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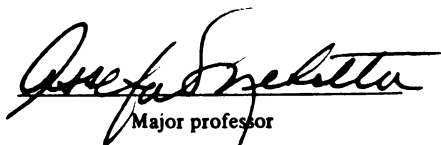
COMMUNITY AND THE RESIDENTIAL LOCATION OF CHURCH MEMBERS

presented by

Thomas M. Bulten

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COMMUNITY AND THE RESIDENTIAL LOCATION OF CHURCH MEMBERS

By

Thomas M. Bulten

A THESIS

**Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of**

MASTER'S OF ARTS

**Department of Geography
and
Urban Affairs Programs**

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ABSTRACT

COMMUNITY AND THE RESIDENTIAL LOCATION OF CHURCH MEMBERS

By

Thomas M. Bulten

Rapidly changing urban form and concepts of community have obscured the relationship between physical distance and social distance—residential proximity and community social capital. The interplay of these factors has bearing on the development of communities and the ability of faith-based institutions to facilitate community development in urban settings. This study examines the relationship between the physical dispersion of church members and the strength of the social bonds in the congregation. Church congregations are considered communities of interest comprised of memberships with degrees of residential dispersion or concentration. These residential patterns are quantified. In addition, the study assesses the sense of community or social capital present in congregations. Residential proximity is found to have little impact on the ability of a congregation to create social capital. Several other socio-spatial relationships are examined. Understanding these relationships can contribute to the use of social capital as an asset in developing livable urban places. The study speculates on the implications of residential patterns and social capital for community development.

This work

This work is dedicated to the people of Ukuru County in Uganda who walk many miles to participate in interest groups of their choosing.

The
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author gratefully acknowledges the encouragement and helpful contributions of Dr. Assefa Mehretu. His guidance in thinking about the creation of a just and positive society was stimulating. He provided valuable direction in my exploration of the spatiality of social life. I also thank Dr. John Schweitzer and Dr. June Thomas for their contributions regarding social capital, sense of community and faith-based institutions in neighborhoods. Their support of this project is highly valued. Finally, I acknowledge the patient encouragement and support of Lisa Bulten.

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INTRODUCTION

"The man who lives in a small community lives in a much larger world."
G.K. Chesterton, 1919

Community is an important but elusive concept. This study explores the meaning of community in a postmodern world. It recognizes the pivotal role played by community as the "meeting place of the individual and the larger society and culture" (Warren, 1978, p. 21). The study examines characteristics of specific communities of interest in a metropolitan setting. These communities are church congregations of the Christian Reformed denomination in Grand Rapids, Michigan. A particular focus is on the ability of social groups such as congregations to be cohesive communities of interest. More abstractly, the study explores the relationship between physical space and social relations. The study also addresses the capacity of congregations to engage their world, especially their own neighborhoods, promoting community development in a disintegrating social environment.

A socio-spatial examination of church congregations can make important academic and practical contributions. Faith-based institutions are especially valuable as repositories of social capital that could facilitate neighborhood development and social change (Pacione, 1989). From a geographic perspective faith-based institutions are a worthy object of study because of their "socio-environmental impact" (Levine, 1986, p. 435). Levine calls religious institutions "world-founding" because they "grapple overtly with the profound desire to comprehend the significance of life" (p. 434-435).

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As social and moral entities, faith-based institutions play a key role in urban society. However, this role is circumscribed by the socio-spatial organization of the institution. A primary purpose of this study is to compare the spatial organization of church congregations, especially the spatial concentration of the members, with the social capital or sense of community in the congregation. Assuming this social capital can be instrumental in community development, the study then speculates on the ability of congregations to facilitate human, social, and especially community development in urban space.

The community literature has attempted to clarify the meaning of the term community. Reviews of the concept are available in Chaskin (1998), Morris (1998), Wellman & Leighton (1979) and Effrat (1974). In summary, the social bonds of community in cities were once embodied in ethnic neighborhoods. As mobility and prosperity increased, ethnic neighborhoods became less central to individual life worlds. Urban residents became free to choose from a hierarchy of communities with fewer spatial constraints. The community development literature often relies on spatially defined communities (see Christenson, Fendley & Robinson, 1989). However, Amitai Etzioni (1998), a communitarian and professor of socio-economics at George Washington University, sees community more as social relations than as spatial ones. Church congregations and other social organizations and networks, once defined by ethnicity and neighborhood, seem to have transcended space. A collage of modern communities is now set in an urbanizing environment characterized by fragmentation. However, communities—including faith communities—still exist *in* space, act *in* space and

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are acted upon *by* space. Understanding the evolving spatial nature of communities is an important component of community and urban development.

Models of urban form have evolved from Burgess' simple concentric rings to include a variety of sectors, spokes, ghettos and nuclei. Pre-World War II cities in the United States were populated by immigrants that congregated in supportive ethnic enclaves or neighborhoods. Transportation technologies and the restlessness of capital have made cities increasingly mobile and fluid. The forces of suburbanization have scattered urban residents across larger regions at lower densities. A postmodern urbanism recently has been theorized to explain the apparent fragmentation and disintegration of the urban place (Dear & Flusty, 1998). The community as a social structure has been profoundly impacted by evolving urbanization. In addition, changing concepts of community produce new forms of social and spatial organization. A better understanding of the role of space in the formation of strong communities can have important implications for the creation of social capital, the promotion of social change and the development of vibrant, sustainable urban places.

