



New Prague Assessing Social Capital: Results and Insights for Action



**Center for Community Vitality
University of Minnesota Extension**

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
EXTENSION

Table of Contents:

Background and Overview on Social Capital	1
▶ What is social capital?	
▶ What are the benefits of social capital?	
▶ How can communities strengthen social capital?	
The Social Capital Assessment	3
▶ A bit of history	
▶ Focus on networks and our six measures	
▶ The community process	
▶ The demographics	
Survey Findings	5
▶ About the scores	
▶ Comparison to other communities	
▶ New Prague's scores for the six measures	
• Bonding Trust	
• Bonding Engagement	
• Bridging Trust	
• Bridging Engagement	
• Linking Trust	
• Linking Engagement	
A Closer Look.....	21
▶ The whole picture	
▶ Comparison charts	
▶ Community input	
Insights for Action.....	25
▶ Strengthening networks	
▶ Community strengths to build on	
▶ Areas for attention	
▶ Next steps for the community	

Background and Overview on Social Capital

What is social capital?

"It's not *what* you know, it's *who* you know." This common saying describes some of what is known about *social capital*. The saying implies what we commonly observe—that getting membership to exclusive clubs requires inside contacts; that close competitions for jobs and contracts are often won by those with friends in high places.

But “who you know” makes a difference in other ways, too. When you fall on hard times, it is friends and family who create a safety net. Your happiest and most rewarding hours may be spent talking with neighbors, sharing meals with friends, being at religious gatherings, or volunteering for community projects. (Woolcock & Narayan 2000) That’s what social capital is all about.

There are three conditions that matter when thinking about social capital:

- ▶ **Trust:** Assured reliance on the character, ability, strength or truth of someone or something.
- ▶ **Engagement:** To take part...doing something for another without any immediate expectation of return (reciprocity).
- ▶ **Connections/Networks:** A collection of people you know who you can count on.

The ability to create and use networks is important for personal success – on-the-job; in professional organizations; in volunteer work. Communities also can create and use networks to improve the quality of life in their town. Networks help us get information, ideas, influence, and resources so that we can accomplish goals.

When you and your community improve your social capital, you can make change happen. You can leverage your strong networks for better results, and you can address your weak networks to make a difference in the future.

What are the benefits of social capital?

The basic idea of social capital is that your family, friends, associates – even acquaintances – are an important asset. You can tap that asset to survive a crisis, improve your financial footing, or just enjoy life more. This is true for individuals and for groups. Communities that have a rich and diverse stock of social networks and civic associations are less vulnerable, and can more easily tackle problems.

When social capital is lacking, it shows. We all know what it is like to fear being left out of the loop on important decisions, or to not be able to get a job in a field or organization where we don’t know anybody. One reason that people stay in poverty is that they don’t have the social networks and institutions that could be used to get a good job or decent housing (Woolcock & Narayan).

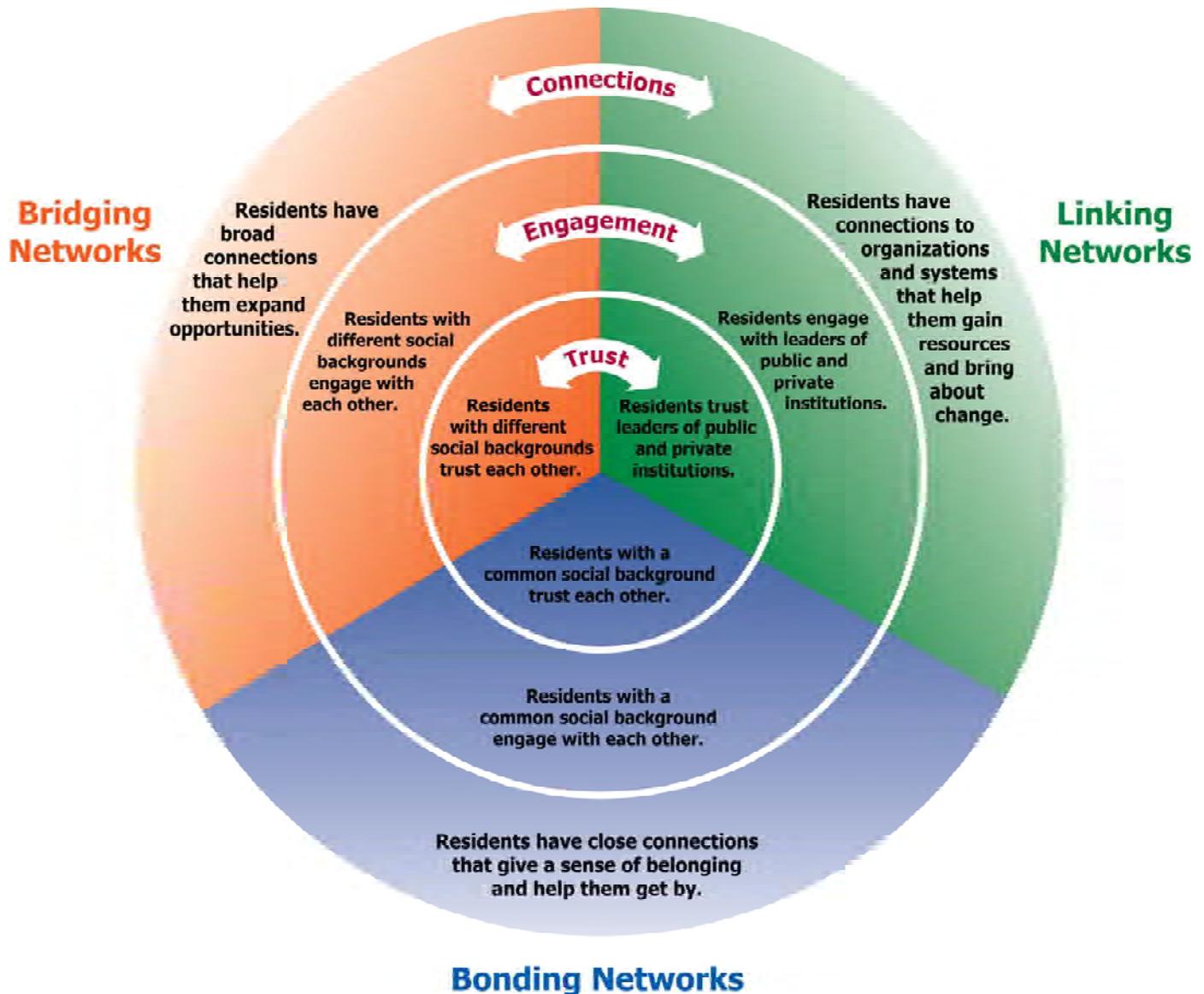
Social capital is so valuable that it affects almost every aspect of personal and community life. One report from Harvard University (Saguaro Seminar) summarized the benefits – stronger communities, better education, economic prosperity for peoples and communities, individual well-being and public health.

How can communities strengthen social capital?

Broad, diverse participation in social networks has side benefits. When people are in social and economic relationships with an assumption of trust they are better able to resolve personal or community problems. Engaged people are more likely to hear about a job or get good information about health issues. Connections within communities help people link to resources so that personal and public problems can be solved more easily.

Communities can improve their social capital by strengthening their residents trust and engagement within three distinct types of networks: bonding, bridging and linking.

Figure 1. Community Social Capital Model



Community Social Capital Model

© Regents of the University of Minnesota 2008. All rights reserved.

The Social Capital Assessment

A bit of history

The University of Minnesota Extension's work on social capital started in August 2002 with a search for a community survey that would help rural communities look at the social aspects of their community life. When no model for rural communities could be found, Extension decided to develop one..

The first pilot of the survey was started in January 2004. Since then, the assessment process has been used with ten rural communities (four towns, two school districts and four counties). Between 2002 and 2008 we have gathered data from over 3,200 individuals. We have responses from 2,659 adults and 555 youth have completed a youth version of the survey. An online version of the survey has also been piloted.

The research (validity and reliability testing) included three pilot versions of the survey tool which resulted in an instrument that is a solid measure of social capital. The full survey has a total of twelve questions that focus on six measures: bonding-trust, bonding-engagement, bridging-trust, bridging engagement, linking-trust, and linking-engagement.

Focus on networks and our six measures

The assessment focuses on trust and engagement within the three types (bonding, bridging, linking) of networks.

Bonding networks are close ties that help people get by. These connections are usually with family, friends, and neighbors.

Bridging networks are weaker ties that can help people get ahead and gain opportunities. These networks are usually with people different from themselves who are engaged in different types of networks like occupations, organizations, etc.

Linking networks are links to organizations and systems that can help people gain resources and bring about change. These connections are usually with organizations that have resources, both within and outside of the community.

Some key assumptions:

- All three types of networks matter. They benefit individuals and communities differently.
- Size and strengths of networks can vary.

The survey measures three types of networks and two key variables resulting in these six measures: Bonding Trust, Bonding Engagement, Bridging Trust, Bridging Engagement, Linking Trust, and Linking Engagement

The community process

As its title suggests, the community assessment process requires communities to provide leadership for training volunteers and gathering input. It is designed to identify areas where the community already has a strong foundation (strengths to build on) as well as areas to strengthen (priorities for action).

In New Prague, members of the **project team** were: *Lori Geiger, Mike Liepold, and Pam Tietz*. The trio has been instrumental in organizing the “New Prague Healthy Communities” initiative. These individuals provided leadership for the process. With their leadership and based on previous work with the Extension Educator, they 1) determined the boundaries of the community to be assessed (focused on the New Prague zip code), 2) identified and recruited individuals/volunteers from a cross-section of the community to assist with data collection, and 3) developed promotional strategies.

One **informational, planning and training session** was attended by 20 people, on December 5, 2007. At this session, participants received information on the assessment process which included training on the data collection methods. Following the training participants identified a plan to reach a cross-section of the community to complete the survey. They mapped out places where people gather in New Prague (civic and community organizations, private businesses, schools, food shelves, churches, community service agencies, coffee shops, work site, etc.) in an attempt to reach a cross-section of the community consistent with the demographics of the community. Then, the volunteers selected areas in the community where they would be responsible for distributing and collecting the surveys from adults.

