



# **Springfield/Greene County Social Capital Survey: Summary Report<sup>1</sup>**

Mike Stout, PhD<sup>2</sup>  
Tim Knapp, PhD  
John Harms, PhD

Dept. of Sociology, Anthropology and Criminology  
Missouri State University  
Springfield, MO

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<sup>2</sup> All questions or comments should be directed to Mike Stout at 901 S. National Ave, Springfield, MO 65897; Phone: (417)836-5357; E-mail: MStout@MissouriState.edu.

### **What is “social capital”?**

Social capital refers to networks of social relationships characterized by norms of trust and reciprocity. The central premise of social capital theory is that social networks have value. Like physical capital and human capital, social capital enhances productivity of both individuals and groups. In this sense, social capital shares many of the attributes of “public goods.” Analytically, social capital has two dimensions: a structural and an attitudinal dimension. The structural dimension involves the social networks that arise from attachment to different groups and organizations, while the attitudinal dimension refers to the norms of trust and reciprocity that shape attachment. These structural and attitudinal dimensions intersect to create either weak or strong ties. The survey questions used to measure social capital reflect these analytical dimensions and are presented in Appendix A at the end of this report.

Conceptually, social capital represents the wide variety of specific benefits that flow from the trust, reciprocity, information, and cooperation that characterize social networks. Social capital creates value for the people who are connected and, in many instances, for bystanders as well. Social capital works through multiple channels. For instance, information flows (e.g. about jobs, political candidates, colleges, etc.) depend on social capital. In addition, norms of reciprocity (mutual aid) are dependent on social networks.

Social capital theorists have identified two types of social networks involved in social capital: bridging and bonding networks. Bridging social networks bring individuals together with others who are different from them in terms of their race, social class, ethnicity, education, religion, age, or gender. Bridging networks sustain *generalized* trust and reciprocity. Bonding social networks bring individuals together with others like them and sustain *particularized*, in-group, trust and reciprocity. Most groups are bridging in some ways and bonding in others. For example, the Knights of Columbus is bonding in terms of religion (since all the participants are Catholic men), but it builds bridges across dimensions of class and income.

There are many different kinds of social capital. For example, there are social ties stemming from informal networks (e.g., everyday socializing, work-place ties, relationships with neighbors, personal support networks), and there are social ties that arise from formal networks, such as being a member of an organization. Group membership in such formal organizations consists of both private-minded organizations, which are primarily designed to produce fun or fellowship (such as a garden club or a bowling league), and public-minded organizations, which are designed to tackle an issue of public concern (such as a crime watch group, the PTA, or a community service organization). The social ties produced via formal and informal networks can be described according to the strength of the ties (strong or weak). Strong ties are ones where the individuals consider each other to be very close friends, where there is regular social interaction, and where people provide personal support to each other. Weak ties are ones where the ties are used only occasionally and tend to be used more for the flow of information (about jobs or other opportunities).

### **Why is social capital important?**

A growing body of scholarly literature over the last twenty years shows that social capital facilitates many important individual and social goods. For example, it has been observed that communities with high levels of social capital are also likely to have higher educational

achievement, more responsive governmental institutions, faster economic growth, and lower rates of crime and violence. In addition, people who live in communities with high levels of social capital are likely to be happier, healthier, and to have a longer life expectancy than people from communities with lower social capital. In places with greater social connectedness, it is easier to mobilize people to address public issues (e.g., establishing a hazardous waste facility, reducing a crime problem, building a community park, etc.), and it is easier to arrange things that benefit the group as a whole (a child-care cooperative among welfare mothers; a micro-lending group that enables poor people to start businesses; or farmers banding together to share expensive tools and machinery).

### **Why study social capital?**

The fundamental reason to study social capital is to inform public policy. Just as economists track investment in physical capital to assess the health of the economy, sociologists study social capital to track the health of civil society. Social capital is a proxy for social well-being and studying it allows communities to track their well-being over time, and to compare their social capital with other communities, states, and the nation. In this report you will see how the Ozarks compares to the nation across many dimensions of social capital. This is one advantage of the social capital survey; it has been used by many communities and scholars and thus allows for comparative analysis.

A second reason to study social capital is that the questions on the survey identify where social capital is strong and where it is weak in the community. This is crucial information for those who want to invest in social capital. For example, the survey identifies the groups and organizations that different types of individuals are involved in, which provides a guide for where communities should invest their efforts to build social capital.

A third reason to study social capital has to do with mobilizing existing social capital to address community problems. Again, because the survey questions identify the areas where social capital is strong and where it is weak, community policy makers can identify organizations where social capital is strong and mobilize these groups to address specific problems. In the Ozarks, for example, it is clear that faith-based organizations generate significant amounts of social capital and can therefore be mobilized to solve community problems such as child poverty and abuse.

A final reason to study social capital is that the survey questions reveal interesting facts about the community that can be used for specific tasks, including producing a Community Focus Report. There are questions on the survey, for example, that measure trust in the police and in local government. There are also questions that permit a more detailed analysis of civic engagement that can be used for a community report. This paper has a special section on civic engagement that can be used for the report.

### **The Springfield Social Capital Survey**

In May and June, 2008, researchers with the Center for Social Sciences and Public Policy Research at Missouri State University conducted telephone interviews with 799 adults in the Springfield/Greene County area. A sample list of residents was obtained from Listsmart, Inc. Phone interviews lasted about 30 minutes on average. In the survey, questions were asked regarding how connected the residents of Greene County are to their family, friends, neighbors

and civic institutions. The questions were asked with the intention of producing measures of social capital in Greene County.

### **Sample Characteristics**

Not all of the 799 survey respondents answered every question, so the statistics below are the valid percentages from those who answered demographic items. The number of people who responded to each question is reported in parentheses next to the variable name.

In terms of their occupational status, forty-two percent of subjects were working full time when contacted, and nine percent were employed part time. Four percent were unemployed or temporarily laid off. Thirty-two percent were retired, four percent were disabled, seven percent were homemakers and three percent were students. For those who were employed, 10 percent worked 38 or fewer hours in a typical week. Forty percent worked a 40-hour week. Thirty-two percent worked between 41 and 50 hours weekly, and 18 percent worked 51 or more hours in an average week.

**Table 1. Sample Demographics**

	Percent		Percent
<b><u>Labor Force Status</u></b> (N = 760)		<b><u>Political Ideology</u></b> (N = 636)	
Full-Time	41.7	Very Conservative/Conservative	50.5
Part-Time	8.7	Moderate	27.0
Laid Off/Unemployed	3.8	Very Liberal/Liberal	21.4
Retired	31.8	<b><u>Age</u></b> (N =646)	
Disabled	4.3	18 to 34	14.7
Other	9.6	35 to 49	26.8
<b><u>Race/Ethnicity</u></b> (N = 745)		50 to 64	29.1
White	94.1	65+	29.4
African-American	0.8	<b><u>Education</u></b> (N =653)	
Asian	0.9	HS or Less	35.1
Other	4.2	Some College	32.8
<b><u>Religious Affiliation</u></b> (N = 739)		Bachelor's Degree	18.8
Protestant	62.0	Advanced/Professional Degree	13.3
Catholic	9.1	<b><u>Gender</u></b> (N = 650)	
Other Christian	17.7	Female	64.5
Jewish	0.1	Male	35.5
Other Religion	3.4	<b><u>Income</u></b> (N = 464)	
No Religion	7.7	\$20k or Less	9.5
<b><u>Political Party Affiliation</u></b> (N = 642)		\$20k to \$50k	42.7
Democrat	28.3	\$50k to \$100k	33.6
Republican	42.2	\$100k+	14.2
Independent	19.8		

Sample participants were quite homogeneous in their ethnic background, which reflects the low level of ethnic diversity in Greene County. Ninety-four percent identified themselves as white, and only about one percent stated that they were either African American, Native American, or of Asian descent. Of the two percent of subjects who were Hispanic, one was from Puerto Rico, and the others were from Mexico.

