

Social Decline and Diversity: The Us versus the Us's

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Us: *E pluribus unum*

The more we get together, the happier we'll be.

Us's: *And the young gay people in the Altoona, Pennsylvannias and the Richmond, Minnesotas who are coming out ... the only thing they have to look forward to is hope. And you have to give them hope... Without hope, not only gays, but the blacks, the seniors, the handicapped, the us's, the us's will give up.*

The three quotations above provide important insights into what the terms “us” and “us’s” mean in the subtitle of this article. The first quotation is the original motto of the United States and means “from many come one”; it implies the possibility of a universal us but also the ideals America seeks in a national unity that supersedes the particulars of history or geography. The second is taken from a children’s song called “The Social Capital Theme Song,” by economist John Helliwell, and suggests another ideal of us, one achieved through an increase in social connections.¹ The “us” in both cases is a universal “we” that transcends difference. The third and final quotation is taken from a speech by San Francisco supervisor Harvey Milk during the 1978 debate over Proposition 6 (the Briggs initiative that sought to prevent openly gay men and women from being public school teachers).² Milk speaks of the need to create hope not for us but for the us’s, groups of Americans differentiated by race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and ability who have been oppressed historically. In order to overcome discrimination, he argues that the us’s must challenge the existing norms of society. Thus the politics of diversity are necessarily divisive for the norms that bind us together in the present must be challenged if the us’s are to have hope for their future.

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This distinction between us and us's is critically important not only as a framing mechanism for this article but as a theoretical corrective to some of the assumptions underlying recent social scientific research on the decline of social capital and cohesion. First, while much of this literature assumes that the "pulling apart" of us (as measured through decreased membership in broad service oriented groups, the decline in trust of others and/or less social cohesion) is by definition negative, I argue that from the perspective of the us's, such declines may be positive, productive, even necessary to achieving justice. Second, while the "social contact" school has argued that increased connections between different group are the solution to reversing the decline in trust and cohesion, I argue that such distrust is embedded in a much larger historical context; therefore getting people together is simply not enough to address the deep problems of racialized discrimination and inequality, homophobia and sexism that still exist. Finally, the essay by Will Kymlicka (2010) also speaks to the politics of us's through a compelling defense of multicultural policies based on comparative empirical evidence. While we may agree on the central principle that multicultural policies have contributed to greater justice for ethnic and cultural minorities, we probably differ on the degree to which the politics of diversity can work to pull apart an us bound by existing shared norms and whether such divisiveness is a good or bad thing. While I envision a greater cost to us (when seen through the lens of generalized trust), I also believe it may be a good thing if the by product is greater justice for all.

The Meaning of Social Decline:

In the last 20 years, the idea that the social realm, understood as various things at different times and places, is under threat of decline or collapse has become a central theme in both academia and daily politics. The most famous articulation, of course, is Robert Putnam's social capital thesis (2000), but we find in the discussions around social union in Canada (PRI, 2003, 2004), social cohesion in Europe (Hooghe et al., 2007) and social capital at the World Bank and the OECD (2001), the same thematic concern articulated in various forms. What does social decline mean, is it real and, most importantly, will the measures suggested to reverse it threaten hard-fought gains in relation to multicultural politics and diversity?

There are at least two meanings of social decline associated with two different historical contexts. The first kind of social decline emerged in the late 1980s; it was manifested in terms like social union, social welfare and social justice and understood to be the contraction of social programs and reduced expenditures on the welfare state. Liberals and social democrats argued that this was the result of the 1980s neoconservative

Abstract. In the last 20 years, the idea that the social realm is under threat of decline or collapse has been a central theme in academic literature and political analysis. In this short paper I explore the meaning of social decline and its relationship to multiculturalism and diversity. Using the twin notions of participation and trust as two key measures of social decline, I argue that participation has not so much declined over the last 40 years (as Robert Putnam, for example, has argued) as it has changed because of what I call the politics of the us's—groups historically oppressed (including women, ethnic and racialized minorities and gay, lesbian and disabled citizens) who have created new kinds of advocacy organizations in order to change the norms of civil society itself. I also argue that such changes (while often perceived as negative in relation to a transcendent “us”) are positive to the extent that they have made society more inclusive, respectful of diversity and just. Trust, on the other hand, *has* declined but, I argue, this is also due to the politics of diversity as the us's fought for change and other groups responded by defending traditional norms and values, often in the name of a transcendental us, creating a vicious circle of distrust as each side feels betrayed by the other's victories. Thus, I conclude, to understand social decline, in terms of participation and trust, we must pay attention not only to the us but also to the us's in civil society. The tendency, therefore, to champion a transcendent us in order to reverse social decline, as many scholars and politicians seem prone to do in recent years, not only ignores the us's but may foreclose on their hope for a future free from discrimination and hate.

