**Racial Differences in Neighborhood Ratings and Social Cohesion at the National Level**

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Thesis

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ABSTRACT

Many scholars have found racial differences in neighboring, social interaction, and neighborhood satisfaction at the neighborhood level. Neighborhood satisfaction can be dependent on the interactions residents have in the neighborhood. Neighborhood satisfaction can also be affected by neighborhood conditions, social cohesion, and social control. My research asks, *how does neighborhood satisfaction vary by race and ethnicity across the United States? Does collective efficacy impact satisfaction levels?* I use data from the 2013 American Housing Survey (AHS) to explore racial and ethnic variation in neighborhood satisfaction in a series of Ordinary Least Square Linear Regression Models. I find that neighborhood satisfaction varies by race and ethnicity, and social cohesion impacts satisfaction levels.

## INTRODUCTION

Historically, minorities have always had constraints on their social options due to less access to resources, social opportunities, and information (Lee, Campbell, Miller 1991). Black people have had to ultimately create their own communities due to institutionalized racism throughout the United States (Lee, Campbell, and Miller 1991: Hunter and Robinson 2018). Black and Brown people have been in continuous search for places and communities to be free, safe, and able to fully express themselves and embrace their culture and identity since enslavement (Hunter and Robinson 2018). Black people have formed their own communities and are connected in the United States by geography and the characteristics of their communities (Hunter and Robinson 2018). Black residents in these communities are connected through common problems they face and the location of the neighborhood (Hunter and Robinson 2018). These communities are often *full of life* but economically constrained (Hunter and Robinson 2018; Lee, Campbell, and Miller 1991; Guest and Wierzbicki 1999; Peters, Finney and Kapadia 2019). These individuals can connect to each other and embrace one another through shared backgrounds, cultures, hardships, constant inequalities, and ultimate triumph in the form of these communities. (Hunter and Robinson 2018).

This persistent inequality has led to varying outcomes by race and ethnicity. This has also led researchers to explore neighborhood outcomes by race and ethnic identity. Many researchers have focused on various topics revolving around specific neighborhoods in the United States. While many scholars have found racial differences in neighboring and social interaction in the community (Lee, Campbell, and Miller 1991; Small 2007; Stack 1974), many of these studies compare just Black and White residents in neighborhoods. There is a lack of research on differentiating other races and ethnicities with neighborhood satisfaction around the United

States. My research will attempt to fill this gap by exploring if and how neighborhood satisfaction varies by race and ethnicity using data from the American Housing Survey. My research asks two main questions. First, *how does neighborhood satisfaction vary by race and ethnicity across the United States?* And *does collective efficacy impact neighborhood satisfaction levels?*

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Neighborhood Satisfaction*

Residential satisfaction can play an important role in successful housing policies (Lu 1999 and Warren 1975). Being satisfied in your community is very important for everyday life (Lu 1999). To improve communities around the United States, it is crucial to understand where the gap of dissatisfaction lies. Neighborhood satisfaction can help us understand more about the needs of the community and the behaviors of residents (Dahmann 1985; Lu 1999). If scholars and policymakers can understand which groups of people are dissatisfied with their community, it leaves room to focus on neighborhoods that need improvement (Parkes, Kearns, and Atkinson 2002). To truly understand why residents might be dissatisfied with their neighborhoods, policymakers and researchers must understand what is most important to the residents (Parkes, Kearns and Arkinson 2002). It is extremely important that we take into consideration the opinions of the residents (Parkes 2002). These are the people who live in the community, and they ultimately know what does and does not work in their neighborhood.

Multiple different studies have explored *why* residents are dissatisfied with their current community. Many scholars have found that urban residents are generally more dissatisfied with their neighborhoods when they have less established social networks (Kasarda and Janowitz 1974; Parkes, Kearns, and Arkinson 2002; Sampson 1991). The extent of social ties is a crucial

variable influencing neighborhood satisfaction levels (Cirorci and Dantzler 2018; Parkes, Kearns, and Arkinson 2002; Sampson 1991). According to scholars, residents are also more likely to report being dissatisfied with their community based on the *judgments* they make about their neighborhood and due to their housing aspirations (Lu 1999; Ringel and Finkelstein 1991). Therefore, when neighborhoods do not meet their housing aspirations, residents are more judgmental of the neighborhood and less satisfied (Lu 1999; Grogan-Kaylor et al. 2006; Lu 1999; Ringel and Finkelstein 1991). Not only do poor judgments about the community contribute to the satisfaction of residents, but crime and the physical environment are also associated with decreased neighborhood satisfaction (Grogan-Kaylor et al 2006).

*Neighborhood Problems and Neighborhood Conditions*

By the same token, increased criminal activity decreases satisfaction in the community (Grogan-Kaylor et al. 2006; Perry 2017). The growth of disorderly conduct in communities has ultimately deepened the impoverishment levels of communities across the country, which affects residents' neighborhood satisfaction (Rankin and Quane, 2000). Adams (1992) found that *perceived safety* was the most important determinant of satisfaction levels. Safety is essential in predicting neighborhood satisfaction (Adams 1992, Parkes, Kearns, and Atkinson 2002, Sampson 1991; Grogan et al. 2008).

Like disorderly conduct in the neighborhood, neighborhood problems are an additional variable affecting neighborhood satisfaction. According to Parkes (2002), exposure to neighborhood problems can be a critical predictor in determining if residents will continue to reside in these neighborhoods and in predicting neighborhood satisfaction. According to Parkes (2002), exposure to problems, social interaction, and neighborhood expectations are all factors that contribute to satisfaction levels. On the contrary, less exposure to disorderly conduct, fewer

community problems, and increased cohesiveness among neighborhood residents will more than likely increase overall satisfaction in the neighborhood.

