

BRIDGING VERSUS BONDING SOCIAL CAPITAL: EXPLAINING THE CONTENT OF ANTI-PATRIOT RESOLUTIONS

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ABSTRACT: There have been 414 local resolutions passed across the country protesting some portion of the USA Patriot Act. These anti-Patriot Act resolutions differ widely with regard to their scope and content. They also come from nearly every state and from communities that vary both demographically and ideologically, yet these variations have not received scholarly attention. Research on social capital makes a strong distinction between the effects of bridging versus bonding social capital and we test two hypotheses derived from this research. The first is that as the number of bonding organizations in a community increases, the number of issues supporting the central claim of a community's anti-Patriot Act resolution will decrease. Second, an increase in the number of bridging organizations is associated with an increase in the number of issues supporting the central claim of the resolution. We find support for both hypotheses suggesting that bridging organizations play an important civic role in our democracy as they facilitate important skills for members and encourage voicing one's concern while accepting others worries.

Keywords: Patriot Act; social capital; bridging social capital; bonding social capital; Putnam; political participation; civic engagement

INTRODUCTION

The study of social capital as a collective benefit typically focuses on the effects of political participation (Ikeda & Richey, 2005; La Due Lake & Huckfeldt, 1998) based on the assumption that more participation is better for the community and society as a whole. A second wave of social capital research has begun to look beyond its effect on participation. These works look specifically at the consequences of this participation and how it affects individuals' personal skills as leaders, communicators and negotiators (Green & Brock, 1998) or citizens' political knowledge, and thus ability to hold elected officials accountable (Claibourn & Martin, 2007). With so much scholarly work focused directly on the effect of social capital on individuals and participation, its effect on what is specifically produced by the newly acquired skills is left unexplored. We believe this is an important missing piece of the social capital puzzle. In other words, increasing participation does little good if the participation being generated fails to produce something of value to the community. We fill this gap by utilizing the almost entirely forgotten local community protests of the USA Patriot Act of 2001 (henceforth Patriot Act). In doing so, we look beyond the typical questions about political participation such as why one community would produce an anti-Patriot Act resolution and another would not. Instead, we are interested in understanding the effect of social capital on the *content* of these community protests.

In 2001, the Patriot Act passed both chambers of Congress with overwhelming majorities (357-66 in the House and 98-1 in the Senate) in response to the terrorist attacks on September 11th of that year. Since then, the Act has created considerable controversy. To date, 414 communities from nearly every state have expressed their concerns by passing anti-Patriot Act resolutions. These communities differ widely in terms of their demographics and ideology. The issues these resolutions touch on range from general claims of constitutional violations to very specific concerns about civil liberties violations such as domestic surveillance. The significant variation in content, as well as the differences in the communities themselves, allows us to utilize these resolutions as a relatively novel test of the effect that civic organizations have on the content of participation.

Putnam's (1993) classic work on social capital suggests that certain types of social networks and the density of those social organizations in a community can facilitate coordinated action. Specifically, Putnam points to an important distinction between two types of social capital producing community organizations—bridging and bonding. Bridging organizations produce positive social capital by attracting a diverse set of individuals. Putnam also posits that such groups are able to teach citizens that democracy is a messy and conflict-ridden process because they advance informed, rational-critical discourse. Bonding organizations, on the other hand, produce less desirable social capital, while attracting homogeneous groups of individuals who simply reinforce already held beliefs. Despite the clear importance of the distinction between these two types of organizations, there have been remarkably few attempts to demonstrate their differing effects.

In what follows, we parse community organizations as either bridging or bonding and then test the supposition that communities with larger numbers of bridging organizations will produce more content-rich anti-Patriot Act resolutions than those with fewer. We also test the related supposition that larger numbers of bonding organizations will reduce the scope of anti-Patriot Act resolutions. The anti-Patriot Act resolutions utilized here, of course, all make the same claim that the Patriot Act itself constitutes bad public policy, but they vary considerably in the number of grounds supporting the claim. We argue that this variance can be explained by the number and types of organizations found in these communities. Ultimately, we find support for the positive influence of social capital produced by bridging organizations and negative influence of bonding organizations based on the quality of argument contained in anti-Patriot Act resolutions.

