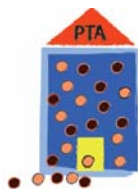


2006 Social Capital Community Benchmark Report

A STUDY COMMISSIONED BY
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF GREATER GREENSBORO
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MEDICINE



Social Capital Benchmark Survey Funded by:

The Community Foundation of Greater Greensboro along with the Cemala Foundation, Joseph M. Bryan Foundation, News and Record, Tannenbaum-Sternberger Foundation, and the Weaver Foundation

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MISSION

The Community Foundation of Greater Greensboro is a charitable organization dedicated to strengthening the community for present and future generations. The Foundation promotes philanthropy, builds and maintains a permanent collection of endowment funds, and serves as a trustworthy partner and leader in shaping effective responses to community issues and opportunities.

VISION

The Community Foundation of Greater Greensboro, working toward a vision of an inclusive, caring community will:

- Seek funds, which will be living gifts, investments returned to the community for generations to come
- Involve donors in strengthening their community while accomplishing their giving objectives
- Impact the community through proactive grantmaking and leadership in community problem solving
- Speak for values that promote social responsibility and self sufficiency of all people
- Continue to earn respect for competency and professionalism, for a board and staff thoroughly engaged in the work of the organization, and dedicated to its mission

Introduction

Over the past decade, **social capital** has become an important conceptual framework for improving the quality of life of communities throughout the world. Although there are a number of specific definitions of “social capital,” it is generally agreed that social capital refers to: *inter-personal relationships, social connectedness, trust, cooperation, and engagement in the life of the community*.¹ In many ways, social capital equates to the *social fabric* that weaves a community together.²

Why is Social Capital Important?

Social connections have value beyond the personal satisfaction that comes from being in relationship with others. As more people in a community reach out to connect with others, the character of the community will change in specific positive ways: people will grow to trust one another, more people will become engaged in work that supports the common good, and the community’s leadership structure will become expanded and diversified. These changes, in turn, will allow the community to achieve improved quality of life for its residents on dimensions such as physical health, economic standing, education, and emotional well-being. Thus, social ties are a form of *capital*. Social capital is a key building block in producing high-functioning communities, neighborhoods, and organizations, just as financial capital, physical capital and human capital allow firms to produce goods and services.

In his groundbreaking book, *Bowling Alone*, Robert Putnam (2000) presented a volume of data demonstrating that social capital has declined dramatically in the United States over the past 50 years. As an example, Putnam noted that while the number of Americans who bowl has increased over the past few decades, there has been a decline in the number of Americans who participate in bowling leagues or associations has decreased in the past few decades. This downward trend is replicated across a wide spectrum of civic-engagement indicators, including membership in fraternal organizations, voting, and having friends over for dinner. On the other hand, in recent years people have found new mechanisms for connecting with one another, including the internet, chat rooms, and text messaging.

Surveys of Social Capital

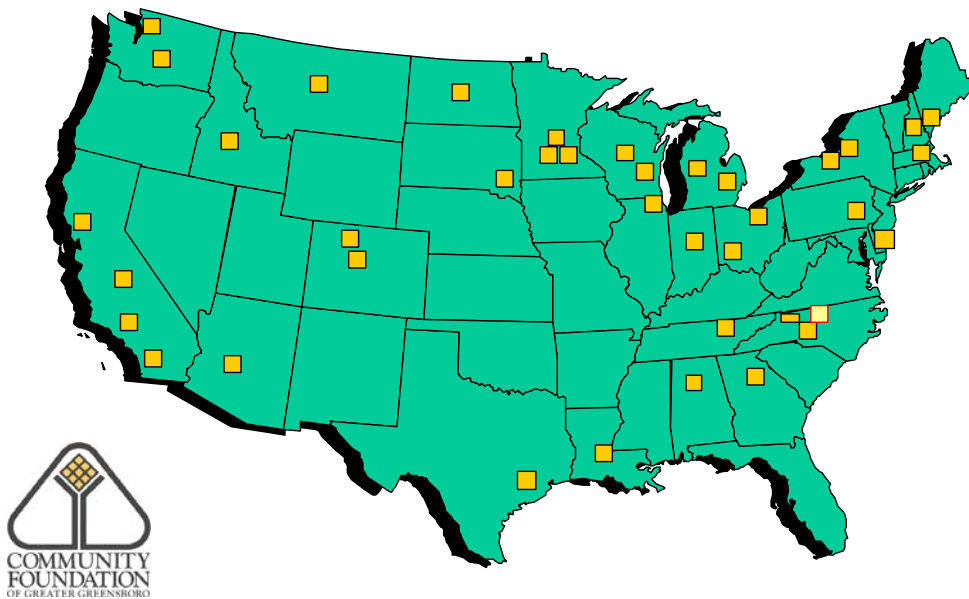
The topic of social capital gained increased attention in 2001 when the results of the Social Capital Benchmark Survey (SCBS) were released. This study, supported by a consortium of 36 foundations throughout the United States (including the Community Foundation of Greater Greensboro), was the most comprehensive assessment of civic engagement and social connectedness ever conducted. The survey was coordinated by the Saguaro Seminar at Harvard University, with Putnam serving as the principal investigator. A Scientific Advisory Committee was convened to determine the most reliable, valid ways of measuring the various aspects of social capital. Based on their recommendations, over 200 items were included in the SCBS instrument. These items assess not only the respondent’s **social connections** (e.g., friendships, social

¹ The World Bank defines social capital as “institutions, relationships, and norms that shape the quality and quantity of a society’s social interactions”. Similarly, Coleman (1988) defines social capital as “the networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit”. Putnam (2000) more succinctly describes social capital as “the glue that holds communities together”. While social capital may include an individual’s psychological sense of community, it may also refer to a sense of collective efficacy and of neighborhood and community cohesion. Accordingly, although social capital can be defined as a single construct, it can also include several “sub-dimensions” ranging from views of government to informal socializing.

² Social capital can be viewed not only at a *community* level, but also at the *individual* level. In other words, each person has his or her own social network that provides personal benefits.

interactions, trust of others), but also the degree to which the respondent is involved in a wide variety of community organizations and political activities (i.e., **community engagement**). In other words, the survey assesses **social capital** using a broad definition of the concept. TNSI, an international survey firm, was commissioned to conduct the telephone survey. The survey was fielded throughout the United States from July to October 2000. Roughly 29,200 people were surveyed, including a representative national sample of 3003 and targeted samples within each of 40 “communities” where there was a sponsoring foundation. A map of the communities queried for the 2000 survey is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Social Capital Community Benchmark Survey Participants, 2000



Each sponsoring organization (largely community foundations) decided on the size and sampling geography for each community sample. The geographic scope of these communities varied from city to county to region to an entire state (e.g., Montana, Indiana). Most of the community samples ranged in size from 500-1,500 interviews. The Community Foundation of Greater Greensboro sponsored a survey of 752 Guilford County residents, of which 546 lived within the city of Greensboro.

A second survey of social capital was carried out in early 2006. The Saguaro Seminar again took the lead in developing the survey instrument and in coordinating the study. The interview protocol contained most of the questions included in the 2000 survey, along with a few additional questions focused on attitudes toward immigrants and ethnic groups. As in 2000, TNSI carried out the telephone surveys using a random digit dial (RDD) procedure. Each interview required approximately 25-30 minutes to complete the approximately 200 closed-ended questions.

As with the 2000 survey, the 2006 Social Capital Community Benchmark Survey was fielded in communities where a local foundation was willing to serve as the sponsor. The Community Foundation of Greater Greensboro along with the Cemala Foundation, Joseph M. Bryan Foundation, News and Record, Tannenbaum-Sternberger Foundation, and the Weaver Foundation provided funding to carry out the survey with 450 residents of Greensboro. Another 11 foundations participated in the project, including eight additional community foundations, a statewide health

foundation, and two national family foundations. Altogether, the 2006 survey was carried out in 20 “communities” (defined as either a town, a city, a county, a multi-county metro area, or an entire state), as well as with a national sample of 2741 adults who are representative of the entire U.S. population.³

Overview of Report

This report presents key findings from the 2000 and 2006 surveys, with the intent of showing how Greensboro fares on a variety of social capital indicators. The findings paint a complex picture of Greensboro. According to some measuring sticks (especially involvement in organizations, volunteering, and monetary giving), Greensboro has a rich stock of social capital. Moreover, these aspects of social capital have increased over the past six years, whereas national levels have remained relatively flat. On the other hand, the survey also points to major areas of concern, particularly with regard to **trust** – inter-personal trust, as well as trust of those individuals and institutions that are charged with serving the larger community’s interests. We consider the implications of these findings in the final section of the report.

³ Nine of the 20 communities were surveyed through the support of a local community foundation: **Greensboro, North Carolina** (Community Foundation of Greater Greensboro); **Winston-Salem, North Carolina** (Winston-Salem Foundation); **Lewiston-Auburn, Maine** (Maine Community Foundation); **San Diego, California** (San Diego Community Foundation); **Rochester, New York** (Rochester Area Community Foundation); **Duluth, Minnesota/Superior, Wisconsin** (Duluth-Superior Area Community Foundation); **Sarasota, Florida** (Gulf Coast Community Foundation); **Kalamazoo, Michigan** (Kalamazoo Community Foundation); and the **state of New Hampshire** (New Hampshire Charitable Foundation). In addition, the Kansas Health Foundation sponsored the survey in five **Kansas** communities (**Abilene, Garden City, Junction City, Kansas City**, and **Wichita**) and in a representative **statewide** sample. Finally, through the contributions of these 10 foundations, along with dedicated support from two national foundations (the Sordna Foundation and the Bernard and Audrey Rapoport Foundation), the Saguaro Seminar was able to conduct the survey in five communities that were impacted by the evacuation of Louisiana residents following Hurricane Katrina: **Houston, Texas; Baton Rouge, Louisiana;** and **three unnamed communities in Arkansas.**

Results

The survey results are organized according to the two major domains of social capital: **social connectedness** and **community engagement**. Within each domain are a variety of more specific dimensions of social capital:

Social Connectedness

- Social networks and support
- Social interaction
- Inter-personal trust
- Inter-racial interaction and trust

Community Engagement

- Involvement in community organizations
- Volunteering and giving
- Leadership
- Involvement in the political process

In presenting these data, we focus on two types of comparison: 1) Greensboro versus the United States as a whole, and 2) change between 2000 and 2006.⁴ For a select set of variables, we also show how social capital varies as a function of race, age, and other demographic factors.