Religiously, a solid majority of sample members (62 percent) were Protestants, while nine percent were Catholic, five percent were self-reported Evangelicals, and 13 percent identified themselves as “another type of Christian.” Only 0.1 percent was Jewish, three percent belonged to “some other religion,” and seven percent had no religion. Baptists were the largest denomination, with forty-six percent of all Protestants belonging to such churches.

Forty-two percent of respondents identified themselves as members of the Republican Party. Twenty-eight percent were Democrats, and 20 percent identified themselves as independents. Five percent were members of other political parties, and the same proportion reported no party preference. Twenty-three percent described their political outlook as very conservative, and 27 percent were moderately conservative. Twenty-seven percent said that they were middle of the road. Sixteen percent were moderately liberal, and five percent were very liberal.

The age of sample members ranged from 18 to 95. The median age of respondents was 55 years. Twenty-nine percent of sample members were 65 or older, 29 percent were between 50 and 64 years old, 27 percent were between 35 and 49 years old, and 15 percent were 34 or younger. This age distribution is skewed toward middle-aged and older respondents for two reasons. First, research indicates that younger people are less likely than older folks to agree to participate in phone interviews, and that occurred with this study. Second, the item measuring age was the 92<sup>nd</sup> question on the survey, and it should be noted that 142 people (18 percent of the 799 respondents) had stopped the interview prior to that point. Phone interviewers’ perception was that respondents who sounded younger were more likely to end the survey before it was complete. Thus, older people were more likely to both have agreed to take the survey and to have completed all 110 questions.

Thirty-five percent of sample participants had a high school degree or less. Thirty-three percent had attended some college, and nine percent had earned an Associate Degree or completed specialized technical training. Nineteen percent had earned a Bachelor’s Degree, three percent had some graduate training, and 10 percent had completed a graduate or professional degree. Thirty-six percent of respondents were male, and 64 percent were female. Sixty-three percent of respondents were married at the time of the survey, 14 percent were divorced or separated, 12 percent were widowed, and an equal proportion had never married. Twenty-four respondents lived without another adult in the household, 62 percent lived with one adult, 11 percent lived in a three-adult household, and four percent lived with three or more other adults. Over 68 percent had no children under the age of 18 living in their household, 13 percent of respondents had one youth in their household, 12 percent had two youths living with them, and six percent had three or more youths in their household.

Nearly 10 percent of respondents reported that their yearly household income before taxes was \$20,000 or less, while 15 percent had incomes between \$20,000 and \$29,999. Twenty-eight percent of sample members had gross household incomes from \$30,000 to \$49,999, and 22 percent had incomes between \$50,000 and \$74,999. Twelve percent had pre-tax household incomes of \$75,000 to \$99,999, while 12 percent had incomes of \$100,000 or more.

The slight over-representation of middle-aged and older respondents and a larger number of women than men are common features of phone interview samples. These sample limitations can be statistically adjusted for using weighting procedures. Thus, we can generalize most of the findings from our sample to the broader population of adults who live in Springfield or Greene County. Having a small number of ethnic minority group members, however, does limit our ability to generalize our findings to the non-white subsection of the local population.

### **Social Capital in Greene County**

The amount and types of social capital a community has can be measured by examining its levels of generalized, localized, and government trust, the characteristics of its social networks, and its levels of membership and participation in voluntary organizations.

#### **DISTRIBUTION OF TRUST**

Three different types of trust were measured in the survey. The first, *general trust*, was measured using three questions regarding trust in people in general, the belief that people are fair, and the belief that people are helpful. The second, *local trust*, was measured using questions regarding levels of trust in those one regularly comes into contact with in their neighborhood, at work, at the places where they shop, in the local police, and in the local news media. The third, *government trust*, was measured using questions regarding how often respondents said they would trust the local and national government to do what is right<sup>3</sup>.

Each type of trust is related to social capital in different ways. General trust is necessary for building bridging networks. Local trust can be useful for building both bridging and bonding networks. Trust in the government provides an indication of how well citizens feel that their interests are being represented by their elected officials.

#### *General Trust*

According to Figure 1, residents of Greene County were more likely to believe that people are fair and helpful than the national average<sup>4</sup>, and that they were about equal in their belief that in general people can be trusted.

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<sup>3</sup> See the Appendix for the exact question wording used in the survey.

<sup>4</sup> All national statistics were derived from the 2006 Social Capital Community Benchmark Survey National Survey or the 2006 General Social Survey.

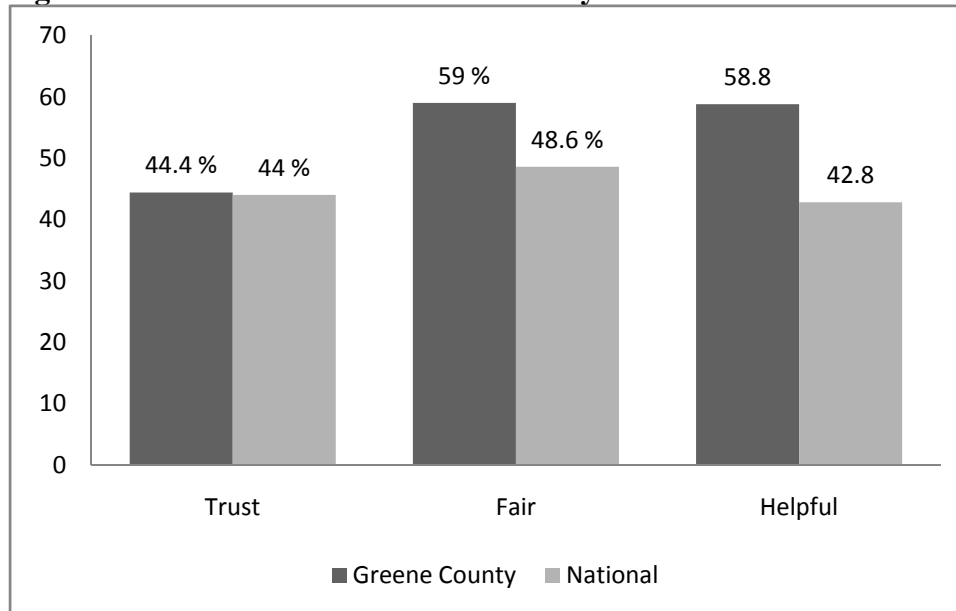
**Figure 1: Levels of Trust in Greene County and the United States**

Table 2 shows that within Greene County there were significant differences in general trust across levels of educational attainment. In general, there was a positive relationship between these two variables. For all three measures of general trust those with lower levels of education had the lowest levels of trust, while those with higher levels of education were the most trusting.

**Table 2: General Trust by Education**

	High School or Less	Some College/Associates Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Graduate Training or Professional Degree
Trust*	37%	41%	57%	69%
Fair*	49%	58%	68%	84%
Helpful*	52%	58%	64%	77%

\* Statistically significant ( $p < .05$ )<sup>5</sup>.

Looking at general trust across levels of household income within Greene County (Table 3) reveals a similar pattern to the one observed for the relationship between general trust and education. There was a positive relationship between general trust and household income, where residents from households with higher incomes also had higher levels of general trust.

<sup>5</sup> Statistical significance refers to probability that the observed differences across categories are a result of random chance. The smaller the p-value is the more likely it is that the differences observed in the sample exist in the population of Greene County. In **general**, when working with random samples, significance is a **necessary but not sufficient** condition for the importance of a difference. It is also important to remember that **non-significance** can be interesting and important as well.