NOTE: The community project team chose not to survey youth in this assessment because they had recently been surveyed through a Search Institute assessment in the fall 2007.

The demographics

How representative of the New Prague community was the survey sample? In an ideal survey situation, survey participants would be truly representative of all the major population sub-groups of the community. This type of representation is best achieved when survey respondents are selected at random. However, random selection is often not practical in community-driven survey projects.

Using volunteers for data collection, New Prague was able to complete 374 surveys¹. Volunteers made an effort to be as inclusive as possible of all demographic groups in the community, but the sample was not representative of the larger community in some important ways. The table below compares some of the demographics of the survey sample with census data from New Prague population. In New Prague the sample selected was somewhat biased with a higher proportions of women, younger adults, wealthier households and higher education levels than the population as a whole.

Table 1. Characteristics of the adult sample

Demographic Characteristic	Population (U.S. Census)	Sample
% female	51%	70%
% minority	1%	2%
% 65 or older	19%	10%
% who earn > \$75,000 (household)	22%	55%
% homeowners	84%	90%
% with bachelor's degree or higher	21%	52%

¹ Throughout this report, we use the word "adults" to describe respondents so that the reader is clear that youth aren't described in this report.

Survey Findings

About the scores

It is important to keep in mind a few notes about the scores from the data analysis.

- ▶ Responses to questions concerning each of the types of networks were quantified, combined, and averaged.
- ▶ The scores are intended as starting points for talking about social capital in the community.
- ▶ They are not scientifically based, the whole story, or “proof”.
- ▶ Scores are from 0 to 100
 - 0** = everybody in the community had the lowest possible responses
 - 100** = everybody in community had the highest possible responses
 - 50** = a good benchmark to use. The further above or below 50 the score is, the more it is an indicator of areas of strength or challenge for the community

The more representative the sample, the more confident we can be about the results. In the case of New Prague, we know the sample was over-representative of wealthier and more educated people, so some the community scores might have been lower if more low income or less educated community residents had been part of the survey sample.

Comparison to other communities

In this report we share a comparison of New Prague with other communities that have completed the Social Capital survey. For comparison purposes, it can be helpful to know the demographics of those communities. Those are provided in Table 2. Among the four communities, New Prague had the smallest minority and elderly populations and the highest percentage of upper income households.

Table 2. Demographics of comparison communities

	New Prague ¹	Southern Community ²	Western Community ¹	Northeastern Community ¹
Scope of community	Zip code area	School district	Zip code area	County
Population size	8,771	19,526	4,331	5,168
Percent minority	2%	7%	10%	9%
Percent of adults with high school education or less	50%	54%	50%	40%
Percent of households with \$75,000 or higher income	22%	15%	11%	14%
Percent of population age 60 or older	16%	18%	25%	23%

¹ SOURCE: American Fact Finder, index of data provided by the US Census Bureau, <http://factfinder.census.gov/>
² SOURCE: School District Census Data, <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/sdds/>

New Prague's scores for the six measures

Bonding Trust

Bonding trust (for adults) was the strongest dimension of social capital for New Prague. As seen in Figure 2, adults in the community had an average bonding trust score of 65.8, well above the benchmark of 50.

Do residents with a common social background trust each other?

Figure 2. Bonding trust score for New Prague adults

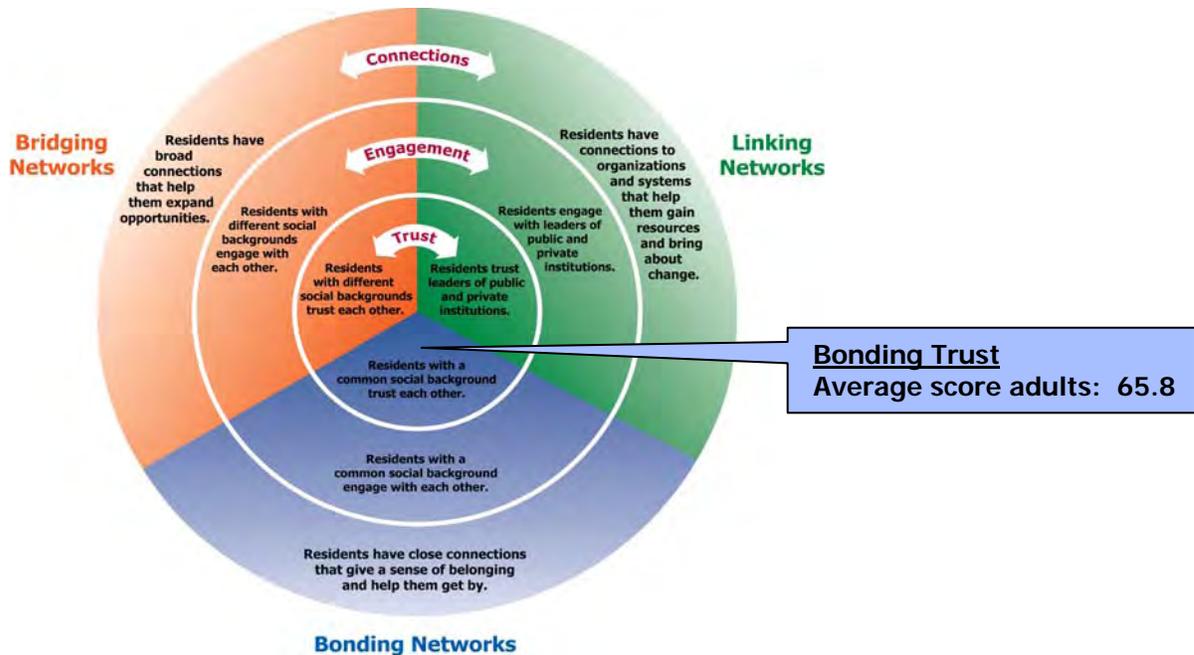
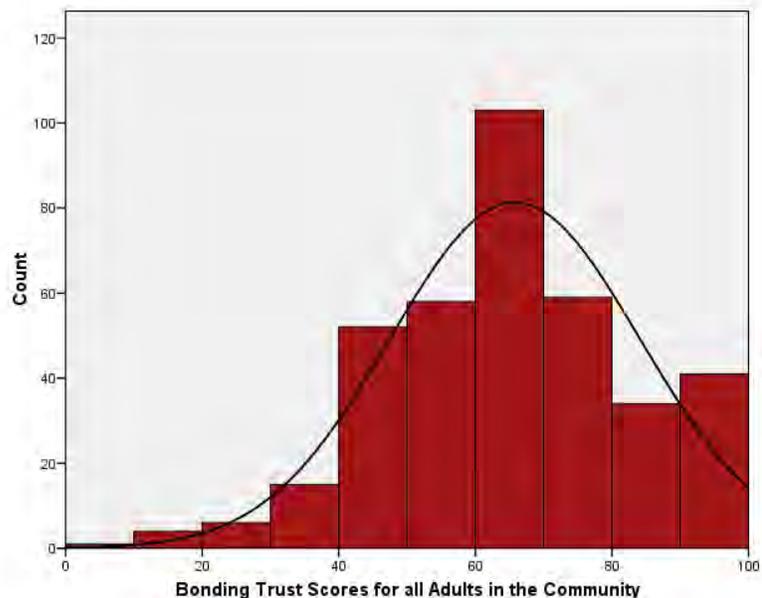


Figure 3. Bonding trust distribution

Average scores are informative, but they don't tell us much about the range of bonding trust levels in the community. Figure 3 shows a normal distribution of scores among those surveyed, with the greatest number of New Prague residents scoring in the 60s or higher on bonding trust, but a substantial number of community residents scoring below 60.



When we compare the averages in bonding trust among demographic subgroups of adults, we find many statistically significant differences.² Comparisons shown in Table 3 show that:

- Females had higher bonding trust than males.
- Older people had more bonding trust than younger people.
- Longer-term residents had more bonding trust than short term residents.
- People with lesser amounts of education had less bonding trust than people with at least some college.
- People in low-income households had lower bonding trust than other income groups.

Table 3. Differences in bonding trust among adults

Gender	Female average	67.0
	Male average	62.9
Age	Age 18-29	53.5
	Age 30-39	63.8
	Age 40-49	67.3
	Age 50-59	69.3
	Age 60 or older	72.5
Length of residence in community	Less than five years	61.3
	Five to 19 years	67.5
	20 or more years	67.6
Education level	High school diploma or less	60.5
	Associate's degree or some college	67.1
	Bachelor's degree or beyond	66.4
Household income	Low income (less than \$25,000)	54.3
	Moderate income (\$25,000 to \$44,999)	62.2
	Middle income (\$45,000 to \$74,999)	66.2
	High income (\$75,000 or more)	66.1

Table 4 displays the average responses of adults to five of the specific questions about bonding trust. Adults had the highest amount of trust in their immediate neighbors and in people at their workplace.