In addition, Kassandra and Jenkins (1974) have found that if local neighborhood conditions do not satisfy the needs of the residents, then residents are more likely to leave the neighborhood. Neighborhood conditions or physical features in the neighborhood can deter residents from the neighborhood. Residents may leave the neighborhood or be less satisfied with the neighborhood due to the physical attractiveness of the neighborhood conditions (Kasarda and Janowitz 1974).

*Social Cohesion/ Social Interaction in the Community*

In strong communities around the United States, a sense of social support in the neighborhood is a predictor of being more satisfied in the community (Dassopoulos, Batson, Futrell, and Brents 2012; Sampson 1991; Lee, Campbell, and Miller 1991; Parkes, Kearns and Atkinson 2002). The types of social ties in the community can gauge the stability of communities (Guest and Wierzbicki 1999). Many scholars have explained/determined that this sense of community in the neighborhood is created through social interaction-- or neighboring (Kasarda and Janowitz 1974). Since the 1970s, social researchers have coined the term neighboring in reference to individual interactions based on how close one lives to one another (Kasarda and Janowitz 1974). Neighborliness is the concept of social cohesion in the neighborhood (Dassopulos, Batson, Futrell, and Brents 2012). Neighborhoods with strong social ties will exchange small services; for example, residents are willing to help each other, neighbors would do something if a fight broke out, shared trust, etc. (Dassopulos, Batson, Futrell, and Brents 2012). These connections in the neighborhood are mainly based on community ties, not

necessarily because someone expects to receive something in return (Dassopulos, Batson, Futrell, and Brents 2012).

Guest and Wierzbicki (1999) spent 22 years researching how social interaction in the neighborhood changes over time. The data found suggested that there is a lot less socialization within the community and an increase in social interaction outside of the community (Guest and Wierzbicki 1999). Therefore, over time, there has been a decline in social interaction among neighbors (Guest and Wierzbicki 1999). Residents who live in poverty are less likely to have local social ties due to the limitations of what resources and knowledge are available to them (Guest and Wierzbicki 1999; Peters, Finney, and Kapadia 2019). Based upon the suggestions of previous research, residents from impoverished communities are less likely to be satisfied with their community (Peters, Finery and Kapadia 2019). Additionally, there is a decline in social ties in the neighborhood that can also be dependent upon different demographic variables, such as age, socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, and education level.

The literature has been consistent with many racial differences and disparities in urban neighborhoods around the United States. More specifically, Black residents are more likely to interact with their neighbors daily, therefore, creating a more casual neighboring relationship (Lee, Campbell, and Miller 1991). Small (2007) found that Black residents have constructed fewer social ties outside their family dynamics. Even though Black residents may have *fewer* social ties, they tend to have strong social support among their networks (Stack 1974). In contrast, White residents are more likely to have more formal and shorter conversations with their neighbors and are less likely to interact with them daily (Lee et al. 1991). Fewer studies examined social cohesion and interaction among Latinos and Asians in American neighborhoods. Most researchers have compared Black and White residents. The few studies that

have explored Latino social ties find that Latinos have had larger social networks and *stronger* social ties in the community compared to Black residents (Almeida, Kawachi, Molnar and Subramanian 2009; Small, 2007; Klinenberg, 2002).

*Social Control*

Having a sense of social control in a neighborhood could potentially be a factor in how residents might rate their neighborhoods. This mostly stems from the consistent change within a metropolitan city and the "modern meaning of community" (Sampson 2003). More so, social control is the idea that there is a common value in the community and for residents to maintain efficiency in the neighborhood (Sampson, Raudenbush, and Earls 1997). Sampson (1997) has identified social control as a response to the deviant behaviors of the residents in the community. This is not the idea that social control is affiliated with larger structural institutions but rather that residents share similar philosophies or have some type of control in social situations in the neighborhood (Sampson et al. 1997). More specifically, it is the objective to have control over the "visible signs of social disorder" in the community (Sampson et al. 1997; Sampson 2003). For example, residents who have social control in their neighborhood will intervene in children painting graffiti or may scold a disrespectful child. Therefore, at the neighborhood level, social control is the general idea that residents are intervening in social situations for the common good of the neighborhood (Sampson et al. 1997).

*Socioeconomic Status and Community Engagement*

Social ties and community engagement vary by socioeconomic status, with higher-income residents being more likely to participate in neighborhood events (Campbell and Lee 1990). Residents who socialize in their neighborhood may be more likely to be highly satisfied with their community. Additionally, residents who have a higher level of education and a high

level of income have an extensive number of social resources and social opportunities compared to residents who live in poverty, resulting in larger social networks they can take advantage of (Campbell and Lee 1990). Many scholars agree that impoverished communities can be associated with poor education, higher crime rates, and unemployment (e.g., Brisson, Roll, and East 2009). Scholars have emphasized that increasing diversity in impoverished communities may exploit less advantaged residents in the community (Tach 2014; Jencks and Mayer, 1990; Joseph, Chaskin, and Webber 2007). Increasing diversity in impoverished communities exposes residents to different perspectives and lifestyles (Perry 2016) impoverished communities tend to lack access to social networking opportunities due to not having the knowledge or resources to network in the community (Tach 2014). Resulting in residents having to rely more heavily on their neighbors for survival (Stack 1974).

Not having access to a diverse network of residents in the community is an additional factor contributing to racial inequality in the United States (Small 2007). While there is not one clear answer as to why or how this happens, there is clear evidence that neighborhood social capital and neighborhood conditions can contribute to different types of networking in the community (Small 2007; Lee et al. 1991).

*Homeownership and Length of Residence*

While there is very limited research on the sociological perspective of neighborhood satisfaction, some scholars have found that homeownership and length of residence contribute to neighborhood satisfaction (Parkes, Kearns and Atkinson 2002; Sampson 1991). Scholars have found that there is limited evidence supporting the ties between these variables, but there is some evidence that states that there is a positive correlation between homeownership and length of

residence being predictors of neighborhood satisfaction (Lu 1999; Parkes, Kearns, and Atkinson 2002).