Résumé. Au cours des vingt dernières années, l'idée que le champ social est menacé de déclin ou d'effondrement a été un thème central dans la littérature académique et l'analyse politique. Dans ce court article, j'explore la signification du déclin social et sa relation avec le multiculturalisme et la diversité. En utilisant les notions liées de participation et de confiance en tant que deux mesures principales du déclin social, j'avance que la participation n'a pas tellement diminué au cours des quarante dernières années (comme le soutient Robert Putnam, par exemple), mais qu'elle a plutôt changé en raison de ce que j'appelle la politique des nous – soit des groupes longtemps opprimés (comprenant les femmes, les minorités ethniques et racialisées, ainsi que les gais, les lesbiennes et les personnes handicapées) qui ont créé de nouveaux types d'organismes représentatifs afin de changer les normes de la société civile. Je soutiens également que de tels changements (souvent perçus négativement par rapport à un «nous» transcendant) sont positifs dans la mesure où ils ont permis à la société de devenir plus inclusive, plus respectueuse de la diversité et plus juste. D'autre part, la confiance a effectivement diminué, mais je soutiens que c'est également en raison de la politique de la diversité, car les nous ont lutté pour faire changer les choses et d'autres groupes ont réagi en défendant les normes et les valeurs traditionnelles, souvent au nom d'un «nous» transcendant – créant ainsi un cercle vicieux de méfiance où chaque côté se sent trahi par les victoires de l'autre. Je conclus donc que pour comprendre le déclin social, en termes de participation et de confiance, nous devons porter attention non seulement au «nous», mais également aux nous dans la société civile. Par conséquent, la tendance à prôner un «nous» transcendant afin de renverser le déclin social, comme le font plusieurs chercheurs et politiciens ces dernières années, en plus d'ignorer les nous, peut aussi éteindre leur espoir d'un avenir libre de discrimination et de haine.

emphasis on liberalization of markets both at home and abroad, under the leadership of Margaret Thatcher in Britain and Ronald Reagan in America. What was needed to reverse such a decline in the social realm was to return to a post-war vision of social citizenship, social rights and social justice through the inclusion of such things as social charters in free trade agreements and a renewed commitment to the welfare state and new social policies to counteract rather than exacerbate the negative impact of the liberalization of markets, and economic unions of various kinds.

Some scholars and politicians have argued that the strengthening of the welfare state and the solidarity necessary to support it seems to pull in the opposite direction to multiculturalism and cultural diversity; thus if we seek to rebuild the social realm (either in terms of distribution or solidarity), we must de-emphasize diversity and difference and pull back on multicultural policies (Miller, 2004; Joppke, 2004; Phillips, 2004; Rorty, 2000; Wolfe and Klausen, 1997; Gitlin, 1995; Goodhart, 2004a and 2004b; Barry, 2001). There is, however, significant empirical work, including research done by Keith Banting and colleagues (2006), and Keith Banting and Will Kymlicka (2004, 2006) that demonstrates no such inverse correlation exists in practice between the strength of social programs and measures to protect and preserve cultural diversity. Kymlicka (2010) speaks to this gap between theory and practice very eloquently and forcefully, as he appeals to those who fear multiculturalism as a net contributor to social decline to consult the empirical record, for there are many concrete examples of countries where multiculturalism neither undercuts solidarity nor core liberal values that bind citizens together.