A THEORY OF SOCIAL CAPITAL

The trumpeting of the normatively desirable connection between civic engagement and good citizenship probably reached its zenith with the publication of Putnam's *Bowling Alone* (1995, 2000). Putnam, of course, was not the first to point to the value of individual connections to their larger community as primary drivers of democratic success (e.g., Almond & Verba 1963/1989; Tocqueville 1840/1994). However, his book struck a chord beyond the halls of academic institutions with the popular press across the globe taking notice (Will, 1995; Uchitelle, 2000; Sheehan, 2000). These popular accounts of Putnam's work often obscure its nuance, in that not all types of civic engagement are created equal. In his work, Putnam defines social capital as "features of social organization, such as trust, norms, and networks that can improve the efficiency of society facilitating coordinated actions" (Putnam 1993, p. 167). Social capital entails that the relationships between people and the norms and attitudes these relationships foster can be productive. Putnam (1993, 2000) has argued that civic groups can help maintain or improve existing democracies by teaching its members tolerance and promoting compromise. Tocqueville's idea (1840/1994) that one's membership in *civil* associations would produce a habit of political participation has been upheld by empirical research in a number of countries (Verba, Nie, & Kim, 1978; Barnes & Kaase, 1979; Wolfinger & Rosenstone, 1980).

Not only do the bonds of social capital affect the sheer quantity of political participation, they also affect its quality. The quality of participation is important for theories regarding civil societies that promote the creation of a public sphere where citizens engage in an informed, rational-critical discourse (Habermas, 1989; Calhoun, 1993). Such a public space not only fosters respect for opposing viewpoints but also encourages citizens and organizations to bring forward their reasoned arguments. Associations who oppose the Patriot Act should therefore feel more comfortable passing resolutions when the overall level of social capital in the community is relatively high. In such communities, opposition may be strong, yet likely to be presented in a civil fashion, without unnecessary and personal hostility.

In addition, communities with high levels of social capital allow for quicker dissemination of new opinions and suggestions. This is the result of increased communication through the larger number of networks one

belongs to where individuals are exposed to more political ideas and debates. By participating in civil groups, individuals may change some of their preferences and may experience an increased capacity to act (Paxton, 2002). Therefore, the overall level of participation should increase. In sum, there are a number of arguments why we should see a positive relationship between social capital and local political activism, as is the case with the passage of local resolutions against national policy, such as the Patriot Act.

BRIDGING VS. BONDING SOCIAL CAPITAL

The social capital story is more complex than to simply say that more community organizations build more social capital and, therefore, are all good. Yet, most works looking at the importance of group participation tend to lump organizations together into one category (La Due Lake & Huckfeldt, 1998; Claibourn & Martin, 2007; Keele, 2007). However, there is reason to suspect that not all organizations may have the same effect. While Putnam (1993, 2000) argues that membership in voluntary associations can lead people to trust each other, to discuss issues of community concern, and to band together for collective action, he also makes clear that one needs to distinguish between the aforementioned bonding social capital and bridging social capital.

Bridging social capital links individuals to people who are different from themselves, the classic example being bowling leagues (Putnam, 1993, 2000). Bridging organizations attract a diverse set of individuals who, because of their different perspectives, quite often engage in informed, rational-critical discourse within their organizations. These types of groups and organizations are deemed best at creating a desirable social fabric. The suggestion is that the good civic engagement that has been believed to be so important for quality democratic participation and competence is only created by organizations producing bridging social capital. Bonding social capital, however, has a different effect. These types of groups and organizations bring together similar, like-minded individuals that simply reinforce what they already believe. They seldom engage in spirited, controversial discourse where one has to defend one's own positions. It is important to note that these bonding organizations are still viewed as institutions that increase participation (Putnam 1993, 2000). However, the type of participation differs considerably from that which is produced by bridging organizations.

The theoretical development of the role of social capital in general, and bridging and bonding organizations in particular, has outpaced the scholarly evidence supporting it. Much of this problem may be due to the opacity of the distinction between bonding and bridging organizations (Geys & Murdoch, 2008). Hill and Matsubayashi (2005) provide one of the few direct, empirical tests of the role of bonding versus bridging groups. They find support for the ill effects of bonding social capital, but fail to find support for the positive effects of bridging social capital. Lee and Moon (2011) focus on volunteering in the Korean immigrant community and find that volunteering for ethnic charitable organizations is not associated with volunteering for mainstream charitable organizations. However, the news is not all bad. In their study of religious congregations and volunteering, Becker and Dhingra (2001) find that this type of volunteering, while seemingly bonding in nature, involved community outreach beyond the walls of the particular congregation.