**Table 3: General Trust by Household Income**

	Under \$20,000	\$20,000- \$50,000	\$50,000- \$100,000	More than \$100,000
Trust*	32%	42%	54%	62%
Fair*	50%	58%	66%	80%
Helpful*	43%	59%	64%	71%

\* Statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ).

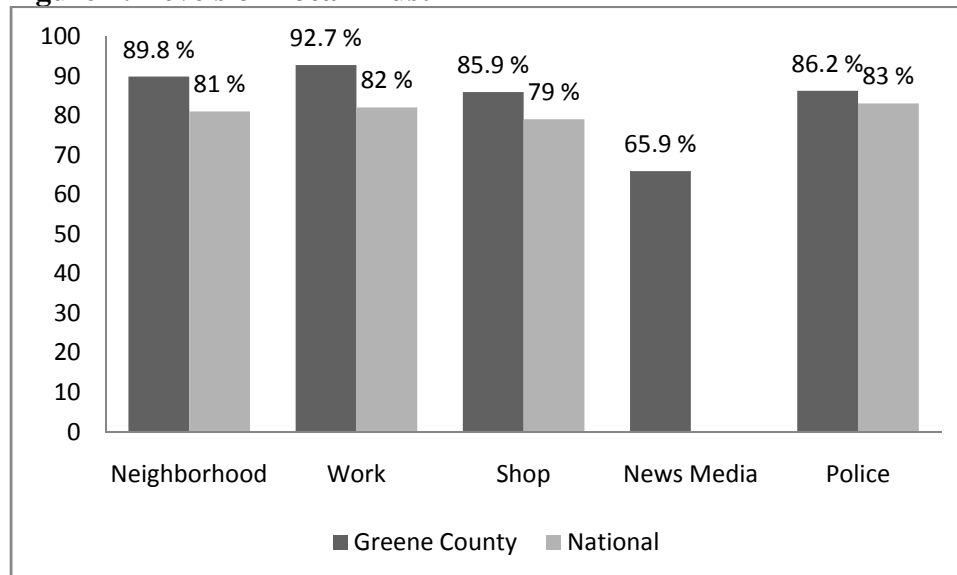
There also appears to be a relationship between age and overall levels of trust where trust tends to increase with age. Table 3 presents the results of an examination of the individual components of trust, and it reveals some interesting variations in the overall pattern of the relationship. For example, levels of general trust increase from ages 18 to 64, but drop slightly for those over 65. Perceptions that people are fair are highest for the youngest group and decrease slightly for the older age groups. There is a positive, statistically significant association between age and the belief that people are helpful.

**Table 4: General Trust by Age**

	18 to 34	35 to 49	50 to 64	65+
Trust	37%	49%	51%	42%
Fair	41%	34%	30%	31%
Helpful*	44%	56%	64%	67%

\* Statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ).

### *Local Trust*

**Figure 2: Levels of Local Trust**

Overall, it appears that the residents of Greene County have relatively high levels of localized trust. Figure 2 shows that residents of Greene County reported higher levels of trust than the national average in every category that national data were available for; including trust in their neighbors, their coworkers, those who work in the stores where they shop, and in the Springfield



police. Compared to these other types of trust Greene County residents had somewhat lower levels of trust in their local news media. When compared to national statistics, it is apparent that citizens of Greene County have higher levels of local trust than typical Americans. National statistics were not available for the question asked about trust in the local news media.

**Table 5: Local Trust by Education**

	High School or Less	Some College/Associates Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Graduate Training or Professional Degree
Neighborhood	83%	86%	87%	90%
Work	94%	89%	94%	98%
Shop	85%	87%	87%	89%
News Media	67%	62%	67%	72%
Police	83%	86%	87%	90%

According to Table 5, there was not a substantial amount of variation in levels of local trust across levels of education. Local trust was high for all levels of education.

**Table 6: Local Trust by Household Income**

	Under \$20,000	\$20,000- \$50,000	\$50,000- \$100,000	More than \$100,000
Neighborhood*	81%	86%	92%	99%
Work	82%	95%	93%	96%
Shop	86%	86%	88%	91%
News Media	67%	63%	67%	80%
Police	75%	80%	86%	91%

\* Statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ).

In general, there appears to be a positive relationship between household income and local trust. In other words, as income rises, so does local trust. Table 6 reveals that there were statistically significant differences in the proportion of people who trust their neighbors across levels of household income. Those with lower household incomes were least likely to report that they had trust in their neighbors when compared to those who reported higher levels of household income. Despite the fact that the rest of the relationships between local trust and household income were not statistically significant, there does appear to be a clear pattern to this data, which indicates positive relationships among the variables. The lack of statistical significance is likely due to the relatively small sample sizes, which have a direct effect on the chi-square significance tests.

Levels of local trust were high for all age groups. The only statistically significant relationship was for trust in neighbors. According to Table 7, while local trust was high for all age groups, older Greene County residents were significantly more likely to trust their neighbors than younger Greene County residents.

**Table 7: Local Trust by Age**

	18 to 34	35 to 49	50 to 64	65+
Neighborhood*	80%	90%	92%	94%
Work	90%	93%	95%	92%
Shop	79%	86%	86%	89%
News Media	64%	70%	68%	60%
Police	82%	82%	87%	90%

\* Statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ).

### *Trust in Government*

One of the most striking findings from the survey was the fact that, on average, the residents of Greene County reported that they were much less trusting of local and national government than were the respondents from the nation at large. According to Figure 3, only one out of every three residents of Greene County reported having trust in the local government, and fewer than one in four reported having trust in the national government. These numbers are much lower than comparable statistics reported for the nation.

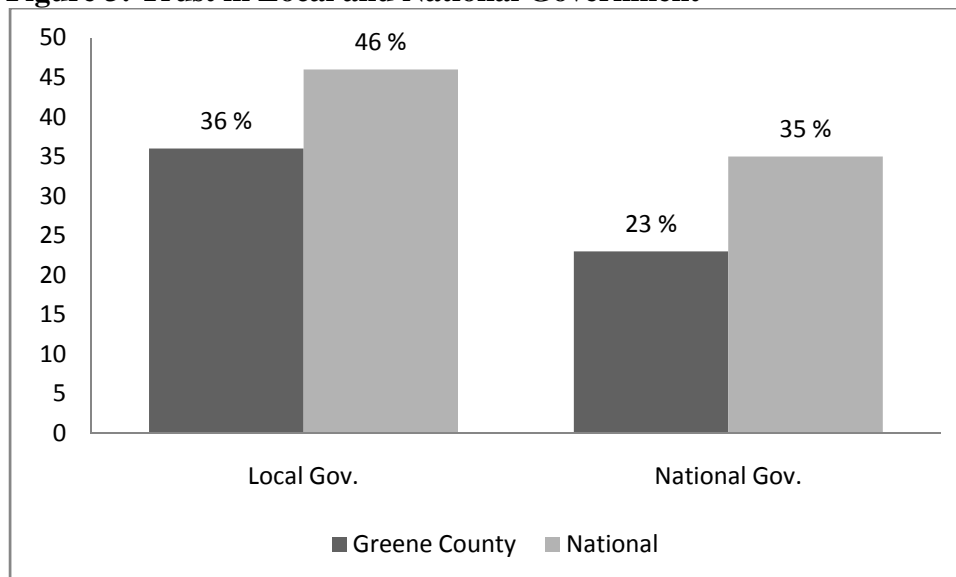
**Figure 3: Trust in Local and National Government**

Table 8 shows that Greene County residents had low levels of trust in the local and national government regardless of their level of education. There were no significant differences in trust in local and national government across levels of educational attainment.