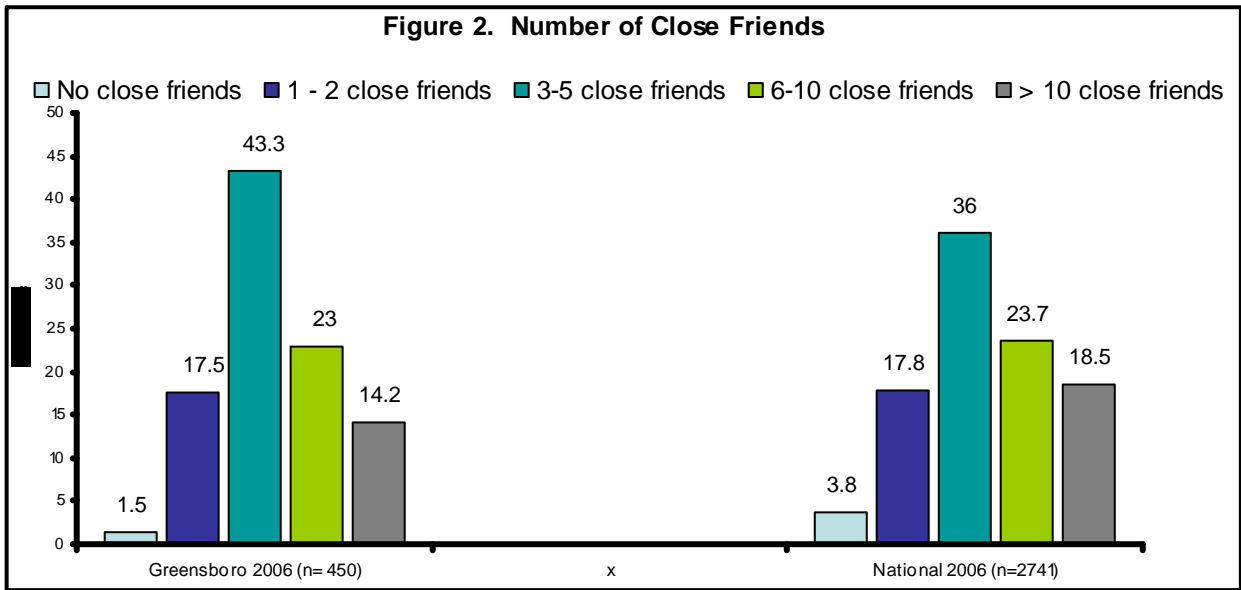
Social Connectedness

All definitions of “social capital” emphasize **social relationships**, especially relationships where those involved receive some form of benefit. Relationships involving family members and close friends obviously produce benefits, in the form of emotional support and helping out with whatever issues might arise. But it is not just these strong social ties that have value. Even strangers can work together in ways that benefit one another and the larger community. Cooperation among people who don’t know each other well is much more likely to occur if there is a prevailing sense of **social trust**. In the 2000 Social Capital Benchmark Survey, the 40 participating communities varied tremendously in the degree to which residents trust one another, especially people they don’t know personally. Moreover, those communities where residents are more trusting of one another tend to do better on a variety of measures of quality of life (e.g., physical and emotional health, economic prosperity, education). Thus, in assessing Greensboro’s social connectedness, it is important to consider not only the degree to which residents are plugged into supportive social networks, but also the level of trust that they display when encountering someone they don’t know, especially someone of a different race

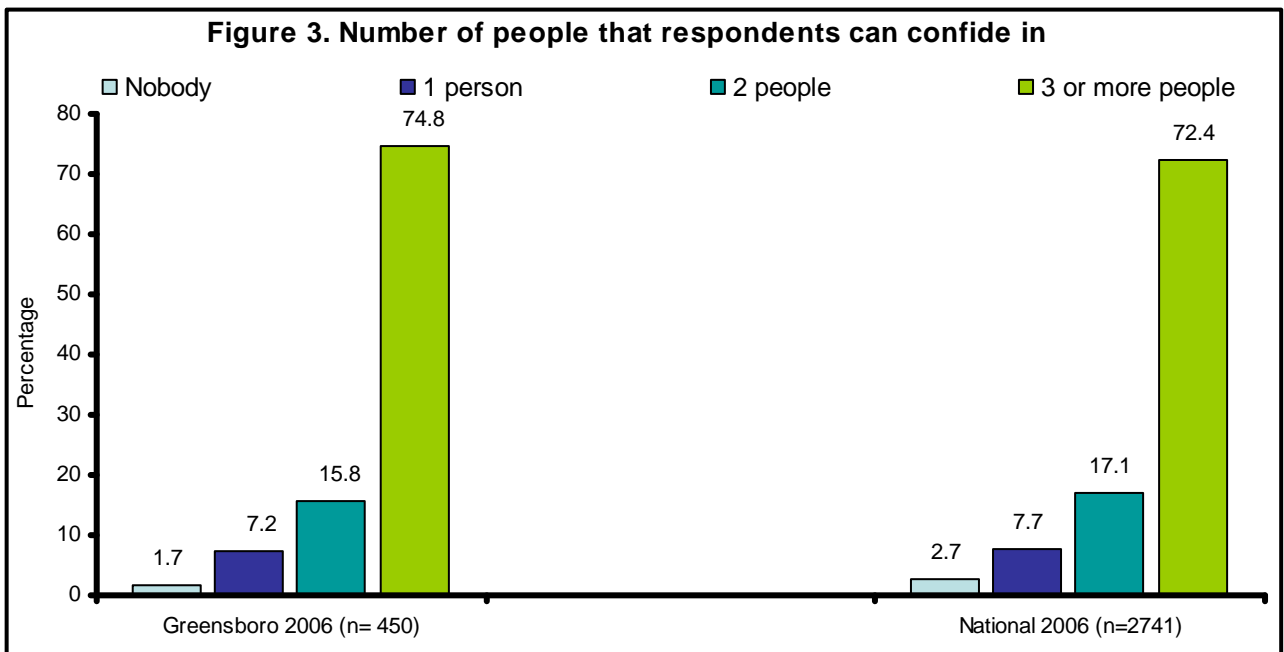
Social Networks

We begin by examining the degree to which residents are part of social networks, especially networks that provide support. Respondents in the survey were asked to indicate how many “**close friends**” they currently have, defined as “*people you feel at ease with, can talk to about private matters, or call on for help.*” As shown in Figure 2, just over 80% of Greensboro respondents that they had at least three such friends, roughly the same percentage as was found in the national sample (78.2%). In both samples, the figures were largely unchanged between 2000 and 2006, except that the percentage of Greensboro respondents reporting “no close friends” declined from 4.6% to 1.5%.

⁴ To allow for valid comparisons between 2000 and 2006, we excluded residents living outside Greensboro when we analyzed the 2000 Guilford County survey.

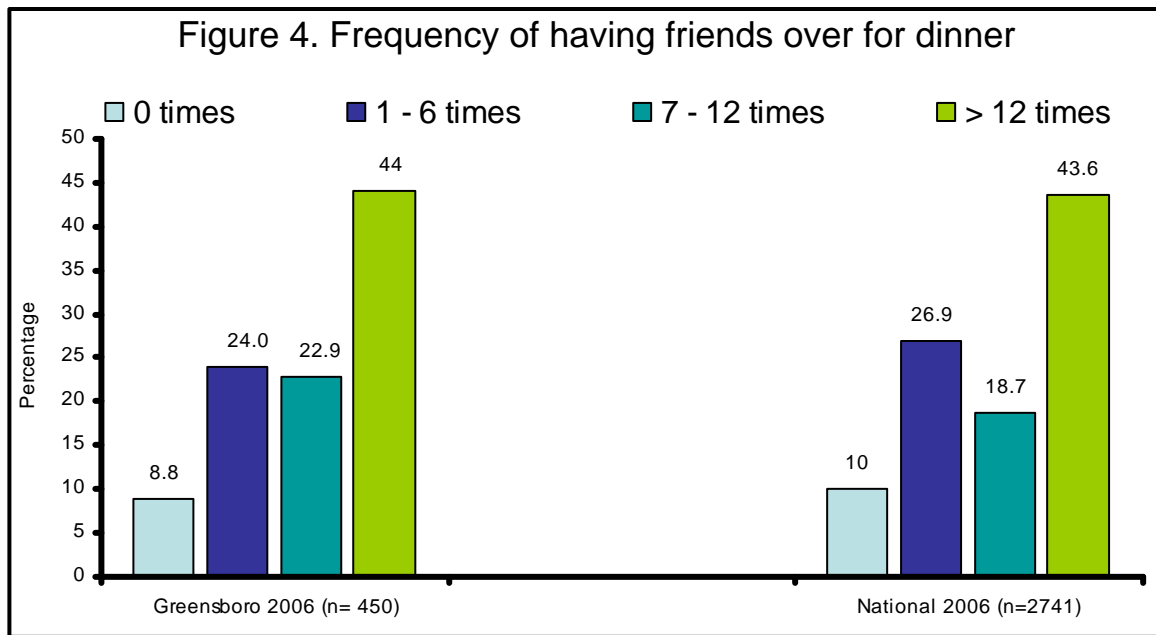


A similar pattern emerges when we analyze responses to the question, “How many people do you have in your life with whom you can share confidences or discuss a difficult decision?” As shown in Figure 3, three quarters of the respondents in Greensboro report that they have at least three such people in their life, slightly more than what is reported by their counterparts in the rest of the country. Looking at Figures 2 and 3 together, one can conclude that **Greensboro is fairly typical in terms of the degree to which residents have supportive friends and families.**