The second definition of social decline, and the one to which I will devote most of my time in this article, arose in the mid to late 1990s but remains central to debates within political science to the present day. This kind of social decline is manifested in the literature and policies that embrace the new paradigms of social capital and social cohesion. Here the concern is not so much with a welfare state that is in decline but civil society itself as citizens seem to participate less in their communities and distrust each other more than in previous generations. If the first understanding of social decline is the result of neoconservative governments and multinational corporations, this kind of social decline is the result, it has been argued (Putnam, 1995, 2000), of a variety of social phenomenon, including the emergence of a “me” generation more self-ish and materialist than its long civil predecessor, technology (as television and computers take us away from our social and civic activities) and the entrance of women into the workforce who are no longer able to lead the social capital charge. Most recently, of course, some, including Putnam himself, argue that ethnic diversity is a critical factor in explaining the decline of social capital (2007). The degree to which this decline is seen as negative and the measures suggested to reverse it have, as I shall argue shortly, enormous implications for the gains made by the us’s in the name of diversity and multiculturalism.

Social Decline: Participation and Diversity

The decline of civil society is often measured in two separate ways by empirical social scientists: *participation* and *trust*. Beginning with par-

ticipation, the first question to be answered is whether the decline over the last 40 years described by Putnam in *Bowling Alone* (1995) is real. In *Diverse Communities* (2006), I examine the participation of American women separately from men because their history is so different over the last forty years. To focus my analysis, I used the 11 organizations with female membership from the 34 Putnam lists in *Bowling Alone* (appendix 3) as his barometer of participation.³ The first eight organizations exhibit the classic Putnamesque pattern of rise and decline over the twentieth century but it is important to note that all were *traditional* women's organizations. This matters because what Putnam is actually measuring is not the overall decline in the participation of women as a decline in the population of "*traditional women*." Thus, as the second wave of feminism washed over American society in the 1960s and 1970s, women moved away from the voluntary sector and towards full-time work and professional organizations, child care groups and other civic activity associated with dual career families (Arneil, 2006; Lowndes, 2000). Which is why Peter Hall finds in his analysis in the UK that women's civic participation *doubled*, with the only decline among traditional women's groups (Hall, 1999, 2002).

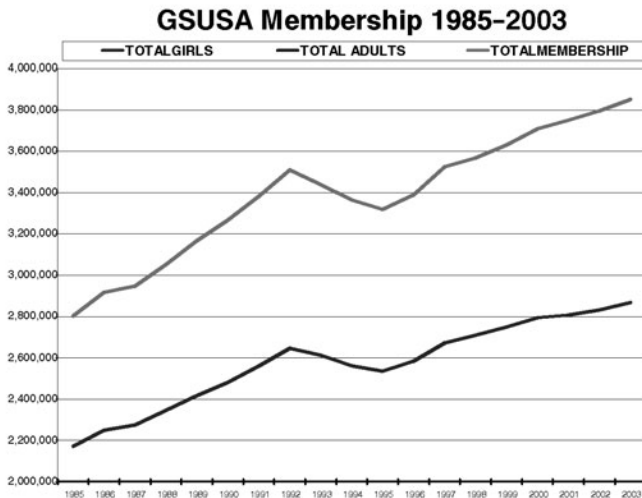
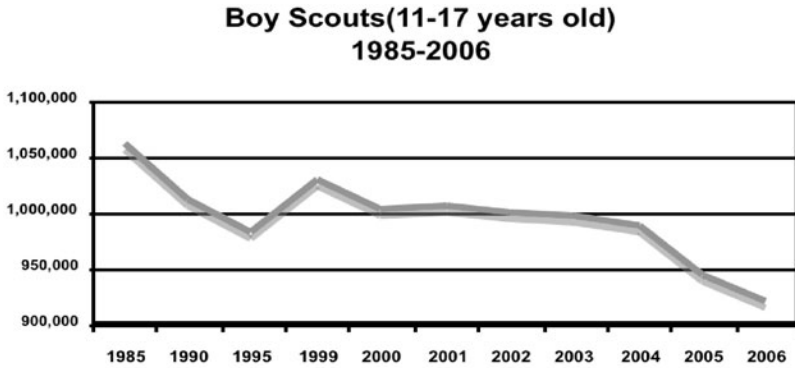
The remaining three organizations (Hadassah, Girl Scouts and Moose Women) are also traditional but they do not decline but plateau or grow. The best example of this is the Girl Scouts of the USA. As the graph below shows, while the Boy Scouts has declined by 10 per cent since 1985, the Girl Scouts has increased by 35 per cent during the same period.