In a particularly interesting study, Krishna (2007) focuses on how social organizations are created. That is, do the social manifestations spring to life organically from the community itself, or are they pushed and supported by groups and individuals external to the local communities? Krishna examines the growth of social capital in villages in India over the course of seven years. The analysis finds that organizations supported and advocated by outsiders did little to contribute to the desired growth in social capital. It is only the organizations and groups initiated by the communities themselves that appear to have produced good social capital in this case.

We find this to be particularly relevant to the study of local political and labor organizations in the United States. Political organizations connected with national political parties and labor organizations connected with large national organizations such as the AFL-CIO, we argue, are similar to organizations supported and advocated for by outsiders in the case of Indian villages in Krishna's work. Thus, not only do these two types of groups likely act as bonding organizations, but they are also generally created and heavily subsidized by people and groups external to the local community. Indeed, previous research also shows that people often participate in collective action through interpersonal ties, that is, informal networks (Snow et al., 1980; della Porta 1988; McAdam 1988; Gould 1995), not formal networks like political parties and unions. All this suggests that labor and political organizations are the most likely to function as bonding organizations. Therefore, the groups that are most likely to build desirable social capital in these communities consist of other types of organizations. As a result, in order to gauge the effect of organizations on social capital, one must separate labor and political organizations from other types of community groups.

In summary, our expectations regarding the effects of bonding versus bridging organizations are quite clear. On the one hand, bonding organizations have an adverse effect on the community, as individuals build walls around themselves though the association with only like-minded individuals. On the other hand, bridging organizations have a positive effect on the community as individuals learn to experience and appreciate (at a minimum tolerate) alternative points of view. In addition, past scholarly work suggests that there is ample reason to believe that political and union organizations are the most likely to produce bonding social capital.¹ Thus, separating these types of community organizations from the others becomes very important, not only when attempting to ascertain the effect of social capital on community involvement, but also when demonstrating its effect on the actual content of this participation. Here we are particularly interested in the latter concept and moving the social capital discussion in a direction that takes the intensity of participation seriously.

¹ Political organizations and unions, of course, do not exhaust all the potential types of organizations that might fall into this category. By focusing on these two we offer the beginnings to a research agenda that attempts to parse the influence of various types of groups. Future work should continue down this path in identifying other specific types of groups.

CONNECTING BRIDGING AND BONDING SOCIAL CAPITAL TO THE PRODUCTION OF ANTI-PATRIOT ACT RESOLUTION CONTENT

The research on social capital that makes a distinction between bridging and bonding social capital suggests expectations about the effect that these different types of organizations will have on participation. However, the lack of scholarly work on how these expectations translate to understanding the content of participation leaves a large hole in the literature. We now turn our attention to making the connection between these expectations and the length of the content of local anti-Patriot Act resolutions.

The anti-Patriot Act resolutions are generally fairly short, typically ranging from just a single paragraph to a few pages. The brevity of these documents is not surprising given that they are simply statements of displeasure rather than legal documents expected to eventually be enacted into law. When we break each resolution down, we are able to identify each of the issues mentioned by the resolutions in support of its central claim. These issues typically fall within two broad categories, (1) grievances that parts of the Patriot Act constitute specific violations of a portion of the Constitution, or (2) grievances that identify specific violations of individual rights and liberties. The depth and richness of the content of each of these communities' resolutions can be measured by looking at the number of issues each community chooses to raise in opposition to the Patriot Act.

The theoretical considerations we discussed earlier lead us to the expectation that bridging organizations specifically contribute positively to a higher level of social capital in a community. In such communities, protest in the form a resolution can be brought up and advanced to a greater extent because the environment promotes a rational-critical discourse where people are more open to new suggestions and ideas. This positive social fabric may allow the members of the community to more easily accept specific reservations concerning the Patriot Act. On the other hand, communities with a high number of bonding organizations may bring up the same number of reservations and concerns, but they may ultimately fail to include them in the adopted resolution because more bonding organizations means a more fractured, potentially more polarized community.

