



Social Capital Survey Central Minnesota

Final Report

Prepared by:
UpFront Consulting
in collaboration with the
St. Cloud State University Survey
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KEY POINTS

The Central Minnesota Community Foundation commissioned a telephone survey of 510 residents of Central Minnesota. The survey asked about the connections individuals have with others in the community—referred to as “social capital.” Here are key findings:

- The Social Capital Scale combines 24 items about trust, community and social connections. According to the scale score, social capital increased in Central Minnesota since 2010, although it is not as high as it was in 2004.
- One of the positive changes this year is a higher percentage of residents who report having someone of another race in their home, or being in the home of someone of another race.
- The percent of respondents who say they trust people from Somalia is 17% higher this year than in 2010, a significant positive change. Trust of African Americans and Latino/a people is up as well.
- The percent of residents who report volunteering in the community is down just slightly from 2010. Further, those who do volunteer report doing so slightly fewer times per year than in 2010.
- Conversely, the percent of respondents who report working on a community project is up slightly this year compared to 2010.
- Trust in the national government has slipped further. It has declined steadily since 2004.
- The top demographic predictors of social capital are 1) higher education, 2) high household income, and 3) longevity in the community.
- Top behavioral predictors of social capital are more trust in people of other races, contributing to charitable organizations, and high levels of volunteering in the community.
- Bridging social capital refers to ties of trust and reciprocity between diverse groups of people. Bonding social capital refers to the ties of trust and reciprocity among close-knit groups of people. In Central Minnesota, both bridging and bonding social capital have increased over the past five years.
- Social capital researchers believe that both trust and actions are crucial for both bridging and bonding social capital. In Central Minnesota there is a great deal more variation in the action components than in the trust components.

More information about each of these key findings is in the body of the report, following the section on the survey methodology.



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OVERVIEW

This 2015 Social Capital survey was commissioned by the Central Minnesota Community Foundation. Major funders and sponsors of the research also include the following:

- CentraCare Health Foundation
- Initiative Foundation
- Morgan Family Foundation
- St. Cloud State University
- St. Cloud Times Media
- United Way of Central MN

This report describes findings from the Social Capital telephone survey conducted in Central Minnesota in May, 2015.

“Social Capital” is a method of measuring the value of connections that individuals have to other individuals and to their communities. This survey looks at a variety of indicators found, in national research, to be good measures of social capital.

The survey is a short form of a survey conducted in 50 communities and regions, and nationally, in the summers of 2000 and 2006. This shorter survey was previously conducted in Central Minnesota in 2004 and 2010.

The survey geography for all three years is a 15-mile radius around St. Cloud. This area largely includes four school districts (St. Cloud, Sauk Rapids, Sartell and ROCORI). A few of the survey respondents live in other districts (Albany, Foley).

This 2015 survey includes responses from 510 individuals. There were 501 responses in the 2004 Central Minnesota survey and 522 to the 2010 survey.

The 2004 survey was a random sample telephone survey. The 2010 survey was a hybrid online/telephone survey, using a survey panel in Central Minnesota along with telephone interviewing. This 2015 survey was again a telephone survey, but this time with a sample that included cellular phones as well as landlines.

The data collection was completed by the St. Cloud State University Survey. Survey staff made a few small changes to the instrument, but the core questions have been identical over the three surveys.

A separate report from the St. Cloud State University Survey describes the sampling methodology and telephone interviewing.

Overall, the respondents match the known demographics of the Central Minnesota area fairly well. Note that those who responded to the survey are slightly better educated than the population as a whole. This is similar to the 2004 and 2010 surveys. The survey this year, as did the past two surveys, underrepresents people of color. As a group, respondents this year are slightly older than the two previous surveys.

Further information or analysis is available from the researchers.

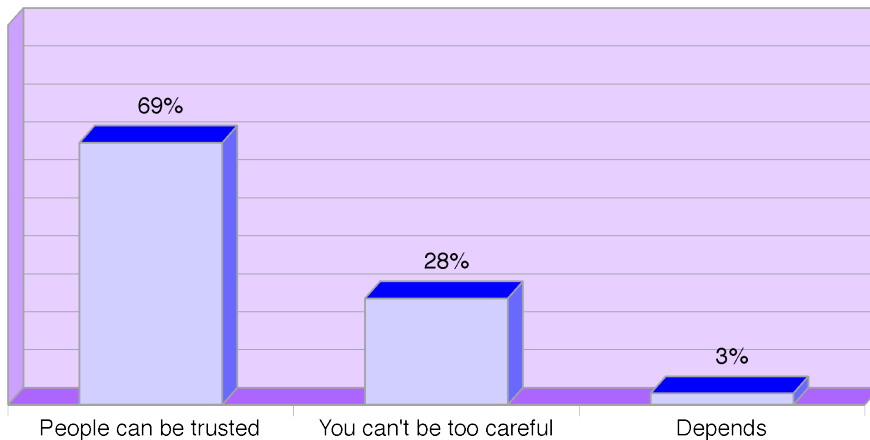
TRUST

Overall trust of people

The chart below shows responses to the question “Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people?” The three response choices were “People can be trusted,” “You can't be too careful” and “Depends.”

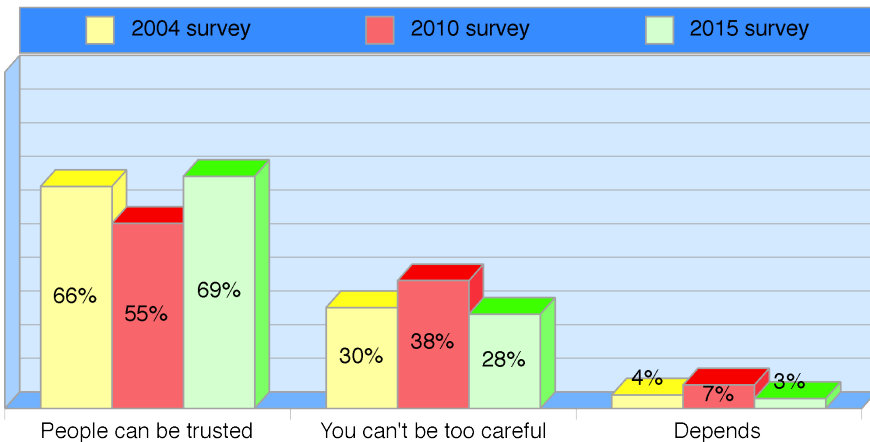
In Central Minnesota, nearly seven in ten respondents believe you can trust people. Fewer than three in ten (28%) believe “You can't be too careful.”

The chart at the bottom of the page compares this survey with the previous two surveys, completed in the same area in Central Minnesota. Overall trust seems to have rebounded from a dip in 2010. That survey was conducted during the “Great Recession” and the economic concerns may have influenced respondents.



“Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people?” All responses are shown.

In the 2004 survey, the questions about trust were first in the survey. In this survey and in 2010, they were placed more toward the middle and questions that were deemed to be easier to answer, and perhaps less threatening, were placed first. We are reporting the questions in the same order they were asked in 2004 so that the reports from the three surveys can be compared.



This chart shows the comparison between the 2004 survey (yellow bars), the 2010 survey (red bars), and this survey (green bars). This color coding is followed throughout the report.



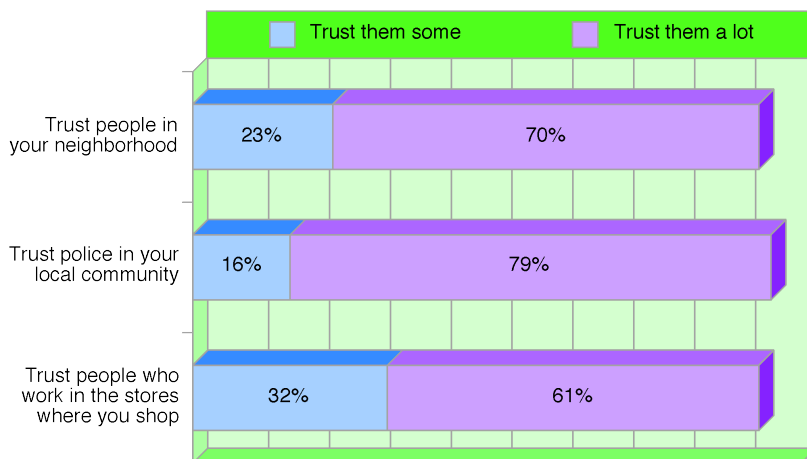
Trust of neighbors, police, shops

The next set of three questions asked community residents how much they trust their neighbors, police in their community, and people who work in the stores where they shop. As shown in the chart below, people generally trust those around them.

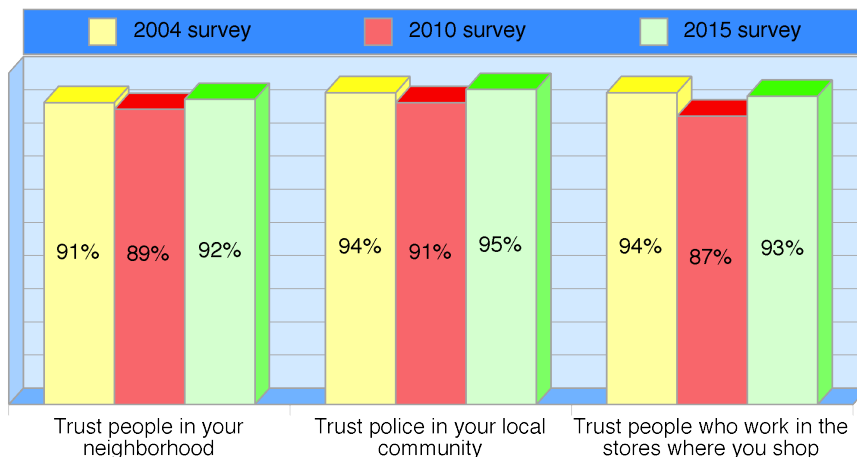
The chart at the bottom of the page compares the three surveys; responses are similar over the three years. The percent of “Trust them a lot” responses is higher this year (similar to 2004), but the “Trust them some” responses are correspondingly higher. This is to be expected given that a majority of surveys in 2010 were completed online. Telephone surveys tend to push respondents to the outer ends of scales (“Trust them a lot”) while in written surveys (which includes online), people are more likely to choose items toward the midpoint

The wording of these three questions followed an identical pattern: “Next, we’d like to know how much you trust different groups of people. First, think about (GROUP). Generally speaking, would you say that you can trust them a lot, some, only a little, or not at all?”