Social Interaction

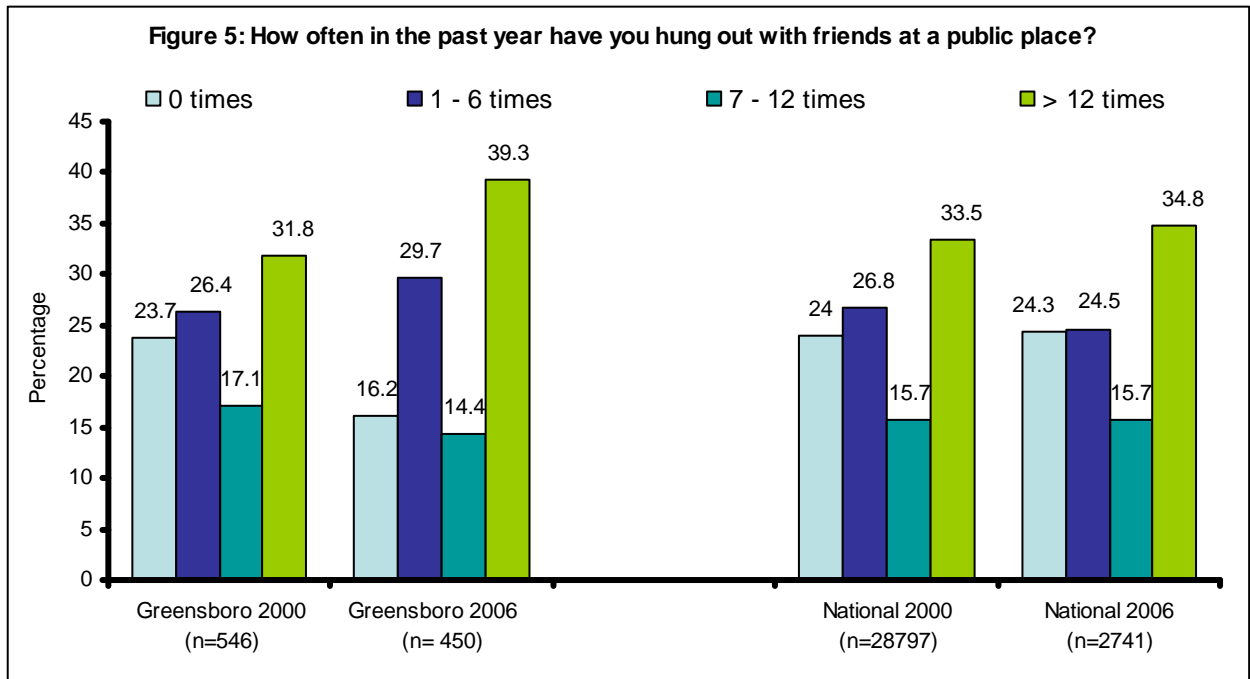
Consistent with the results on social networks, Greensboro is close to national norms when it comes to the level of social interaction that residents have with one another. Data for one of the items measuring social interaction (i.e., How often in the past year have you had friends over for dinner) is shown in Figure 4. Greensboro respondents were slightly more likely than their national counter-parts to report that they had had friends over for dinner at least seven times (67% vs. 62%). Figures for both the national and Greensboro samples remained relatively constant between 2000 and 2006.



A number of other items assessed the degree to which the respondent interacts with others:

- How often in the past year have you visited with relatives?
- How often in the past year have you had friends over to your home?
- How often do you talk or visit with your neighbors?
- How often in the past year have you hung out with friends at a park, shopping mall, or other public place?

The responses to the first three of these questions are generally consistent with the pattern reported for frequency of having friends over for dinner. Namely, Greensboro residents interact with one another at levels that are quite similar to national levels, with little change over time in either group. However, the fourth question shows a more interesting pattern. Namely, Greensboro residents reported higher levels of *“hanging out with friends in public places”* in 2006 than they did in 2000 (see Figure 5). The percentage of respondents who indicated that they hadn’t done this at all in the past year dropped by 7.5 percentage points (from 23.7% to 16.2%), while the percentage reporting that they had done this at least 12 times (i.e., at least once a month) increased by 7.5 percentage points (from 31.8% to 39.3%). In contrast, responses among the national sample remained at levels consistent with what occurred in Greensboro in 2000.



In interpreting the increased hanging out in public places, one can't but help note that Greensboro saw a major revitalization of its downtown between 2000 and 2006. The new restaurants, theatres, bars, and shops have attracted a wide range of residents, especially during the evenings. The survey of Forsyth County residents found a similar increase in "hanging out in public places," at the same time that Winston-Salem experienced a revitalization of its downtown.

Inter-Racial Friendship and Interaction

The data on social networks and social interaction indicate that Greensboro is a community where residents have strong and active connections. The survey included a set of items that allow us to assess whether these connections span race and other demographic differences. In other words, to what extent do Greensboro residents have **bridging social capital** in addition to **bonding social capital**?

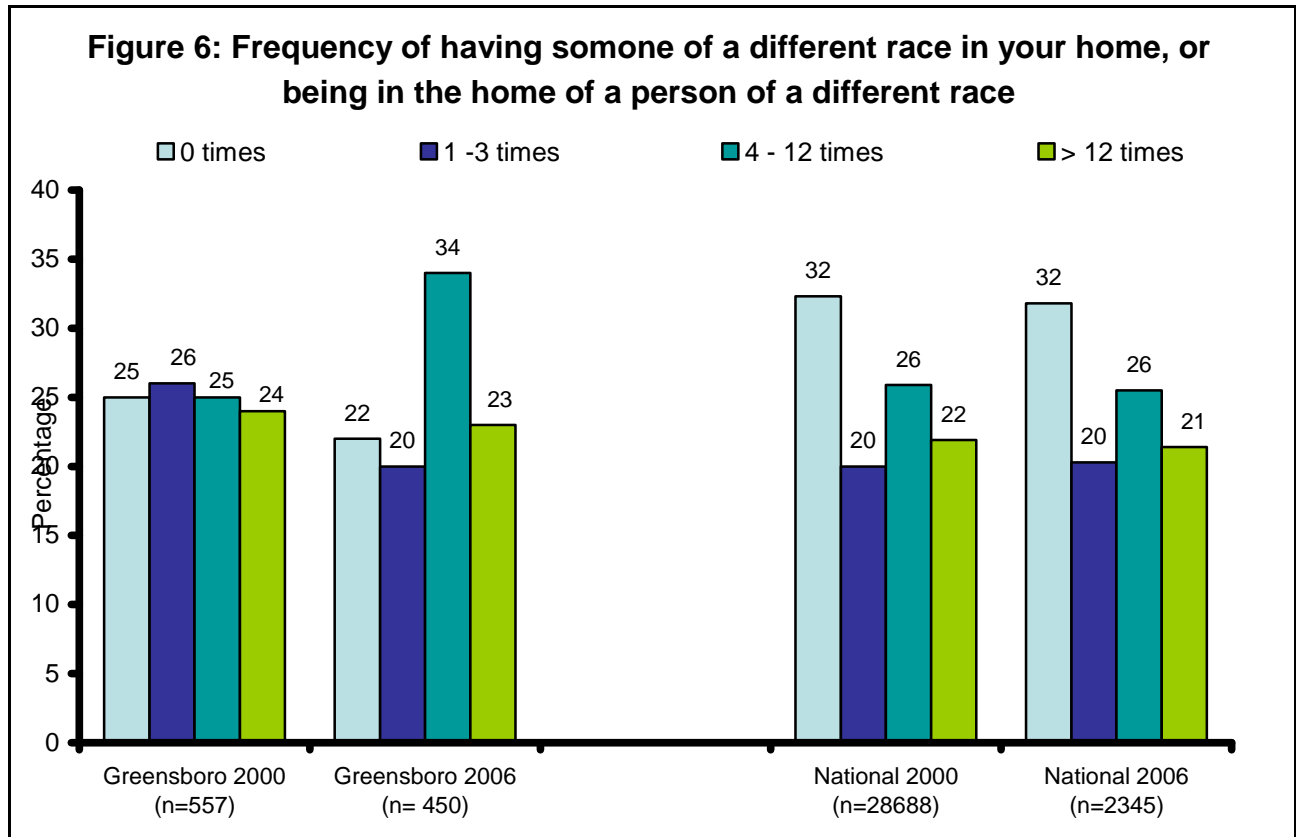
A number of survey items indicate that Greensboro residents have social connections that cross racial lines. This is most clear from the set of questions that ask whether the respondent has friends of different races and ethnicities. Table 1 shows the percentage of white respondents who have at least one friend who is African American, at least one who is Latino or Hispanic, and at least one who is Asian. It also provides comparable data for African American respondents, looking at white, Latino/Hispanic, and Asian friends.⁵ Compared to the national sample, Greensboro has much higher rates of friendships between whites and African Americans. Roughly four fifths of each group has a friend of the other race. For both whites and African Americans, friendships involving Hispanics and Asians are less common, but in line with national levels. Perhaps most importantly, all forms of inter-racial friendship increased between 2000 and 2006, generally at rates above what occurred nationally.

⁵ The Greensboro sample has too few Hispanic and Asian respondents to allow for valid estimates of the proportions for these two sub-populations.

Table 1. INTER-RACIAL FRIENDSHIPS

Type of Friendship	Greensboro		National	
	% with this type of friend in 2006	Change from 2000	% with this type of friend in 2006	Change from 2000
<u>White with a friend who is:</u>				
African American	79.7%	+4.1%	64.1%	+4.8%
Latino or Hispanic	50.0%	+12.3%	53.2%	+10.0%
Asian	44.0%	+7.3%	36.0%	+0.6%
<u>African American w/ friend who is:</u>				
White	82.1%	+7.9%	76.4%	+1.8%
Latino or Hispanic	46.2%	+14.3%	59.0%	+2.1%
Asian	32.2%	+7.6%	34.3%	+6.7%

The conclusion that Greensboro is high on inter-racial connectedness is reinforced by a more behaviorally oriented survey item: “*In the past year, how often have you been in the home of a person of a different race, or had them in your home?*” The results from this item are shown in Figure 6. In the 2006 survey, Greensboro respondents were more likely than their national counterparts to indicate they had done this at least once *in the past year* (78% vs. 68%). The proportion of Greensboro respondents indicating they had done this at least *four times* increased from 49% in 2000 to 57% in 2006, whereas the national sample remained around 48% for both years.