The variance in types of organizations as well in the content of resolutions allows for the testing of the following two hypotheses related to the theorized role of bridging and bonding organizations in communities across the country:

H1: As the number of *bonding* organizations in a community increases, the number of issues supporting the central claim of the community's anti-Patriot Act resolutions will *decrease*.

H2: As the number of *bridging* organizations in a community increases, the number of issues supporting the central claim of the community's anti-Patriot Act resolutions will *increase*.

DATA AND METHODS

In order to test these two hypotheses, we estimate a series of generalized Poisson models containing three key variables, testing each of the hypotheses along with five control variables. Our data consists of a random sampling of 110 of the anti-Patriot Act resolutions² passed by cities, towns or counties across the country. These resolutions were collected online through the Bill of Rights Defense Committee’s website, which was formed after the passage of the Patriot Act and is a national non-profit grassroots organization. The resolutions themselves are relatively short, typically being no more than a few paragraphs, and point to the same issues, often using the same language. Table 1 provides an outline of the types and volume of each of the issues mentioned as support for the central claim that the Patriot Act is bad public policy.

Table 1
Protesting the Patriot Act: Grounds Supporting the Central Claim listed by
Number of Occurrences in Local Resolutions

General Constitutional Concerns

General violation of rights and liberties granted by U.S. Constitution	104
1 st Amendment: freedom of speech, religion, and right to assemble	69
4 th Amendment: protection from unreasonable search & seizure	68
6 th Amendment: right to counsel & right to speedy and public trial	64
5 th Amendment: double jeopardy, self-incrimination	60
14 th Amendment: due process and equal protection clause	20
8 th Amendment: prohibition of excessive bail	6
2 nd Amendment: right to keep and bear arms	2

Specific Concerns

Detention / deportation of non-citizens / military tribunals	57
Record, file, and share intelligence records; government access to library records	55
Expression of commitment to diversity	54
Covert search activities (“sneak and peak searches”)	45
Surveillance and investigation of citizens and groups	42
Too broad definition of “terrorist organization”	38

² The sample size of 110 is relatively low when used in multiple regressions. Miller and Kunce (1973) suggest a case to independent variable ratio of 10 to 1, while others have suggested higher (e.g., Pedhazur & Schmelkin 1991 and Maxwell 2000). Our base models have a ratio of 13.75 to 1. Of course, a relatively small N is not uncommon in the discipline, but does make finding significant results more difficult (i.e., the potential for a type 1 error) and could potentially bias the coefficients.

Racial profiling and discrimination	35
Phone and internet surveillance	29
Violation of immigration laws	27
Disclosure of public documents	24
Treatment of non-citizens	17
Use of municipal resources	10
Domestic spying in general	8
Lack of trust in the government	1

We used an open-ended coding scheme where we recorded each individual issue (or datum) supporting the resolution's claim. These issues were typically one of two types: (1) violations of specific parts of the U.S. Constitution or (2) some specific issue relating to civil liberties and immigration. From this coding we estimated three models with three different dependent variables. These three dependent variables represent, first, a count of the total number of grounds mentioned in the anti-Patriot Act resolutions, second, a count of the number of constitutional grounds mentioned, and third, the number of other specific grounds mentioned. By modeling the effects of bridging and bonding organizations in multiple ways, we are able to better pinpoint their specific influence on the richness of the content in each of these anti-Patriot Act resolutions. Each of these dependent variables represents a count of the number of grounds mentioned. With these counts, we estimate three generalized Poisson regressions. Generalized Poisson was chosen due to the significant evidence of underdispersion³ in the data (Hilbe, 2011; Hardin & Hilbe, 2007; Cameron & Trivedi, 1998).⁴

KEY INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

We test two hypotheses in this study with three counts of different types of organizations in each community. These data were collected from the Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development's website (Rupasingha & Goetz, 2008). The first variable is a measure of the number of political organizations in a community, per 10,000 people. The second is the number of labor organizations, per 10,000 people. As per the discussion above, in both instances we expect that as the number of these organizations grows, the number of grounds supporting the central claim mentioned in the anti-Patriot Act resolutions will *decrease*. One of our main reasons to classify political and labor organizations as bonding organizations is *not* because of a lack of racial, ethnic, religious or other type of diversity, but because members generally have the same outlook on relevant issues with a clearly defined counterpart. In addition, labor and political organizations are often supported by

³ This was tested by estimating a Poisson model and then determining if the squared errors were statistically different from λ_i using the equation $\hat{u}_i^2 = (Y_i - \hat{\lambda}_i)^2 - Y_i / \hat{\lambda}_i \sqrt{2}$. The estimated coefficient is negative and statistically significant at the .01 level. Thus, the test indicates that the data is underdispersed.