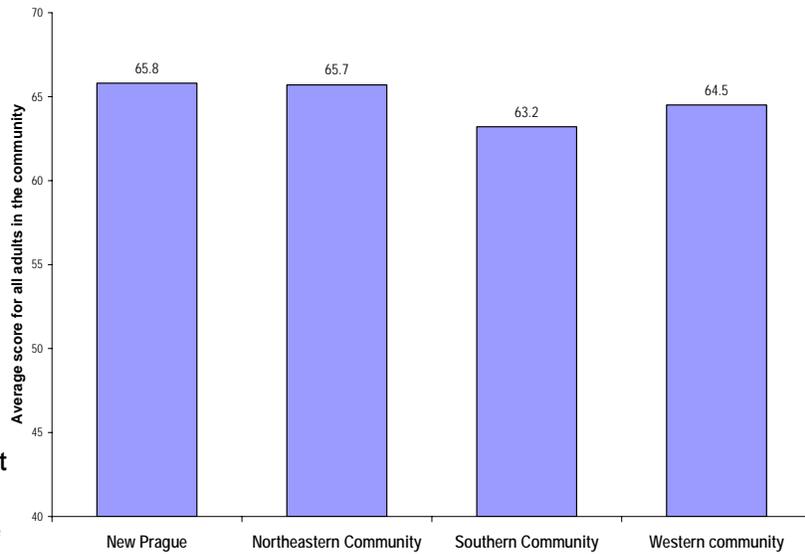
Table 4. Bonding trust item averages

To what degree do you trust the following groups? (1=to a very small degree to 4=to a very great degree)	Adult average
Your immediate neighbors	3.1
People you go to work or school with	3.1
People at church or place of worship	3.0
People in the same clubs or activities	2.8

² **DEFINITION FOR STATISTICAL SIGNIFICANCE:** A difference between two averages is called statistically significant if it is unlikely to have occurred by chance. So when we state that a difference between averages for adults and youth, high or low income groups, or education groups, is statistically significant, we mean that the difference is likely due to real differences in survey responses, not chance. When a difference between groups is not statistically significant, it is less meaningful because it very well could be due to chance.

Figure 4. Bonding Trust in New Prague compared with other pilot communities

How did bonding trust in New Prague compare with other communities that have participated in the social capital survey? Figure 4 shows the average level of bonding trust in New Prague compared with the other communities. All four communities have bonding trust averages in the 60s, well above the benchmark of 50. New Prague ranked first of the four communities in terms of bonding trust, but the differences among the communities were very small.



Bonding Engagement

Bonding engagement levels in New Prague were lower than those of bonding trust, but still above the 50 benchmark. Adults in the community averaged 55.2, while youth averaged 51.5.

Do residents with a common social background engage with each other?

Figure 5. Bonding engagement score for New Prague adults

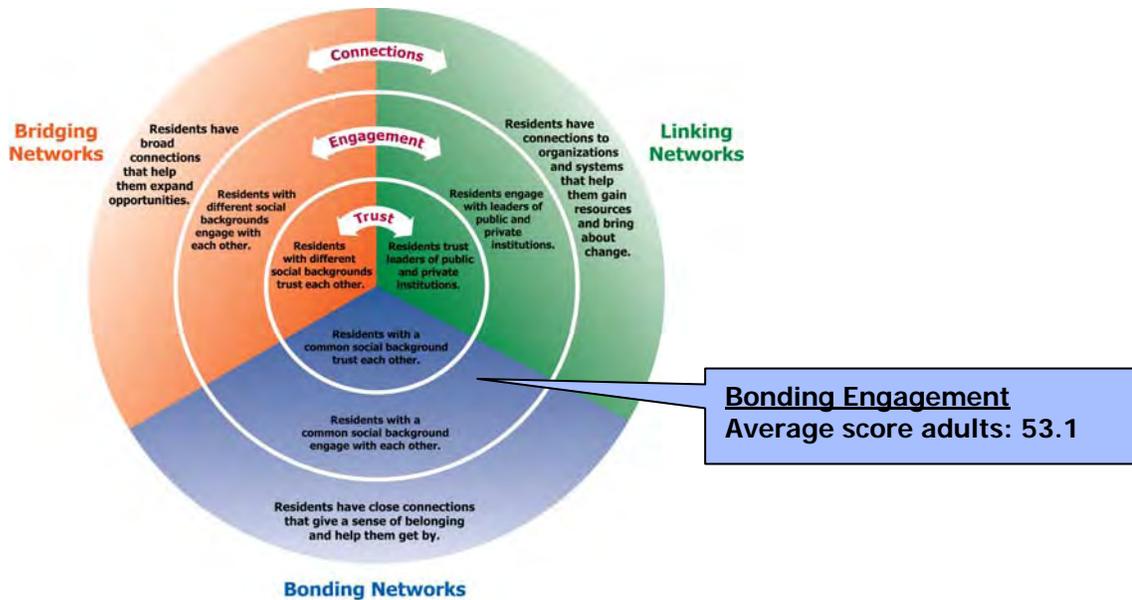
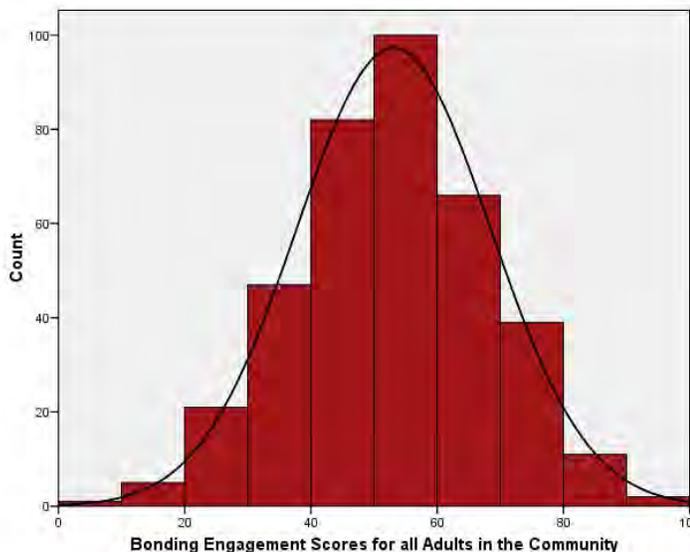


Figure 6. Bonding engagement distribution

The distribution of bonding engagement was also normal. A large number of community residents scored in the 50s on this scale, suggesting a moderate level of engagement for most community members. In contrast to bonding trust, few residents scored above 80 on this scale, and more residents scored below 40.



Four demographic factors – gender, age, education and household income – were associated with differences in bonding engagement in New Prague. Women, people with higher levels of education and people from higher income households had significantly higher bonding engagement scores than men, people with lower levels of education and household income. The relationship of age to bonding engagement was more complex. The youngest and oldest age groups had lower levels of bonding engagement than the middle-age groups. Adults in their 50s had the highest levels of this type of engagement.

Table 5. Differences in bonding engagement among adults

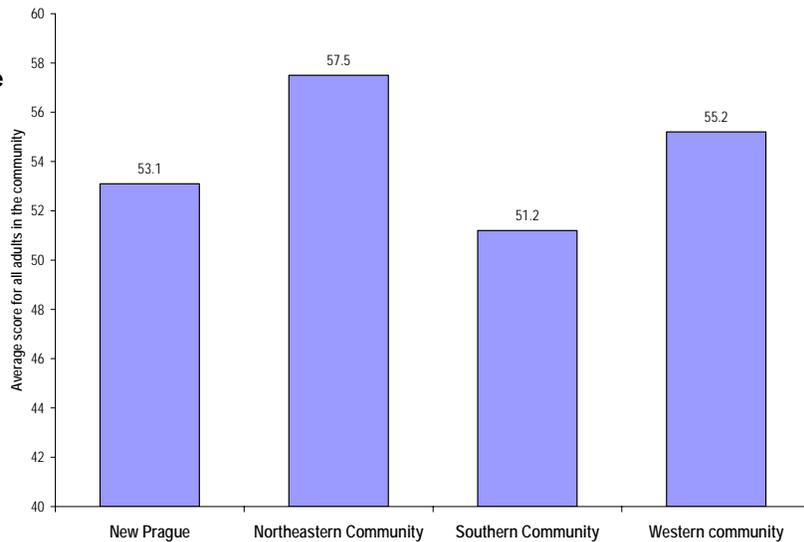
Gender	Female average	60.5
	Male average	52.1
Age	Age 18-29	44.8
	Age 30-39	53.1
	Age 40-49	54.6
	Age 50-59	56.9
	Age 60 or older	51.8
Length of residence in community	Bonding engagement not significantly different among people with different lengths of residence in New Prague.	
Education level	High school diploma or less	48.3
	Associate's degree or some college	50.8
	Bachelor's degree or beyond	55.4
Household income	Low income (less than \$25,000)	44.4
	Moderate income (\$25,000 to \$44,999)	48.1
	Middle income (\$45,000 to \$74,999)	54.3
	High income (\$75,000 or more)	54.5

What gives residents of New Prague a sense of belonging? Table 6 shows the responses to these survey items. Family and friends were the strongest sources of bonding, while places of worship and people who share interests were somewhat strong. There was less sense of belonging from people who share ethnic background, share political views, or people met online.

Table 6. What gives residents of New Prague a sense of belonging?

Group	Averages (1=not at all to 4=to a great extent)
	Adults
My family	3.8
My friends	3.5
My place of worship	3.0
People I work/go to school with	3.0
People who share my interests	3.0
People who share my ethnic background	2.2
People who share my political views	2.0
People I have met online	1.1

Figure 7. Bonding engagement in New Prague compared with other pilot communities



How did New Prague compare to other communities in terms of bonding engagement? As shown in Figure 8, bonding engagement in New Prague ranked third among the four communities, but all four communities had bonding engagement averages in the 50s.

Bridging Trust

Bridging trust, or trust among New Prague residents from different social backgrounds, was right at the benchmark of 50. Adults averaged a score of 49.9. Bridging trust is the lowest among the six social capital scales measured by the survey.

Do residents with different social backgrounds trust each other?