Social Trust

So far, the results presented here would suggest that Greensboro is a community where residents have relatively strong social networks and regularly connect with the friends and relatives in those social networks. Moreover, there is evidence that residents are reaching out even more to form friendships with people of a different race. It is somewhat surprising then that residents of Greensboro are not particularly trusting of one another, at least when they move beyond their social circles. In all communities, trust diminishes as one moves from those we know to those we don't know. In Greensboro however, the decline is precipitous. When it comes to "people in general" (i.e., **generalized social trust**), Greensboro residents are much more suspicious than is true of most American communities.

The dynamics surrounding trust become clear when we consider the data from a set of questions that ask respondents how much they trust a variety of different types of people:

- People at your church or place of worship
- People you work with
- People in your neighborhood
- People who work in stores where you shop

Not surprisingly, respondents reported higher levels of trust in those people with whom there is more frequent and more intimate interaction. As shown in Table 2, two-thirds of respondents indicated that people at church or place of worship could be trusted "a lot," whereas less than one-fifth reported "a lot" of trust in people who work in stores.

Table 2. LEVEL OF TRUST IN DIFFERENT GROUPS OF PEOPLE – GREENSBORO 2006

	How much can you trust ...			
	People at your church or place of worship (n=405)	People you work with (n=382)	People in your neighborhood (n = 446)	People who work in the stores where you shop (n = 435)
a lot	67.5%	44.3%	39.1%	19.4%
some	24.4%	37.4%	39.7%	50.4%
only a little	3.8%	13.6%	15.1%	23.1%
not at all	4.4%	4.6%	5.0%	7.1%

* Note: This analysis omits respondents who indicated "not applicable" or refused to answer.

When we compare the data in Table 2 to corresponding data from the national sample, we find that Greensboro residents are less trusting than average, regardless of whether we are looking at trust in people who are well-known or trust in people who are relatively anonymous (see Table 3). For each of the three target groups where data are available,⁶ respondents in Greensboro reported lower levels of trust than did their counterparts in the national sample. For *people you work with* and *people in your neighborhood*, the difference is rather subtle – with the national sample more likely to report "a lot" of trust and the Greensboro sample more likely to report "some" trust. However, for the last target group (*people who work in stores*), the difference involves more outright **mistrust** among the Greensboro sample (i.e., "only a little" or "not at all").

⁶ The fourth question, "How much do you trust people at your church or place of worship?," was not asked within the national sample in 2006. When we look at the 2000 data for this item, we once again find that the national sample reports higher levels of trust than does the Greensboro sample. For example, 71.4% of respondents in the 2000 national sample reported that they trust people at church or place of worship "a lot," compared to 68.5% of the 2000 Greensboro sample.

Table 3. TRUST IN DIFFERENT GROUPS OF PEOPLE – GREENSBORO VS. NATIONAL 2006

	How much can you trust ...					
	People you work with		People in your neighborhood		People who work in the stores where you shop	
	GSO (n=382)	National (n=2226)	GSO (n = 446)	National (n=2694)	GSO (n = 435)	National (n=2681)
a lot	44.3%	49.3%	39.1%	45.9%	19.4%	29.7%
Some	37.4%	32.8%	39.7%	34.8%	50.4%	48.6%
only a little or not at all	18.2%	17.7%	20.1%	19.2%	30.2%	21.8%

** Note: This analysis omits respondents who indicated “not applicable” or refused to answer. The last two response categories (“only a little” and “Not at all”) were combined for easier comparison.*

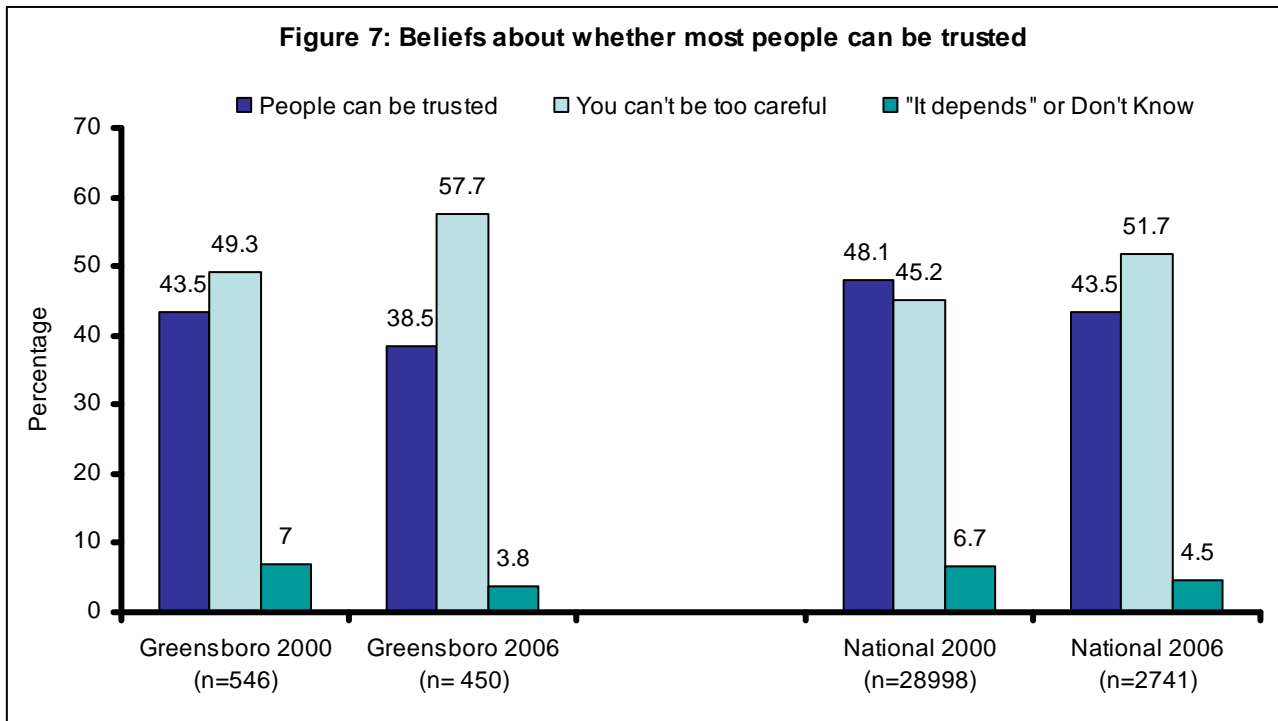
Not only is trust lower in Greensboro than in the rest of the country, but it has declined to a greater degree, at least when it comes to people who are outside the respondent's immediate social circle. This pattern is apparent in Table 4, which indicates the change in each trust item for the Greensboro sample. While there has been little change in the degree to which Greensboro respondents trust *people at church/place of worship* or *people you work with*, there have been declines in reported trust in *people in your neighborhood* and *people who work in stores*. In contrast, there was a decline in how much respondents report trusting *people you work with*, but no discernible change in trust at the *neighborhood* level or trust in *people who work in stores*.

Table 4. CHANGE IN LEVEL OF TRUST BETWEEN 2000 AND 2006 – GREENSBORO

	How much can you trust ...			
	People at your church or place of worship	People you work with	People in your neighborhood	People who work in the stores where you shop
a lot	-1.0%	-0.4%	-5.6%	-3.2%
some	+1.0%	+1.8%	+2.0%	-0.9%
only a little or not at all	+0.1%	-0.5%	+2.6%	+4.1%

** Note: This analysis omits respondents who indicated “not applicable” or refused to answer. The last two response categories (“only a little” and “Not at all”) were combined for easier comparison.*

The results presented here suggest that especially when it comes to people outside one's social circle, Greensboro residents are more suspicious than are people throughout the rest of the country, and that this suspicion seems to be growing. This conclusion is reinforced by another question on trust, **“In general, do you think that most people can be trusted, or that you can't be too careful?”** As shown in Figure 7, Greensboro residents are more likely than their national counterparts to respond that “you can't be too careful” (57.7% vs. 51.7%). Moreover, this figure increased by 8.4 percentage points between 2000 and 2006.