⁴ The `gnpoisson` command was used in Stata.

people and groups external to the local community and guided by a national platform, leading to lower level of social capital relative to organically formed local groups (Krishna, 2007). In addition the long history of union activity in the US has shown that unions have often struggled with the concept of diversity occasionally embracing it, but often excluding individuals in order to control the labor market (Woods, 1998).

We also include a measure of non-labor and non-political organizations. This measure of bridging social capital includes bowling and sports leagues, civic and social associations such as Rotary and Kiwanis clubs, physical fitness facilities, and business or religious associations. These are the types of organizations we expect to contribute to the bridging social capital of the community because they not only bring together people with diverse backgrounds, but because the interactions in those associations and locations require a higher level of tolerance for viewpoints that may conflict with one's own opinions. With regard to anti-Patriot Act resolutions, this may result in a higher level of inclusiveness in the final resolutions as various concerns are brought up. In sum, we expect that the types of organizations listed above contribute to the bridging social capital of the community and thus *increase* the number grounds mentioned and, therefore, the volume of content in these resolutions. By necessity we have created broad classification criteria for bonding and bridging organizations. There is no doubt that within our classification scheme some organizations are being misplaced. To the extent that this is true, it should make it more difficult for us to find significant results in our models. Thus, our ability to find a signal in all this noise, likely underestimates the real effect of bridging and bonding organizations in a community.

CONTROL VARIABLES

In addition to the key variables testing our hypotheses, we include five control variables. The first variable is a measure of the partisanship of each community in our sample. This is an important control variable because there is ample anecdotal reason to believe that anti-Patriot Act resolutions were being produced as much as a protest against the Bush administration as against the act itself. Indeed, coverage of these resolutions in newspapers has characterized these communities as among the most liberal in the country (Vlahos, 2003). Two of the resolutions we examine were passed in 2003 and 2004 (the other was in 2005). We chose to measure the partisanship of the community as the proportion of the vote received by Gore in 2000. Using presidential vote as a measure of an area's partisanship has a long history (Erikson, 1971; Cain & Campagna, 1987; Ansolabehere, Snyder, & Stewart, 2000) and using 2000 rather than 2004 presidential results assures us that the partisanship values are independent of the Patriot Act itself. We obtained this data from the Federal Elections Project website (Lublin & Voss, 2001). The expectation here is a positive value in all cases.

The next two control variables are traditional measures of income and education. Utilizing U.S. Census Bureau fact sheets again, we measured education as the proportion of residents holding at least a bachelor's degree for each community, and income as simply the median household income in the community, in thousands of dollars. Both higher income and education have been shown to increase levels of tolerance and trust (Cigler

& Joslyn, 2002; Marschall & Stolle, 2004). Therefore, we expect a positive association for these two variables indicating that they increase the size of anti-Patriot Act.

Table 2
Variable Summary Statistics

	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min.	Max.
<i>Key Variables</i>				
# of Labor Organizations in 2005	18.6	34.6	0	289
# of Political Organizations in 2005	13.0	21.3	0	98
# of Other Organizations in 2005	367	455	10	3537
<i>Control Variables</i>				
Gore Presidential Vote	58.8	14.4	18.7	87.1
Minority Population	20.7	16.1	2	73
Median Income	44,313	17,524	15,882	97,124
Bachelor's Degree	34.1	16.2	7.8	75.9

Note: All variables have an N of 110.

The fourth control variable is a measure of each community's minority population. The Patriot Act includes some provisions, such as the detention and deportation of immigrants, that minorities may find particularly problematic, especially those who may be newly arrived in this country. As a result, there is a need to control for the potential that personal interest may be driving the content of these resolutions. The information on the size of a community's minority population was obtained from U.S. Census Bureau's fact sheets and was operationalized as the percent of non-white citizens. The final control variable is a dummy variable coded 1 if the community is a county and 0 otherwise. We included this variable because our sample of anti-Patriot Act resolutions includes resolutions passed by both cities and towns as well as counties. There is some potential that the choices driving the content at the county-level are different than those made at the city/town-level. Thus, this variable will control for this potential effect. Table 2 presents summary statistics for each of our key and control variables.