There were two response choices not shown in the chart, “Trust them only a little,” and “Trust them not at all,” in addition to a “Don’t know” response. All the percentages are figured with the “Don’t know” responses removed, the same as in the past two surveys.



This chart shows the combined “Trust them a lot” and “Trust them some” responses from this survey and the two earlier surveys. Note that overall, trust levels are similar over the years. The item “Trust people in the stores where you shop” showed a slight decline in 2010 but this year is very similar to the 2004 survey.

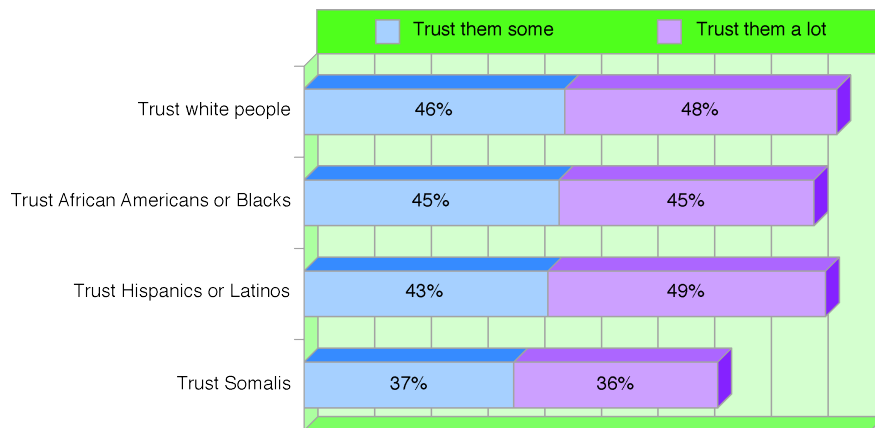


of the scale (“Trust them some”). For that reason, the comparison charts in this report show the sum of the two positive responses.

Trust of racial groups

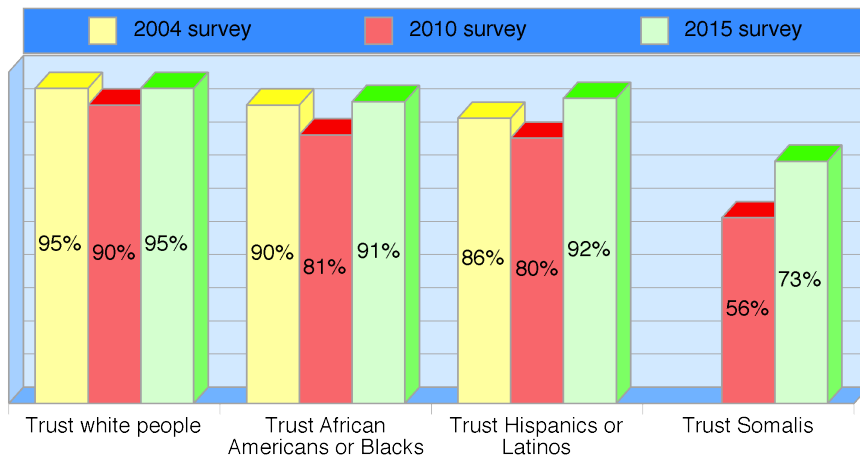
A similar set of four questions asked respondents how well they trust different racial groups. The charts below show the responses.

Similar to the previous questions, the overall trust level of the three groups—whites, African Americans or blacks, and Hispanics or Latinos—is very similar to 2004. The slightly lower level of trust in the 2010 survey may be attributable to the online versus telephone methodology that year. Note that trust of people from Somalia has risen since 2010. 36% of respondents this year said they “trust them a lot” compared to only 9% in 2010.



These four questions used the same pattern as the previous three questions, with the same response sets.

The percentages shown are figured with the “Don’t know” and “Refused” responses removed. In general, this set of questions had the highest refusal rate in the survey, with a few respondents making comments to the interviewers that they believed the questions are racist.



Overall, trust is higher this year than in 2010, although note that the difference in methodology may influence this result. The group “People from Somalia” was not included in the 2004 survey.



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POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT

Voter registration

The voter registration figures from the Social Capital surveys often do not correlate closely with data from voter registration rolls. Not only do respondents tend to over-report on voting questions, some are unaware of voter registration procedures and assume they are registered.

Nearly all survey respondents (94%) say they are registered to vote. This is higher than the 88% who said they were registered in the 2004 survey; 96% reported registration in the 2010 survey. This is likely caused by the higher education level of respondents in the 2010 and 2015 surveys; there is a positive correlation between higher education levels and voting.

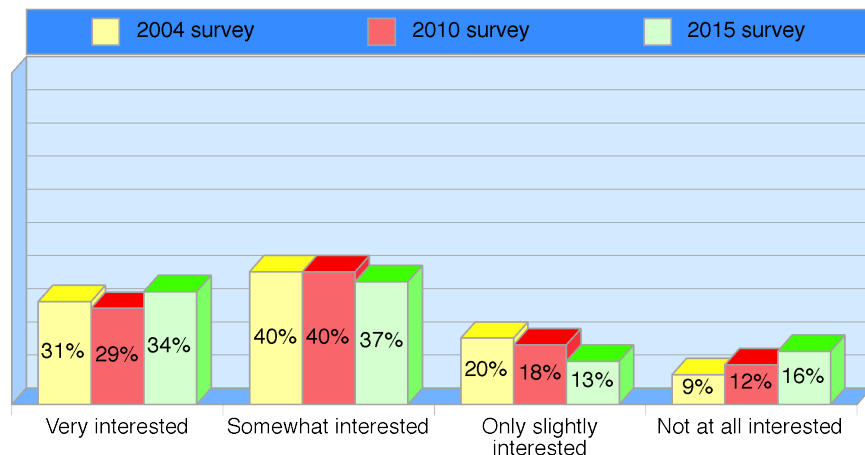
Interest in politics

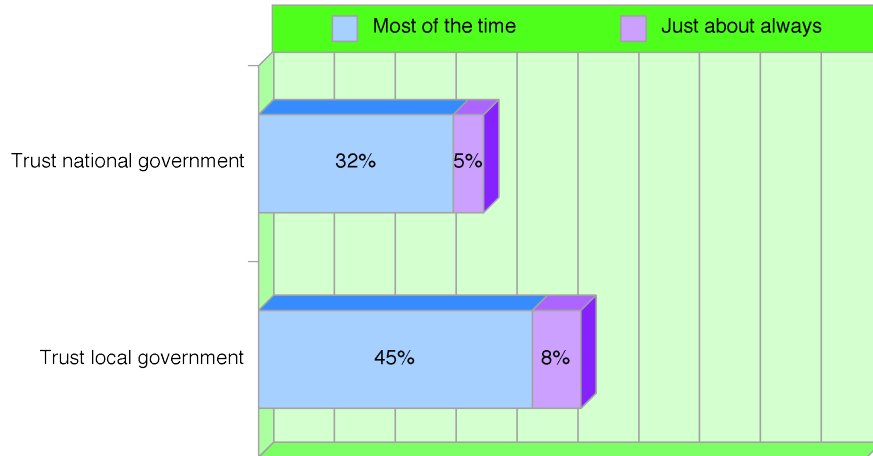
The chart below shows that about seven in ten respondents are “Somewhat” or “Very” interested in politics. This is virtually identical to the past two surveys. The only slight change is that the “Not at all interested” category has grown slightly from 9% in 2004 to 16% this year. Note that 2004 was a presidential election year, 2010 a congressional election year, but 2015 was neither.

Trust in government

The three charts on the next page show responses to two questions about trust in government. Fewer than four in ten trust the national government either “Most of the time” or “Just about always.” Slightly more than five in ten trust local government “Most of the time” or “Just about always.” Trust of local government has stayed relatively flat over the three surveys, while trust of the national government is lower now than it was in 2004.

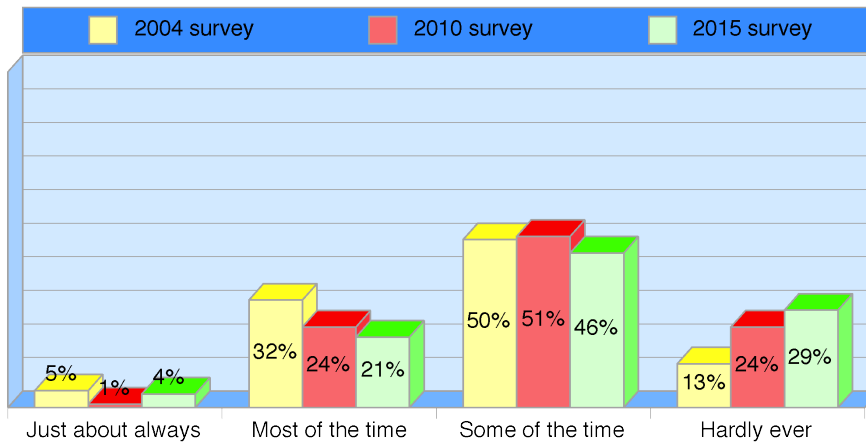
“How interested are you in politics and national affairs?” All response choices are shown.