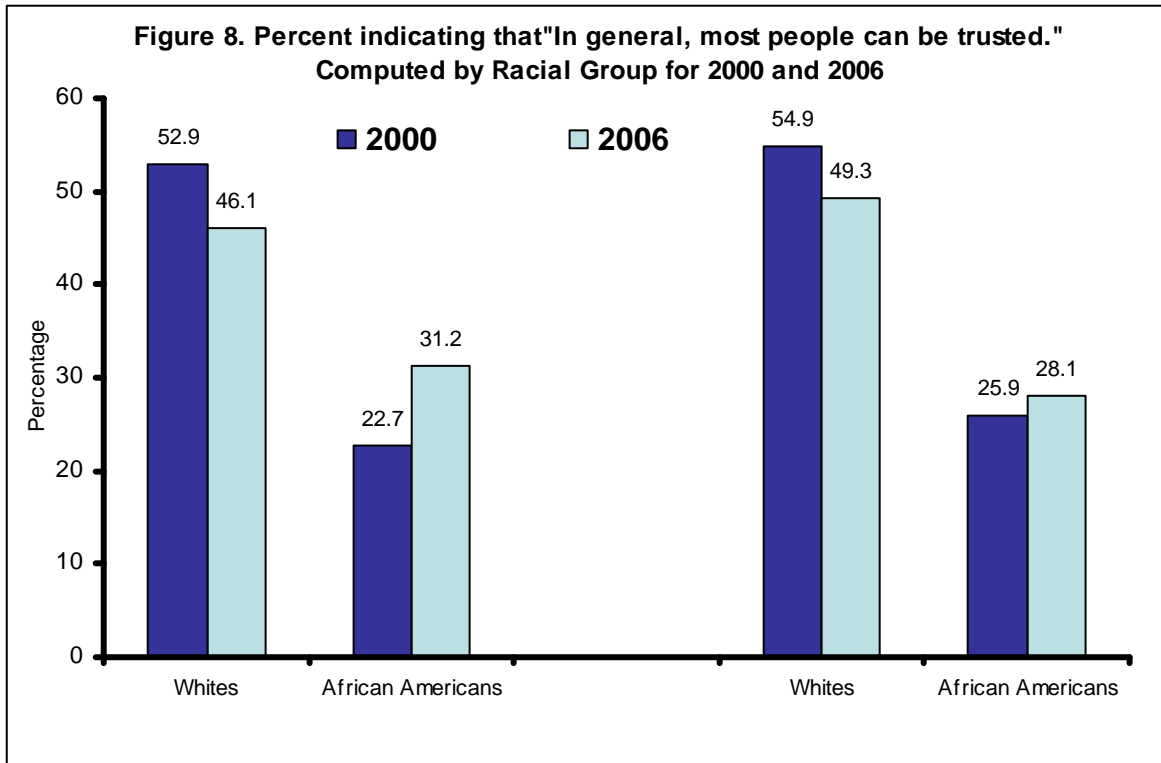
Trust in Greensboro is not only lower than the national average, but also the lowest among the nine communities where a local foundation sponsored the 2006 survey (i.e., Greensboro; Winston-Salem, NC; Kalamazoo, MI; Rochester, NY; Duluth, MN/Superior, WI; Sarasota, FL; the state of New Hampshire, and the state of Kansas).⁷ For example, whereas only 38.5% of Greensboro respondents reported that “*most people can be trusted*,” this figure was 58% in Duluth-Superior, 57% in New Hampshire, and 51% in Kalamazoo. The remaining six communities had figures in the 40’s.

We are emphasizing the data on this particular question because it has been shown to be one of the single best predictors of how communities fare with regard to physical, social, and economic health. The proportion of respondents who indicate that “*most people can be trusted*” is an indicator of the community’s prevailing attitude. Communities where residents give each other the benefit of the doubt are much more prone to be cooperative, supportive, and optimistic, while communities where people believe that others can’t be trusted tend to be more isolating, guarded, and contentious places to live. Especially when it comes to adapting to the large-scale social and economic forces at work these days, communities where people generally trust one another have a huge advantage over communities where residents are suspicious of those outside their social circle. Communities will succeed in the new global economy only if local residents and leaders recognize their inter-connectedness and act together in a cooperative rather than competitive manner.

Before leaving this particular item, it is important to show how the results vary as a function of the respondent’s race. Throughout the United States, whites are much more likely to report that “*most*

⁷ Community-specific data are available only in those cases where the sponsoring foundation also participated in the “Social Capital Learning Circle,” a collaborative effort that involves sharing data and lessons learned from grantmaking and other strategies to build social capital. Data are not available for San Diego, Houston, Baton Rouge, the three Arkansas communities, and the five Kansas communities (although *statewide* data for Kansas are included in the pooled data set).

people can be trusted" than are African Americans or Hispanics. This is true in Greensboro as well, as is apparent in Figure 8. At the same time, it is important to point out that between 2000 and 2006, African Americans in Greensboro became more trusting while whites became less trusting – to a greater degree than occurred nationally. In 2000, Greensboro had a 30-point "race gap" in trust (52.9% vs. 22.7%). That gap has been cut in half to 15 points (46.1% vs. 31.2%) in only six years. Unfortunately, the reduction in the gap was due in large part to declining levels of trust among whites.



Inter-Racial Trust

The findings from the trust questions indicate that white respondents in Greensboro have high-than-average levels of mistrust when dealing with people outside their social circles. Interestingly, their mistrust does not seem to be exacerbated when dealing with African Americans. When asked the question, “How much can you trust African Americans or blacks?”, 31% of the white respondents in Greensboro reported “a lot,” 59% reported “some,” and 10% reported either “only a little” or “not at all” (see Table 5). The figures are virtually identical among the white respondents in the national sample. On the other hand, white respondents in Greensboro reported less trust than their national counterparts when asked about “white people” and “Hispanics or Latinos.” Table 5 also shows that white respondents in Greensboro report almost the same level of trust in African Americans as they do in whites, a pattern that is not so true at the national level.

Table 5. WHITE RESPONDENTS’ TRUST OF DIFFERENT RACIAL GROUPS–2006

	How much can you trust ...					
	White People		African Americans or Blacks		Hispanics or Latinos	
	GSO (n = 233)	National (n = 1772)	GSO (n = 232)	National (n = 1755)	GSO (n=227)	National (n = 1730)
<i>a lot</i>	33.9%	35.7%	30.6%	30.7%	31.0%	30.2%
<i>some</i>	55.3%	56.5%	59.4%	59.7%	51.8%	57.1%
<i>only a little</i> or <i>Not at all</i>	10.6%	7.7%	10.0%	9.7%	17.1%	12.6%

** Note: This analysis omits respondents who indicated “not applicable” or refused to answer. The last two response categories (“only a little” and “Not at all”) were combined for easier comparison.*

The story becomes more interesting when we look at reports of trust among African American respondents (Table 6). Although African Americans are generally less trusting than are whites, African Americans in Greensboro are more trusting than are African Americans at the national level. This trend emerges regardless of whether we look at the question dealing with trust in whites, trust in African Americans, or trust in Hispanics.

Table 6. AFRICAN AMERICANS’ TRUST OF DIFFERENT RACIAL GROUPS–2006

	How much can you trust ...					
	White People		African Americans or Blacks		Hispanics or Latinos	
	GSO (n = 151)	National (n = 249)	GSO (n=152)	National (n=252)	GSO (n=150)	National (n = 242)
<i>a lot</i>	23.8%	22.3%	23.1%	20.2%	16.6%	18.6%
<i>Some</i>	60.6%	53.6%	63.7%	57.0%	63.1%	52.1%
<i>only a little</i> or <i>Not at all</i>	15.7%	24.0%	13.2%	23.9%	20.4%	29.1%

** Note: This analysis omits respondents who indicated “not applicable” or refused to answer. The last two response categories (“only a little” and “Not at all”) were combined for easier comparison.*

The data on **inter-racial trust** reinforce the conclusions presented earlier on **generalized social trust**. White residents of Greensboro who participated in the study are less trusting than are whites in other communities across the United States. African American respondents from Greensboro who participated in the study are less trusting than are whites, but are more trusting than are African Americans in other communities. However, these data also add an important piece of information. Namely, **whites and African Americans are just as trusting (or mistrusting) of one another as they are of people of their own race**. The historically crucial factor of *black versus white* seems to have become less relevant when Greensboro residents decide whether or not to trust someone. On the other hand, Hispanics (the “new minority” in Greensboro) are generally regarded with extra suspicion – among both whites and African American survey respondents.

Community Engagement

A comprehensive assessment of Greensboro’s social capital requires that we consider not only the degree to which residents are connected and trusting of one another **on an inter-personal level**, but also the degree to which they **engage in activities that promote the community’s well-being**. For this second domain of social capital, we consider a variety of venues for engagement (including clubs, service organizations, informal groups, and political processes), as well as various roles that one might play within those venues (e.g., member, volunteer, responsible citizen, leader). The data presented below suggest that Greensboro residents are highly engaged in activities that advance local quality of life, although there seems to be some shying away from more formal leadership roles, especially with regard to community-level institutions.

Participation in Groups

In evaluating how and how much Greensboro residents are involved in “community groups,” the obvious place to start is **church** (and to a lesser degree, non-Christian places of worship). Like most communities in the southern United States, church/place of worship is the primary means through which Greensboro residents connect with other people and provide service to their community. As shown in Table 7, almost two-thirds of Greensboro respondents belong to a church or other place of worship, about 10 percentage points higher than in the country as a whole. And Greensboro residents spend a great deal of time there, with 55% attending service at least “almost every week,” compared to 41% among the national sample. In Greensboro, attendance increased between 2000 and 2006, but there was little change at the national level.

Table 7. PARTICIPATION IN FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

Q30. Church/synagogue member?	Greensboro		National	
	2000 (n = 546)	2006 (n = 450)	2000 (n=28874)	2006 (n=2741)
Yes	63.5%	64.3%	54.9%	53.6%
No	25.1%	24.6%	31.6%	31.9%
NA (no religion)	11.3%	11.1%	13.5%	14.5%

Q31. How often you attend religious services?	Greensboro		National	
	2000 (n = 546)	2006 (n = 450)	2000 (n=28874)	2006 (n=2741)
Every week (or more often)	37.1%	43.9%	33.2%	34.5%
Almost every week	11.5%	11.3%	7.9%	6.7%
Once or twice a month	18.6%	15.3%	16.9%	14.9%
A few times per year	12.2%	6.8%	16.2%	16.9%
Less often than that	8.2%	11.4%	12.0%	12.2%
NA (no religion)	11.3%	11.1%	13.5%	14.5%

Although Greensboro residents are especially engaged in religious organizations, this does not come at the expense of other, more secular forms of community engagement. Table 8 shows the percentage of respondents who indicated that they are involved in each of a variety of types of group, ranging from service organizations to sports teams to PTA’s to self-help programs. Almost across the board, Greensboro respondents are involved at levels well above the national average. The 2000 survey found a less pronounced advantage for Greensboro, but the past six years have seen an increase in group involvement in Greensboro, accompanied by little change at the national level.