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### *Collective Efficacy*

As previously mentioned, many residents prefer to have some type of control over their neighborhoods for the common good. While some residents want control in their neighborhood, social interaction at the neighborhood level is also changing (Sampson 2003; Guest and Wierzbicki 1999). As discussed above, Guest and Wierzbicki (1999) find social ties within the community are decreasing over time therefore, the community level environment is not as collective as one might think (Sampson 2003).

Therefore, due to this decline of the modern meaning of community, some scholars have proposed the idea of *collective efficacy* (Sampson et al. 1997; Sampson 2003). Collective efficacy has been used as a theoretical framework to forecast positive community outcomes (Sampson 2012; Gerhard 2019). Sampson (1997) developed this model using data from the Project on Human Development in Chicago Neighborhoods. Sampson (1997) created this model based on the highly correlated measures of social cohesion and social control and coined the term collective efficacy (Sampson et al. 1997; Sampson 2003).

Sampson (2003) compares collective efficacy to self-efficacy, in the realm that it is relative to a specific objective, whereas collective efficacy is that neighborhood efficacy is relative to a shared objective of the neighborhood. These scholars have put an emphasis on the functionality of mutual trust and cohesive willingness at the neighborhood level (Sampson et al. 1997; Sampson 2003). The willingness of neighbors to share expectations and trust with the influence of social ties is the idea of collective efficacy. Collective efficacy is the notion that

residents at the neighborhood level have shared beliefs to achieve an intended effect (Sampson 2003).

*Theory of Limited Liability*

As previously mentioned, minorities lack social resources and the ability to invest within their community (Guest and Wierzbicki 1999; Peters, Finney, and Kapadia 2019; Lee, Campbell, and Miller 1991). Many scholars have found that residents who live in poverty are less likely to have local social ties due to the limitations of what resources and knowledge are available to them (Guest and Wierzbicki 1999; Peters, Finney, and Kapadia 2019; Lee, Campbell, and Miller 1991). Social ties in the community can gauge the stability of urban communities across the nation (Guest and Wierzbicki 1999). If communities lack social cohesion due to poverty and resources, then ultimately, they are also going to be dissatisfied with their community overall (Kasarda and Janowitz 1974; Parkes, Kearns, and Arkinson 2002).

This theory suggests that involvement with neighbors and the community will vary over time and across households, although this is dependent upon the degree of one's investment in the neighborhood (Greer 1962 and Lee, Campbell, and Miller 1991). The investment is not only monetary value, but the degree to which one is involved in the community is also seen as an investment (Greer 1962 and Lee, Campbell, and Miller 1991). According to Lee (1991) and other scholars, one's investment in the community can vary depending on judgments of the community and how much residents may feel that their *investment* is at stake (Lu 1999; Grogan-Kaylor et al. 2006). What scholars mean by this is that if residents feel as if they are at risk or have concerns about the community or their safety, residents may be hesitant to invest their time and money in the community (Lee, Campbell, and Miller 1991; Lu 1999; Grogan-Kaylor et al. 2006)

Greer (1962) divides this model into sections, the first being the neighborhood itself. Greer (1962) puts an emphasis on investing in relationships within the neighborhood. It is explained that each household varies based upon their housing units, however, it is important for neighbors to have casual interaction that could lead to more personal friendships (Greer 1962). The second section Greer (1962) references is the *local residential area*. Greer (1962) explains this to be the involvement in the larger community where residents can create broader connections in the community. These broader connections could be, being in a common space for everyday activities (like a park, playground, or the sidewalks) and being connected to the "community-oriented associations" (being a participant in these organizations can increase social cohesion of the community) (Greer 1962). Furthermore, I have used the theory of limited liability to help guide my research and findings, but it is not a determining factor in my research.

## METHODS

### *Data*

The data comes from the 2013 American Housing Survey (AHS). The AHS is sponsored by the Department of Housing and Urban Development; however, the survey is conducted by the U.S Census Bureau. The American Housing Survey uses a probability sample of close to 50,000 housing units around the United States (AHS 2022). The AHS surveys housing units every other year. The AHS is a broad national housing survey in the United States that provides a wide range of housing subjects revolving around financing and maintaining homes, people who live in those homes, physical conditions of homes, physical conditions of neighborhoods, and characteristics of the people living in the neighborhoods (AHS). While the 2013 AHS data are almost ten years old, they remain the only comprehensive *national* data that includes measures of both social cohesion and neighborhood satisfaction variables. My analysis measures social cohesion,

neighborhood satisfaction, and sociodemographic variables to explore if there is racial and ethnic variation in neighborhood satisfaction and social ties.

## MEASURES

### *Dependent variable*

The dependent variable throughout my analyses is neighborhood satisfaction, measured by neighborhood rating as the dependent variable in all models. Neighborhood satisfaction is measured by a respondent's self-reported neighborhood rating of their neighborhood as a place to live from 1 (worst) to 10 (best).

### *Independent variables*

Race and ethnicity are the key independent variable in all of the models. I use the householder's self-reported racial and ethnic identity. One weakness of this approach, however, is that it obscures multi-racial households in the analysis. racial and ethnic identity was created from the respondent's answers to two questions. First, they are asked if they are Hispanic (yes/no). Respondents who respond affirmatively have been coded as Hispanic in my analyses. If respondents do not identify as Hispanic, then I have used their response to the racial identity question to establish their racial and ethnic identity. Here respondents are asked if they are Non-Hispanic White, Non-Hispanic Black, and Non-Hispanic Asian (hereafter White, Black, and Asian). I have created dummy variables for five racial and ethnic categories, White, Black, Hispanic, Asian, and other Races--with White being the reference category throughout the multivariate analyses.