The Girl Scouts bucked the trend because they adapted to the demands of a changing society, most particularly the politics of diversity. From recognizing sexual diversity and equality to supporting local democracy to engaging in affirmative action for ethnic minorities in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, the GSUSA altered virtually every aspect of its organization, from the uniforms and cookies right down to the fundamental promise (where girls no longer had to swear allegiance to God) in order to facilitate a generation of Americans whose values and demography had changed so rapidly. The Girl Scouts also changed many of their laws and shifted emphasis from obedience to independence and empowerment. In short, they explicitly and deliberately embraced the us's of America.

The Boy Scouts, on the other hand, went the other way, rejecting the politics of diversity entirely in order to stake their organization on a hierarchical top-down defense of traditional and unchanging bedrock values (that excluded membership to gay men or boys or atheists). They thus refused to change or adapt their oath or laws in order to allow religious diversity or local democracy. In essence, the Boy Scouts embraced a particular and unchanging idea of us, where cultural diversity was and is seen as a threat to the essence of scouting and, by extension, to America itself.

CHART 1

Membership in the Boy Scouts vs. Girl Scouts in America (1985–2005)



From the perspective of diversity, the good news from these two examples, at least, is that traditional organizations that embrace diversity and give hope to the us's, as Harvey Milk suggested they should, have grown in membership in the last 30 years while membership in those rejecting such changing values, in the name of a traditional and transcendent us, has declined.⁴

Going beyond women's organizations to civil society generally, I would argue that we have witnessed three broad patterns of change in civil society in the last four decades, largely as a result of the us's and their demands on civil society. The first is a shift away from traditional *service-oriented* groups like the Shriners, the Rotary Club, the Elks, and

traditional women's clubs (as discussed above) and towards membership in *professional* organizations. A second pattern is a shift away from *face-to-face* organizations and towards *web-based social and political groups and networks* (as advances in technology make such virtual groups possible). The third and final pattern is a shift away from *national organizations with local chapters* and towards *Washington DC cheque-based advocacy groups* where lawyers are employed to press specific political causes on their membership's behalf rather than through grassroots, locally staffed national campaigns. While Putnam recognizes all three patterns of change (2000) he, along with Theda Skocpol (1999, 2002), laments them because they represent a negative story when seen from the perspective of us. For Putnam and Skocpol, these changes pull us and the shared values of a long civic generation (that sought to serve others and achieve universal objectives for all Americans) apart, and replace them with the values of a me-oriented materialist/cocooning generation who join organizations only if it furthers their own specific group's interests (which accounts for the rise in professional and advocacy organizations) and if it is easy (which accounts for the cheque-based groups that bring about change rather than citizens who invest their own time).

While there is something to this critique, I believe what may be missing from this account of the declining us is the very important story of the us's over the last half of the twentieth century and how the same patterns of change described above when seen from their perspective may represent positive rather than negative change. For example, if one considers the first pattern, that women may be less likely to join traditional service-oriented groups, like the Women's Christian Temperance Union, than forty years ago and more join professional associations, like the American Bar Association and Medical Association, such a pattern has a much deeper moral significance; it represents a positive change *for women* from *indirect* access to power through women's clubs and ladies societies in the form of maternal feminism in the first half of the twentieth century to the more *direct access* to political, economic and social power through professional means. The increase in membership in professional organizations is thus positive to the extent that it represents increasing equality between men and women in American society.

The second pattern of change (from face-to-face organizations to virtual groups) is also positive for many gay and lesbian Americans (the ones Milk speaks of in the quotation at the beginning) who cannot be open within their local communities because of homophobia but can connect with others through the anonymity of the Internet. In a different way, many disabled Americans also find virtual communities accessible to them on a daily basis in a way that traditional organizational spaces are not. This is not to deny that a virtual community can lead to isolation or its anonymity can produce less than civil communication compared to

face-to-face meetings but it is important to balance the negative dimensions of this medium against its positive ones, especially for the groups described above.