Table 8. INVOLVEMENT IN ORGANIZATIONS

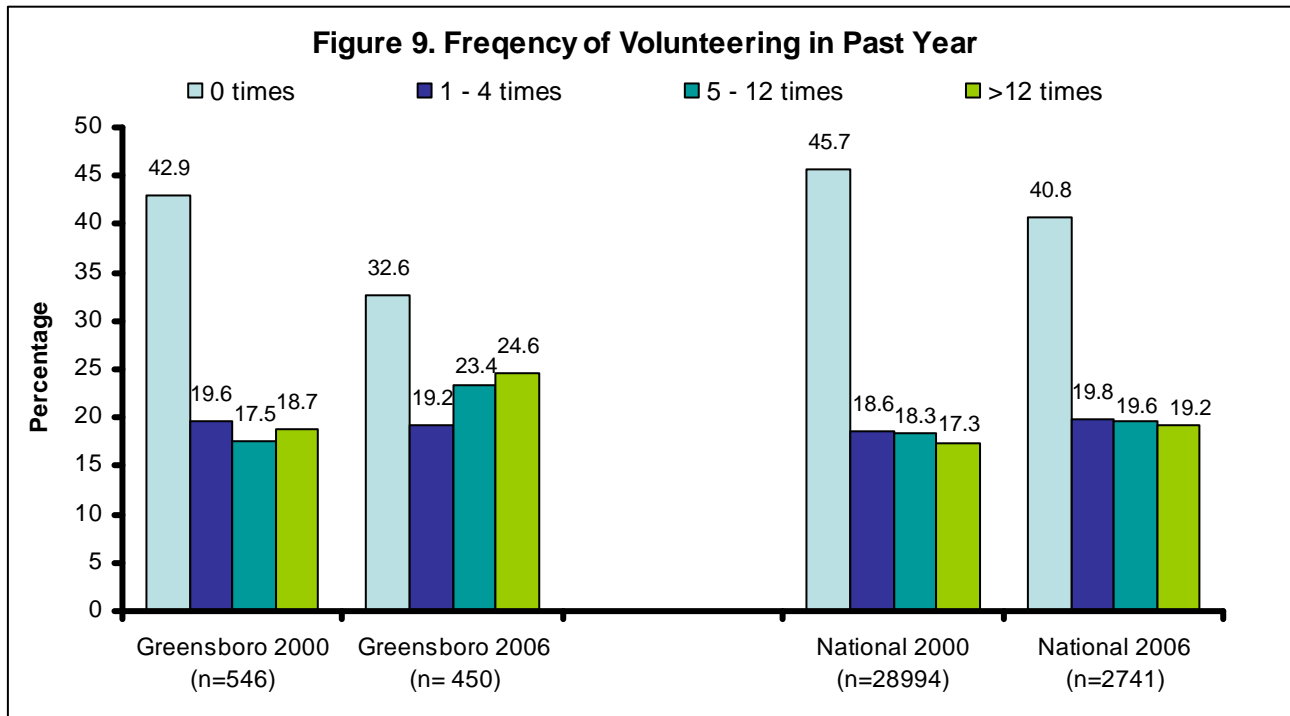
Type of Organization	Greensboro		National	
	% involved in 2006	Change from 2000	% involved in 2006	Change from 2000
Charity or social welfare org	48.5%	+11.8%	33.9%	+2.1%
Youth organization	32.4%	+10.6%	24.1%	+2.8%
Neighborhood association	32.4%	+2.5%	20.5%	-2.8%
Hobby, investment, or garden club	31.3%	+3.7%	23.7%	-1.1%
PTA, PTO or other parent support group	31.0%	+5.8%	20.8%	-0.2%
Literary, art or musical group	27.3%	+6.2%	19.4%	+1.2%
Sports club, league or outdoor activity club	25.7%	+6.0%	21.2%	-0.9%
Professional, business or trade org	20.2%	-7.7%	22.2%	-0.9%
Self-help group or program	19.2%	+0.1%	20.3%	+2.5%
Service or fraternal org	17.0%	-1.7%	13.9%	+0.7%
Seniors group	15.6%	-2.9%	14.6%	+0.3%
Ethnic or civil rights group	11.8%	+1.6%	5.9%	-0.4%
Political group	10.9%	+1.6%	9.8%	+1.0%
Veterans group	9.2%	+0%	10.0%	+1.6%
Labor union	4.5%	-0.3%	10.3%	+0%

* Note: Highlighted percentages indicate a difference of at least 5 percentage points compared to the national sample

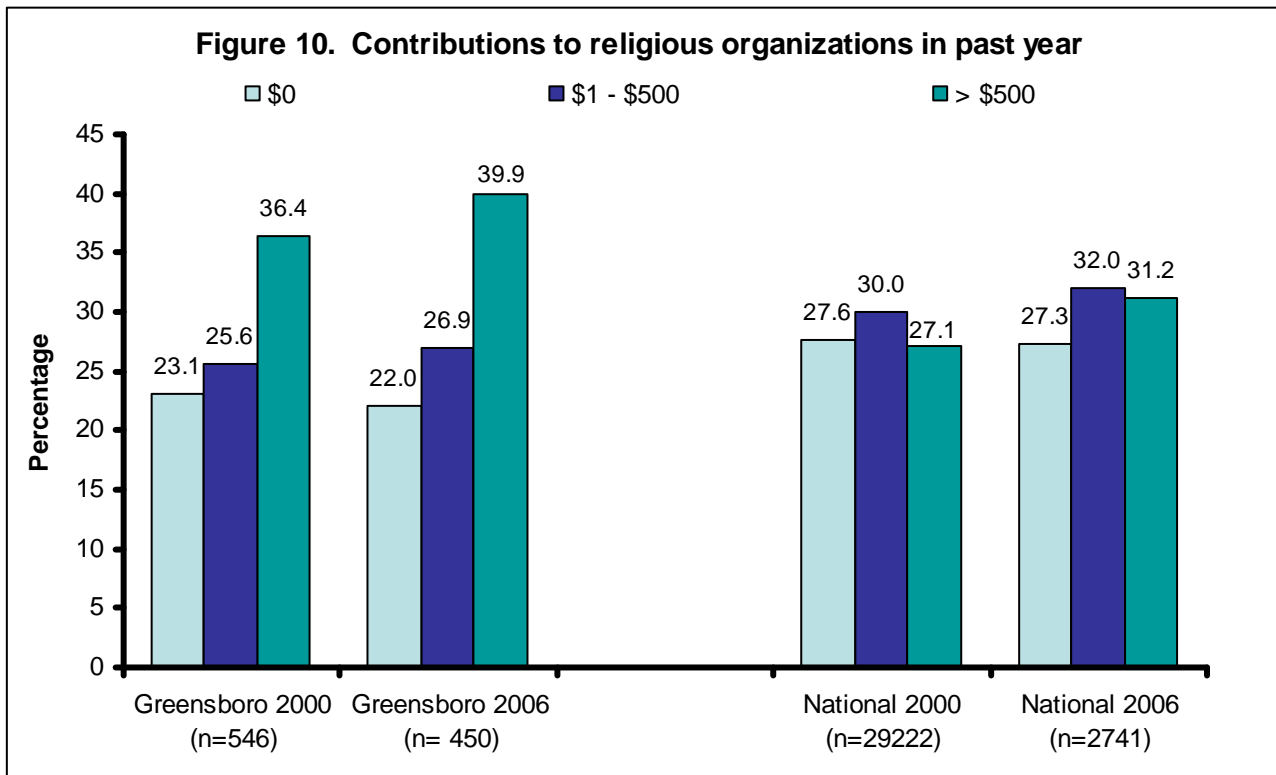
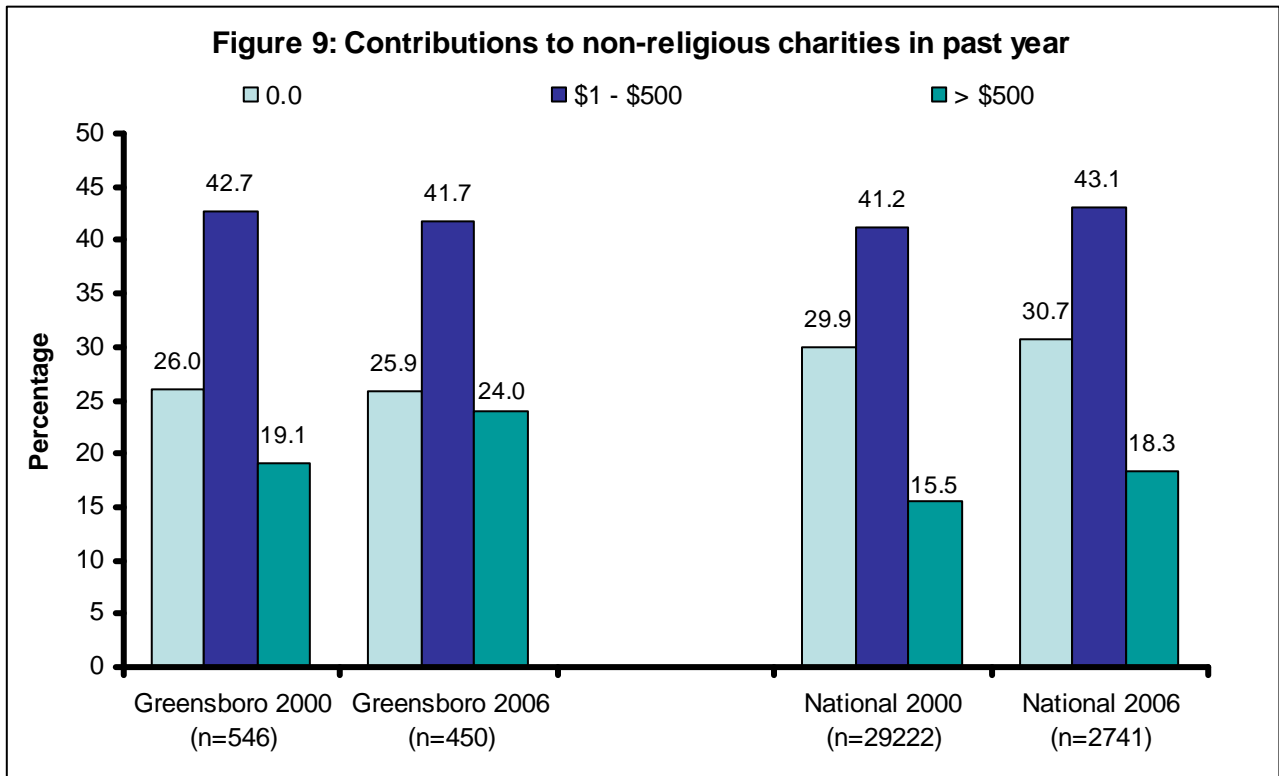
Table 8 orders the groups from highest to lowest levels of involvement among Greensboro respondents. At the top of the list, almost half the sample (48.5%) indicated that they are involved in “a *charity or social welfare organization that provides services in areas such as health or service to the needy.*” Among the national sample, only about a third of the respondents were involved in such a group. Moving down the list, three of the next four types of group involve **service to one’s family or neighborhood** (e.g., youth organization, neighborhood association, PTA). Especially for these types of organizations, Greensboro distinguishes itself from other places in the country. In addition, Greensboro has relatively high levels of participation for literary/art/musical groups, sports leagues, and ethnic/civil rights groups.