Figure 8. Bridging trust score for New Prague adults

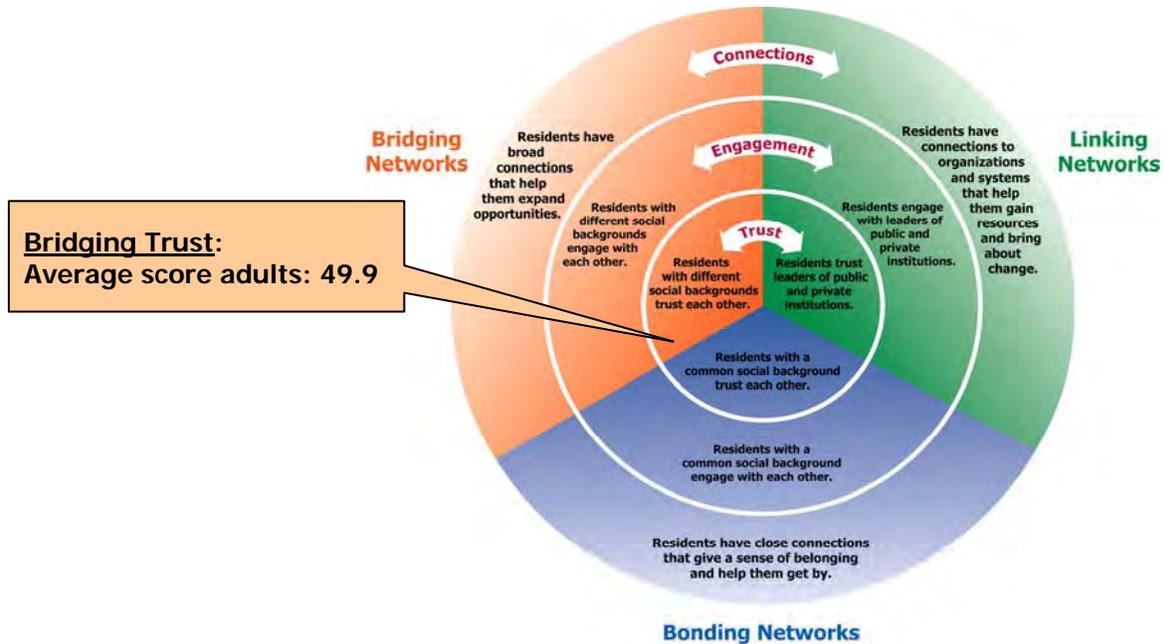
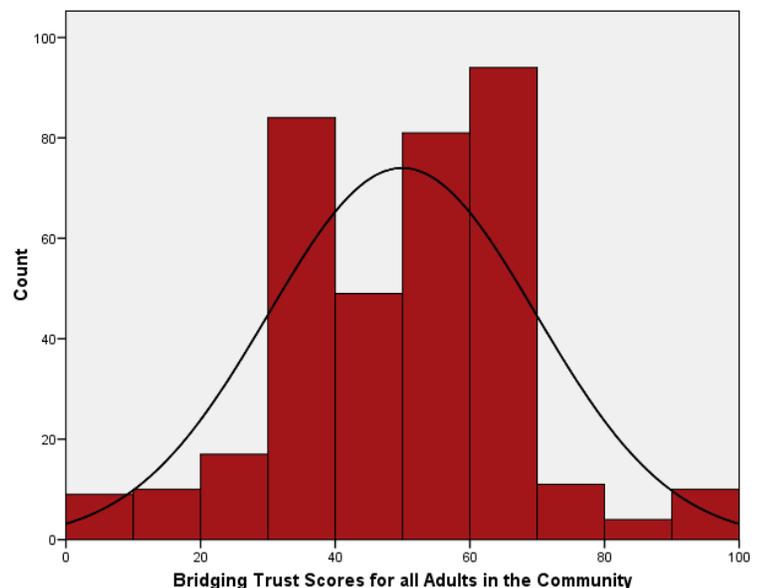


Figure 9. Bridging trust distribution

The distribution of bridging trust in New Prague had a “bi-modal” pattern. As seen in Figure 9, there were distinct groups of community residents who scored relatively low (in the 30s) and moderately (in the 50s and 60s) rather than a single “modal” group. There were very few community residents with high levels of bridging trust (scores above 70). The implication is that there is a relatively large segment of the community that is mistrustful of strangers, or people with backgrounds different from their own.



While there appear to be important differences in the community between people with high bridging trust and people with low bridging trust, none of the typical demographic factors explain these differences well. As shown in Table 6, average levels of bridging trust were not significantly different for subgroups based on gender, age, length of residence, education or income. This finding may be due in part to the lower overall level of bridging trust and non-normal distribution of bridging trust in the community.

However, when we compare those who scored high on bridging trust (top 25% of scores) with those who scored low (bottom 25% of scores) there were statistically significant differences based on age and education level. The average age of those in the top quartile of bridging trust was 47, while the average age of those in the bottom quartile was 43. In terms of education, 62% of those in the bottom quartile of bridging trust had less than a

bachelor’s degree, while 46% of those in the top quartile had less than a bachelor’s degree. So it does appear that younger adults and adults with lower levels of formal education had lower levels of bridging trust.

Table 7. Differences in bridging trust among adults

Gender	Bridging trust not significantly different among women and men in New Prague.
Age	Average bridging trust scores were not significantly different among people from different age categories, but . . .
Length of residence in community	Bridging trust not significantly different among people with different lengths of residence in New Prague.
Education level	Average bridging trust scores were not significantly different among people with different levels of education, but . . .
Household income	Bridging trust not significantly different among people with different levels of household income.

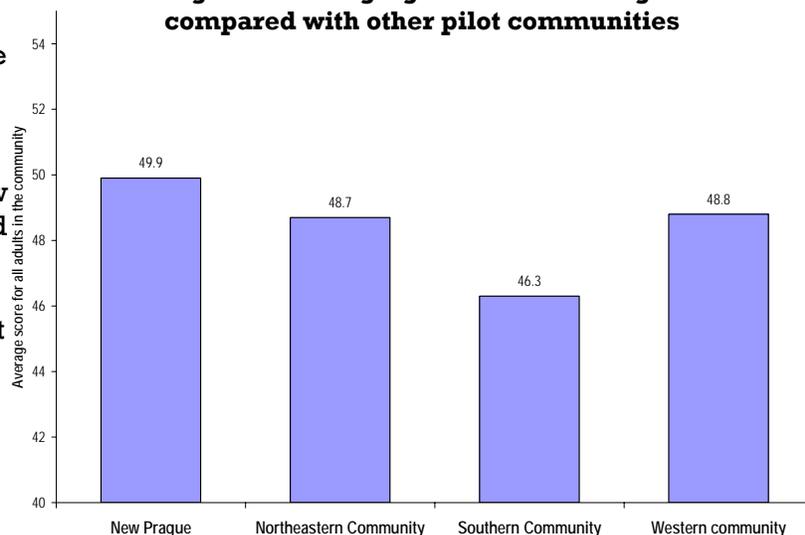
Table 8 displays the specific survey items used to measure bridging trust. On a scale of 1 to 4, averages below 3 suggest that trust is not strong for any of these types of people. Adults tended to have higher levels of trust in people of other religious beliefs and the least trust for people new to the community.

Table 8. Bridging trust item averages:

To what degree do you trust the following groups? (1=to a very small degree to 4=to a very great degree)	Averages
People of other religious beliefs	2.7
People from other cultural or ethnic groups	2.5
People new to the community	2.4

How did New Prague compare to other communities in terms of bridging trust? While bridging trust was the lowest social capital measure for New Prague, the community scored higher on bridging trust than the other communities. As seen in Figure 10, all four pilot communities had bridging trust averages in the 40s.

Figure 10. Bridging trust in New Prague compared with other pilot communities



Bridging Engagement

While bridging trust was the weakest of the six survey scales in New Prague, bridging engagement was stronger, with an average of 60.7. People in New Prague have a fair amount of contact with people who are from different backgrounds, they just don't have that much trust in them.

Do residents with different social backgrounds engage with each other?

Figure 11. Bridging engagement score for New Prague adults

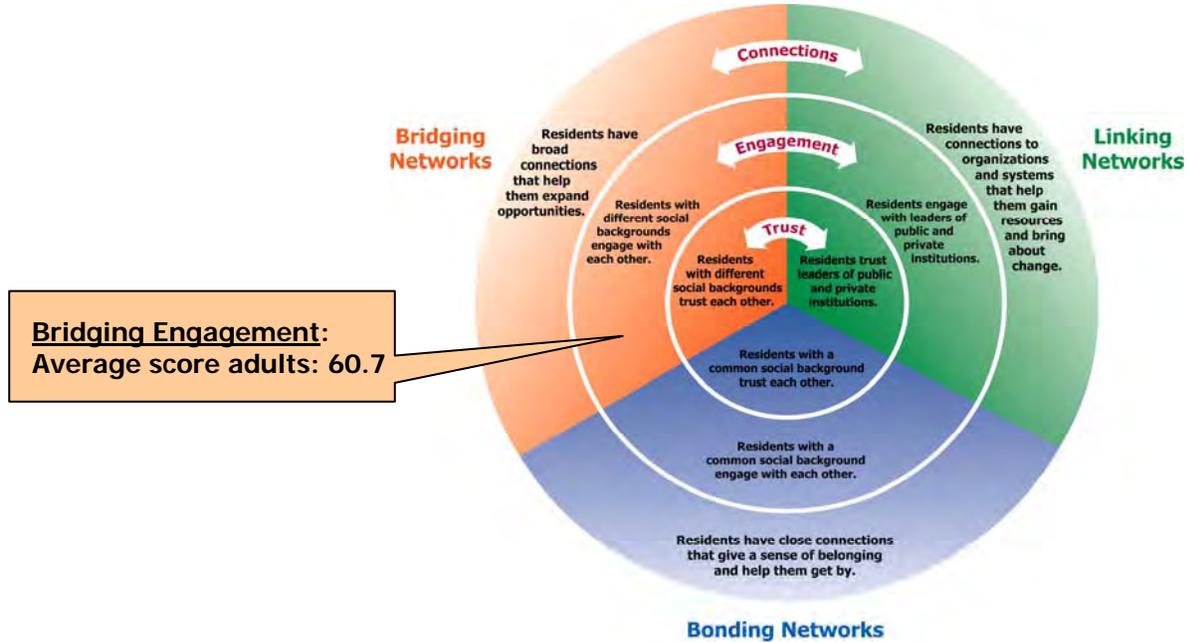


Figure 12. Bridging engagement distribution

The distribution of bridging engagement in New Prague was skewed toward higher levels of engagement. The largest group of residents scored in the 60s on this scale, and a substantial number of residents scored in the 70s, showing high levels of contact with people different from themselves.