The third shift, from locally based national service organizations to Washington-based advocacy groups is also positive from the perspective of various us's. The shift in membership, for example, from groups like the March of Dimes or Easter Seals in the first half of the twentieth century (who ran fund-raising drives on behalf of disabled persons who were largely constructed as objects of charity) towards Washington-based disability rights organizations which, along with their lawyers, pushed through the Americans with Disability Act against significant opposition holds enormous normative significance for disabled people. This piece of legislation and the rights-based groups required to make it a reality are profoundly positive developments for disabled Americans if civil society is to become truly accessible. The shift also reflects a change in status for disabled persons from objects of pity or charity to citizens with equal rights. A similar story can be told around same sex marriage, gay rights or AIDS, issues and campaigns deeply divisive to society as a whole (and therefore requiring lawyers and advocacy groups in state capitals) but ultimately positive for the groups fighting to overcome discrimination. Thus, if we understand such patterns of change only as negative for us, we miss the positive impact they have in the real lives of the us's and the hope they provide for the future.

Social Decline: Trust and Diversity

The second measure of social decline used by social scientists is generalized trust. Unlike participation (which I hope to have shown changed rather than declined) generalized trust has indeed decreased over the last forty years. The question is why. I have argued elsewhere (2006) that there are four contributing factors. I will mention the first three briefly before turning to analyze the fourth (ethnic and cultural diversity) in greater detail. The first cause is increased economic inequality; both Eric Uslaner (2002) and Robert Wuthnow (2002) argue this is a critically important variable in predicting distrust. The second is political duplicity, which both Orlando Patterson (1999) and Everett Ladd (1996; 1999) argue (in the form of Watergate and the Vietnam War) was critical to the drop in trust in the 1970s and 1980s in both government *and* generalized others. The third is the rising incivility of public discourse. Changing technology and behaviour has led to confrontational talk radio, television programs like *Crossfire*, 24-hour news, negative advertising in campaigns, anonymous communication through the Internet, reality television, all coming together to produce the sense, especially for a younger cohort

of an us and them who, as Diana Mutz (2006) argues, end up not listening to each other's points of view since everything is reduced to a shouting match, a zero-sum outcome and/or a game of social exclusion or extinction. All of these contributing factors provide the contextual background against which we can now examine in detail the role diversity plays in the decline of generalized trust.

Over the last 10 years, a whole swath of literature has examined this question, both over time (as we become more diverse) and/or space (diverse communities are less trusting). Within this literature, three possible answers have been proposed to the question of whether diversity leads to lower levels of trust:

- (1) Yes, for those who subscribe to a conflict or constrict theory (Alessina and La Ferrara, 2002; Costa and Kahn, 2003; Putnam 2007).
- (2) No, for those who subscribe to the contact theory because it is not diversity but social isolation that is key (Allport, 1954; Stolle et al., 2008; Uslaner, 2006).
- (3) It depends (on specific historical contexts, for example, whether a country has multicultural policies and/or other kinds of institutional arrangements) (Bloemraad, 2006; Helliwell, 2003).

Although both the second and third sets of arguments are important to understanding certain differences in specific national and local contexts, on balance, I argue, consistent with the conflict school, that increased diversity *does* generally lead to a decline in trust with an important caveat. It is not *diversity* itself but the *politics of diversity* (the politics of the us's) that has led to lower levels of trust. Thus, in the following section, I will analyze how the demands for equality and recognition by the us's in the civil rights era of the 1960s and 1970s (followed by a backlash in the 1980s and 1990s) contributed to both a *gap* in trust *between* groups that persists across time and a *decline* in trust over time.

While much of the social capital literature has focused on the latter dimension of generalized trust, that is, the decline in the last 40 years, it is as important to address the larger *gap* in trust *between* different racialized groups in society. Orlando Patterson shows that while overall trust (among all Americans, that is, the us) declined by 10 per cent or so between 1970 and 2000, the *gap* between black and white Americans remained at 27 per cent (on average 45 per cent of white Americans and 18 per cent of African Americans express trust in their fellow citizens in this time period). Why should there be such a gap, and can the politics of diversity help to explain it? Wuthnow (2002) suggests one critical reason is the economic inequality between white and black Americans. Uslaner (2002) concurs, adding more recently that residential segregation is also key (2006). Ira Katznelson has likewise claimed, "Even today, after the great achievements of civil rights and affirmative action, wealth

for the typical white family, mainly in homeownership, is 10 times the average net worth for blacks” (2005). Clearly, economic inequality was and is an important factor, but is it enough of an explanation?