Volunteering and Giving

Greensboro residents are highly involved in community organizations not only as **members** but also as **volunteers**. Moreover, volunteering in Greensboro has increased significantly over the past six years – much more than has occurred nationally (see Figure 9). Between 2000 and 2006, the percentage of Greensboro respondent reporting that they had volunteered at least once in the past year increased from 56% to 67%. At the national level, the percentage volunteering at least once increased less – from 54% to 59%. Similarly, the percentage volunteering at least five times increased from 36% to 48% in Greensboro, but only from 36% to 39% nationally.



This increased giving of time and talent is consistent with Greensboro’s longstanding reputation as a place where residents are generous with their money. In the 2000 survey, Greensboro emerged near the top among the 40 participating communities with regard to monetary giving. That advantage remains in the 2006 survey, as shown in Figures 9 and 10. These figures show the percentage of respondents who gave to non-religious charities (Figure 9) and religious organizations (Figure 10). Respondents are classified as giving either: a) nothing in the past year, between \$1-499, and at least \$500. For clarity, the figures omit those respondents who reported “don’t know” or who refused to answer.



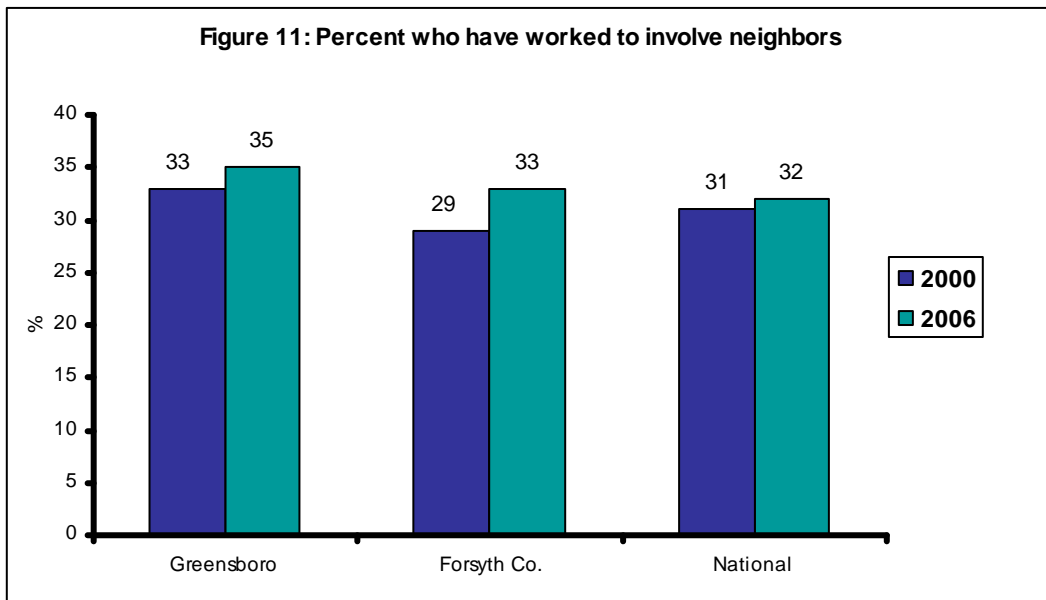
In terms of **non-religious charities** (Figure 9), the percentage of Greensboro respondents indicating that they gave some money increased from 62% to 66%. There was a similar increase at the national level – from 57% to 61%. Greensboro also showed an increase in giving at the higher end (at least \$500) – from 19% to 24%, whereas nationally the increase was from 15% to 18%.

Whereas roughly one-fourth of Greensboro respondents gave at least \$500 to non-religious charities, 40% gave that much to **church or other religious organizations**. Here again, we see increases in giving between 2000 and 2006. These increases were comparable to what occurred nationally, implying that giving to church remains at relatively high levels.

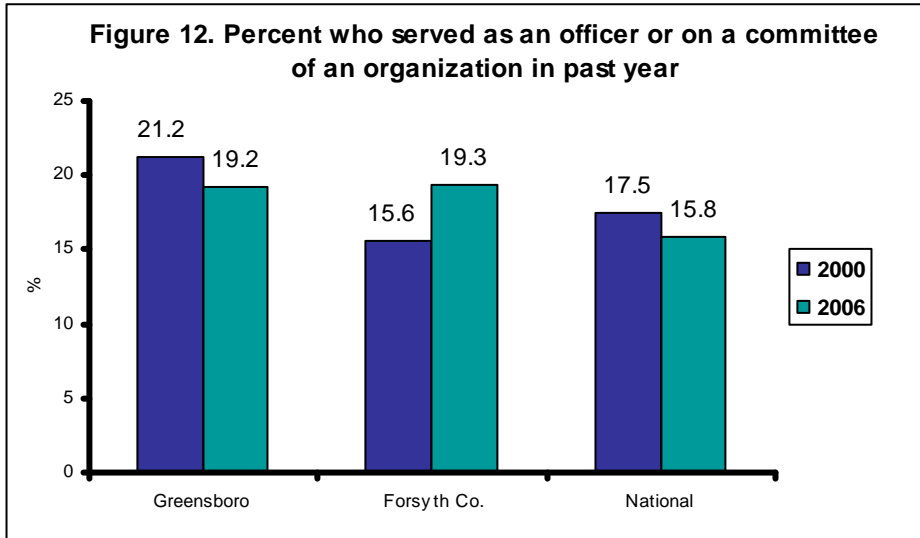
In interpreting these increases in giving, it is important to take into account that median household income stagnated in Greensboro between 2000 and 2006, while increasing by roughly \$5000 at the national level. In other words, Greensboro residents continue to be generous even when they are financially stretched and stressed.

Leadership

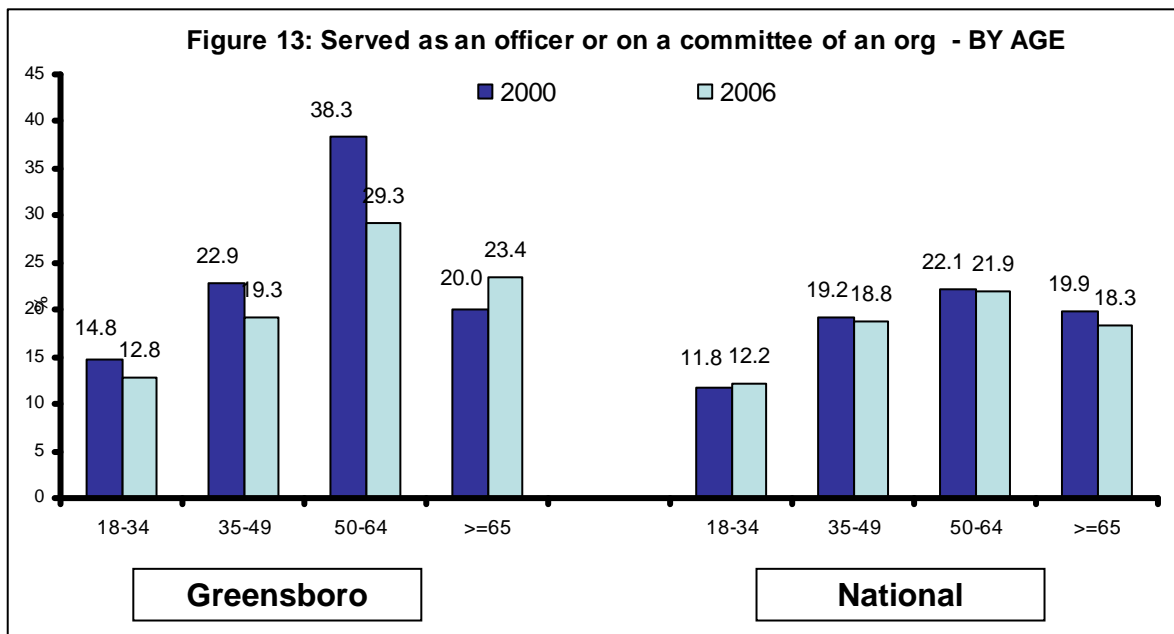
While Greensboro residents are volunteering and giving at increased levels, they seem to be stepping away from leadership roles, at least with regard to leadership roles that involve formal responsibility. Figure 11 shows rates of leadership according to a **less formal** definition: the percentage of respondents who reported that they had “*worked with others to get people in your immediate neighborhood to work together to fix or improve something.*” This form of leadership increased slightly between 2000 and 2006 – from 33% to 35%.



However, when we switch to **leadership with formal responsibility**, we see a decline – both in Greensboro and nationally. The key survey item here is, *“In the past twelve months, have you served as an officer or served on a committee of any local club or organization?”* The percentage indicating that they had played such a role dropped by 2 percentage points in Greensboro and nationally, but increased in Forsyth County by almost 3 percentage points.