**Table 8: Trust in Government by Education**

	High School or Less	Some College/Associates Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Graduate Training or Professional Degree
Local	32%	35%	42%	41%
National	21%	17%	24%	28%

\* Statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ).

Table 9 reveals that there was a significant positive relationship between trust in local government and household income for Greene County. Those in the highest income group were nearly twice as likely to report that they had trust in the local government as were those in the lowest income category. There were not significant differences across income categories for trust in the national government. Trust in the national government was low regardless of the respondents' income category.

**Table 9: Trust in Government by Household Income**

	Under \$20,000	\$20,000- \$50,000	\$50,000- \$100,000	More than \$100,000
Local*	27%	31%	39%	52%
National	23%	20%	23%	20%

\* Statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ).

According to Table 9, there was not a substantial difference in trust in the local or national government across age groups.

**Table 10: Trust in Government by Age**

	18 to 34	35 to 49	50 to 64	65+
Local	30%	40%	34%	37%
National	21%	26%	15%	23%

\* Statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ).

### CHARACTERISTICS OF SOCIAL NETWORKS

Survey respondents were asked several questions relating to the characteristics of their social networks. They were asked the following question in the survey:

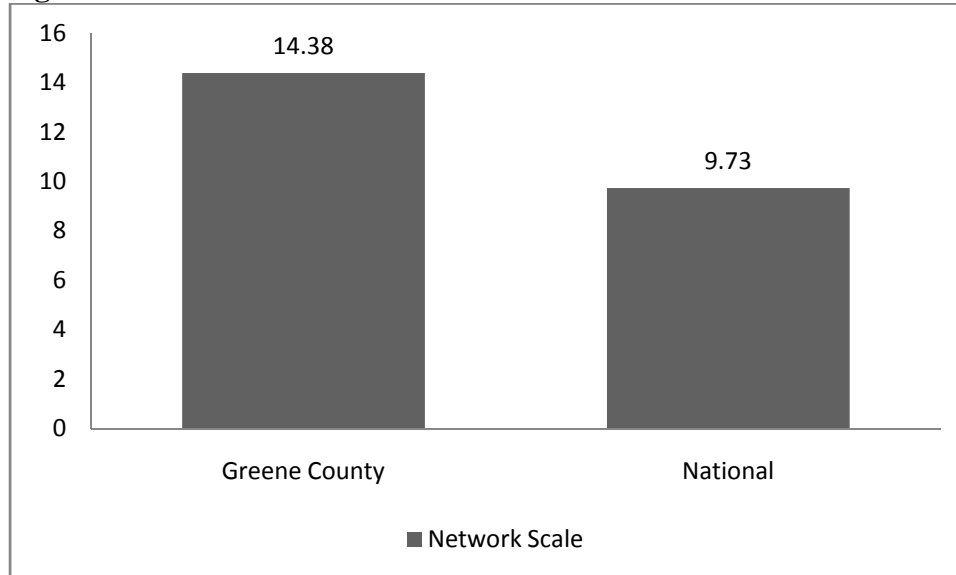
“Now I'm going to ask you some questions about people that you trust, for example good friends, people you discuss important matters with, or trust for advice, or trust with money.”

They were then asked to report the number of people they knew who fit into a given category (e.g., how many are lawyers, police officers, etc.)<sup>6</sup>. An additive scale was created based on the answers to these questions and the relationship between this scale and the socioeconomic and age characteristics of respondents was examined. The results of this analysis are presented below.

<sup>6</sup> See Appendix for the full list of types of networks included in the scale.

### Social Network Scale

**Figure 4: Social Network Scale**



According to Figure 4 the average resident of Greene County reported having just over fourteen people that they trusted and could discuss important matters with, trust for advice, or trust with money. This number is significantly higher than the comparable number for the average citizen of the United States, who reported having just under ten such networks.

**Table 11: Social Network Scale by Education**

	High School or Less	Some College/Associates Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Graduate Training or Professional Degree
Network Scale	15	14	15	13

\* Statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ).

Table 11 reveals no significant differences in the average number of social networks for Greene County citizens across levels of educational attainment.

**Table 12: Social Network Scale by Household Income**

	Under \$20,000	\$20,000- \$50,000	\$50,000- \$100,000	More than \$100,000
Network Scale*	12	16	15	16

\* Statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ).

Table 12 shows that Greene County residents with household incomes under \$20,000 had significantly fewer social networks than those with household incomes greater than \$20,000.

**Table 13: Social Network Scale by Age**

	18 to 34	35 to 49	50 to 64	65+
Network Scale	16	13	14	15

\* Statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ).

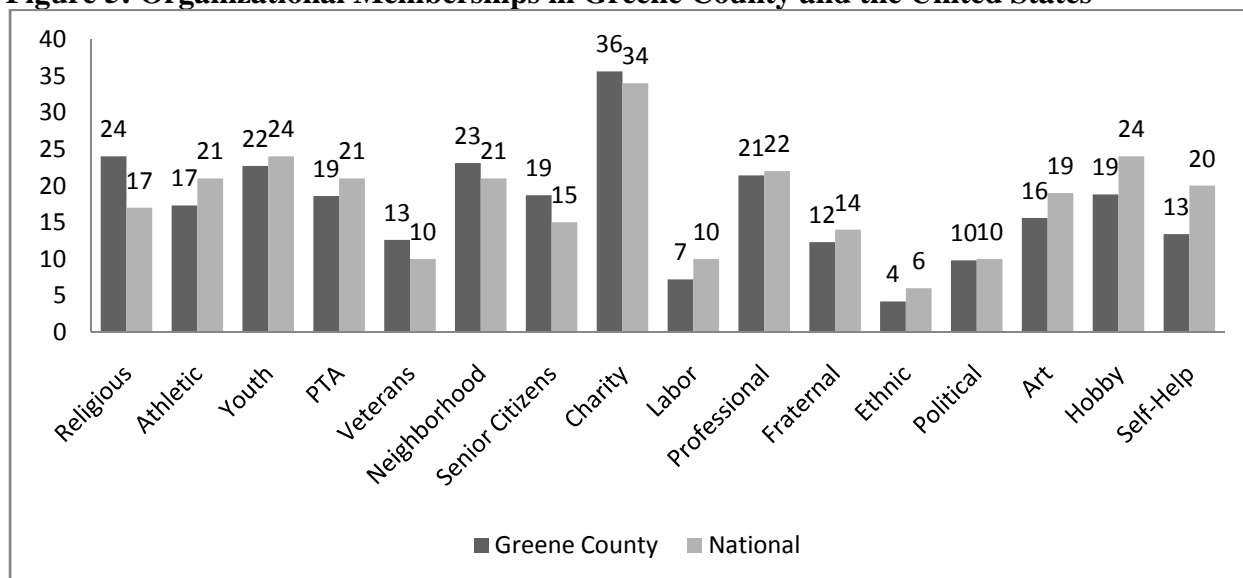
According to Table 12, there is not a significant difference in the number of networks across age groups.

### CHARACTERISTICS OF VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATION

In addition to trust and networks, there is a third component of social capital, which involves membership and participation in different types of voluntary association. The important and unique role played by the voluntary sector in American democracy has been well-documented by political scientists and sociologists. Indeed, it has been argued that nations, states, and communities that have vibrant voluntary sectors are more likely to have governments that are open, democratic, and responsive to the needs of their citizens. The nature of the social activity that occurs in civic organizations, fraternal societies, leisure clubs, and political groups is different from the type of activity done in the interest of economic gain. The effectiveness of voluntary associations is highly dependent on social networks that are based on mutual cooperation, trust, and reciprocity. These are exactly the types of network that produce and sustain social capital. As a result, voluntary associations act as engines that use and produce social capital. In order to determine the amount of social capital a community has it is important to examine its landscape of voluntary association.