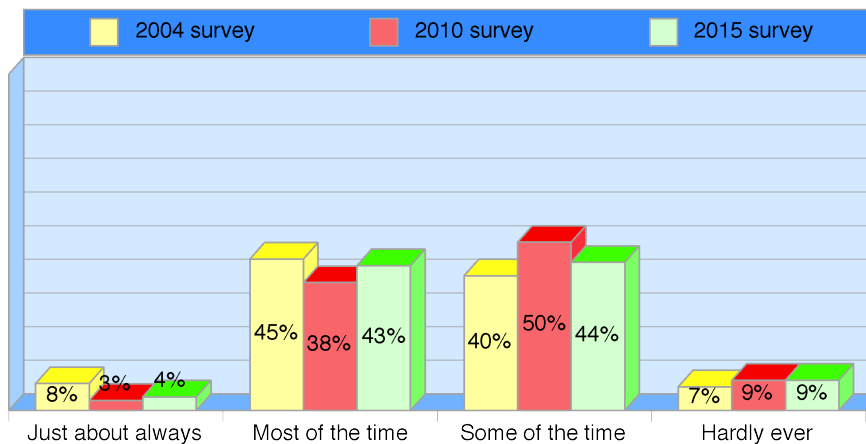


“How much of the time do you think you can trust the national government to do what is right?” and “How much of the time do you think you can trust the local government to do what is right?”

The five response choices for this question ranged from “Just about all the time” to “Hardly ever” as well as a “Don’t know” choice. 29% said they “Hardly ever” trust the national government; 9% said they “Hardly ever” trust the local government.



Trust in the national government appears to have slipped further since 2010. Note especially the growth in the “Hardly ever” category.



Respondents are more likely to trust local government than the national government. The percentage of respondents that trust local government has stayed fairly consistent over the three surveys.

Comparison of community activities

The three charts on the next page show responses to a set of questions about community activities.

These questions asked how many times individuals did each of these activities. The charts simply show the percent who did or did not do these things. The mean, or average, number of times respondents report completing these activities are shown in the table.

Overall, respondents are most likely to have attended a club or organizational meeting, and least likely to have attended a political rally.

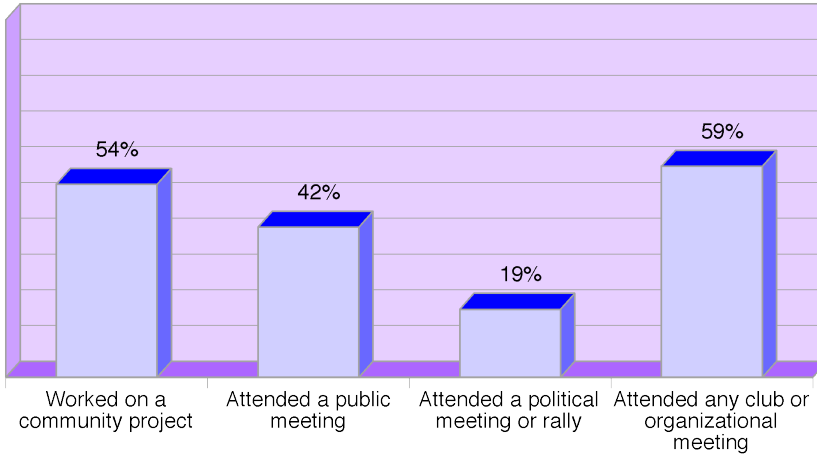
Compared to 2004, it appears that the percentage of people who are active in community activities is down, with the exception of attending a public meeting. Note that 2004 was a presidential election year and 2010 is not, which may partially explain the decline in the percent who attended a political rally.

Looking at the averages below, it appears that generally participation in these community events is very similar across the three surveys. The biggest change since 2004 is the increase in the number of times respondents worked on a community project.

Note that in the 2010 and 2015 surveys questions where we report means, they are figured using the midpoint of the categories. For example, if the respondent answered in the “2 to 4 times” category, it was counted as “3”. One would expect some variation with this inexact procedure. In the 2004 survey most respondents answered with exact numbers. If they couldn’t remember, they were then prompted with categories. Overall for these questions, the comparison between the 2010 and 2015 surveys is more exact than comparing back to 2004.

Mean or average number of times respondents have participated in each community activity in the past 12 months. See the next page for the percent of respondents who have completed each activity.

	2004 survey	2010 survey	2015 survey
Worked on a community project	4.33	5.75	5.79
Attended a community meeting	2.45	3.62	2.89
Attended a political meeting or rally	1.05	1.35	0.60
Attended any club or organizational	6.37	10.03	9.06
Donated blood	0.80	0.98	1.46



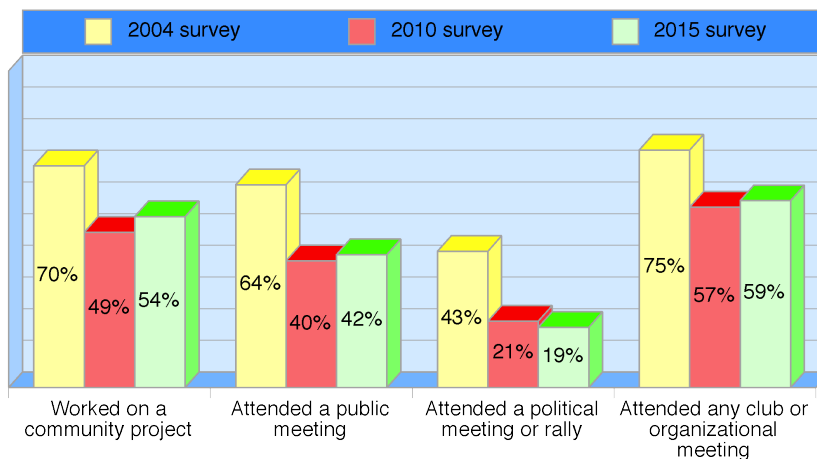
This set of questions was worded, “How many times in the past twelve months have you...

...worked with others on a community project?

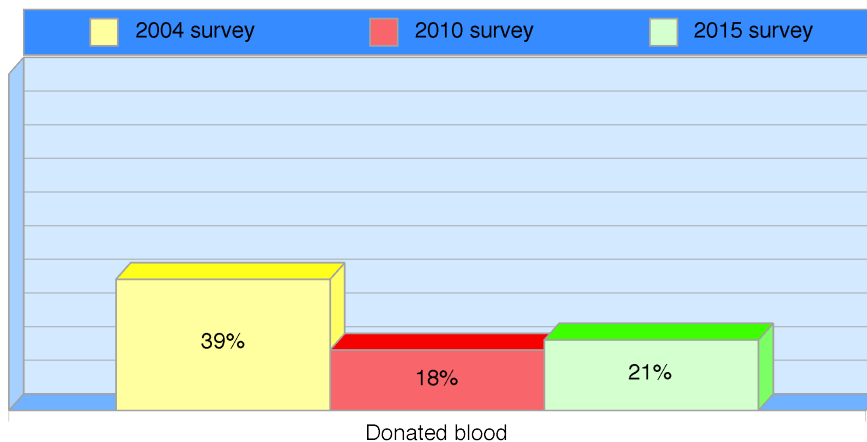
...attended any community meeting in which there was discussion of town, city or school affairs?

...attended a political meeting or rally?

...attended any club or organizational meeting (not including meetings for work)?”



Responses this year are fairly similar to 2010, except note that a slightly higher percentage report working on a community project. 2004 was a presidential election year, likely the reason for the high percentage attending a political meeting or rally. The 2004 figures are higher overall but note that the wording of those questions changed in 2010, so the comparison for this set of questions is not exact between the first survey and the last two.



“How many times in the past twelve months have you donated blood?” Shown are the percent of “Yes” responses.

Percentage is about the same as in 2010. Note that the average number of times people donate, however (previous page), is higher this year than in 2010, suggesting that regular donors are giving more often.

The drop from the level reported in 2004, may be because blood donations were higher immediately after 9-11, but could also be a result of the change in question wording.



Comparison of social activities

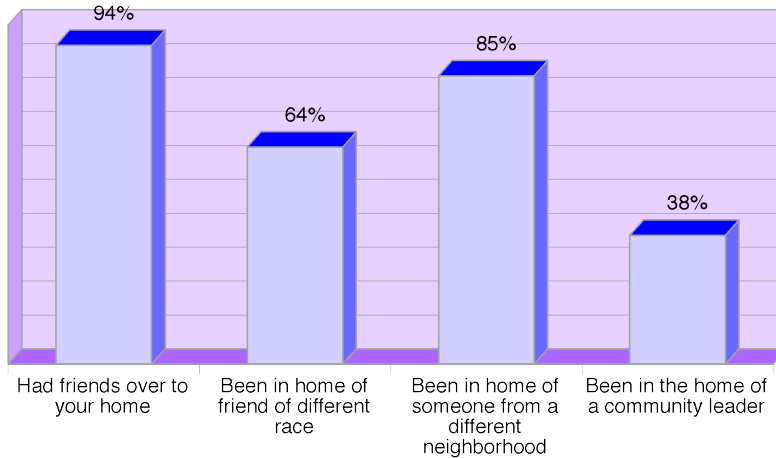
These charts show the number of times people socialize with friends, with people of another race, with people outside their own neighborhood, and with people they consider influential.

All questions asked for the number of times respondents had done these things in the past 12 months. The top chart on the next page shows the percent who have done each activity one or more times.

Overall, nearly all residents socialize with friends, and most do so with people outside their own neighborhood. More than half socialize with people of another race. About four in ten say they socialize with someone they consider to be a community leader.

The center chart shows the comparison with the 2004 and 2010 surveys. The differences are small for socializing with friends and socializing with people from another neighborhood. Compared to 2010, however, there are substantial increases in the percent of people who report socializing with someone of another race and with someone they consider a community leader. The percent who say they socialize with someone from another race is back about where it was in 2004 after being lower in 2010. The percent who socialize with a community leader is still below the 2004 report.

The table on the bottom of the next page shows the mean, or average, number of times respondents have done each activity in the past 12 months. Overall, the pattern seems to be that respondents who are socially active are a little more active than in the past. This is especially true for those who socialize with someone from a different race; the number of times respondents do so is up substantially over 2004 and 2010.