The answer is no, for there are other reasons for this gap that go beyond economics, which will become clearer if we pose the question of trust the other way around. That is, rather than asking why 15 per cent of African Americans *trust* others, let’s ask instead why *85 per cent* of African Americans *distrust* their fellow citizens? By shifting the lens to distrust rather than trust, we open up a new avenue of inquiry because at the heart of most feelings of distrust is a sense of betrayal; and the question thus becomes what led African Americans to feel betrayed by their fellow citizens and why does this increase over the last forty years. As Patterson argues (1999), the answer lies not only in the long history of white-dominated society (slavery, segregation and discrimination and their legacies) that make African Americans *collectively* doubt the trustworthiness of their fellow citizens but a continuing sense of betrayal which arises in the wake of events such as Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans, the arrest of Henry Louis Gates, Jr., and persistent and profound economic inequality. Put simply, betrayal arises from the sense that the promises made during the civil rights movement have still not been fulfilled. Thus, notwithstanding the election of Barack Obama, the statistics quoted above by Katznelson on home ownership and the inequities in criminal punishment and justice provided by Jon Hurwitz in his article, appropriately titled “And Justice for Some,” (2010)⁵ are concrete evidence of why a sense of collective betrayal persists to today. Put simply, the *gap* in trust is the result of the politics of diversity, how power is deeply contoured on racial lines in both historical and contemporary America.

The decline in trust over time of all Americans is also rooted in the politics of diversity. As the fight began in the 1960s and 1970s by the us’s for justice in the form of the civil rights, women’s and gay rights movements, the politics were divisive, even when the focus was on inclusion and equality (goals that spoke to universal values). But as the us’s gained certain kinds of formal equality and then shifted towards a politics of recognition that emphasized particularity and difference, the politics of diversity became even more disruptive to society as a whole. As philosopher Charles Taylor (1992) argues, divisiveness is unavoidable since the “politics of recognition” always begin in the context of long standing “misrecognition” with the purging of negative self-images forced on subordinated groups by dominant groups and replacing them with positive ones of their own making; think, for example, of “black is beautiful,” “gay pride,” “red power” or “difference feminism.” Asserting one’s difference through positive images in the public realm demands profound psychological changes on the part of other, more traditional groups in society who believe(d) that African Americans were inferior, women were

weaker, native Americans were uncivilized and/or homosexuals were sinful. Thus, the us's, as they engaged in the politics of diversity by making demands for both equality and recognition, unleashed a deeply divisive and highly personal form of politics on society in the name of justice.

While important gains were made in the immediate aftermath of the civil rights era in relation to both equality and recognition of difference, a conservative backlash followed almost immediately manifested in the culture wars (Hunter, 1991) of the 1980s and 1990s as traditional groups of Americans repudiated the politics of diversity as nothing more than special interest groups threatening the traditional and transcendent us of America, particularly as they went beyond formal equality to recognition of difference. In 1992, Pat Buchanan famously announced that there was a war underway for the soul of America. While it may be tempting to dismiss Buchanan's speech as a reactionary response to social change, one needs to understand, with respect to generalized trust, that he, along with many other traditional Americans, felt betrayed by his fellow citizens, indeed that America itself had been betrayed by these various challenges to long-held norms in American society.

One specific example of this sense of betrayal within the backlash of the 1980s and 1990s were the so-called "angry white men" who saw their traditional power being challenged by both feminism and various cultural groups at exactly the same time that the vagaries of the globalized market were creating a disproportionate number of redundancies within the manufacturing and resource extraction industries, with their largely male jobs. Indeed, this is what feminist Susan Faludi has described in the subtitle of her 2000 book as "the betrayal of the American man." Similarly the "social" and/or religious right, including those defending so-called traditional "family values" (against same sex marriage), English-only ordinances and tough immigration laws as well as those who challenged affirmative action and women's reproductive choices also believed that their vision of America had been betrayed by the changes that had already occurred. Thus, among groups that had traditionally held power in American society, there was a growing sense of betrayal and distrust in their fellow citizens. And, as they began to win battles in the courts and legislatures and turn back the changes that had been made in response to the demands for equality and recognition, another wave of betrayal and disillusionment followed on the side of the us's as they watched hard-fought gains in the name of multicultural justice and gender equity topple.