Age and education were significant factors in bridging engagement in New Prague. People in the 40s and 50s had the highest levels of bridging engagement, while people age 60 or older had the lowest levels of bridging engagement. Interestingly, young adults (ages 18 to 29) had higher levels of bridging engagement than adults in their 30s. This may be due to increased family and parenting responsibilities for those in their 30s.

As seen in Table 9, bridging engagement was significantly lower for the youngest and oldest age groups of adults, with the highest scores for people in the 50s. Those with higher incomes and higher amounts of formal education also had higher levels of bridging engagement.

Table 9. Differences in bridging engagement among adults

Gender	Bridging engagement not significantly different among women and men in New Prague.	
Age	Age 18-29	54.9
	Age 30-39	61.0
	Age 40-49	63.6
	Age 50-59	67.4
	Age 60 or older	53.4
Length of residence in community	Bridging engagement not significantly different among people with different lengths of residence in New Prague.	
Education level	High school diploma or less	54.7
	Associate's degree or some college	58.3
	Bachelor's degree or beyond	64.7
Household income	Low income (less than \$25,000)	58.4
	Moderate income (\$25,000 to \$44,999)	56.6
	Middle income (\$45,000 to \$74,999)	63.1
	High income (\$75,000 or more)	65.4

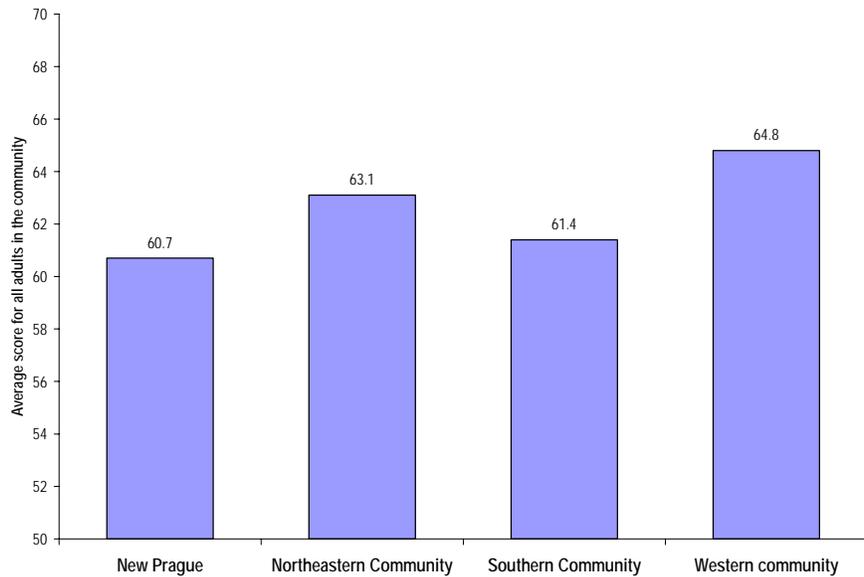
Table 10 shows responses to several of the survey items related to bridging engagement. Individuals in New Prague tended to have the least contact with people from different racial or ethnic backgrounds and people with disabilities, and higher levels of contact with people from different religious backgrounds.

Table 10. Bridging engagement survey items

In the past month, how often have you had contact with the following categories of people?	Not at all	Once or twice	Three or four times	Five or more times
People who have a different religion than me	2.6%	18.7%	29.2%	49.4%
People of a different race or ethnicity than me	12.6%	43.3%	19.4%	24.7%
People much wealthier than me	4.3%	28.8%	28%	38.9%
People much poorer than me	6.6%	36.4%	21.5%	35.5%
People with disabilities	15.9%	38.3%	21.6%	24.2%

Figure 13. Bridging engagement in New Prague compared with other pilot communities

How did New Prague compare to other communities in bridging engagement? New Prague had the lowest level of bridging engagement among the four communities in this comparison although all four communities had bridging engagement scores in the 60s.



Linking Trust

Linking trust was relatively strong among adults in New Prague, with an average of 61.6, suggesting a strong level of trust in leaders of public and private institutions in the community.

Do residents trust leaders of public and private institutions?

Figure 14. Linking trust score for New Prague adults

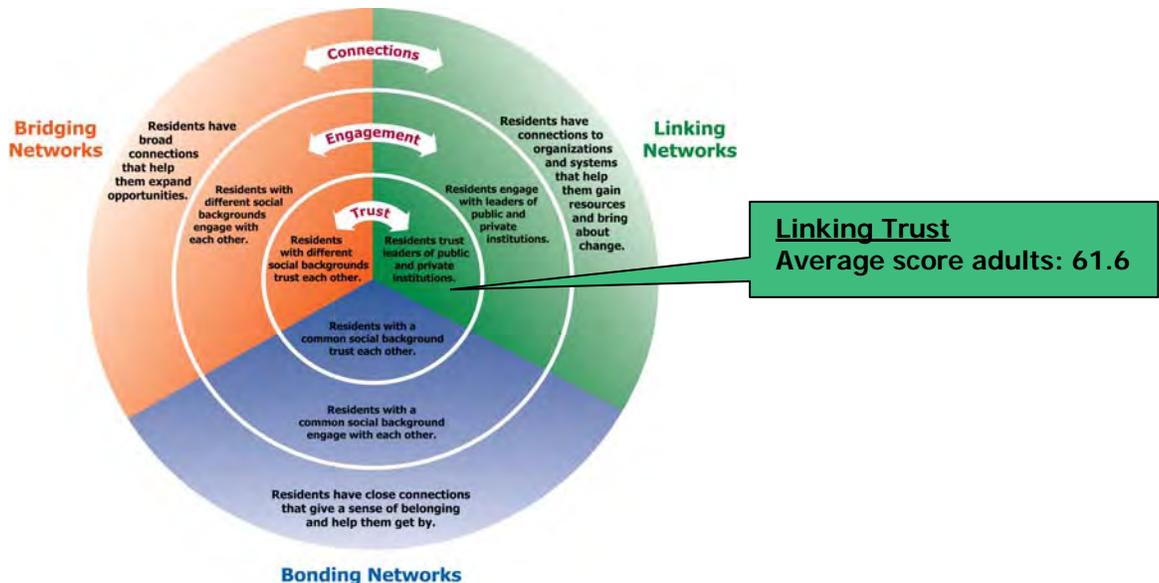
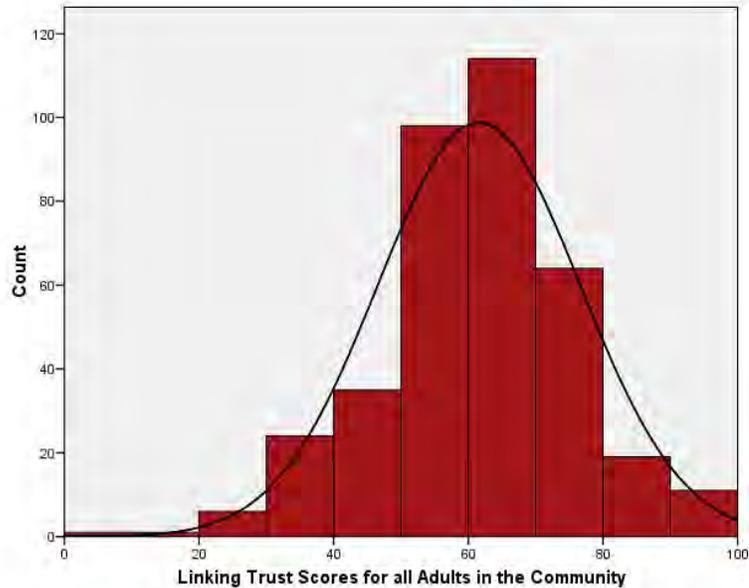


Figure 15. Linking trust distribution

Linking trust was slightly skewed toward the high end of the scale, with the majority of adults scoring in the 50s and 60s. Many adults had scored in the 70s as well, while relatively few adults had scores below 50.



Age, education, and income were associated with differences in linking trust in New Prague. As seen in Table 11, the youngest group of adults, those between 18 and 29, had lower levels of this type of trust than older adults. People with higher levels of education and household income had higher levels of linking trust.

Table 11. Differences in linking trust among adults

Gender	Linking trust not significantly different among women and men in New Prague.	
Age	Age 18-29	55.2
	Age 30-39	61.3
	Age 40-49	62.0
	Age 50-59	64.9
	Age 60 or older	62.5
Length of residence in community	Linking trust not significantly different among people with different lengths of residence in New Prague.	
Education level	High school diploma or less	56.7
	Associate's degree or some college	61.3
	Bachelor's degree or beyond	62.9
Household income	Low income (less than \$25,000)	54.1
	Moderate income (\$25,000 to \$44,999)	56.4
	Middle income (\$45,000 to \$74,999)	57.1
	High income (\$75,000 or more)	60.2

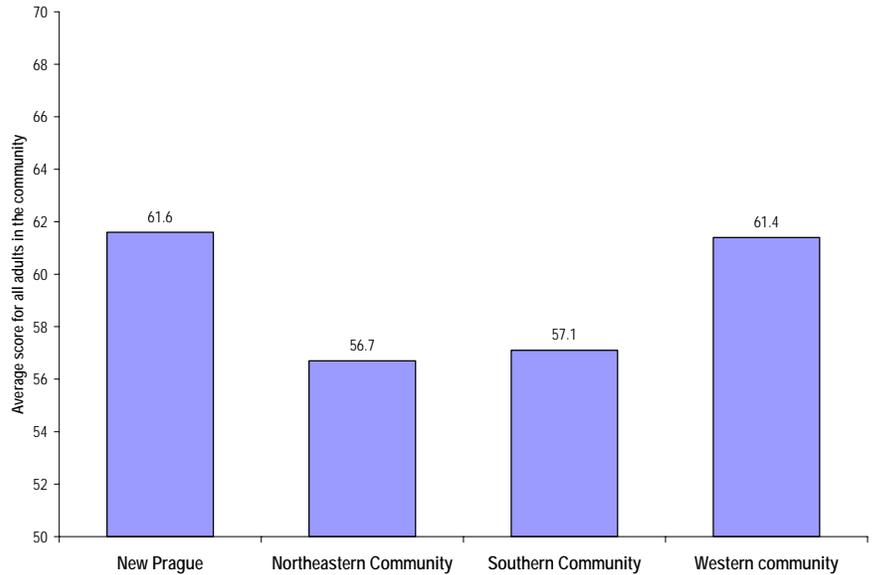
Table 12 displays results of the survey questions measuring linking trust. Linking trust in New Prague was strongest for people in health care, education, and law enforcement. Trust in local government officials, the news media, and business people was relatively low.