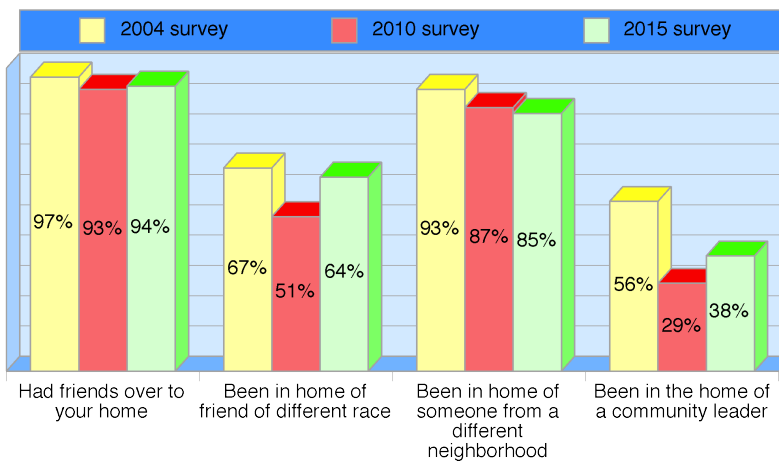
This question asked: “In the next questions, “home” refers to where you are living right now—such as an apartment, a house or a dorm. How many times in the past twelve months have you...

... had friends over to your home?

...been in the home of a friend of a different race or had them in your home?

...been in the home of someone of a different neighborhood or had them in your home?

...been in the home of someone you consider to be a community leader or had one in your home?”



The chart above and this chart show the percent of people who report doing this one or more times in the past 12 months.

	2004 survey	2010 survey	2015 survey
Had friends over to your home	21.03	20.96	22.86
Been in home of friend of different	6.91	5.68	9.92
Been in home of someone from a	14.02	11.93	15.93
Been in the home of a community	2.88	1.78	2.96

The mean (average) responses are shown here, pointing out the average number of times respondents completed each of these activities. The overall percent who did so is shown above. As with other means reported in this survey, one would expect some variation because of the different question wording between 2004 and the two recent surveys (see page 10).



VOLUNTEERISM

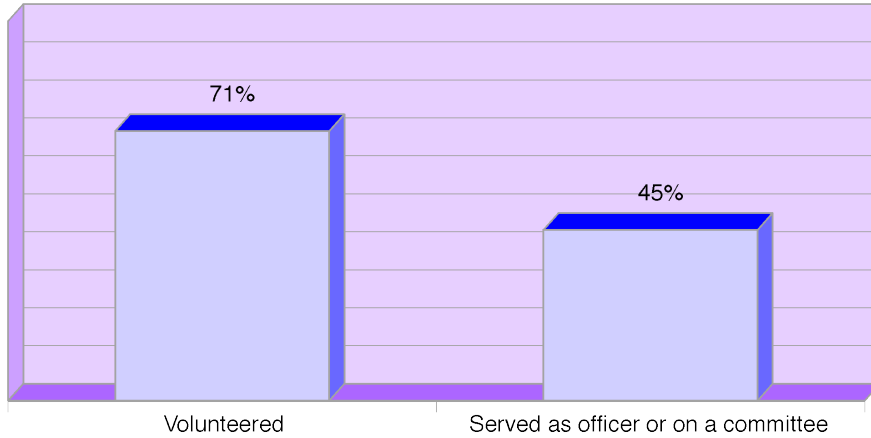
This set of two questions asked about volunteering in the community (including the number of times doing so) and about serving as an officer or on a committee in a club or organization.

The chart on the top of the next page shows the responses. More than seven in ten report volunteering. More than four in ten have served as an officer, or have served on a committee, for an organization.

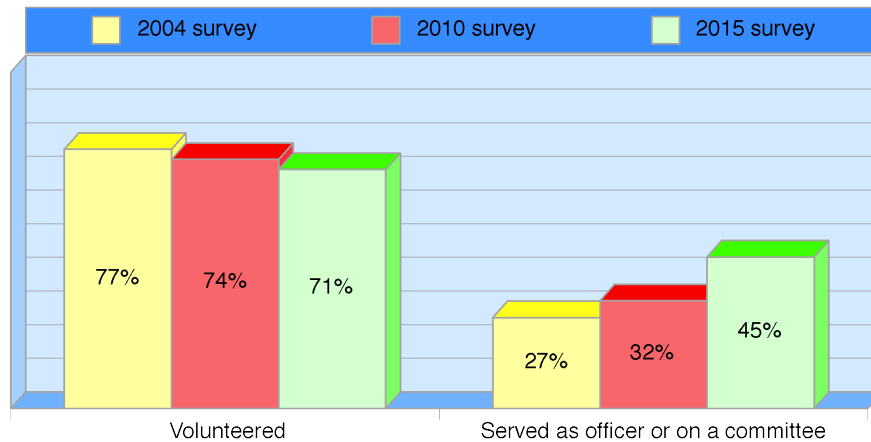
The second chart shows the comparison with the 2004 and 2010 surveys. The percent who volunteer is down just slightly in each of the past two surveys, but still above seven in ten. The percent who have served on a committee or as an officer is much higher this year, after growing slightly in 2010. This year's survey group is more educated than the 2010 survey; this may account for the higher percent response to this item.

The table at the bottom of the next page shows the mean (average) number of times individuals volunteered. Note that the average number of times a respondent who volunteers does so in a 12-month period is down slightly from 2010, but still much higher than 2004.

(In the 2010 survey, two additional questions asked respondents to describe the number of times they volunteered in the community and the number of times they volunteered for a religious or faith organization. In general, there was not much difference; many individuals volunteered for both types of organization. Because of this, the question was not included this year.)



The wording for the first question was: "How many times in the past twelve months have you volunteered?"
The wording for the second question was: "In the past twelve months, have you served as an officer or served on a committee of any local club or organization?"



The chart above and this chart show the percent of people who report doing this one or more times in the past 12 months or, for the last item, answered "Yes."

	2004 survey	2010 survey	2015 survey
Volunteered	9.74	16.26	14.33

The mean (average) responses are shown here, pointing out the average number of times respondents completed each of these activities. The overall percent who did so is shown above. As with other means reported in this survey one would expect some variation because of the change in question (see page 10).



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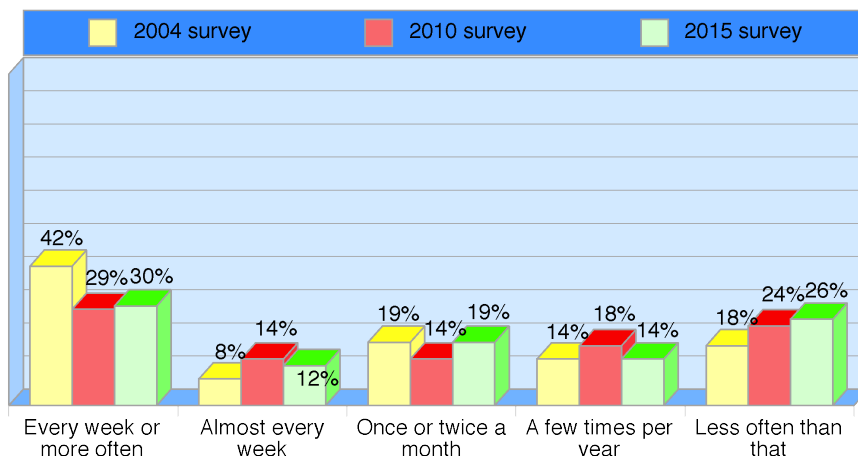
RELIGIOUS AND CHARITABLE ACTIVITY

Two questions asked about this activity. The first gave a number of choices for how often the respondent attends religious services. The second gave a number of categories to describe how much the individual donated in the past 12 months.

Based on the median, the average respondent attends religious services once or twice a month, similar to 2010. More than two in ten attend less often than a few times a year.

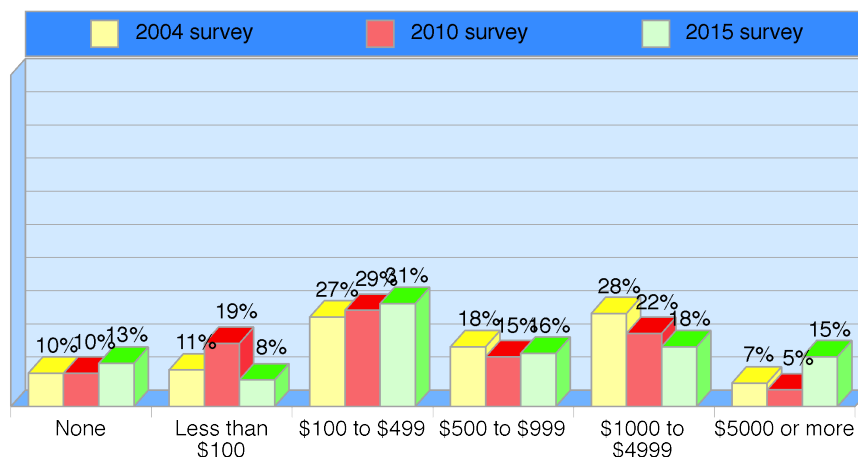
The chart at the bottom shows that, in general, there hasn't been much change in contribution level over the three survey years. The big jump in the "\$5000 or more" category may reflect the more highly educated (and therefore more affluent) respondents this year. Note that one dollar in 2004 is worth about 79 cents today.

The wording for this question was "Not including weddings and funerals, how often do you attend religious services?" Response choices ranged from "Every week" to "Never." In this chart, the "Never" responses are included in the "Less often than that" category.



The question wording was: "People and families contribute money, property or other assets for a wide variety of charitable purposes. During the past 12 months, approximately how much money did you and the other family members in your household contribute to all community causes and all religious causes, including your local religious congregation. By contribution, we mean a voluntary contribution with no intention of making a profit or obtaining goods or services for yourself."

Nearly two in ten respondents (16%) declined to answer this question.

