build strong communities, organizations, and people. HRD experts can benefit society from the community perspective by working with community based organizations to produce outcomes from a broader perspective that benefit society—and how they engage society. The Human Resource Development field of study has opportunity to further engage in research and professional practices related to connecting the community and society to human development and learning experiences (Garavan et al., 2004). “The HRD literature has given little consideration to the learning community as a mechanism to facilitate change at a community-societal level (Boot & Reynolds, 1997; Brookfield, 1987; O'Donnell, 1999)” (Garavan et. al, 2004 p. 425).

### **Conclusion**

The minimal improvement in predictability of each model does not support the practical purpose of the study: to empower elected officials with the confidence that political trust encourages political engagement and encourage public administrators and elected officials to

develop interventions that help build citizen trust in government and encourage social networks and ties across ethnicities and neighborhoods that encourage political engagement. However, the significant results in this study do offer opportunities for further exploration into the theory that social capital and political trust may predict certain types of political engagement.

If political engagement is essential to the survival of American democracy, and if the political science, public administration, and organizational development literature lacks in research that expands beyond the traditional explanations of how socioeconomic status (Brady, Verba, Schlozman, 1995) relates or predicts political engagement, then this model provides an opportunity for further examination into more contemporary factors that predict political engagement related to social capital and political trust. Researchers must broaden their conceptual thinking to assist government officials and government organizations in understanding the benefits of social relations and government integrity and efficiency in fostering social relationships and political trust that encourages political engagement. The model created in this study establishes a foundation for further research related to social capital, political trust, and the likelihood that both variables can predict political engagement. The results of this study are worthy of further exploration, with a dataset that is less biased. To argue that this model is invalid, as a result of the findings in this study, would be premature and hinder opportunities to examine predictors other than race, income, and education. More meaningful results from future studies could lead to a paradigm shift in how government encourages engagement, how government behaves to foster citizen trust, and how government creates policies and programs that respond to the needs of all citizens regardless of race and socioeconomic status.

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## **VITA**

James Gilmore, Jr., is a native of Baton Rouge, Louisiana. He earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in political science from Southern University. After Southern University, James attended Louisiana State University and earned a master's in public administration. In 2005, James was selected as a Fannie Mae Fellow and attended Harvard University's John F. Kennedy Senior Executives in State and Local Government Program to expand his knowledge in the area of community leadership and development. While working on his Doctor of Philosophy studies, James co-authored and published two peer reviewed journal articles entitled Environmental Leadership Development: A Framework for Designing and Evaluating a Training Program which was published in the European Journal of Social Sciences and Developing Social Entrepreneurs for Developing Pan-African Nations which was published in the Business Renaissance Quarterly.

Upon completion of his masters degree, James was hired by United States Gypsum Corporation as a Human Resources Supervisor and was later promoted to Human Resources Manager. In both positions, James managed recruiting and hiring, workforce training and development, safety, and employee relations.

In 2003, James joined Governor Kathleen Babineaux Blanco's administration as a Policy Advisor on Social Services, Housing, and Community Development. His job activities included researching, analyzing, and advising in the areas of temporary assistance to needy families, childcare, foster care, affordable housing, and strategies to reducing poverty.

In 2006, James was appointed Vice-President of the Louisiana Housing Finance Agency. While there, James assisted the Agency's President in formulating and implementing single-family and multifamily housing policies and programs to help Louisiana increase its supply of

safe, decent and affordable housing. He was also responsible for providing workforce leadership and training, assisted with the direction of the Agency's financial, administrative and business affairs, managing its \$12 million operating budget, \$2 billion combined Mortgage Revenue Bond portfolio, including Community Development Block Grant, HOME funds and Housing Trust Fund.

James is the President of The Bayard Research Group, a government relations, public policy, and strategic planning firm based in Slidell, Louisiana. The firm specializes in coordinating local, state, and federal campaigns, writing and advocating public policy, and strategic planning and organizational development.