RESULTS

Table 3 presents results after estimation of three generalized Poisson regression models. Model 1 represents the model with the total number of grievances mentioned. Model 2 represents a count of only the issues focused specifically on violations of parts of the Constitution. Model 3 is focused on other specific problems

with the Patriot Act, such as the fear of covert search activities (known as “sneak and peak searches”) and the concern of racial profiling in communities. The results for each of these three models are included in order to distinguish between the potential differing effects that bridging and bonding organizations may have on these different types of concerns.

The first two key variables test hypothesis H1, which states that as the number of bonding organizations increases in a community, the number of grounds supporting the central claim will decrease. Focusing on the results of Model 1, the signs for both the number of labor and political organizations turn out to be as predicted and both reach conventional levels of statistical significance. The results are similar in both Models 2 and 3, except that the number of political organizations falls just short of the .05 level of significance when the issues are broken down into constitutional and other specific issues. All told, these results provide strong support for hypothesis H1. The strong presence of bonding organizations, such as labor and political ones, reduce the amount content contained in the anti-Patriot Act resolutions.

The third key variable measuring the number of other organizations in the community tests hypothesis H2. In each of the three models the variable has the expected sign and reaches significance in Models 1 and 2, but fails to do so in Model 3. This, once again, provides strong support for our hypothesis. Non-labor and political organizations appear to contribute to a community’s social capital in a positive way.

Table 3
Generalized Poisson Estimates Predicting the Number of
Grounds Supporting Local Anti-Patriot Act Resolutions’ Claim

	Model 1 Total	Model 2 Constitution	Model 3 Other Specific
<i><u>Key Variables</u></i>			
# of Labor Organizations in 2005	-0.008** (0.002)	-0.012*** (0.004)	-0.005* (0.003)
# of Political Organizations in 2005	-0.010** (0.003)	-0.011 (0.008)	-0.008 (0.005)
# of Other Organizations in 2005	0.0006*** (1.01)	0.0009** (0.0003)	0.0005* (0.0002)
<i><u>Control Variables</u></i>			
Gore Presidential Vote	0.019** (0.007)	0.016* (0.008)	0.022** (0.007)
Minority Population	0.002 (0.005)	-0.003 (0.006)	0.004 (0.006)

Median Income (thousands)	0.001 (0.005)	0.003 (0.006)	-0.001 (0.006)
Bachelor's Degree	-0.002 (0.005)	-0.005 (0.007)	-0.002 (0.006)
County	0.016 (0.147)	0.090 (0.200)	-0.014 (0.161)
AIC Statistic	5.738	4.312	4.971
Log pseudo likelihood	-306.59	-228.15	-264.39

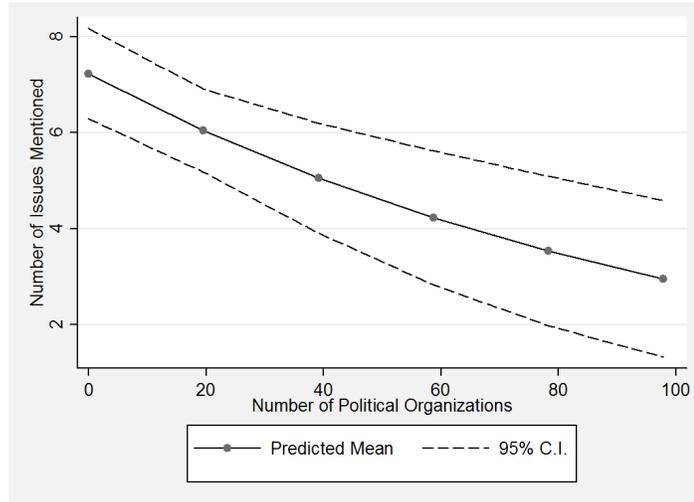
Notes: * = $p < .05$, ** = $p < .01$, *** = $p < .001$, one-tailed; N = 110

Overall, these findings are quite striking, given how broad all three of these categories representing bonding and bridging organizations are. Ideally scholars would be able to parse each individual organization and after careful consideration, place them in either the bonding or bridging category. Here we present a rather broad sweep of a large number of organizations, which surely results in organizations being improperly placed in either of the two categories, which should make finding the hypothesized effects far more difficult. Yet, the results are unequivocal. Labor and political organizations, perhaps not directly or intentionally through participation in the resolution writing process, contributed to a community's social capital in a way that reduces the scope of their resolutions.