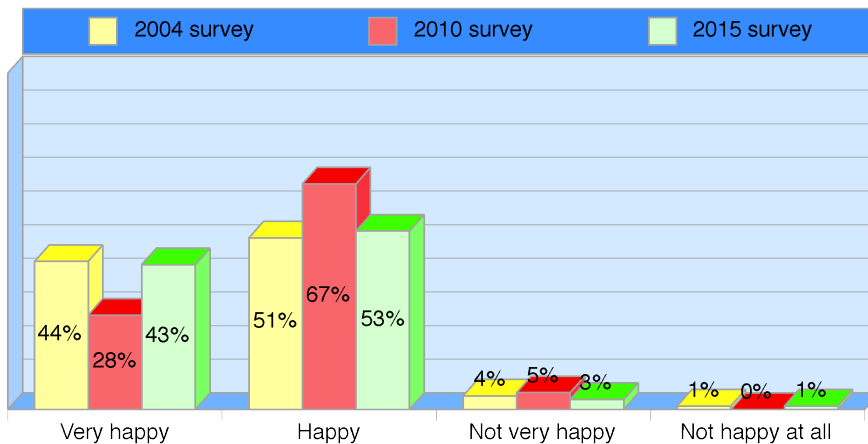


HAPPINESS AND HEALTH

These two questions asked respondents to rate their happiness and health.

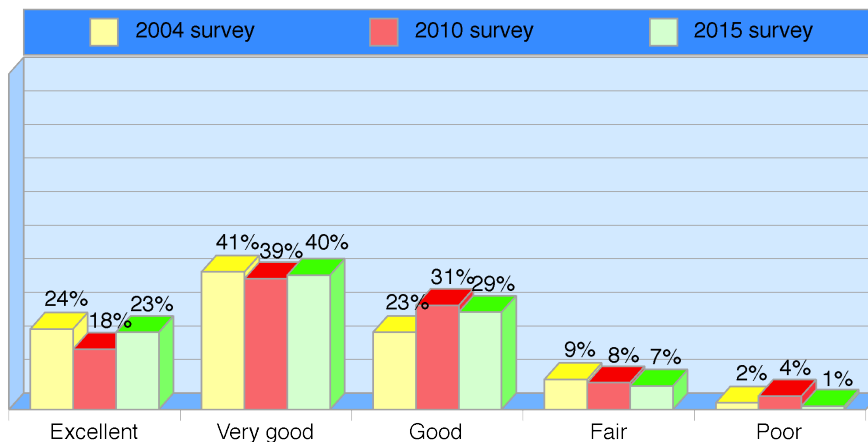
Responses to both questions are very similar to the 2004 survey. Overall, respondents report a high degree of happiness. Only about one in twenty answered in the “Not very happy” or “Not happy at all” categories.

Similarly, most respondents rate their health as “Good” or better. Fewer than one in ten this year answered in the “Fair” or “Poor” categories. Note the more highly educated pool of respondents this year; these individuals are more likely to have access to health care so one would expect better ratings of personal health.



Wording: “All things considered, would you say you are very happy, happy, not very happy, or not happy at all?”

These responses may reflect the hybrid survey methodology in 2010. In general, telephone surveys (2004 and 2015 surveys) tend to push respondents toward the outer scale items while written surveys (including online) tend to cluster respondents more in the middle. Note that overall, adding the “Happy” and “Very happy” percentages produce nearly identical results across all three surveys.



Question wording: “How would you describe your overall state of health these days? Would you say it is excellent, very good, good, fair, or poor?”



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SOCIAL MEDIA

One question asked about respondent use of social media. The chart at the bottom of the page shows that just more than two in ten respondents haven't used social media in the past month. This compares with nearly six in ten who have used social media 20 days or more in the past month.

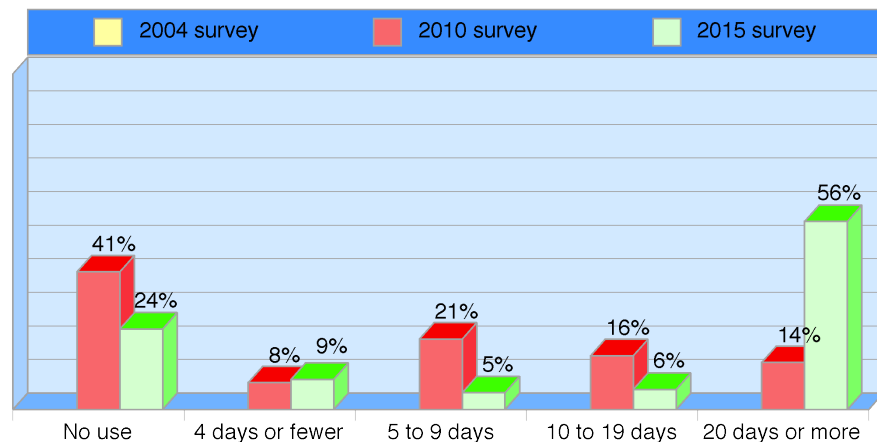
The change since 2010 is dramatic. In that survey four in ten respondents had not used social media in the past month. And just more than one in ten used social media 20 or more days in the previous month.

A question asking for minutes a day spent on social media was not asked this year. In the 2010 survey it was found that the amount of time per day spent on social media closely followed national average. One research source reports that the typical internet user in 2014 spent 1.72 hours per day using social media. The increasing use of mobile devices to access social media has driven the increases in time spent per day, according to this source.

This data comes from the Global Web Index site. There are many other sources of data about internet and social media use in the US and globally. <http://www.globalwebindex.net/>

This question was worded: "On how many days in the past month have you used one or more social media such as Facebook, Twitter, and the like?" All response choices are shown.

The 2010 question was asked as two questions. The first asked if they had used social media in the past month. Those who had then reported how many days in that month they had used social media. The chart combines responses to those two questions to provide an accurate comparison with this year's single question.



(Demographic tables begin on next page)



DEMOGRAPHICS

Tables

The tables below report the response to the survey's demographic questions, with comparisons to the 2004 and 2010 surveys. Because of rounding, not all columns in individual tables add up to 100%.

Gender

The gender split this year was more in line with the population; in the past two surveys a slightly higher percentage of women responded.

	2015 survey	2010 survey	2004 survey
Male	49%	45%	44%
Female	51%	55%	56%

Age

In all three surveys the percentage of respondents 34 and younger is lower than the actual population, and the percentage of those 35 to 64 is slightly higher. The percentage of those 65 and older is higher than the general population in this survey.

	2015 survey	2010 survey	2004 survey
18 to 34	14%	26%	26%
35 to 49	27%	31%	35%
50 to 64	31%	26%	24%
65 or older	28%	17%	16%

Education

Overall, the survey respondents tend to be better educated than the population in the region.

	2015 survey	2010 survey	2004 survey
High school or less	17%	16%	31%
Some college/tech school	40%	46%	40%
College degree or above	43%	38%	29%

Race

People of color are underrepresented in all three years of the survey. The survey geography includes all communities within a 15 mile radius of St. Cloud. The St. Cloud Metropolitan Statistical Area, which includes all of Stearns and Benton counties, is 92% Caucasian. The city of St. Cloud is 85% Caucasian (five-year estimates from the American Community Survey, US Census).

	2015 survey	2010 survey	2004 survey
African American	1%	1%	0%
American Indian	1%	0%	1%
Asian/Pacific Islander	1%	1%	1%
Caucasian	94%	96%	97%
Other	3%	1%	1%

National origin

	2015 survey	2010 survey	2004 survey
Hispanic	2%	1%	1%
Somali	0%	0%	Not asked

House ownership

	2015 survey	2010 survey	2004 survey
Own	87%	84%	82%
Rent	13%	16%	18%

Income

	2015 survey	2010 survey	2004 survey
Less than \$30K	11%	20%	26%
\$30 to \$50K	20%	22%	22%
\$50K to \$75K	26%	22%	24%
More than \$75K	43%	30%	25%
Other/refused	6%	3%	

The total inflation between 2004 and 2015 was 26%, so one would expect some migration to higher categories across the three surveys.

Years of residence

	2015 survey	2010 survey	2004 survey
Five years or less	16%	23%	27%
Six to twenty	34%	37%	34%
More than twenty	50%	40%	39%

The increased years of residence this year reflects the higher percentage of respondents 65 and older.

Marital status

	2015 survey	2010 survey	2004 survey
Married	69%	64%	57%
Not married	31%	36%	43%

Number of children

	2015 survey	2010 survey	2004 survey
None	66%	58%	61%
One	11%	17%	13%
Two	12%	15%	17%
Three or more	12%	10%	10%

Residence

	2015 survey	2010 survey	2004 survey
St. Cloud Metro	39%	44%	49%
Other metro (Sartell, Sauk Rapids, Waite Park)	19%	22%	25%
Outlying communities	42%	34%	26%

The percent of surveys completed outside of St. Cloud city has increased over the three years. Some communities in the 15-mile radius of the survey—for example, St. Joseph—have seen rapid growth during that time.



SOCIAL CAPITAL SCALE

The researchers created a scale to better understand the relationships between demographic groups in the survey. The scale takes individual answers to a number of questions about community connections and adds them together. Respondents with more community connections score higher on this social capital scale (up to a maximum of 24).

The charts on the next four pages show where different demographic groups fall on the scale. The table below shows the 24 questions that make up the scale and what response level is positive for each item.

The overall Social Capital scale score for the entire group of respondents in 2010 is 16.31. This compares to 15.34 in 2010 and 16.90 in the 2004 survey. The difference between the 2010 and 2015 scores is statistically significant, as was the difference between the 2004 and 2010 scores.

There are many factors that may influence the differences in scale scores over the years, not the least of which is the change in survey methodology from telephone to an online/telephone hybrid and back to telephone. Also, the economic pressures in 2010 (still in the depth of the “Great Recession”) no doubt had an impact on social capital and likely influenced not only the responses but also the survey methods and response rates.