Table 12. Linking trust survey items

To what degree do you trust the following?	Averages (1=to a very small degree to 4=to a very great degree)
Nurses / doctors	3.2
Teachers / educators	3.1
People in law enforcement	3.0
Business people	2.6
Local government officials	2.4
The local news media	2.4

Figure 16. Linking trust in New Prague compared with other pilot communities

How did New Prague compare with other communities in terms of linking trust? As seen in Figure 16, New Prague had the highest level of linking trust compared with the other communities.



Linking Engagement

Linking engagement, a measure of actual contact with leaders of public and private institutions, was somewhat lower than linking trust for adults in New Prague, with an average score of 50.8.

Do residents engage with leaders of public and private institutions?

Figure 17. Linking engagement score for New Prague adults

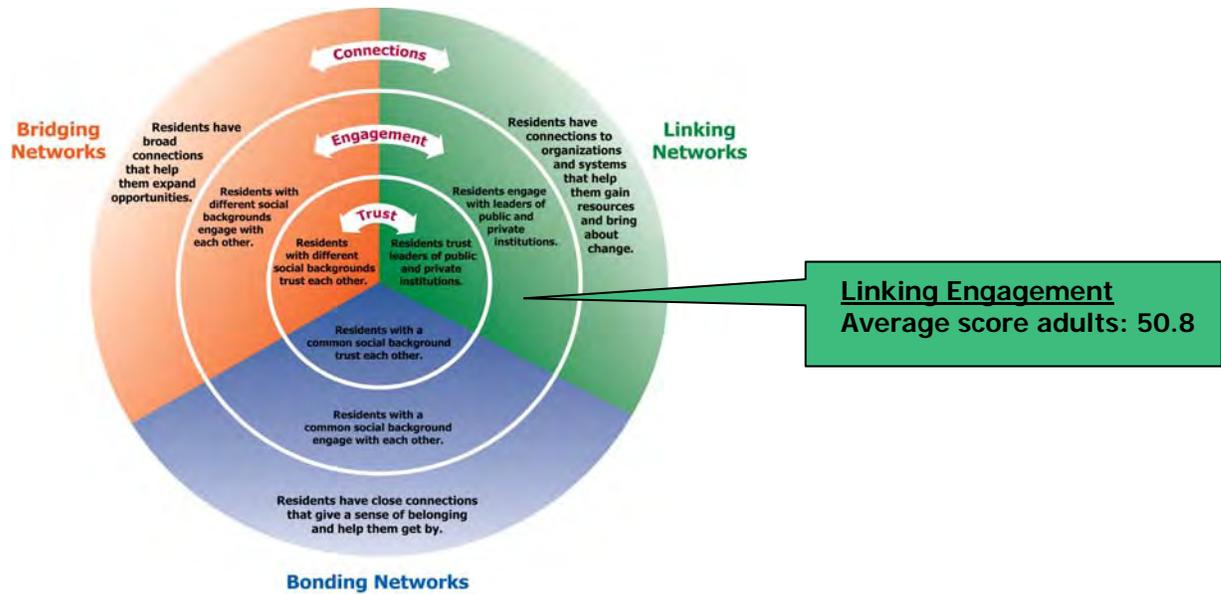
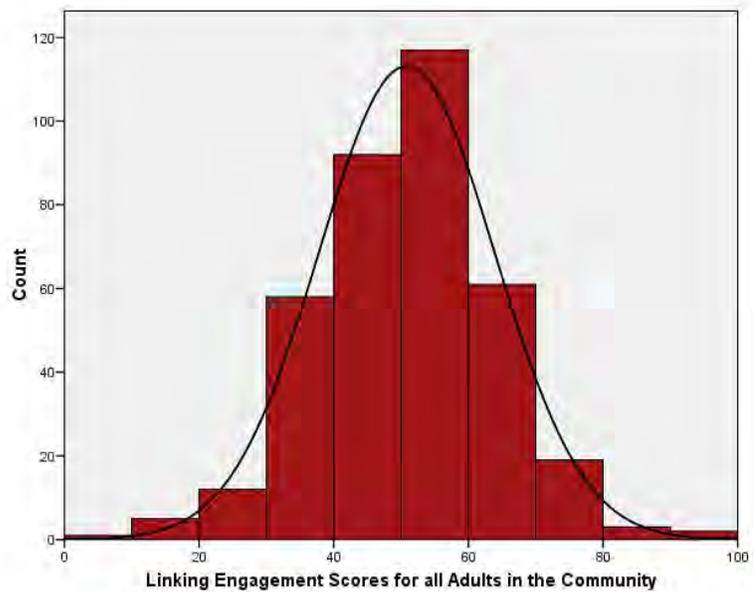


Figure 18. Linking engagement distribution

As seen in Figure 18, the largest group of respondents scored in the 50s on this scale and relatively few scored either very low (under 30) or very high (over 70). This pattern suggests that most members of the community had a moderate level of engagement, but few were highly engaged and few were highly disengaged.



Several demographic factors were related to differences in linking engagement. Household income had the strongest relationship with linking engagement. Adults in high income households had an average score of 56.4 as compared with a score of 34.5 for adults in the lowest income category. People with higher levels of formal education scored higher on linking engagement. Age was also a factor, with adults in their 40s and 50s having higher linking engagement than other age groups. Length of residence also was a significant factor, with newer residents having less linking engagement than longer-term residents.

Table 13. Differences in linking engagement among adults

Gender	Linking engagement not significantly different among women and men in New Prague.	
Age	Age 18-29	43.9
	Age 30-39	48.8
	Age 40-49	53.4
	Age 50-59	57.4
	Age 60 or older	48.8
Length of residence in community	Less than five years	47.8
	Five to 19 years	52.4
	20 or more years	51.7
Education level	High school diploma or less	46.9
	Associate's degree or some college	48.1
	Bachelor's degree or beyond	53.7
Household income	Low income (less than \$25,000)	34.5
	Moderate income (\$25,000 to \$44,999)	48.1
	Middle income (\$45,000 to \$74,999)	50.5
	High income (\$75,000 or more)	56.4

Table 14 shows the responses of survey respondents to several survey items related to linking engagement. Adults in the community are frequent contributors to charities, but they had less frequent involvement in community meetings or other efforts to solve community problems. Less than half of the adults surveyed had joined together with others in the community during the past year to address an issue and only one-third of adults had tried to get the local government to pay attention to something that concern them.

Table 14. Linking engagement survey items

How many times in the past twelve months have you?	None	1 to 6 times	7 to 12 times	More than 12 times
Donated money, goods, or services to a charity?	4.9%	45.2%	19.2%	30.7%
Attended any public meeting in which there was discussion of school or town affairs?	42.7%	46.7%	4.9%	5.7%
Joined together with others in your community to address an issue?	50.8%	39.7%	4.9%	4.6%
Been in the home of a community leader or had one in your home?	58.5%	36.9%	3.3%	1.4%
Tried to get your local government to pay attention to something that concerned you?	66.2%	28.6%	2.7%	2.5%

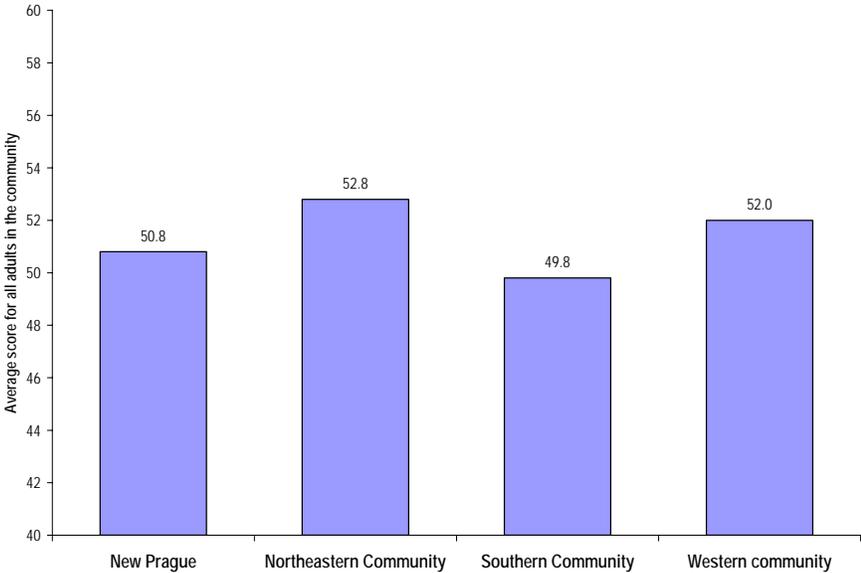
What factors limit linking engagement? As seen in Table 15, the biggest barriers to civic participation for adults in New Prague have to do with time. Conflicting time demands and inflexible or demanding work schedules were perceived as the biggest obstacles to participation. To a lesser degree, community residents reported issues such as lack of information, feeling unwelcome, or feeling that they can't make a difference as obstacles.

Table 15. Obstacles to civic participation

Obstacle (1=very large, 2=somewhat large, 3=not at all large)	Average
Conflicting time demands	2.0
An inflexible or demanding work schedule	2.1
Practical problems like child care or transportation	2.4
Lack of information or not knowing where to begin	2.5
Commuting time for work/meetings	2.5
Feeling unwelcome	2.6
Feeling that you can't make a difference	2.6
Concerns about costs of transportation	2.6
Personal health concerns	2.8

Figure 19. Linking engagement in New Prague compared with other pilot communities

How did New Prague compare to other communities in linking engagement? New Prague ranked third among the four communities, with all four communities averaging close to the 50 benchmark on this measure.