In the survey, we asked several questions regarding membership and participation in voluntary associations. Below is a summary of the types of organizations that residents of Greene County belong to.

#### *Voluntary Association Membership*

**Figure 5: Organizational Memberships in Greene County and the United States**

According to Figure 5, Greene County residents were somewhat more likely to belong to veterans, neighborhood, senior citizens, and charity groups than the overall American population. Conversely, Greene County residents were less likely to belong to athletic, youth, PTA, labor, fraternal, ethnic, art, hobby, and self-help groups than Americans overall. Locally, residents were just as likely to belong to professional and political groups as Americans overall.

**Table 14: Organizational Membership by Education**

	High School or Less	Some College/Associates Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Graduate Training or Professional Degree
Athletic*	10%	21%	19%	25%
Youth	17%	22%	30%	29%
PTA*	10%	15%	29%	33%
Veterans	13%	12%	15%	13%
Neighborhood*	17%	22%	29%	38%
Senior Citizens	17%	19%	20%	23%
Charity*	21%	42%	46%	53%
Labor	7%	8%	2%	12%
Professional*	10%	17%	33%	49%
Fraternal*	6%	12%	15%	26%
Ethnic*	1%	3%	7%	12%
Political*	5%	9%	12%	22%
Art*	7%	10%	32%	31%
Hobby*	13%	19%	27%	25%
Self-Help*	8%	14%	17%	21%

\* Statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ).

Table 14 reveals significant differences in group memberships across levels of educational attainment within Greene County. Specifically, those with higher levels of education were significantly more likely to belong to athletic, parents, neighborhood, charity, professional, fraternal, ethnic, political, art, hobby, and self-help groups than those with lower levels of education. In most cases, those with the highest levels of educational attainment were more than twice as likely to belong to one of these groups as those with the lowest levels of educational attainment. The greatest effects of education on group membership were for membership in professional and charitable groups. There were not significant differences in group membership across categories of educational attainment for veterans, senior citizens, or labor groups.

Group membership in Greene County was also stratified by household income, with higher household incomes corresponding to an increased likelihood of group membership. Table 15 shows that those with higher levels of household income were significantly more likely to belong to religious, athletic, youth, parents, neighborhood, senior citizens, charity, labor, professional, fraternal, art, and self-help groups than those with lower levels of household income. Many of these differences are more pronounced than the differences across levels of educational attainment. For example those in the lowest category of household income were 32% less likely

to belong to a parent's group such as the PTA, while those in the lowest educational category were only 23% less likely to belong to such a group than those in the highest educational category. The most pronounced differences in group membership across income categories were for parents, neighborhood, charity, and professional groups. In each of these cases those in the highest income category were more than 30% more likely to belong to one of these groups than those in the lowest income category.

**Table 15: Organizational Membership by Household Income**

	Under \$20,000	\$20,000- \$50,000	\$50,000- \$100,000	More than \$100,000
Athletic*	7%	17%	22%	23%
Youth*	11%	20%	32%	35%
PTA*	7%	16%	24%	39%
Veterans	11%	18%	14%	11%
Neighborhood*	2%	19%	27%	39%
Senior Citizens*	27%	20%	12%	21%
Charity*	11%	31%	45%	61%
Labor*	0%	6%	12%	6%
Professional*	7%	18%	28%	41%
Fraternal*	9%	10%	17%	21%
Ethnic	0%	4%	5%	6%
Political	5%	9%	14%	18%
Art*	11%	11%	24%	24%
Hobby	11%	21%	22%	26%
Self-Help*	21%	12%	13%	25%

\* Statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ).

**Table 16: Organizational Membership by Age**

	18 to 34	35 to 49	50 to 64	65+
Athletic*	30%	17%	14%	14%
Youth*	23%	37%	18%	14%
PTA*	19%	35%	13%	5%
Veterans*	4%	6%	17%	19%
Neighborhood*	13%	22%	28%	25%
Senior Citizens*	9%	6%	17%	38%
Charity	37%	35%	39%	35%
Labor	2%	8%	10%	6%
Professional*	26%	28%	25%	11%
Fraternal	9%	13%	12%	13%
Ethnic	2%	6%	5%	2%
Political	7%	11%	13%	7%
Art*	22%	15%	20%	10%
Hobby	16%	19%	19%	20%
Self-Help*	11%	15%	16%	11%

\* Statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ).

According to Table 16, there were also some significant differences in organizational membership across age groups. In the aggregate, there is no clear pattern between age and organizational membership. If anything, there may be a weak, negative association. It appears that the pattern in the relationship between age and organizational membership is highly dependent on the type of organization one looks at. Those in the youngest age group were 17% more likely to belong to an athletic group than those in the oldest age group. Those who were between the ages of 35 to 49 were 14% more likely to belong to youth groups and parent groups, such as the PTA, than those in the next closest group (18 to 34). Those in the oldest age group were 15% more likely to belong to veterans, and 29% more likely to belong to senior citizens organizations, than those between 18 and 34 years of age. Greene County residents between the ages of 18 and 34 were 15% less likely to belong to a neighborhood group than the age group (50 to 64) that reported the highest level of membership. Those under the age of 65 were significantly more likely to belong to a professional organization than those older than 65.

### *Voluntary Association Activity*

**Figure 6: Number of Meetings Attended Past 12 Months**

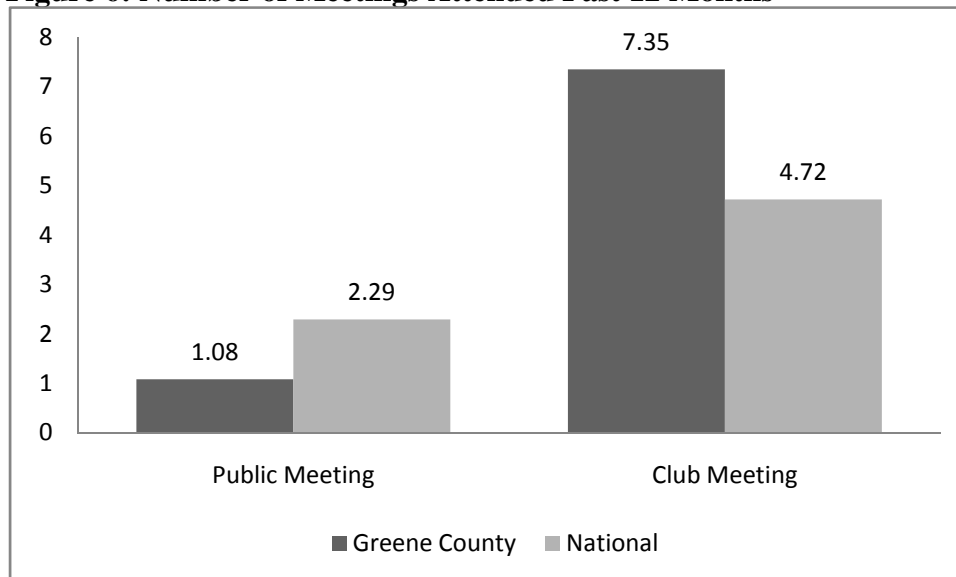


Figure 6 shows that Greene County residents, on average, attended about one public meeting that discussed town or school affairs, and they attended about seven club meetings in the past twelve months. Greene County residents attended less public meetings, on average, than Americans overall, but they attended more club meetings, on average, than Americans overall.

**Table 17: Average Number of Meetings Attended by Education**

	High School or Less	Some College/Associates Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Graduate Training or Professional Degree
Public Meetings	1	1	2	2
Club Meetings*	4	8	11	10

\* Statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ).