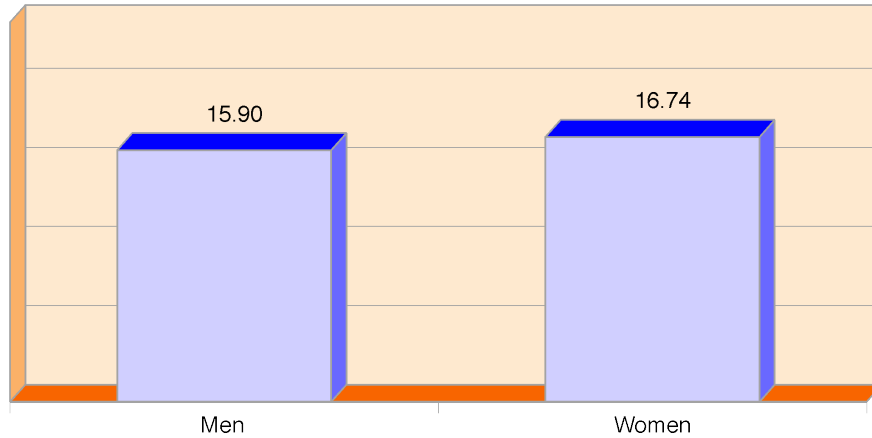
Perhaps the most useful data begins on the next (or facing) page, with information about how social capital plays out within demographic groups.

Items used for Social Capital Scale

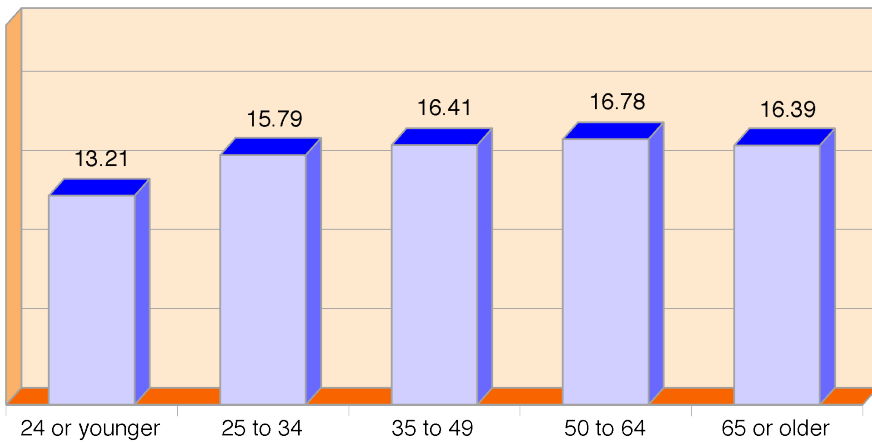
<u>Item</u>	<u>Response considered positive</u>
1. Overall trust of people	People can be trusted
2. Trust neighbors	Trust a lot, some
3. Trust local police	Trust a lot, some
4. Trust shop people in local stores	Trust a lot, some
5. Trust white people	Trust a lot, some
6. Trust black people	Trust a lot, some
7. Trust Hispanic people	Trust a lot, some
8. Interested in politics	Very or somewhat
9. Registered to vote	Yes
10. Trust national government	Always, most, or some of the time
11. Trust local government	Always, most, or some of the time
12.† Worked on a community project	One or more times
13.† Donated blood	One or more times
14.† Attended public meetings	One or more times
15.† Attended political meetings	One or more times
16.† Attended club meetings	Two or more times
17.†* Had friends in home	Five or more times
18.†* Had friends of another race in home	One or more times
19.†* Had friends from another neighborhood in home	Two or more times
20.†* Had a community leader in home	One or more times
21.† Volunteered	Two or more times
22.† Served as officer or on committee	Yes
23. Attended religious services regularly	Every week, almost every week, once or twice a month
24.† Donations to all causes	\$500 or more

† Items 12 through 22, and 24 specified “within the last 12 months.”

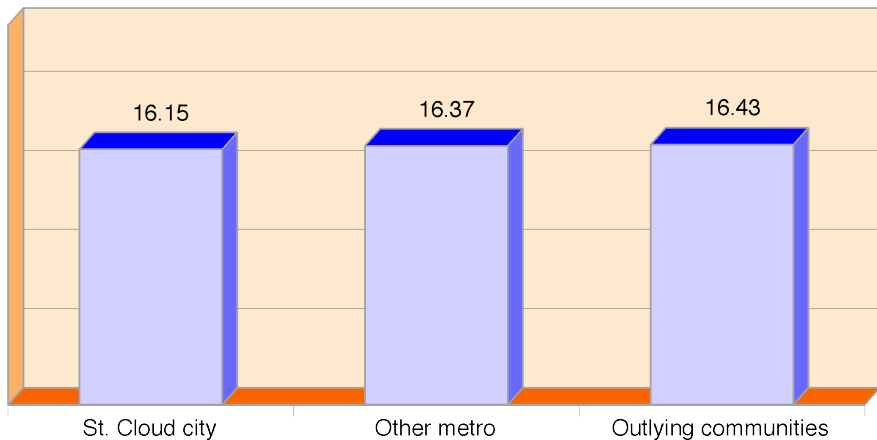
* Items 17 through 20 “been in the home of” counted as positive as well as “had them in your home.”



The difference in social capital between men and women is illustrated by this chart. Again this year, as in 2004, women have slightly more social capital than men. The difference this year just misses statistical significance.



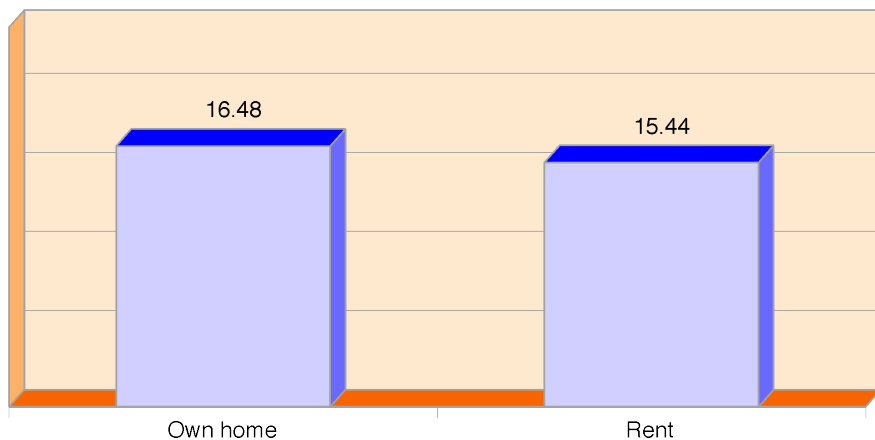
As in 2010, social capital in Central Minnesota peaks in the category of 50 to 64, then declines slightly as people move beyond working age. The group with the least amount of social capital are those 24 and younger; this group is significantly lower than the rest. The distribution of the scale scores is very similar to the past two surveys.



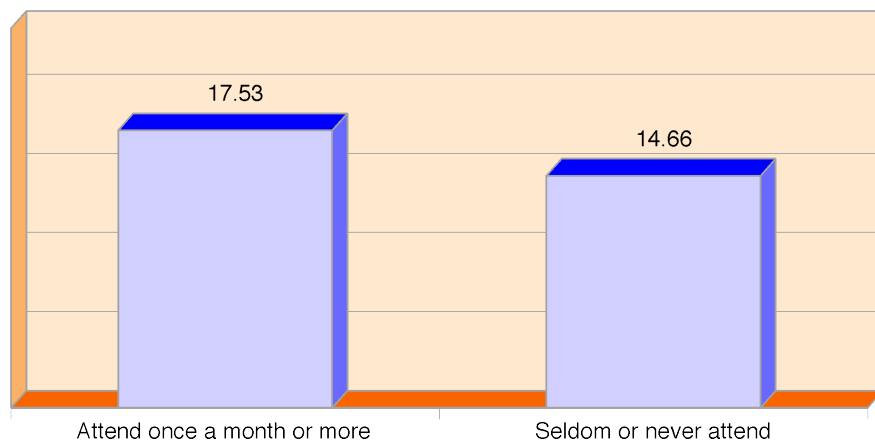
As was the case in 2004 and 2010, where one lives in this area makes little difference in social capital. The small differences shown do not meet a test of statistical significance.



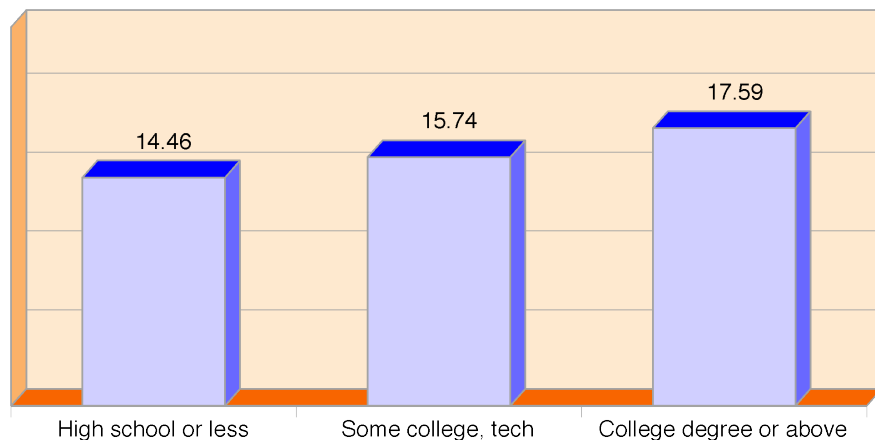
Those who own their own home score higher on the social capital scale. This was also true in 2004 and 2010. Unlike those two years, the difference this year does not quite meet a test of statistical significance.

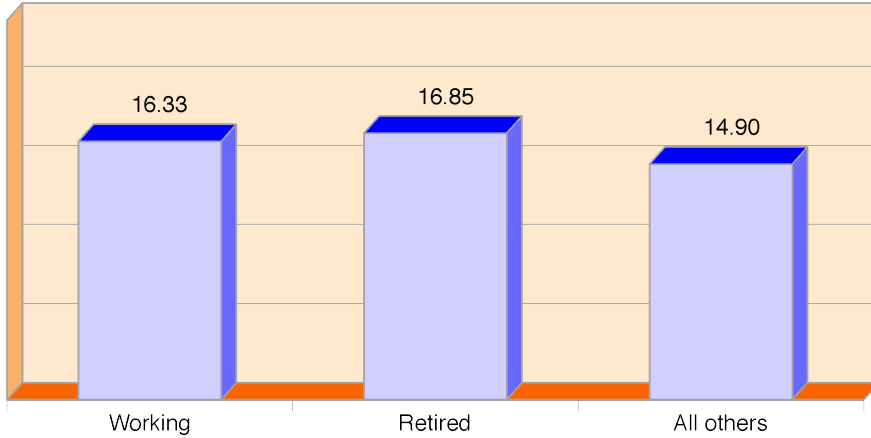


Regular attendance (defined as once a month or more often) at religious services is closely related to an individual's social capital, as shown by the significant difference between those who attend and those who don't. The 2004 and 2010 surveys showed this same relationship.