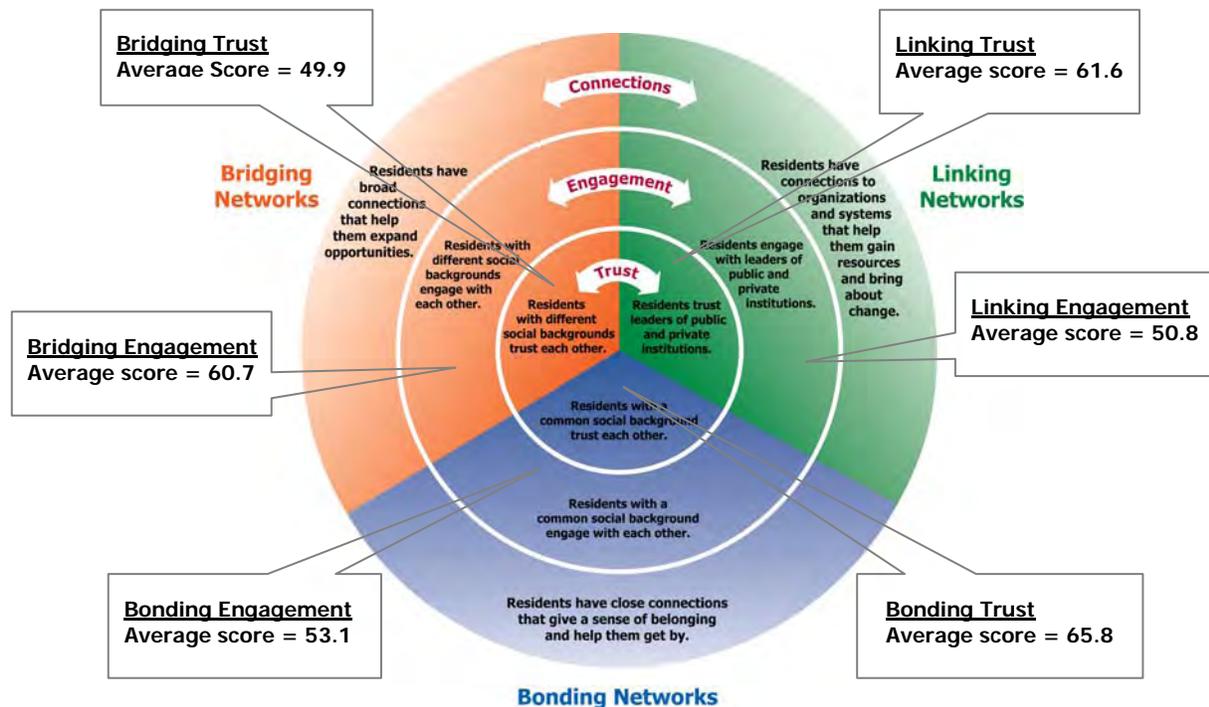


A Closer Look

The whole picture

Figure 20 shows the whole social capital picture for New Prague adults. Overall, the picture is a positive one with adult averages over 50 for five of the six scales. The areas of strength for Prague, with average scores over 60, are bonding trust, bridging engagement, and linking trust. There are high levels of contact among people from differing social backgrounds, and high levels of trust among people with common backgrounds and of leaders of public and private institutions. Knowing these areas of strength is key for planning action to improve the other three aspects of social each type of network, namely bridging trust, linking engagement and bonding engagement.

Figure 20. The whole picture for the community

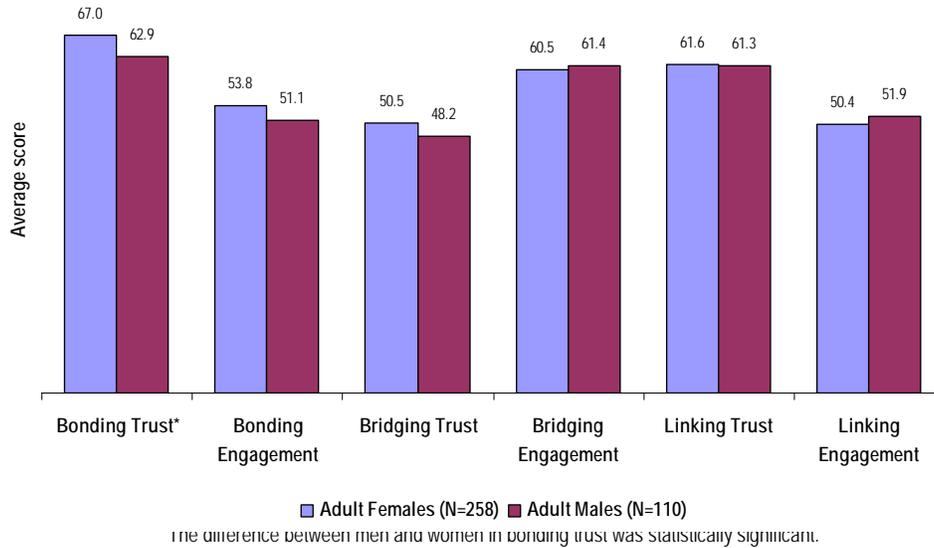


Comparison charts

Differences among adult men and women

Figure 21 shows the differences between adult men and women in each dimension of social capital. In most aspects of social capital, New Prague adult men and women had similar levels of trust or engagement. The only exception was in bonding trust. Women had significantly higher levels of bonding trust in the community than men, although men still had an average score of over 60.

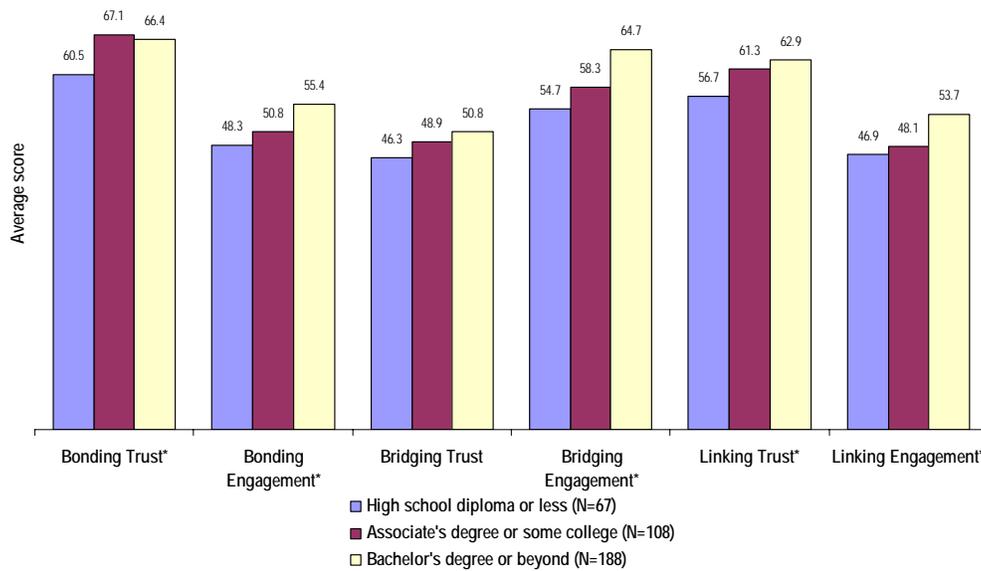
Figure 21. Differences between men and women across the six social capital scales



Differences by education level in the community

Educational differences among adults were related to five of the six social capital measurement scales. As seen in Figure 23, adults with higher levels of education, particular with a bachelor’s degree or beyond, had more bonding trust, bonding engagement, bridging engagement, linking trust, and linking engagement than adults with lower levels of formal education. This pattern suggests the importance of reaching out to adults with less formal education in efforts to strengthen the community or plan for the future.

Figure 22. Differences between education levels across the six social capital scales



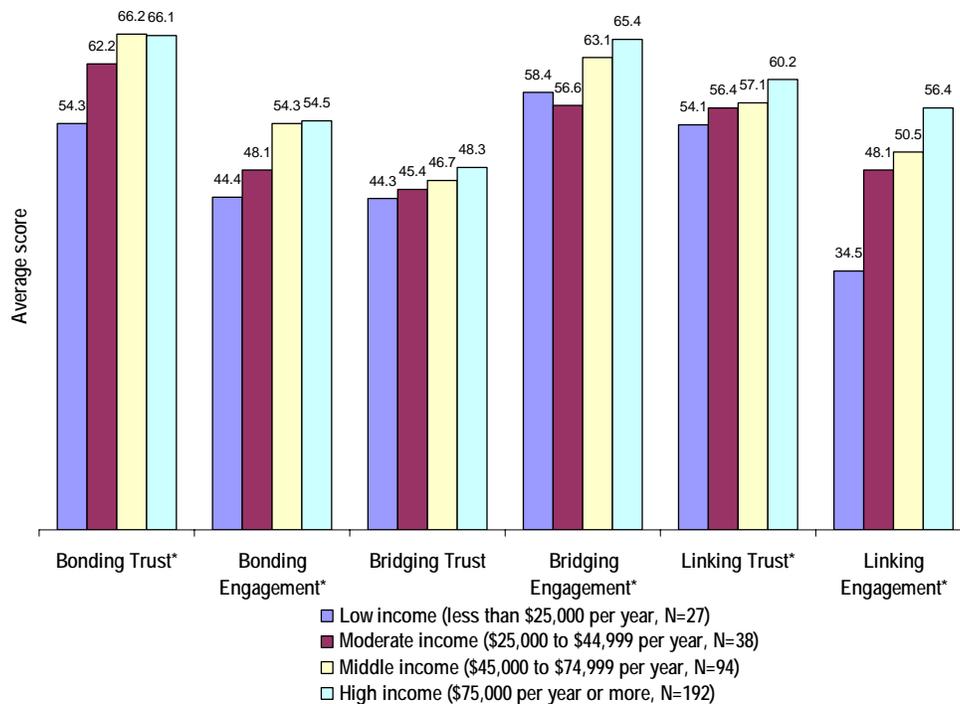
*The differences between education categories in bonding trust, bonding engagement, bridging trust, bridging engagement, linking trust and linking engagement were statistically significant.