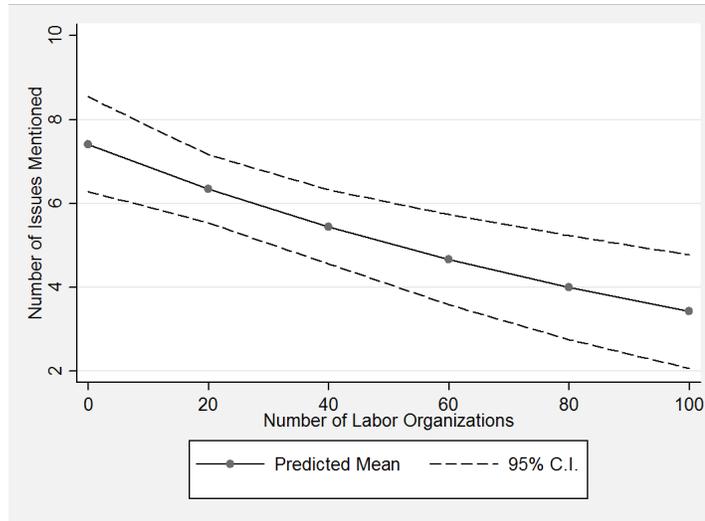
The effect of other organizations—again not necessarily directly or intentionally—is to contribute to a community's social capital in a way that results in more comprehensive resolutions. This is important because the finding demonstrates a clear effect beyond all the concerns with simple participation, which has been shown to increase by both bonding and bridging organizations. Participation is not enough. Bonding organizations' negative influence happens at the production stage of individual community involvement. The differing effect of these types of organizations on the level of participation is real and a closer, more fine-grained analysis of specific groups and associations is warranted in order to determine their influence in our communities.

Figure 1
 Predicted Number of Issues Mentioned in Anti-Patriot Act Resolutions for
 Significant Key Variables in Model 1 in Table 3

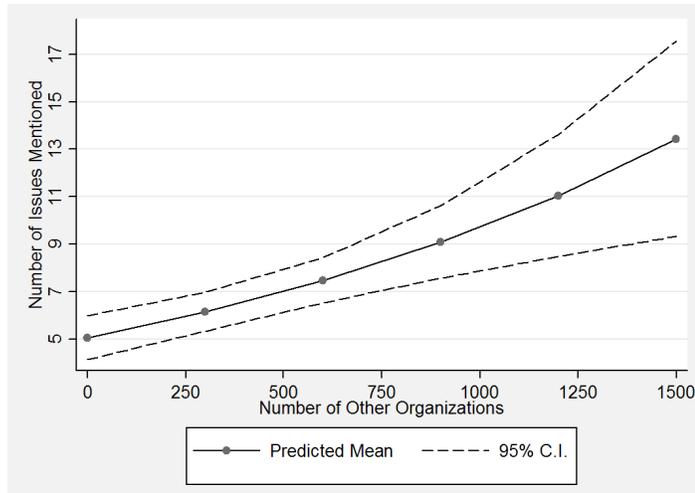
Part A:



Part B:



Part C:



The substantive meaning of these coefficients can be difficult to interpret directly. As a result, Figure 1 presents the predicted total number of issues supporting the central claim in anti-Patriot Act resolutions as the number of political, labor, or other organizations present in the community varies, holding all other variables at their mean.⁵ As can be readily observed, as the number of political organizations increases the number of issues mentioned goes down. The mean number of political organizations in the data is 13 with a standard deviation of 21. Part A in Figure 1 indicates that moving from the mean to one standard deviation above the mean in the number of political organizations results in a drop of about two issues mentioned (from seven to five). This is nearly a 30 percent drop in the amount of content found in a resolution.