Thus the catalyst for the decline in generalized trust was indeed the civil rights generation as Putnam claims, but is not because they participated less in civil society but because they engaged more. Their initial campaign led to increased justice but unleashed, as a by-product, the dynamic and vicious circle of disillusionment and betrayal described above which continues today as each proposition is won or lost and/or each

court case is decided one way or the other. While there have always been disagreements in American politics between different groups of citizens, the culture wars involve a very different kind of politics because, they are, by definition, deeply personal on both sides and leave little room for compromise (consider, for example, the personal, emotive and uncompromising nature of the politics in the case of either same sex marriage or abortion).

Thus, while I agree with the conflict theorists that diversity has led to a decline in trust, I disagree with them on two critical points. First, it is the *politics* of diversity rather than diversity itself that led to both a gap and decline in trust as I have described above. Second, and *most importantly*, I believe both gap and decline, to the extent they are necessary byproducts of the search for justice by various us's, are *positive* rather than negative developments. It is also why I would argue that "social contact" and connections *cannot* be the primary solution to resolving the problem of distrust. While increased connections may have an impact in certain neighbourhoods (and should be embraced), reversing deeper levels of distrust requires solutions that go beyond geographical integration and social contact to address the issues of racialized discrimination and inequality, homophobia and sexism that still exist in society today. Given the long and complicated history of discrimination against and misrecognition of various groups in society, changes will not happen overnight, and so, in the short term, we must accept a continuing divisiveness in liberal democratic politics (and the loss of trust and changes in participation that go with it).

Let me end on a hopeful note, for I believe that the long-term picture of diversity politics is an optimistic one, as Harvey Milk so eloquently argued in his famous "Speech of Hope," quoted above. Research by Dietlind Stolle and Allison Harell (2009) has shown that younger generations are quite different from their parents on many of these cultural issues because they have grown up in countries where multicultural policies and communities as well as a wide diversity of individuals are present in their daily lives.⁶ The solution is time, along with continued pressure by the us's on civil society for change; at some point in the future, a certain demographic tipping point will be reached that will cause something like same sex marriage to simply disappear as a salient political issue in the United States, and with that, many of the vicious circles that currently exist around that particular issue will give way to virtuous ones and younger citizens will show an older generation how to trust each other again through their respect for difference. This process, however, must be given the time and space necessary to unfold, which is why at this point in history, to champion a transcendent us (a twenty-first century version of *e pluribus unum*) over the politics of diversity and the divisiveness that comes with it, as so many in the debate over diversity

and social decline seem prone to do, is to foreclose on the us's and the hope they should have for a future free from discrimination and hate.

Notes

- 1 <http://www.universityaffairs.ca/secrets-to-a-satisfying-life.aspx>
- 2 Speech given by Harvey Milk at a San Diego dinner of the gay caucus of the California Democratic Caucus on March 10, 1978: <http://victormv.wordpress.com/2008/09/08/harvey-milk-the-hope-speech-excerpt/>
- 3 The eleven organizations are the American Association of University Women, the Business and Professional Women's Association, the General Federation of Women's Clubs, the Women's Christian Temperance Union, the League of Women's Voters, Organization of the Eastern Star, PTA, Women's Bowling Congress, Hadassah, Moose (women) and the Girl Scouts of America.
- 4 For more detailed analysis, see my article (2010) "Gender, Diversity and Organizational Change: The Boy Scouts vs. Girl Scouts of America."
- 5 Hurwitz and Peffley (2010) demonstrate that the justice system in the US today is deeply racialized and that while white Americans see the country as largely "colour blind" and "fair," black Americans see it as fundamentally biased and racist.
- 6 "Using the Canadian General Social Survey (2003), our findings show that despite a negative relationship among adults, younger Canadians with racial and ethnic diversity in their social networks show higher levels of generalized trust. The results seem to confirm that youth experiences with rising diversity and the normalization of diversity in a multicultural environment contribute to beneficial (instead of detrimental) effects of diverse social networks" (Stolle and Harell, 2009:1). While these authors analyze Canadian data, the same phenomenon with respect to American youth holds on various kinds of social issues.

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