According to Table 17 there appears to be some degree of stratification across categories of educational attainment regarding the number of meetings Greene County citizens attended in the past twelve months. Those with the highest levels of education attended twice as many public meetings, and more than twice as many club meetings than those with the lowest levels of education.

**Table 18: Average Number Meetings Attended by Household Income**

	Under \$20,000	\$20,000- \$50,000	\$50,000- \$100,000	More than \$100,000
Public Meetings	0	1	2	2
Club Meetings*	6	7	7	11

\* Statistically significant (p<.05).

The number of public and club meetings attended by Greene County citizens in the past year, on average, also appears to be stratified across levels of household income. Table 18 shows that those in the lowest income categories did not attend any public meetings, on average, while those in the highest income categories attended two public meetings in the past year. Those in the lowest income categories attended about six club meetings in the past twelve months while those in the highest income categories attended about eleven club meetings.

**Table 19: Average Number of Meetings Attended by Age**

	18 to 34	35 to 49	50 to 64	65+
Public Meetings	1	2	1	1
Club Meetings	6	7	7	8

\* Statistically significant (p<.05).

According to Table 19, there does not appear to be a significant amount of variation in the number of meetings attended in the past twelve months across the age groups.

**Figure7: Percentage Who Participated in Organization**

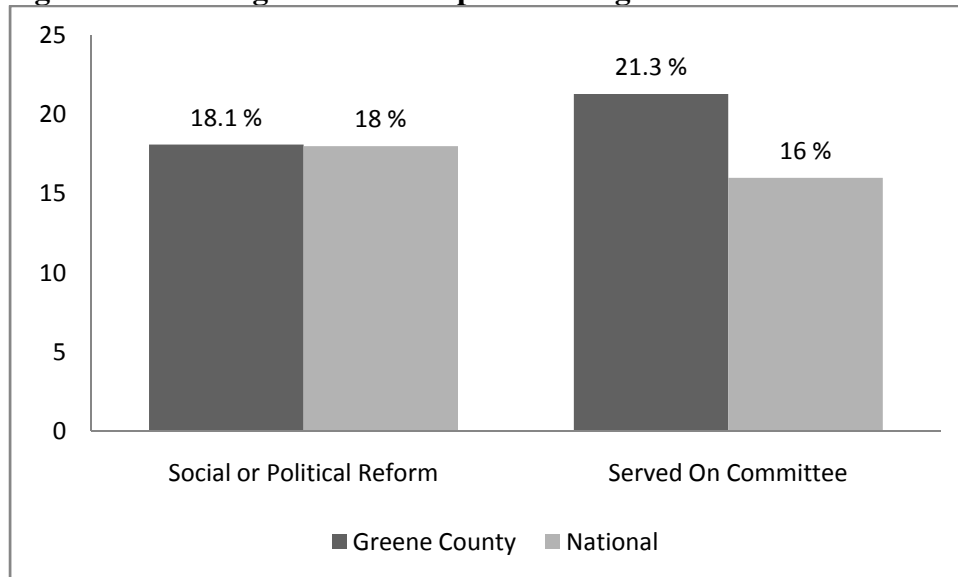


Figure 7 shows that nearly 17% of Greene County residents belonged to a group that took action for social or political reform. This number is comparable to those for the general U.S. population. Nearly 22% of Greene County residents served on the committee of a voluntary organization. This number is greater than that (16%) for the general U.S. population.

**Table 20: Organizational Activities by Education**

	High School or Less	Some College/Associates Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Graduate Training or Professional Degree
Reform*	9%	16%	24%	40%
Committee*	12%	19%	27%	46%

\* Statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ).

Table 20 reveals that organizational participation is significantly stratified across levels of educational attainment in Greene County. Those with the highest levels of educational attainment were 31% more likely to belong to a group that took action for political or social reform than those with the lowest levels of educational attainment. Those with the highest levels of educational attainment were nearly four times more likely to serve on the committee of a voluntary association.

**Table 21: Organizational Activities by Household Income**

	Under \$20,000	\$20,000- \$50,000	\$50,000- \$100,000	More than \$100,000
Reform*	5%	17%	24%	34%
Committee*	5%	17%	27%	43%

\* Statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ).

Organizational participation in Greene County was also significantly stratified across categories of household income. According to Table 21, those in the highest income category were nearly seven times more likely to belong to a group that took action for social or political reform, and were nearly nine times more likely to have served on the committee of a voluntary association.

**Table 22: Organizational Activities by Age**

	18 to 34	35 to 49	50 to 64	65+
Reform*	26%	19%	21%	10%
Committee	19%	21%	23%	21%

\* Statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ).

Age was not as strongly related to organizational activity as education and income were. There was a negative association between age and membership in a group that took local action for reform. According to Table 22, the youngest age group was about two and a half times more likely to have participated in these types of groups than the oldest age groups. There was no association between age and the likelihood of having served on a committee.

## RELIGION-BASED SOCIAL CAPITAL

In general, social capital is a multi-faceted concept that involves levels of trust, characteristics of social networks, and engagement in voluntary association. One type of voluntary association that is particularly important for understanding the nature of social capital in Greene County involves the extent to which people are active in religion-based social activity. A good deal of the social networking that takes place in Greene County takes place in churches or church-based groups. Thus, in addition to the individual sense of fulfillment it provides, religion can also serve as a form of social capital.

Religion-based social capital was measured using a series of survey questions regarding the nature of religious participation in Greene County. Here, four main questions are used to measure religion-based social capital. The first question asked about church membership. The second question asked about membership in any faith-based organizations outside of the church. The third question asked about trust in fellow congregants. The fourth question asked how important religion was to the respondents' lives. A summary of the findings are presented below.

**Figure 8. Religion-Based Social Capital**

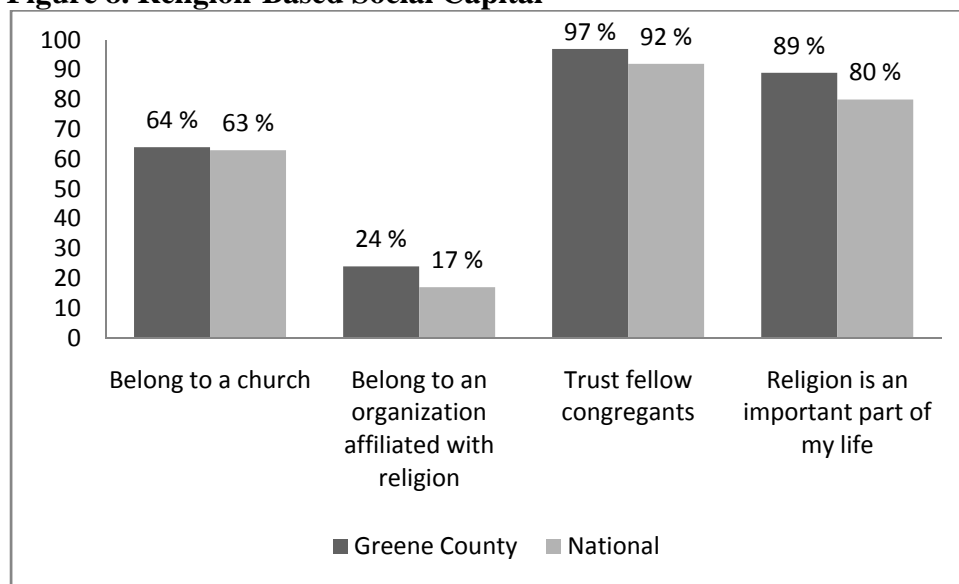


Figure 8 shows a comparison of religion-based social capital for Greene County and the nation. Levels of church membership in Greene County were nearly equal to national levels of church membership. Sixty-three percent of Greene County residents belonged to a church, compared to 62% nationally. Greene County residents were 7% more likely to report that they belonged to an organization affiliated with religion besides their place of worship. Greene County residents were 7% more likely to trust their fellow congregants, and they were 9% more likely to agree that religion is an important part of their life.