To assess collective efficacy more clearly, I have used social cohesion as another key independent variable. The 2013 AHS includes a series of questions about social cohesion components. I have combined the social cohesion variables to create a single outcome variable of

social cohesion among respondents. Respondents were asked to rate (strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree) the social cohesion variables (neighborhood is close knit, people in neighborhood get along, people are willing to help their neighbors, people share the same values, and people in the neighborhood can be trusted). These variables are reverse coded (0 = strongly disagree, 1 = disagree, 2 = agree, and 3 = strongly agree). Social cohesion ($\alpha$=0.88) ranges from 0-15, with higher scores indicating more cohesion in the neighborhood.

I have also combined a series of social control variables to have one single outcome variable to assess collective efficacy. Respondents were asked to rate (strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree) the social control variables (neighbor would step in if saw fighting near home, neighbor would step in if saw child not in school, neighbor would step in if saw child painting graffiti, and neighbor would scold a disrespectful child). Like the social cohesion variables, these variables are reverse coded (0 = strongly disagree, 1 = disagree, 2 = agree, and 3 = strongly agree). Social control ($\alpha$= 82) ranges from 0-12, with higher scores indicating more social control at the neighborhood level.

*Control variables*

I have included a series of control variables that have been shown in the literature to be related to neighborhood satisfaction and neighborhood social ties. I have used the neighborhood conditions and neighborhood problems variables to assess the correlation more clearly with neighborhood satisfaction. These variables include a series of dummy variables for satisfaction with neighborhood police protection (0=yes, 1= no); abandoned buildings, trash, litter, or junk in the streets and roads (0=yes, 1= no); and buildings with bars on the windows (0=yes, 1= no). I also use a series of dummied control variables exploring the types of relationships and

connections in the neighborhood, sometimes called social ties. These variables are as follows, household member belongs to a neighborhood group (0= yes, 1= no), household member has attended a neighborhood meeting (0= yes, 1= no), household member has spoked to a local politician about a neighborhood problem or improvement (0= yes, 1= no), household member has friends in the neighborhood (0= 0-5 friends, 1= 6-10 or more friends); and household member has talked with a neighbor in the last month for 10 or more minutes (0=yes, 1=no).

Finally, I include a series of sociodemographic control variables, including a series of dummies for the marital status of the householder (married (reference), widowed, divorced/separated, and never married); Sex of Householder (0= Male, 1= female); a series of dummies for the level of education of the householder ( less than high school, high school diploma, some college, bachelor's degree or higher (reference)), year householder moved in, and presence of children under 18 (0=no household residents under 18, 1=at least one household resident under 18), annual household income (in ten thousands), receipt of public assistance (0=yes 1=no), region (Northeast, South, West, and Midwest), household located in a central city (0=yes, 1=no), householder age, and if the householder is foreign-born (0=yes, 1=no).

*Analytic Strategy*

I use an ordinary least squares linear regression analysis for all models. This type of regression analysis allows me to analyze the relationship between the dependent, independent, and control variables. I used a weighted analysis for the sample to be nationally representative. All analyses are conducted using STATA/BE 17.

Neighborhood satisfaction is the dependent variable in all the models. Model 1 explores the relationship between racial and ethnic variation and neighborhood satisfaction. Model 2 adds the key independent variable of social cohesion and the social control index. Model 3 adds the

neighborhood conditions variables. Model 4 adds controls for social ties/ relationships in the neighborhood. Model 5 includes the independent variable, dependent variable, and all the control variables, including the demographic variables.

## RESULTS

### *Descriptive Statistics*

Table 1 represents the descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, minimum and maximum values) for each dependent, independent, and control variable. The sample size is 22,416 respondents. The sample consists of 65% White, 14% Black, 4% Asian, 13% Hispanic, and 1% other race: with a mean age of 52 years of age. The sample is composed of 22% single respondents, 49% married, 10% widowed, 15% divorced, and 3% separated. While 50% of the sample identifies as female. Moreover, 14% of respondents have less than a high school diploma, 25% have a high school diploma, 29% some college, and 32% have a bachelor's degree or higher. Respondents reported which region of the United States they reside in, 26% in the Northeast, 27% in the Midwest, 30% in the South, and 18% in the West. In the sample, 33% of the respondents live in a central city.

The mean neighborhood satisfaction level is 8.07 (rated 1-10). The mean social cohesion among the sample is 11.16 (range 0-15), and the mean social control score of respondents is 8.08 (range 0-12). Next, looking at the neighborhood conditions variables, 92% of respondents report satisfaction with police in their neighborhood, 9% report there is trash, litter, or junk in the streets and roads within ½ block, 10% of the respondents report that there are buildings with bars on the windows, 3% have abandoned/vandalized building within ½ block, and finally 41% report a lack of green space in the neighborhood.

Finally, regarding the types of connections in the neighborhood, 11% of neighborhood members belong to a neighborhood watch group, 16% of household members have spoken with a local politician about a neighborhood problem or improvement, 36% of household members have friends in the neighborhood, 84% of household members have talked with a neighbor in the last month for ten or more minutes, 16% of household members participated in solving a neighborhood problem, and 10% of household members have spoken with a person or group causing a neighborhood problem.