Part B of Figure 1 presents the predicted number of issues as the number of labor groups vary within the community. In this case, the mean number of labor organizations in the data is 19 with a standard deviation of 35. Moving from the mean number of labor organizations to one standard deviation above the mean results in a drop of about one issue mentioned in the anti-Patriot Act resolution. This is a smaller effect than for the number political organizations.

Finally, Part C depicts change in the predicted number of issues mentioned as the number of other organizations increases. In this case the mean number of other organizations in the data is 367 with a standard deviation of 455. The figure indicates that as a community moves from the mean number of other organizations/associations to one standard deviation above the mean, one would expect to see an increase of about 2.5 issues mentioned. In other words, this move increases the amount of content found in an anti-Patriot Act resolution by about a third.

DISCUSSION

We find these results to be extremely encouraging, given the number of negative findings regarding citizen participation and social capital. Theiss-Morse and Hibbing's (2005) excellent review of the social capital literature leaves one rather depressed as they conclude that:

...people join groups that are homogeneous, not heterogeneous; civic participation does not lead to, and may turn people away from, political participation; and not all groups promote democratic values. Good citizens need to learn that democracy is messy, inefficient, and conflict-ridden. Voluntary associations do not teach these lessons (p. 227).

With the results presented here, we believe we have found a ray of hope by focusing on the differing effects of bonding and bridging organizations on the intensity of participation.

⁵ Predictions computed using SPost (Long & Freese 2006).

Our empirical evidence provides strong support for the notion that communities with high numbers of bridging social capital producing associations are more likely to come together and clearly state in rich detail their concerns about a national policy they oppose. The values found in these anti-Patriot Act resolutions (listed in Table 1) are some of the most cherished for this or any democracy. The number of bridging associations in a community has a clear positive association with communities viewing violations of these values as unacceptable and grounds to support a claim to change national policy.

We also find evidence that a high level of bonding social capital at the local level appears to hold back the expression of specific grievances. This is interesting because what these bonding organizations appear to be doing in this context is reducing the quality of the arguments made in their anti-Patriot Act resolutions. Therefore, it is suggested that, while participation is occurring, it will be less effective. A finding such as this holds importance because work seeking to demonstrate the positive value of social capital, and civic life in general, often lump all groups together. In doing so, such studies will confound the positive effects of bridging associations with the negative effects of bonding associations.

In an ideal world, we would have data for all communities that show who exactly decided to include what types of grievances and how many of them in the resolutions while they were being formulated. This type of data would be impossible to gather systematically, also because many of these decisions will be made prior to a public meeting where the resolutions were adopted. Instead, we have used the differing number of bridging and bonding organizations in a community as a proxy to test how different types of social capital affect political participation. That way we were able to move beyond the theoretical discussion of how different types of organizations may affect public discourse and political decision-making.

While this work takes some of the first steps toward detailing the varying influences of different types of organizations, we still need to find out more about which specific types of bridging organizations are most likely to facilitate high quality collective action and which bonding organizations are most detrimental to it. For example, future research should distinguish between the different goals organizations have, since some of them work for the common good while others are ‘inward-looking’, i.e. serve their members’ interests. Additionally, future work on bonding organizations should continue to examine the importance of how an organization is created (i.e., from within the community or from outside of it) and supported (i.e., large national organizations or local, unaffiliated groups). The results in this study support the idea that there is a significant difference here, but they are only suggestive. Scholarly work at the individual level is needed to further examine this important factor.

Maybe most importantly, civic, social, athletic organizations, and places that we identify as positive influences for intense political participation are usually “pre-Internet” groups that now compete with groups that are active online or groups that simply ask for a “checkbook membership.” Many of these older, legacy groups are struggling with attracting younger members, in part because of the effort it takes to be involved instead

of sitting in front of a computer. Our study indicates that these “brick and mortar” organizations and facilities seem to play an important civic role in our democracy. As other research shows (Baggetta, Lim, Andrews, Ganz, & Han, 2012) as well, civic organizations contribute to the improvement of many skills for members and their leaders: listening to others, accepting criticism, facilitating discussion, working effectively in a coalition, and working effectively with public officials, to name some benefits. It is important that these organizations themselves make it clear to potential new members how they will benefit from active participation in the groups beyond material and expressive benefits. In the end, the benefits described above are useful in many aspects of life, be it professionally or personally. We therefore hope that bridging organizations will continue to be training grounds for future leaders.

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