**Table 23. Religion-Based Social Capital by Education**

	High School or Less	Some College/Associates Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Graduate Training or Professional Degree
Religion is very important*	73%	70%	69%	67%
Member of church*	56%	62%	65%	74%
Member of religious group*	17%	29%	30%	29%
Trust fellow congregants	98%	95%	98%	97%

\* Statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ).

Table 23 reveals some interesting findings regarding the relationship between education and religion-based social capital. On the one hand, the most highly educated respondents were the least likely to agree that religion is important in their life. On the other hand, the most highly educated respondents were also the most likely to belong to a church. In fact, they were 18% more likely to belong to a church than those with a high school diploma or less. Those with some college, a college degree, or with graduate training or a professional degree were almost twice as likely to belong to a group affiliated with religion compared to those with a high school education or less. There was no difference across levels of education in the percentage of respondents who said they trusted their fellow congregants.

**Table 24. Religion-Based Social Capital Activity by Income**

	Under \$20,000	\$20,000-\$50,000	\$50,000-\$100,000	More than \$100,000
Religion is very important*	67%	70%	66%	62%
Member of church*	58%	53%	68%	74%
Member of religious group*	5%	25%	27%	30%
Trust fellow congregants	94%	96%	97%	100%

\* Statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ).

Table 24 reports the associations between religion-based social capital and income. For the most part, the relationship is similar to the relationship for education. Respondents with incomes greater than \$100k were the least likely to report that religion was very important to them, and the most likely to be a member of a church. They were also the most likely to belong to an organization affiliated with religion. In fact, those making more than \$100k were five times more likely to belong to such groups than those making under \$20k.

**Table 25. Religion-Based Social Capital by Age**

	18 to 34	35 to 49	50 to 64	65+
Religion is very important*	60%	70%	67%	78%
Member of church*	49%	62%	60%	70%
Member of religious group	23%	26%	20%	30%
Trust fellow congregants	96%	97%	96%	98%

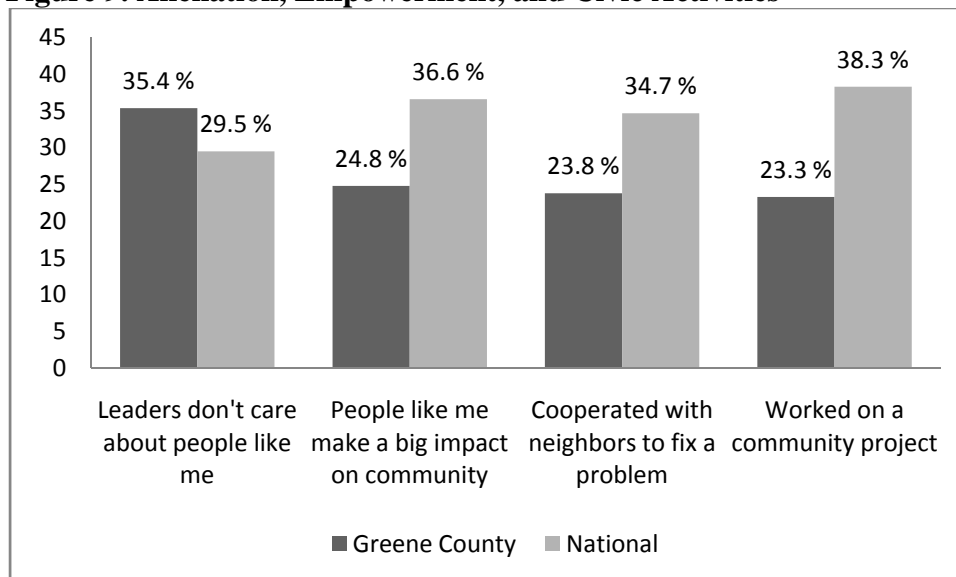
\* Statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ).

According to Table 25, older people were more likely to agree that religion is an important part of their lives than younger people, they were the most likely to belong to a church, and they were most likely to belong to an organization affiliated with religion.

### **Civic Attitudes and Community Engagement in Greene County**

High levels of social capital often are associated with an increased sense of empowerment and with high levels of civic engagement; however, this is not automatically the case. A comparison of findings from the Springfield area study with results from the 2006 National Social Capital Survey reveals that the area's generally high levels of social capital do not lead to above average sentiments of empowerment or to high levels of civic engagement (see Figure 9). In fact, a somewhat higher proportion of Springfield area residents (35.4 percent) feel alienated because people running the community do not care about them, compared with 29.5 percent of the national population who hold that view. Local respondents also expressed a notably lower sense of community efficacy than their counterparts nationwide. Slightly less than one fourth (24.8 percent) of area residents believe that they can have a big impact in making their community better. However, over one-third of adults nationwide (36.6 percent) feel that they have that extent of community efficacy.

**Figure 9. Alienation, Empowerment, and Civic Activities**



These subjective differences lead to lower levels of community engagement locally than are found across the United States in general. Nationally, 35 percent of people cooperated with others to fix or improve something in their neighborhood, but fewer than 24 percent of local residents had done so. Also, 38 percent of people nationally had worked on a community project in the past year, compared with only 23 percent of people in Springfield and Greene County.

What can explain the lower sense of efficacy and lower civic engagement rates in Springfield even though the area's social capital is above national average levels? One argument is that communities that have wide socioeconomic inequality gaps tend to have lower civic participation rates. People near the bottom of the social ladder feel alienated rather than empowered, and they

therefore are less involved in their communities. It might be that socioeconomic stratification in Springfield is greater than it is across the nation as a whole, and that greater local inequality would partially account for lower levels of empowerment and engagement.

Communities across the nation are stratified by socioeconomic status, ethnicity, gender and age groups, and Springfield is no different. Some groups feel empowered to work for change, while other groups feel alienated from civic processes. These subjective differences lead to behavioral differences, as some groups are fairly active in working for community betterment, while many members of other groups sit on the sidelines. Simply put, some categories of people are more civically engaged than are others. Due to under-representation of ethnic minorities in our sample, we cannot address relationships between ethnic group stratification and civic attitudes and community participation. Females were highly over-represented in our sample, so we currently are constructing weighting formulas for the gender variable. Data do allow us to investigate community sentiments and participation rates across socioeconomic categories and age groups.

Socio-economic status groups do display varying attitudes of powerfulness and of alienation, and their rates of civic participation are significantly different. We measured socio-economic status with income and education variables. Income had several noticeable effects on respondents' interpretations of the interests of local leaders and on their subjective sense of being able or unable to make a difference in their community. Only a little over one-quarter, 27 percent, of people with annual incomes in excess of \$100,000 agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that "The people running my community don't really care much what happens to me." That sense of being overlooked by local leaders increased noticeably among middle-income groups, and fully two in five, 40 percent, of low-income individuals shared that critical attitude of alienation (see Table 26).

When asked "How much impact do you think people like you can have in making your community a better place to live?", fewer than one in ten people with incomes below \$20,000 felt that they could make a big impact. Over one-quarter of middle-income respondents felt that they could make a big impact, while almost one-third of high-income individuals felt that they had such power to improve the local community.

**Table 26. Alienation and Civic Activities by Income**

	Under \$20,000	\$20,000- \$50,000	\$50,000- \$100,000	More than \$100,000
Leaders don't care about people like me	40.0%	38.5%	31.3%	27.3%
Make a big impact in community*	9.8%	27.5%	28.2%	32.4%
Cooperated with neighbors to fix a problem	14.0%	22.2%	25.0%	32.8%
Worked on a community project*	9.1%	18.7%	31.0%	42.4%

\* Statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ).