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics, American Housing Survey (2013) N = 22,416**

| | Mean | Standard Deviation | Minimum Value | Maximum Value |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Neighborhood Rating | 8.07 | 1.88 | 1 | 10 |
| Race and Ethnicity | 1.62 | 1 | 1 | 5 |
| White | 0.65 | 0.47 | 0 | 1 |
| Black | 0.14 | 0.35 | 0 | 1 |
| Asian | 0.04 | 0.21 | 0 | 1 |
| Hispanic | 0.13 | 0.33 | 0 | 1 |
| Other Race | 0.01 | 0.13 | 0 | 1 |
| Social Cohesion | 11.16 | 3.37 | 0 | 15 |
| Neighborhood is close knit | 2.04 | 0.88 | 0 | 3 |
| People in neighborhood get along | 2.41 | 0.69 | 0 | 3 |
| People in neighborhood are willing to help neighbors | 2.34 | 0.76 | 0 | 3 |
| Neighbors share the same values | 2.14 | 0.82 | 0 | 3 |
| People in neighborhood can be trusted | 2.21 | 0.84 | 0 | 3 |
| Social Control | 8.08 | 2.95 | 0 | 12 |
| Neighbor would step in if saw child not in school | 1.80 | 0.97 | 0 | 3 |
| Neighbor would step in if saw child painting graffiti | 2.35 | 0.86 | 0 | 3 |
| Neighbor would scold a disrespectful child | 1.62 | 0.97 | 0 | 3 |
| Neighbor would step in if saw fighting near home | 2.32 | 0.84 | 0 | 3 |

| Table 1, continued: Descriptive Statistics | Mean | Standard Deviation | Minimum Value | Maximum Value |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Satisfaction with police protection | 0.92 | 0.27 | 0 | 1 |
| Trash, litter, or junk in the streets and roads within 1/2 block | 0.09 | 0.28 | 0 | 1 |
| Buildings with bars on the windows | 0.10 | 0.30 | 0 | 1 |
| Abandoned/vandalized buildings within 1/2 block | 0.03 | 0.18 | 0 | 1 |
| Lack of green space | 0.41 | 0.49 | 0 | 1 |
| TYPES OF CONNECTIONS | | | | |
| Neighborhood member belongs to a neighborhood watch group | 0.11 | 0.31 | 0 | 1 |
| Household member has attended a neighborhood meeting | 0.13 | 0.34 | 0 | 1 |
| Household member has spoken with a local politician about a neighborhood problem or improvement | 0.16 | 0.36 | 0 | 1 |
| Household member has friends in the neighborhood | 0.36 | 0.48 | 0 | 1 |
| Household member has talked with a neighbor in the last month for 10 or more minutes | 0.84 | 0.37 | 0 | 1 |
| Household members has participated in solving neighborhood problem | 0.16 | 0.37 | 0 | 1 |
| Household member has spoken with a person or group causing neighborhood problems | 0.10 | 0.31 | 0 | 1 |
| DEMOGRAPHICS | | | | |
| Single (Not Married) | 0.22 (22%) | 0.41 | 0 | 1 |
| Married | 0.49 (49%) | 0.50 | 0 | 1 |
| Widowed | 0.10 (10%) | 0.31 | 0 | 1 |
| Divorced | 0.15 (15%) | 0.36 | 0 | 1 |
| Separated | 0.03 (3%) | 0.17 | 0 | 1 |
| Female | 0.50 (50%) | 0.50 | 0 | 1 |
| Less than High School | 0.14 (14%) | 0.35 | 0 | 1 |
| High School Diploma | 0.25 (25%) | 0.43 | 0 | 1 |
| Some College | 0.29 (29%) | 0.45 | 0 | 1 |
| Bachelor's Degree or Higher | 0.32 (32%) | 0.47 | 0 | 1 |

| Table 1, continued: Descriptive Statistics | Mean | Standard Deviation | Minimum Value | Maximum Value |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Year householder moved in | 12.27 | 13.07 | 0 | 94 |
| Number of householder's children under 18 years | 0.30 (30%) | 0.46 | 0 | 1 |
| Householder Income (In ten thousand) | 6.82 | 7.71 | 0 | 106.1921 |
| Receipt of public assistance | 0.03 (3%) | 0.16 | 0 | 1 |
| Northeast | 0.26 (26%) | 0.44 | 0 | 1 |
| Midwest | 0.27 (27%) | 0.44 | 0 | 1 |
| South | 0.30 (30%) | 0.46 | 0 | 1 |
| West | 0.18 (18%) | 0.38 | 0 | 1 |
| Central City/ Metropolitan Area | 0.33 (33%) | 0.47 | 0 | 1 |
| Foreign born | 0.15 (15%) | 0.36 | 0 | 1 |
| Housing Tenure | 0.60 (60%) | 0.48 | 0 | 1 |
| Householder age (years) | 52 | 17.22 | 14 | 93 |

*OLS Regression*

Table 2.1, Model 1, explores variation in neighborhood satisfaction by race and ethnicity. In all models with race, White is the reference category. In Model 1, relative to White respondents, respondents of all other racial and ethnic groups report lower satisfaction. Asian respondents report the lowest satisfaction (-0.990), followed by Black respondents (-0.6399), then those of another race (-0.4737), and Hispanic respondents (-0.2533). Model 2 adds controls for collective efficacy (social control and social cohesion). Black respondents (-0.2552) and those of another race (-0.2385) still report lower satisfaction than White respondents. Hispanic and Asian respondents, however, are no longer statistically different from White respondents after controlling for collective efficacy. When social control (0.0537) and social cohesion (0.2468) are greater, respondents also report more neighborhood satisfaction.

**Table 2.1: OLS Regression showing relationship between Race and Neighborhood rating using 2013 American Housing Survey (AHS) N= 22,416**

| | Model 1 Coefficient/ (s.e.) | Model 2 Coefficient/ (s.e.) |
|---|---|---|
| White (reference category) | | |
| Black | -0.6399 *** | -0.2552 *** |
| | (0.0492) | (0.0419) |
| Asian | -0.0990 | 0.1011 |
| | (0.0587) | (0.0549) |
| Hispanic | -0.2533 *** | 0.0154 |
| | (0.0464) | (0.0420) |
| Other Race | -0.4737 *** | -0.2385 * |
| | (0.1210) | (0.1056) |
| Social Control | | 0.0537 *** |
| | | (0.0055) |
| Social Cohesion | | 0.2468 *** |
| | | (0.0052) |
| Constant | 8.2502 *** | 4.9316 *** |
| | (0.0161) | (0.0623) |
| F-Statistic | 48.76 *** | 612.28 *** |
| R-Squared | 0.0149 | 0.2618 |