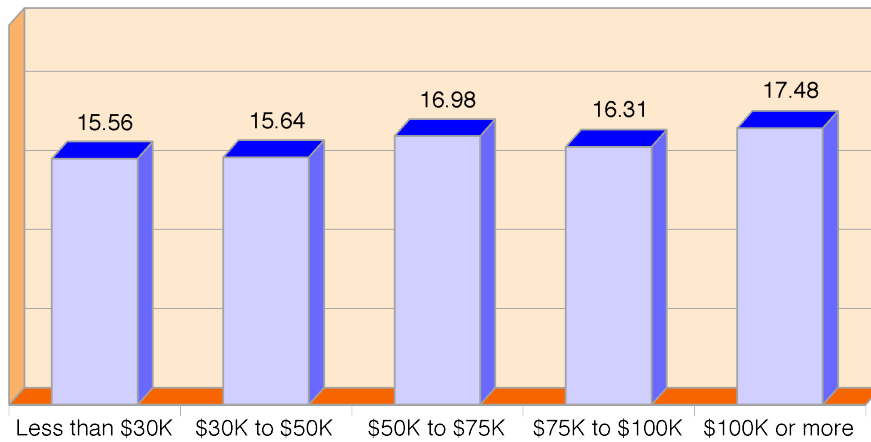


Social capital is highly correlated with level of education, across all three years of the survey.

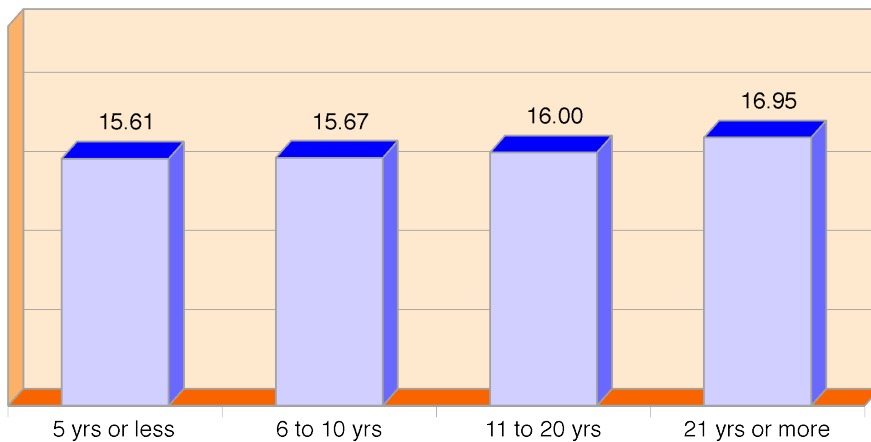




The difference between those who are working and those who are retired doesn't meet a test of statistical significance. However, those in the not working category (includes laid off, unemployed, disabled, and students) have lower social capital than the other two groups; the difference is significant. Note that students are included in this category, even though they may be working.



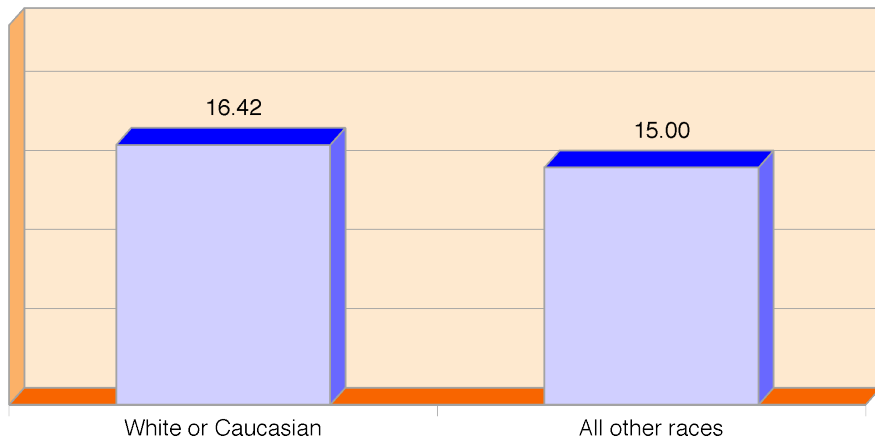
Those with higher income are significantly more likely to have more social capital than those in the two lowest income categories. The distribution is very similar to the past two surveys.



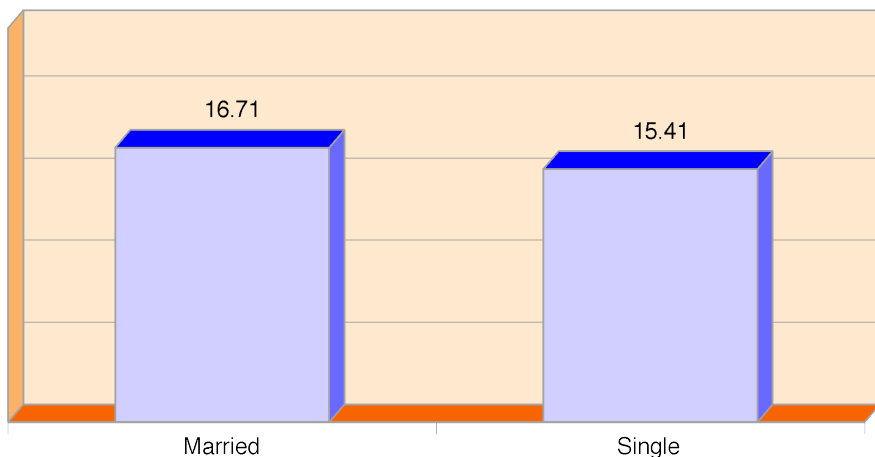
Those who have been in the community 21 years or more have significantly more social capital than those who have been here ten years or less. A similar distribution was seen in the earlier surveys.



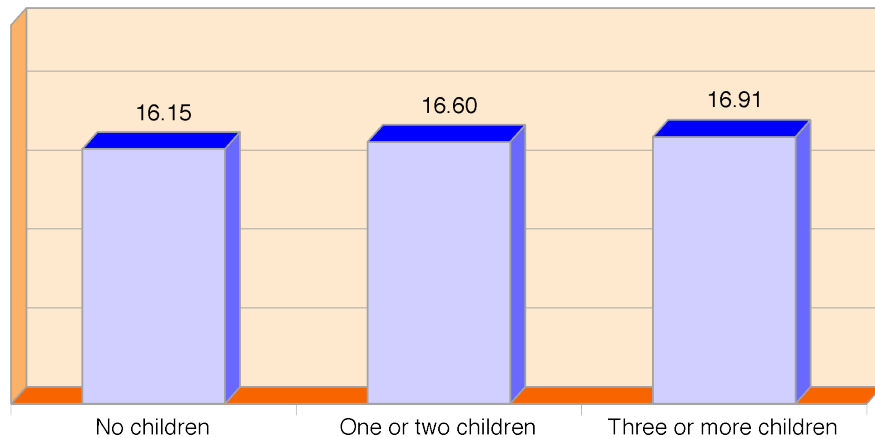
The number of respondents to this survey who are not Caucasian is very small. So even though the data shows a difference in social capital by race, the difference is not statistically significant. In other words, it could be a result of random variation rather than reflect a real difference.



Those who are married score significantly higher on the scale than those who are not. This was also true in the past two surveys.



Having children may have a slight impact on the likelihood of a higher score on the social capital scale. The difference between those who have no children and those who have three or more children was statistically significant in the 2004 survey. However, in the 2010 and 2015 surveys, none of the groups are different enough from each other this year to meet a test of statistical significance.



PREDICTORS OF SOCIAL CAPITAL

Best demographic predictors of social capital

Based on the correlation between items, it appears that the top demographic predictors of social capital are 1) education level, 2) household income, and 3) years living in the community. Education and income have been in the top three predictors in all three surveys.

Individuals with one or more of these traits—some higher education, a household income of \$75,000 or higher, and living in the community 21 years or more—are likely to have more community connectedness than others.

Note that this does not imply causality, only that they are related. In fact, the cause and effect could work in either direction. For example, possessing social capital may enhance the individual's ability to complete a higher education and to earn a high income. On the other hand, individuals with education and resources are likely in a better position to “gather” social capital than those who are struggling to raise their education level and their socio-economic status.

Best behavioral predictors of social capital

This analysis of the behavioral questions in the survey attempts to predict which behaviors are most closely related to social capital.

Among the categorical questions, four items stand out as most closely predictive of social capital. They are: 1) whether the individual trusts Hispanics 2) whether the individual trusts African-American people, 3) the amount the individual donates to both religious and charitable causes, and 4) whether the individual trusts people in the neighborhood. Again, causality is not implied; only relatedness. Note that three of these were also the top predictors in 2004 and 2010.

Among items with numbers of occurrences, the three with the closest association with social capital are: 1) volunteering, 2) attending a political meeting, and 3) attending religious services. Volunteering was also the top predictor in 2010. Of interest is the fact that the 2004 and 2010 surveys were conducted during election years in contrast with this 2015 survey year.

These items should be considered when setting priorities in a plan to increase social capital in the community.

This ordering was determined using correlation analysis to find how closely related each item was to the overall social capital scale. The items are rank-ordered (education, income, and years in the community). However, in this survey education level has a much stronger correlation with a higher social capital scale score than the other two.

Top demographic predictors in the 2010 survey were 1) education, 2) age and 3) household income. Top predictors in the 2004 survey were 1) education, 2) household income, and 3) marital status.

There were two kinds of behavioral questions in the survey—some asked for responses from a specific category; others asked respondents to provide an actual number of times they had completed an activity.