At least in Greensboro, the decline in formal leadership was not consistent across different age groups (see Figure 13). The greatest decline occurred in the 50-64 group (9 percentage points). In contrast, leadership actually increased in the 65 and over group, possibly because some of the civically active individuals who were in their early 60s in 2000 are now in the 65+ age group. In 2000, the 50-64 age group was particularly engaged in leadership roles (38% in Greensboro vs. 22% nationally), but that difference has shrunk considerably in the past six years – now down to 29% vs. 22%. While some might argue that it is healthy for the 50-64 age group to relinquish some of its leadership responsibility, the data show that the younger residents of Greensboro are not stepping up to these new vacancies. This is especially true among the 18-34 year group, where the percentage serving as an officer or committee member declined from 15% to 13%.



Participation in the Political Process

The data on participation in community groups and volunteerism indicates that Greensboro residents are highly engaged in activities that advance local quality of life. Likewise, Greensboro respondents are more likely than their national counterparts to belong to a group “*that took political action in the past year*” (25% vs. 20%). Voting rates are also above average in Greensboro. Both these statistics are in keeping with the community’s reputation for political awareness and activism.

On the other hand, other data from the survey suggest that this political sensibility does not translate into direct engagement in the proceedings of public institutions (see Table 9). This disconnect is most apparent in the survey item that asked respondents, “*How many times in the past twelve months have you attended any public meeting in which there was discussion of town or school affairs?*” The percentage of respondents who reported that they had attended at least one public meeting declined by 4 percentage points and is now lower than the national level (37% vs. 41%).

Table 9. ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT IN THE POLITICAL PROCESS

Type of Activity	Greensboro		National	
	% involved in 2006	Change from 2000	% involved in 2006	Change from 2000
Attended a public meeting to discuss community affairs	37%	-4%	41%	-1%
Signed a petition	30%	-3%	35%	-2%
Belong to a group that took political action	25%	+3%	20%	+1%
Attended a political meeting or rally	15%	-1%	18%	+1%
Participated in a demonstration, boycott, or march	7%	-1%	7%	+0%

In explaining why Greensboro residents might not want to engage directly in the work of public institutions, it is important to consider two questions related to **trust**:

- How much of the time can you trust local government to do what is right?
- How much do you agree or disagree that “the people running my community don’t really care much what happens to me”?

The responses to these two items are shown in Figure 14 and 15. Greensboro respondents were less likely than their national counterparts to report that local government can be trusted either “all of the time” or “most of the time” (36% vs. 46%). Likewise, Greensboro has higher rates of agreement with the statement, “*the people running my community don’t really care much what happens to me*” (35% vs. 31%).

The results on political participation indicate that residents may restrict their community engagement to venues that do not directly involve elected officials. The results on trust suggest that this tendency might be due to a desire to avoid individuals, groups, and institutions that do not warrant trust. Unfortunately, this pattern implies that residents are avoiding venues where decisions are made regarding the overall community’s interests.

Figure 14. Trust the local government to do what is right

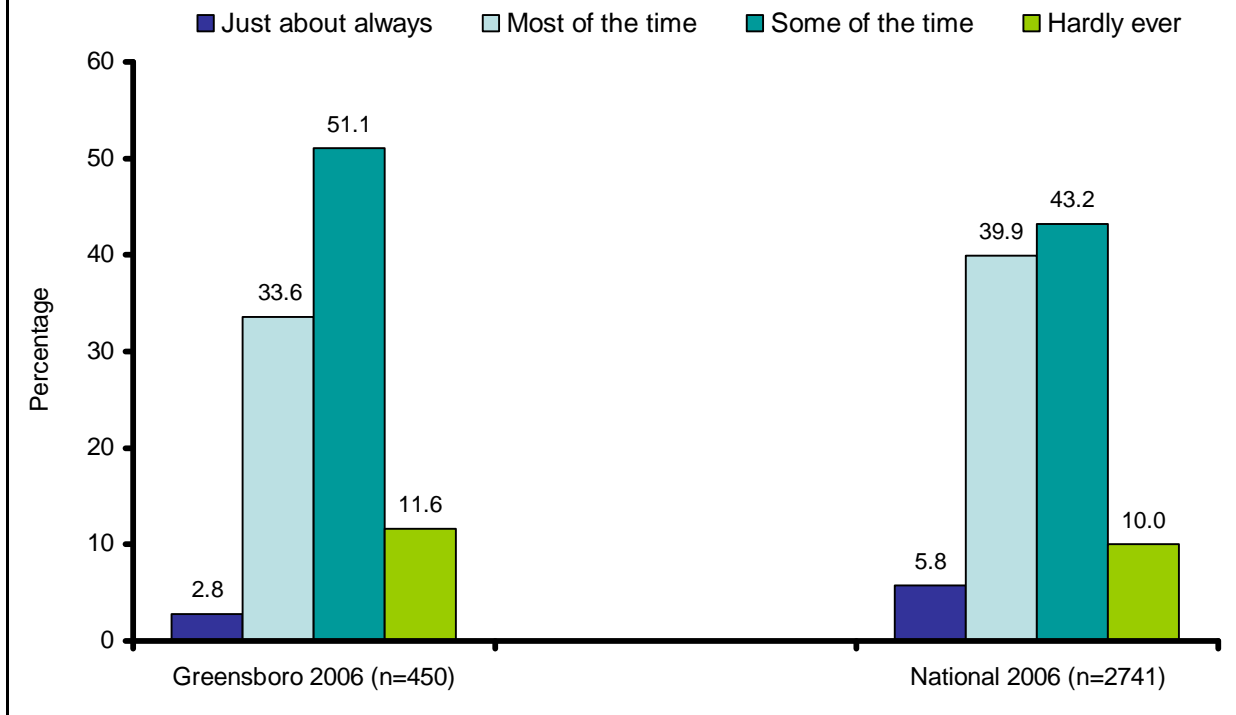
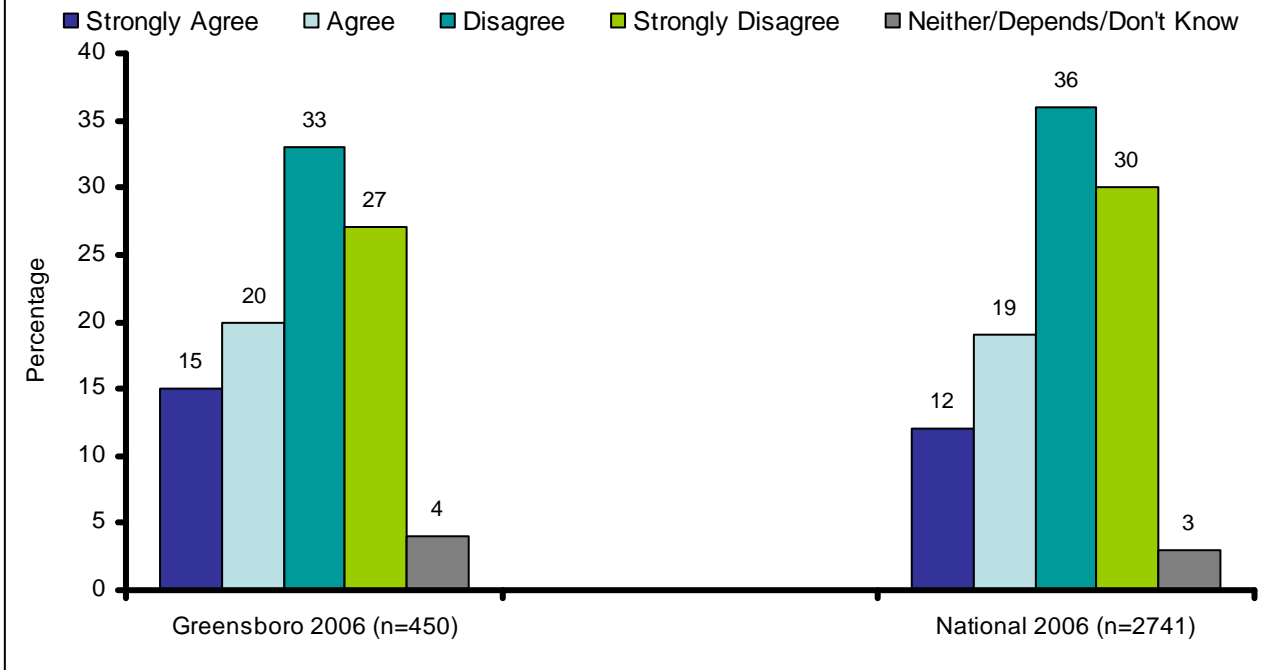


Figure 15 – The people running my community don't really care much what happens to me.



CONCLUSION

According to a variety of studies, there are significant benefits to having a community where residents are both engaged and trusting of one another. Greensboro succeeds on one dimension of social capital (engagement), but not the other (trust). Moreover, this pattern is true regardless of whether we are looking at **interpersonal relationships** or **community engagement**.

On the interpersonal level, Greensboro residents generally have healthy social networks and interact frequently with friends and family members – at home, places of worship, and increasingly in “public places” like downtown. However, residents are mistrustful of people outside their social circles – to a much greater degree than is true in most of the rest of the country.

In terms of community engagement, Greensboro residents are highly involved in a variety of groups that support schools, families, and neighborhoods. Volunteerism and giving are both at admirable levels. However, residents are mistrustful of the community's established leaders, and they are increasingly shying away from stepping into formal leadership roles themselves.

When a community has high levels of both trust and engagement, there is an air of **cooperation** – among residents, leaders, and organizations. In contrast, when a community has neither trust nor engagement, the result is apathy, passivity, and isolation. When a community has engagement, but not trust the result can be **contentiousness**. This plays out both at an inter-personal level and with regard to community problem-solving. Herein lies the challenge and opportunity for Greensboro -- to leverage high levels of engagement to increase trust.

2006 Social Capital Community Benchmark Report



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