Differences among income groups in the community

As shown in Figure 22, income was a significant factor in five of the six social capital measurement scales. New Prague residents with higher incomes tended to have higher levels of bonding trust, bonding engagement, bridging engagement, linking trust and linking engagement. The only score for which income was not a significant factor was bridging trust, and this may be due to the overall lower level of bridging trust as well as the bi-modal, rather than normal, distribution of bridging trust in the community.

The implication of all these differences in income is that income matters in New Prague's social capital picture. Efforts to increase bonding, bridging and linking networks among low or moderate income residents would lead increased security, opportunity and resources for those residents and to big improvements in social capital for the community as a whole.

Figure 23. Differences between income levels across the six social capital scales

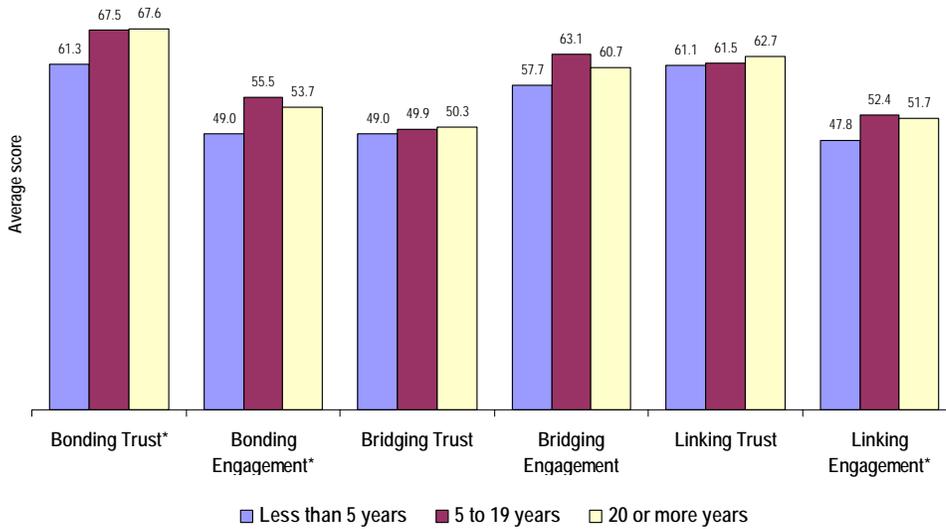


*The differences between income categories in bonding trust, bonding engagement, bridging engagement, linking trust and linking engagement were statistically significant.

Differences by length of residence in the community

Differences among adults in length of residence in New Prague were related to three of the six social capital measurement scales. As seen in Figure 24, newcomers to the community (those who had lived in New Prague for less than five years) has lower levels of bonding trust, bonding engagement, and linking engagement. This pattern suggests that newcomers are disconnected from crucial aspects of community life and that efforts to reaching out to newcomers could lead to big improvements in their security and resources, as well as increases in New Prague's overall social capital picture.

Figure 24. Differences by length of residence across the six social capital scales



*The differences between length of residence categories in bonding trust, bonding engagement and linking engagement were statistically significant.

Community Input

A data presentation (June 13, 2008) with the survey findings was shared with the volunteers who collected the assessments. At that time, individuals had the following comments to offer as they reflected on the information they had just received. They noted that:

- It appears that people are engaging with each other but there’s a lack of trust.
- We have always heard that this is a tough community to break into, but it looks like those that haven’t been here long are engaged – but I guess we don’t know if they’re engaged with the “old timers”.
- We need to find ways to make connections across economic and educational boundaries.
- In reflecting on bridging networks, one person commented that as a volunteer through her church she was part of a group had been doing outreach in a low-income community. Over time she documented that they had gained a sense of trust by the residents – something that the group thought could be modeled.
- There was no surprise that church and family were highly valued in the community.
- Even though the respondents were more likely to have a higher household income and more formal education, the responses from those with less education and economic resources helped to realize there is a need to do more connection beyond just agency work.

“I’m not surprised that women have higher bonding trust than men. I think women just do that better.” Pam Tietz, local volunteer and leader.

Lorie Geiger, local volunteer and leader, noted that *“We need to address finding a place for our senior citizens to come together for connecting.”*

Insights for Action

Strengthening networks

Things you can do to strengthen **bonding networks** are....

- Turn off the TV and computer and spend time with others
- Participate in groups, clubs, and community activities
- Play games or cards with your neighbors
- Join a project with others with similar interests
- Exercise together or take walks with family or friends
- Form or join a bowling team, golf team or other sport
- Hold a neighborhood get together

Things you can do to strengthen **bridging networks** include....

- Welcome new and lonely residents and youth into activities
- Volunteer in your area of interest
- Invite and support people from diverse religious and ethnic backgrounds to be involved

Some things you can do to strengthen **linking networks** are....

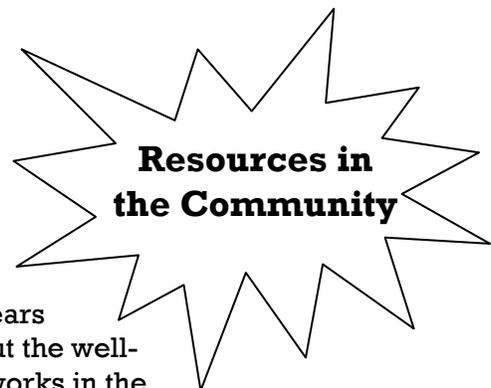
- Provide input into community issues and decisions
- Link your outside contacts to needs and interests of the community
- Attend regional, statewide or national meetings
- Help create a shared agenda to be funded
- Form a regional or statewide network

Community Strengths to Build On

BONDING IS STRONG. This appears to be especially true for women in New Prague. How and why is this so? Is it something that can be replicated to help build strong bonding trust in other groups? Or does it cause exclusion?

CHURCH AND FAMILY. New Prague is a community that is well connected and feels a sense of belonging to their family and the church. These are resources that can be tapped for reaching out to newcomers and those with lower incomes.

HEALTHY COMMUNITY INITIATIVE. A cross-section of volunteer members has been meeting for less than two years and has been instrumental in asking tough questions about the well-being of the community. With their commitment and networks in the community, they serve as the impetus to continue to increase the Social Capital for all residence of New Prague.



Areas for Attention



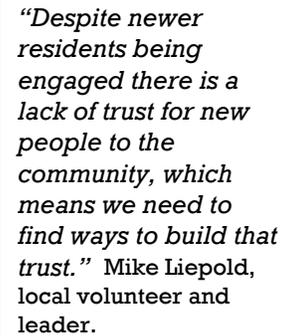
Focus Areas in the Community

NEW RESIDENTS. New people to New Prague area scored significantly lower in the areas of bonding trust, bonding engagement and linking engagement. Many of these people may also be commuters adding another dimension to be considered. Efforts may need to target issues about newcomers and people from other cultural or ethnic groups in particular.

TRUST vs. ENGAGEMENT. Work is needed to build bonding and linking engagement as well as strengthening networks in bridging trust. Which comes first? Trust or Engagement?

LOWER INCOME: The data suggests that the lowest income households are not well connected either with each other or with community leaders and institutions. This would indicate a lack of a safety net or means of making a difference.

LINKING ENGAGEMENT. People are not taking the initiative to get local government to pay attention to something that concerns them. Do people not engage because they totally trust their leaders? Or do they not engage because they don't feel they can make a difference?



"Despite newer residents being engaged there is a lack of trust for new people to the community, which means we need to find ways to build that trust." Mike Liepold, local volunteer and leader.

Next steps for the community

The Healthy Communities Initiative board will:

- Host an asset mapping session to further explore strengths of New Prague. They will be intentional to make sure that diverse community members and organizations are included, modeling building social capital.
- Share information with local groups such as churches, businesses, hospital, school, etc.
- Sponsor action planning events to engage the community in building social capital.



**Next Step Plans:
Healthy Communities
Initiative Board...**



**Next Step Suggestions:
Community Groups and
Clubs...**

Groups can:

- Reach out to those with less social capital to include them in networks
- Be intentional in building social capital as you go about your work
- Consider training in leadership and facilitation

You can:

- Read more about social capital
- Capitalize on your own social capital to build and strengthen networks.
- Get involved in your community!



Social capital is built through hundreds of actions, large and small, that you take every day.

- ▶ Seek ways to nurture trusting relationships.
- ▶ Engage with others in your community.
- ▶ Get involved.

Each one of us in our own way is a builder of social capital.

References

Scheffert, Donna Rae, Jody Horntvedt and Scott Chazdon, *Social Capital and Your Community*, University of Minnesota Extension Service, May 2008.

Authors

Scott Chazdon, Research and Evaluation Coordinator

Jody Horntvedt, Extension Educator and Associate Extension Professor

Mary Laeger-Hagemeister, Extension Educator and Associate Extension Professor

Contributors

Ryan Allen, Assistant Professor, Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs

Donna Rae Scheffert, Leadership Development Specialist and Extension Professor

The New Prague Healthy Communities Initiative board

Thanks

Our thanks to the members of the New Prague community for their input throughout this assessment process.

Source

University of Minnesota

Extension Center for Community Vitality

For more information, please contact:

Program Leader, Leadership & Civic Engagement

University of Minnesota, 458 Coffey Hall

1420 Eckles Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55108

612-624-4226 or 612-624-7714

The information given in this publication is for educational purposes only. Reference to commercial products or trade names is made with the understanding that no discrimination is intended and no endorsement by the University of Minnesota Extension is implied. Copies authorized for educational purposes only.

For more information about Extension's Community Vitality programs on social capital,
visit www.extension.umn.edu/U-Connect/SocialCapital.html