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$; White race is the reference category in all models

Model 3, Table 2.2 adds controls for neighborhood conditions. Black respondents report less neighborhood satisfaction (-0.1189) than their White counterparts. This relationship has been somewhat attenuated by the addition of controls for neighborhood conditions. After controlling for neighborhood conditions, Asian (0.1267) and Hispanic (0.1433) residents rate their neighborhood more highly than White respondents. As was seen in Model 2, when social cohesion (0.2468) and social control (0.0537) are greater, neighborhood satisfaction is greater. Residents who are more satisfied with police in their neighborhood (0.7072) report higher neighborhood satisfaction. However, when there is trash, junk, and litter in the streets or roads

within ½ block (-0.9586), buildings with bars on the windows (-0.2565), and when there are abandoned/vandalized buildings within ½ block of the residence (-0.4173), respondents report lower neighborhood satisfaction. Surprisingly, when there is a lack of green space (0.1350) in the neighborhood, residents tend to be more satisfied with their neighborhood.

Model 4, Table 2.2 adds controls for neighborhood connections and social ties in the neighborhood. Even after these controls are applied, Black respondents (-0.1115) report less satisfaction with their neighborhoods compared to White residents. However, Asian (0.1267) and Hispanic (0.1433) respondents report higher levels of neighborhood satisfaction relative to White respondents. When residents report more social cohesion (0.2214), social control (0.0435), and greater satisfaction with the police in their neighborhood (0.7072), their neighborhood satisfaction is higher. Conversely, when residents report that there is trash, junk, or litter in the streets or roads within 1⁄2 block (-0.9394), buildings with bars on the windows (-0.2522), and/or presence of abandoned/vandalized buildings within ½ block (-0.4034), they report lower neighborhood satisfaction. When there is a lack of green space, neighborhood satisfaction is greater (0.1382). However, when residents report that they belong to a neighborhood watch group (0.0915) and residents have friends in the neighborhood (0.1389) they report being more satisfied with their neighborhood. When the household member has spoken to a person or group causing a neighborhood problem (-0.2715) they are more likely to be less satisfied with their neighborhood. No other controls are significant.

**Table 2.2: OLS Regression showing relationship between Race and Neighborhood rating using 2013 American Housing Survey (AHS) N= 22,416**

| | Model 3 Coefficient/ (s.e.) | Model 4 Coefficient/ (s.e.) |
|---|---|---|
| White (reference category) | | |
| Black | -0.1189 ** | -0.1115 ** |
| | (0.0406) | (0.0407) |
| Asian | 0.1267 * | 0.1167 * |
| | (0.0544) | (0.0547) |
| Hispanic | 0.1433 *** | 0.1394 ** |
| | (0.0404) | (0.04051) |
| Other Race | -0.1167 | -0.1030 |
| | (0.1011) | (0 .1020) |
| Social Control | 0.0435 *** | 0.0456 *** |
| | (0.0053) | (0.0053) |
| Social Cohesion | 0.2214 *** | 0.2176 *** |
| | (0.0052) | (0.0054) |
| Satisfaction with police protection | 0.7072 *** | 0.6857 *** |
| | (0.0583) | (0.0585) |
| Trash, litter, or junk in the streets and roads within 1/2 block | -0.9586 *** | -0.9394 *** |
| | (0.0569) | (0.0566) |
| Buildings with bars on the windows | -0.2565 *** | -0.2522 *** |
| | (0.0490) | (0.0489) |
| Abandoned/vandalized buildings within 1/2 block | -0.4173 *** | -0.4034 *** |
| | (0.0743) | (0.0744) |
| Lack of green space | 0.1350 *** | 0.1382 *** |
| | (0.0242) | (0.0242) |
| Neighborhood member belongs to a neighborhood watch group | | 0.0915 * |
| | | (0.0377) |
| Household member has attended a neighborhood meeting | | 0.0477 |

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$; White race is the reference category in all models

**Table 2.2 continued: OLS Regression showing relationship between Race and Neighborhood rating using 2013 American Housing Survey (AHS) N= 22,416**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Household member has spoken with a local politician about a neighborhood problem or improvement | | -0.0357 |
| | | (0.0341) |
| Household member has friends in the neighborhood | | 0.1389 *** |
| | | (0.0261) |
| Household member has talked with a neighbor in the last month for 10 or more minutes | | -0.0677 |
| | | (0.0374) |
| Household members has participated in solving neighborhood problem | | -0.0750 |
| | | (0.0395) |
| Household member has spoken with a person or group causing neighborhood problems | | -0.2715 *** |
| | | (0.0436) |
| Constant | 4.667 *** | 4.7460 *** |
| | (0.0788) | (0.0812) |
| F-Statistic | 426.28 *** | 270.77 *** |
| R-Squared | 0.3039 | 0.3077 |

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$; White race is the reference category in all models

Finally, Model 5, Table 2.3 is the full model and adds demographic variables. In this model, the only racial and ethnic group that significantly differs from White respondents on neighborhood satisfaction is Hispanic respondents (0.1829), who report more neighborhood satisfaction. As was seen in the previous models, when residents report more social cohesion (0.2110) and social control (0.0464) they also report more neighborhood satisfaction. Additionally, as seen in the previous models, when residents are more satisfied with the police

(0.6587), they report more neighborhood satisfaction. Whereas residents who report that there is trash, junk, or litter in the streets or roads within ½ block (-0.8891), buildings with bars on the windows (-0.2274), and/or the presence of abandoned/vandalized buildings within ½ block (-0.3856), report lower neighborhood satisfaction. The lack of green space (0.1394) continues to have a positive correlation with neighborhood satisfaction. Household members who have reported to have spoken with a local politician about a neighborhood problem or improvement (-0.0746) have a negative relationship with neighborhood satisfaction. When a household member has friends in the neighborhood (0.1136) they continue to rate their neighborhood more positively. When household members report that they have talked with a neighbor in the last month for ten or more minutes (-0.0724) or have spoken with a person or group causing neighborhood problems (-0.2576) they have a negative correlation with neighborhood satisfaction.