Correlation analysis was again used to determine this list. The items are rank ordered. Note that donations are closely related to income, one of the top demographic predictors. However, even when controlling for the effect of income, level of donations still remains as one of the top four predictors. Top categorical predictors in 2010 were 1) donations, 2) serving as an officer of a club or association, and 3) trust of Hispanics.

Regression analysis using the social capital scale provided this list. Note that none of the ten items tested showed a strong relationship with the scale, but these three fit the model best. Top numeric predictors in 2010 were 1) volunteering, 2) having someone of another race in your home, and 3) attending a club or organization meeting.



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BRIDGING AND BONDING SOCIAL CAPITAL

Special kinds of social capital

This section of the Social Capital report was completed by Dr. Ann Finan, Associate Professor of Sociology at St. Cloud State University.

There are different aspects of social capital. In this report, we will highlight two important kinds called Bridging Social Capital and Bonding Social Capital. Bridging social capital refers to the ties of trust and reciprocity between diverse groups of people, such as between groups of different ethnicities or of different religions. Bonding social capital refers to the ties of trust and reciprocity among close-knit groups of people, such as among family, within a religious congregation, or among people one sees as similar to oneself.

Bridging social capital is associated with increased understanding among diverse groups of people. For example, in communities with high levels of bridging social capital there are fewer incidences of racism and other forms of prejudice and discrimination against groups identified as “other”. Bridging is the form of social capital most associated with employment opportunities and successful entrepreneurship. Bridging social capital is positively correlated to weathering severe disruptions to the community, such as a natural disaster or the loss of a major employer.

Bonding social capital increases the sense of belonging community members feel. Individuals embedded in networks with strong bonding capital may be cushioned against economic and other disruptions by their strong ties, and bonding social capital provides emotional and

+ Bridging social capital		-	+ Bonding social capital -
Extreme individualism – wealthy invest for themselves; poor excluded from access to community resources.	Progressive participation – community decides priorities based on the common good		
Clientelism – community decisions based on what outsiders from market, state of civil society offer, building power of local elites and service providers	Strong boundaries – Particularistic internal investment. When your kin are in office, you get the potholes fixed. No outside communication or trust.		

Adapted from *Cornelia Flora and Jan Flora, Rural Communities: Legacy and Change, 3rd ed. Westview Press, 2008.*

psychological support. However, bonding social capital can be more associated with negative qualities than is bridging social capital. For example, a community high in bonding capital, but low in bridging capital, can lead to insularity, cliquishness, and can be less adaptable in the face of economic or other disruptions.

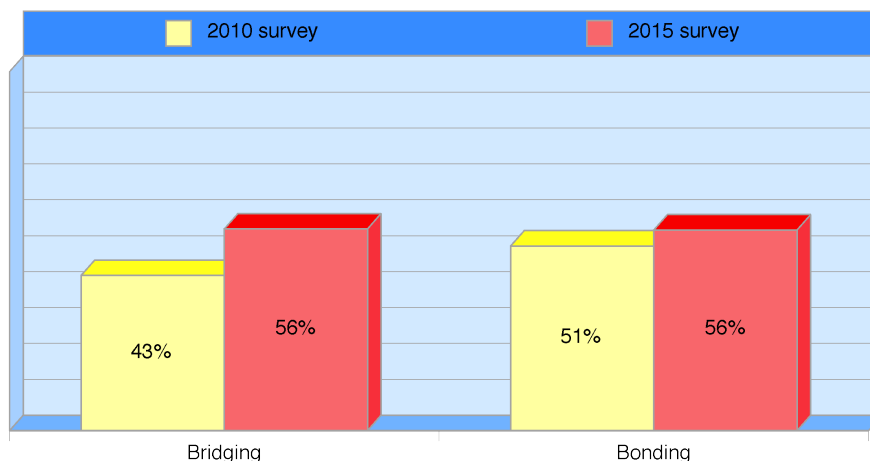
Fortunately, although requiring distinct efforts to augment, bridging and bonding social capital are not mutually exclusive.

Ideally, a community would work toward having both high bridging and high bonding social capital.

Bridging and bonding social capital in Central Minnesota

In 2015, both bridging and bonding social capital in Central Minnesota are slightly higher than 50% of their possible value, based on this combined measure, at 56.2% and 55.9%, respectively. The two kinds of social capital seem to be well-balanced, although there is room for growth in both areas.

We can compare the results from the 2015 survey with those of the 2010 survey. Both bridging and bonding social capital have increased over the last five years. This is a trend seen in many studies of social capital around the country, and it is reasonable to hypothesize that some of the effect may be a result of improved economic conditions after the Great Recession. Especially in the trust component of the bridging measure, it is also likely that social processes specific to Central Minnesota may be working to increase trust among different groups of people.



Comparison of bridging and bonding social capital in the 2010 and 2015 Social Capital surveys. See the next two pages for the list of items that comprise each type of social capital.



In the 2015 data, no statistically significant differences are observed among demographic groups, (gender, age, time living in the area, income). Respondents of color did report slightly higher levels of both bridging and bonding social capital than white respondents. However, because the sample included too few people of color to assume a representative sample, we are not able to conduct statistically valid comparisons among racial or ethnic groups.

The bridging and bonding measures are a compilation of several items on the Social Capital Survey (see tables).

When a factor analysis is performed on these items, it reveals that the bridging measure is a combination of two general measures – trust in people different from oneself, and actions that increase contact with people different from oneself. Bridging trust component is measured

Bridging items

*How many times have you been in the home of a friend of a different race or had them in your home?

*How many times have you been in the home of someone who lives in a different neighborhood or had them in your home?

Now, think about people from Somalia. Generally speaking, would you say that you can trust them a lot, some, only a little, or not at all?

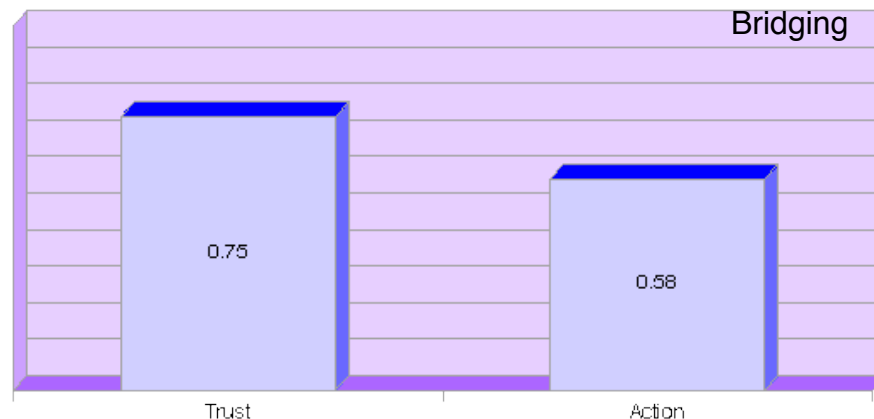
Next, think about black or African-American people. Generally speaking, would you say that you can trust them a lot, some, only a little, or not at all?

Now think about Latino or Hispanic people. Generally speaking, would you say that you can trust them a lot, some, only a little, or not at all?

**Denotes component associated with action or behavior.*

Questions from the 2015 Social Capital survey that are associated with bridging social capital.

Factor analysis of bridging components from 2015 Social Capital survey. n = 411 and 476, respectively.



at .75, and bridging action component is measured at .58, with standard deviations of 2.1 and 3.6, respectively.

Similarly, bonding is also a combination of two components – trust in people you are close to, or similar to, and actively participating in activities with those people who are similar to you. Religious service attendance is most associated with the trust component rather than the action component.

Bonding trust component was measured at .71, and bonding action component was measured at .54, with standard deviations of 1.5 and 3.2 respectively.

Social capital researchers believe that both of these components - trust and actions - are crucial for building these special kinds of social

Bonding items

*Not including weddings and funerals, how often do you attend religious services?

*How many times in the past twelve months have you had friends over to your home?

*How many times have you attended any club or organizational meeting (not including meetings for work)?

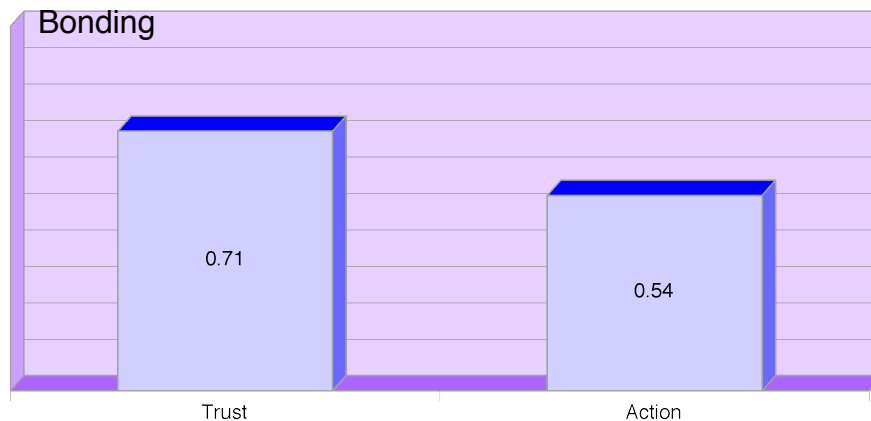
Think about people in your neighborhood. Generally speaking, would you say that you can trust them a lot, some, only a little or not at all?

Next, think about white people. Generally speaking, would you say that you can trust them a lot, some, only a little, or not at all?

And how much of the time do you think you can trust local government to do what is right?

**Denotes component associated with action or behavior.*

Questions from the 2015 Social Capital survey that are associated with bonding social capital.



Factor analysis of bonding components from 2015 Social Capital survey. n = 471 and 495, respectively.



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capital. We see that in Central Minnesota there is a great deal more variation in the action components than in the trust components.

Although we cannot directly compare these results for Central Minnesota to those from other communities because of confounding factors like time of the study, news cycles, precise methodology, etc., these results seem to be relatively high when compared to communities featured in the Saguaro Seminar's Social Capital Community Benchmark Survey collection of studies using similar methodology (see a compilation of studies at <http://www.hks.harvard.edu/saguaro/communitysurvey/>.)