Peoples' income also affected their actual behavioral efforts to work with others to improve local conditions. Only one in seven area residents who had incomes below \$20,000 had worked with others in their neighborhood over the past two years to fix or improve something (see Table 25). The proportion of people who cooperated with neighbors to fix a problem or improve local

conditions rose steadily among middle income groups, and almost one-third of those with annual incomes exceeding \$100,000 had worked with others to make local improvements.

Similar patterns were revealed when people were asked whether they had worked on a community project in the past year. Fewer than one in ten people in the lowest income category had worked on such a project, compared with over 40 percent of high-income individuals who had done so (see Table 26). Clearly, those with less income held more negative views of local leaders, felt less capable of making a difference in their communities, and, based in part on those perceptions, they were less likely to join with others in efforts to improve their neighborhoods and communities.

Attitudes about the interests of local authorities and a sense of their ability to make a positive difference also diverged across education categories. Nearly two in five respondents who had no education beyond high school agreed or strongly agreed that “The people running my community don’t really care much what happens to me.” Only 23 percent of those in the highest education category shared that pessimistic opinion (see Table 27). Similarly, fewer than 18 percent of those with a high school diploma or less education believed that they could have a “big impact” on improving their community. Over one-third of people with a Bachelor’s Degree felt that they could make a large difference in their community.

Participation in efforts to improve local conditions varied across education groups as well. Nearly 33 percent of those with graduate or professional education beyond a Bachelor’s Degree had worked with others in their neighborhood in the past two years to fix a problem or improve something. This was over twice the rate (14 percent) of participating in neighborhood action that the lowest-educated group showed (see Table 27). And, the rate of working on a community project in the past year was four times higher in the most-educated group compared with the least-educated group, 45 percent compared with less than 11 percent. As with income, education shows that people with low socio-economic status tend to have negative opinions of local authorities, feel that they are unable to make a difference locally and, therefore, have lower rates of civic participation.

**Table 27. Alienation and Civic Activities by Education**

	High School or Less	Some College/ Associates Degree	Bachelor’s Degree	Graduate Training or Professional Degree
Leaders don’t care about people like me*	39.4%	40.7%	27.1%	22.9%
People like me make a big impact in community*	17.9%	25.7%	33.9%	26.7%
Cooperated with neighbors to fix a problem*	14.1%	25.8%	31.1%	32.9%
Worked on a community project*	10.5%	18.9%	38.0%	45.3%

\* Statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ).

Age impacts peoples’ sense of alienation or empowerment and their community activities less than education and income do. Nonetheless, some interesting patterns are shown in Table 28.

Feelings of alienation only vary between 34 percent and 38 percent across the four age categories. People between ages 35 and 49 are significantly more likely than younger and older folks to feel that they can make a big impact on the community, and they have cooperated with neighbors to fix a problem more than people of other ages. Young adults, ages 18 to 34, and middle-aged individuals are more likely to have worked on a community project than older persons. Older residents have noticeably lower rates of community activities, as rates of cooperating with neighbors to fix something and working on community projects drop off noticeably after age 50.

**Table 28. Alienation and Civic Activities by Age**

	18 to 34	35 to 49	50 to 64	65+
Leaders don't care about people like me	33.7%	34.9%	38.1%	33.9%
People like me make a big impact in community*	22.6%	31.8%	23.0%	21.3%
Cooperated with neighbors to fix a problem	22.3%	29.1%	21.6%	21.7%
Worked on a community project*	29.8%	27.9%	22.0%	17.0%

\* Statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ).

The important question of what causes the mismatch between relatively high levels of social capital in Greene County and the area's below-average rates of empowerment and community activities can be answered only after deeper analysis. As mentioned above, if socio-economic inequality gaps are wider in Greene County than across the nation, then that might account for below-average empowerment and community activities. Unfortunately, this argument is very difficult to test, as no reliable estimates of local income distribution are available to compare with national patterns. It also is possible that inequality gaps are not wider in Southwest Missouri, but that those near the bottom of the class structure are more alienated and less active in the community than their similarly disadvantaged peers across the nation. While further analyses are needed to evaluate these possible explanations for Greene County's disconnect between high social capital and low empowerment and community activity rates, it is clear that efforts are needed to draw more lower-income and less-educated individuals into civic participation and community work.



## Appendix A: Survey Questions

### Social Capital Questions:

#### *General Trust*

Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you can't be too careful in life?

Do you think most people would try to take advantage of you if they got a chance, or would they try to be fair?

Would you say that most of the time people try to be helpful, or that they are mostly just looking out for themselves?

#### *Local Trust*

Next, we'd like to know how much you trust different groups of people. First, think about people in your neighborhood. Generally speaking, would you say that you can trust them a lot, some, only a little, or not at all? (Asked for people you work with, people at your place of worship, people who work in the stores where you shop, the local news media, and the police in Springfield/Greene County).

#### *Trust in Government*

How much of the time do you think you can trust the NATIONAL government to do what is right - just about always, most of the time, only some of the time, or hardly ever?

How about your LOCAL government? How much of the time do you think you can trust the LOCAL government to do what is right? (Would you say just about always, most of the time, only some of the time, or hardly ever?)

#### *Network Diversity*

Now I'm going to ask you some questions about people that you trust, for example good friends, people you discuss important matters with, or trust for advice, or trust with money.

How many people that you trust are police officers?

How many are lawyers?

How many are janitors or building cleaners?

How many are electricians?

How many of the people that you trust are currently serving in the armed forces?

How many of the people that you trust are you pretty certain are currently unemployed?

How many are you pretty certain are currently in state or federal prison?

How many of the people that you trust are you pretty certain attend religious services on a regular basis?

*Voluntary Organization Membership*

Besides your local place of worship, have you been involved with any organization affiliated with religion, such as the Knights of Columbus or B'nai B'rith (BA-NAY BRITH), or a bible study group?

(How about) An adult sports club or league, or an outdoor activity club?

(How about) A youth organization like youth sports leagues, the scouts, 4-H clubs, and Boys & Girls Clubs?

A parents' association, like the PTA or PTO, or other school support or service groups?

A veteran's group?

A neighborhood association, like a block association, a homeowner or tenant association, or a crime watch group?

Clubs or organizations for senior citizens or older people?

A charity or social welfare organization that provides services in such fields as health or service to the needy?

A labor union?

A professional, trade, farm, or business association?

Service clubs or fraternal organizations such as the Lions or Kiwanis or a local women's club or a college fraternity or sorority.

Ethnic, nationality, or civil rights organizations, such as the National Organization for Women, the Mexican American Legal Defense or the NAACP?

Other public interest groups, political action groups, political clubs, or party committees?

A literary, art, discussion or study group OR a musical, dancing, or singing group?

Any other hobby, investment, or garden clubs or societies?

A support group or self-help program for people with specific illnesses, disabilities, problems, or addictions, or for their families?

*Voluntary Organization Participation*

How many times in the past twelve months have you attended a club meeting?

How many times in the past twelve months have you attended any public meeting in which there was discussion of town or school affairs?

Did any of the groups that you are involved with take any LOCAL action for social or political reform in the past 12 months?

In the past twelve months, have you served as an officer or served on a committee of any local club or organization?

Community Attitudes and Civic Engagement Questions:

“The people running my community don’t really care much what happens to me” (Alienation)

“How much impact do you think people like you can have in making your community a better place to live?” (Engagement or efficacy)

“Did you work on a community project in the past 12 month?” (Personal engagement)

“In the past two years, have you worked with others to get people in your immediate neighborhood to work together to fix or improve something?” (Cooperative engagement)