Relative to married respondents, those who are divorced (-0.1461) or separated (-0.1963) report lower neighborhood satisfaction. Women report more neighborhood satisfaction (0.0864) than men do. Relative to respondents that have a bachelor's degree or higher, those with less than a high school degree (-0.0265), high school diploma (-0.0978), and some college (-0.0978) all report lower neighborhood satisfaction. When the duration of the residence increases (-0.0057), neighborhood satisfaction decreases. Respondents who report having at least one child under the age of 18 years (-0.1083) report lower satisfaction. As household income (0.0080) increases, neighborhood satisfaction also increases. Household members who receive public assistance (-0.0618) report less satisfaction. Satisfaction also varies by region. Respondents in the Midwest (-0.0407) and West (-0.0573) report lower satisfaction than those in the South. Those living in the Northeast report greater neighborhood satisfaction (0.0264) than those in the South. Living in a

central city decreases neighborhood satisfaction (-0.1595). Householders who are foreign born (0.1216) report greater neighborhood satisfaction. Finally, as age (0.0100) increases, so does neighborhood satisfaction. No other controls are significant.

**Table 2.3: OLS Regression showing relationship between Race and Neighborhood rating using 2013 American Housing Survey (AHS) N= 22,416**

| | **Model 5** |
|---|---|
| | **Coefficient/ (s.e.)** |
| White (reference category) | |
| Black | -0.0550 |
| | (0.0421) |
| Asian | 0.0595 |
| | (0.0643) |
| Hispanic | 0.1829 *** |
| | (0.0471) |
| Other Race | -0.0420 |
| | (0.1008) |
| Social Control | 0.0464 *** |
| | (0.0053) |
| Social Cohesion | 0.2110 *** |
| | (0.0054) |
| Satisfaction with police protection | 0.6587 *** |
| | (0.0584) |
| Trash, litter, or junk in the streets and roads within 1/2 block | -0.8891 *** |
| | (0.0565) |
| Buildings with bars on the windows | -0.2274 *** |
| | (0.0501) |
| Abandoned/vandalized buildings within 1/2 block | -0.3856 *** |
| | (0.0737) |
| Lack of green space | 0.1394 *** |
| | (0.0240) |

Note: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$; White race, Married Couples, and South is the reference category in all models.

**Table 2.3 continued: OLS Regression showing relationship between Race and Neighborhood rating using 2013 American Housing Survey (AHS) N= 22,416**

| | Model 5 Coefficient/ (s.e.) | |
|---|---|---|
| Neighborhood member belongs to a neighborhood watch group | 0.0691 | |
| | (0.0375) | |
| Household member has attended a neighborhood meeting | 0.1298 | |
| | (0.0412) | |
| Household member has spoken with a local politician about a neighborhood problem or improvement | -0.0746 | * |
| | (0.0343) | |
| Household member has friends in the neighborhood | 0.1136 | *** |
| | (0.0264) | |
| Household member has talked with a neighbor in the last month for 10 or more minutes | -0.0724 | * |
| | (0.0373) | |
| Household members has participated in solving neighborhood problem | -0.0634 | |
| | (0.0390) | |
| Household member has spoken with a person or group causing neighborhood problems | -0.2576 | *** |
| | (0.0432) | |
| Single (Not Married) | -0.1132 | |
| | (0.0390) | |
| Married | Reference Category | |
| Widowed | 0.0700 | |
| | (0.0466) | |
| Divorced | -0.1461 | *** |
| | (0.0381) | |
| Separated | -0.1963 | * |
| | (0.0914) | |
| Female | 0.0864 | *** |
| | (0.0250) | |

Note: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$; White race, Married Couples, and South is the reference category in all models.

**Table 2.3 continued: OLS Regression showing relationship between Race and Neighborhood rating using 2013 American Housing Survey (AHS) N= 22,416**

| | Model 5 Coefficient/ (s.e.) | |
|---|---|---|
| Less than High School | -0.0265 | |
| | (0.0468) | |
| High School Diploma | -0.0480 | |
| | (0.0332) | |
| Some College | -0.0978 | *** |
| | (0.0295) | |
| Bachelor's Degree or Higher | Reference Category | |
| Year householder moved in | -0.0057 | *** |
| | (0.0011) | |
| Number of householder's children under 18 years | -0.1083 | *** |
| | (0.0321) | |
| Householder Income | 0.0080 | *** |
| | (0.0014) | |
| Receipt of public assistance | -0.0618 | |
| | (0.1021) | |
| Northeast | 0.0264 | |
| | (0.0330) | |
| Midwest | -0.0407 | |
| | (0.0308) | |
| South | Reference Category | |
| West | -0.0573 | |
| | (0.0338) | |
| Central City/ Metropolitan Area | -0.1595 | *** |
| | (0.0282) | |
| Foreign born | 0.1216 | ** |
| | (0.0445) | |
| Housing Tenure | -0.0310 | |
| | (0.0332) | |

Note: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$; White race, Married Couples, and South is the reference category in all models.

**Table 2.3 continued: OLS Regression showing relationship between Race and Neighborhood rating using 2013 American Housing Survey (AHS) N= 22,416**

| | Model 5 Coefficient/ (s.e.) | |
|---|---|---|
| Householder age (years) | 0.0100 | *** |
| | (0.0010) | |
| Constant | 4.475 | *** |
| | (0.1042) | |
| F-Statistic | 149.61 | *** |
| R-Squared | 0.3213 | |

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$; White race, Married Couples, and South is the reference category in all models.

DISCUSSION

For this study, I used the approach of an Ordinary Least Squares regression model to test the research questions: *how does neighborhood satisfaction vary by race and ethnicity across the United States?* And *does collective efficacy impact neighborhood satisfaction level?* I hypothesize that respondents' neighborhood satisfaction will vary by racial and ethnic identity and that neighborhood satisfaction will vary by collective efficacy.

More specifically, examining the research question "*how does neighborhood satisfaction vary by race and ethnicity across the United States?"* neighborhood satisfaction does indeed vary by race and ethnicity throughout all the models. Black respondents consistently rated their neighborhood more negatively relative to White respondents in Models 1-4 however, once demographic controls were applied in Model 5, there was no longer a significant difference between Black and White neighborhood satisfaction. Asian respondents rated their neighborhood negatively compared to White respondents in Model 1. However, after controlling for social cohesion and social control (collective efficacy) in Model 2, there is no significant difference

between Asian and White neighborhood satisfaction. When controls for neighborhood conditions are added in Model 3, Asian respondents reported more neighborhood satisfaction than their White counterparts. However, once demographic controls are added in Model 5, there is no significant difference between Asian and White neighborhood satisfaction. Hispanic respondents follow the same pattern as Asian respondents for neighborhood satisfaction. However, after demographic controls are applied in Model 5, there is still a significant difference between White and Hispanic satisfaction, with Hispanic respondents reporting more satisfaction than their White counterparts. Finally, examining respondents of another race, they are less satisfied with their neighborhood relative to White respondents in Models 1 and 2, but once controls for neighborhood conditions are applied in Model 3, they do not significantly differ from White respondents in the level of neighborhood satisfaction.

While there is limited previous research on neighborhood satisfaction, my research aligns with similar results of other studies. Stack (1974) found that when Black residents have strong social support, their neighborhood satisfaction increases. My findings are consistent with Stack (1974) as well. In Model 2, when measures of collective efficacy are added, Black residents' neighborhood satisfaction levels increase, but they still rate their neighborhood more negatively than White residents. Additionally, Almeida et al. (2009) found that Latinos have stronger social ties in the community compared to black residents. I find that while Hispanic respondents may not significantly differ from White respondents when measures of collective efficacy are added, collective efficacy does increase satisfaction levels among Hispanic respondents.

Next, my analyses explore the question, *does collective efficacy impact neighborhood satisfaction levels?* The simple response to this question is yes, collective efficacy does impact satisfaction levels across all races. In Model 1, respondents of all other races rate their

neighborhood more negatively than White respondents. When measures of social cohesion are added in Model 2, Asian and Hispanic respondents no longer significantly differ from White respondents. While in contrast, Black and other race respondents continued to report lower neighborhood satisfaction than White respondents. In Model 4, when controls for social cohesion, social control, neighborhood conditions, and neighborhood connections were present, Asian, and Hispanic respondents reported greater neighborhood satisfaction than White respondents. In contrast, Black respondents continue to be less satisfied with their neighborhood than their White counterparts.

My analyses also use the Theory of Limited Liability, which suggests that involvement with neighbors and the community will vary over time and across households. However, this is dependent upon the degree of one's investment in the neighborhood (Greer 1962 and Lee, Campbell, and Miller 1991). The investment is not only monetary value, but the degree to which one is involved in the community is also seen as an investment (Greer 1962 and Lee, Campbell, and Miller 1991). I find that involvement within the neighborhood does vary, but I do not have enough evidence to say that this varies over time or across households, as these variables are currently only included in the 2013 AHS, so longitudinal analyses are not possible. However, my analyses demonstrate that the extent to which one is involved in their neighborhood impacts neighborhood satisfaction levels. As can be seen in Model 2, when respondents report more social control and social cohesion in the neighborhood, Asian and Hispanic respondents do not significantly differ from White respondents. In contrast, Black and other race respondents are less satisfied. Model 3 investigates social connections and investment in the neighborhood. Satisfaction levels increase when household members have friends in the neighborhood (0.1389) or belong to a neighborhood watch group (0.0915). In this theoretical perspective, Greer (1962)

puts an emphasis on investing time in the community and creating casual relationships in the neighborhood, which aligns with my findings. Therefore, when residents invest their time in the community and are connected to community-oriented associations, they are more likely to have higher levels of neighborhood satisfaction. Future research should look more closely at residents spending time in everyday activities like a park, playground, or sidewalks to determine if this impacts satisfaction levels.

My analyses are not without limitations, however. One major limitation of my research study is that the data are ten years old. Even though the data are ten years old, they are still the only national data that include measures of social cohesion and neighborhood satisfaction. Future research should attempt to collect newer data that include measures of neighborhood satisfaction and social cohesion. Another limitation of my research is that there is no variable measuring neighborhood crime rate in the 2013 AHS. Future researchers should use a restricted version of the AHS that is geocoded to append crime rates to the AHS data to explore what, if any, impact crime rate has on neighborhood satisfaction, as other researchers have found crime can significantly impact satisfaction levels (Grogan-Kaylor et al. 2006).

Despite these limitations, my analyses make several important contributions to the literature. There is limited research focusing on neighborhood satisfaction at the national level. Most researchers have focused on specific neighborhoods or cities (e.g., Chicago, Baltimore, and Atlanta). My analyses use a nationally representative dataset to explore satisfaction across US cities. Additionally, much of the research on neighborhood satisfaction is older. While my data are ten years old, they provide some updated information and remain the only nationally representative data with measures of neighborhood satisfaction and social cohesion.

In closing, I find that neighborhood satisfaction does vary by race and ethnicity. Once all controls are applied, only Hispanic respondents, who report greater satisfaction, differ from White respondents in their level of satisfaction. I also find that social cohesion and neighborhood social ties impact satisfaction levels, with those reporting more social cohesion and more friends in the neighborhood reporting more satisfaction, while those who report working on solving neighborhood issues report less satisfaction. Future research should continue to explore these relationships to better understand the mechanisms that lead to variation in neighborhood satisfaction.

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