More abstractly, physical space and social interaction are reciprocally related as noted by geographers (e.g. Harvey, 1973, p. 26, Knox, 1994, p. 199, Ley, 1983, p. 184). Studies by sociologists, social psychologists and geographers seem to verify that "distance matters" in social groups or communities (Latané, Liu, Nowak, Bonevento, Zheng, 1995; Ley, 1983; Wellman, 1996). Evidence suggests that social ties are stronger between spatially proximate individuals.

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Although geographers are particularly well equipped to conduct spatial analyses, they have made few contributions to this literature in recent years.

This study draws on theory from a variety of disciplines and bodies of literature. Geographic distance decay or gravity models help explain spatial interaction and the creation of central places. The sociological concept of social distance is usually measured in relation to comfort levels of spatial distance. Social impact theory, developed by a social psychologist, suggests that the impact of individuals on each other is a function of three terms, one of which is physical distance. Finally, social network analyses have included some studies of the role of space in networks.

This study investigates social relations in space by examining church congregations as communities of interest in an urban environment. Congregations are considered social organizations of members that regularly gather at a specific location (typically a church building). The research examines the strength of each church congregation as a social network. Broadly, the study suggests that the physical parameters of a church congregation, especially the dispersion of its members, impact its ability to mobilize and expend social capital. The study tests the hypothesis that a more spatially concentrated congregation has a higher sense of community because of the importance of physical proximity in promoting social contact, interactions and bonds. In other words, the study hypothesizes that decreased residential distance between congregation members (physical proximity) is associated with increased "sense of community" (social proximity) in the congregation.

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The study uses several variables in principal components and cluster analyses to construct broad typologies of congregations in a metropolitan area. These typologies contribute to an understanding of the socio-spatial organization of church congregations in and around Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Finally, the study is interested in the implications of spatial dispersion for community development. In this study, sense of community is considered an indicator of the presence of productive social capital. The study assumes that social capital can be used by organizations to promote change in urban settings. A growing literature argues the importance of networks and social capital in developing civic society (Putnam, 1993, 1995). The study includes data that measures the amount of interest the congregation has in its local neighborhood and in outreach more generally. Of particular interest is the potential of congregations to facilitate development in divested and distressed urban neighborhoods. The construct validity and the data for this portion of the study are weak and the results should be considered exploratory and speculative.

The study organization progresses from specific arguments about church congregations and community formation to more general abstractions regarding space and society. The review begins by addressing the capacities of faith-based institutions in general and churches in particular to facilitate human and community development. Because community, as both an end and a means, is key to human and social development, the interwoven meanings and scales of community in postmodern society are analyzed in chapter 2. The related concepts of social capital and sense of community are discussed in chapter 3.

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The review expands in scope by describing the postmodern urban place as the setting for contemporary social practice in chapter 4. This portion of the study concludes with a normative review of community-building. Chapter 5 summarizes and integrates the previous chapters by suggesting that church congregations can and should develop communities that promote a just social order with diversity and territoriality.

Chapter 6 reflects more abstractly on the relationship between physical space and social interaction. This theoretical review transitions the study into an examination of congregational social capital and spatial organization. A methodology is presented for the exploration of social interaction in space in chapter 7. The results of spatial manipulation and statistical tests are reported in chapter 8. Correlation and multiple regression are used to test specific hypotheses. Conclusions are drawn where statistically appropriate. Cluster analysis uses congregation characteristics to categorize congregations into general types. Finally, chapters 9 and 10 draw conclusions about the socio-spatiality of church congregations and community development.

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Chapter 1

FAITH-BASED INSTITUTIONS AND DEVELOPMENT

As social and moral institutions, churches and other faith-based institutions¹ can and should be instrumental in transforming urban society. Faith-based institutions exist as collective pursuits of religious understanding. As such they contain both social and spiritual facets. Ammerman (1997) calls congregations “social collectivities no less than—indeed perhaps more than—places where ideological work is done” (p. 57).² In addition, congregations are tightly woven into the social fabric of urban space. This multi-faceted characterization of congregations as physical, social and spiritual entities gives them particular transformational power. As key components of the social environment, congregations play an important role in social development. This is especially true where relationships have disintegrated and social problems threaten civil society.

Portions of urban America are severely distressed—socially, economically and physically.³ Pacione (1989) argues that the church (or, what he calls, the ecclesiastical community of interest) can be a “vehicle to challenge the moral

¹ While the ideas here apply to most religious faiths and faith-based institutions, this study focuses on church congregations, especially those of the Christian Reformed Church denomination in Grand Rapids, Michigan. The study will typically use *church* to mean either the Christian faith in general or an individual church building and *congregation* to refer to a specific group of church members.

² The concept of church congregations as communities is discussed further in chapter 2

³ See chapter 4 on Urban Form and Social Practice.

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philosophy of capitalism and promote the interests of the urban disadvantaged” (p. 194). According to Green (1996a), the disharmony between the existence of urban problems and strongly held spiritual ideology compels faith-based institutions to engage in developmental activities:

For churches with a theological mandate to seek the peace of the city, to break down the dividing walls of hostility, to create communities of love, justice, and hope that anticipate—even in fragmentary parable—the eschatological divine commonwealth, this local and global paradigm of disparity, suffering, and injustice is an unavoidable context of all ministry, not only urban ministry (p. 9-10).

Church congregations have both the mandate and the opportunity to respond to urban social problems.

They are particularly well equipped to promote community development⁴ because of their unique ideological and physical characteristics. Former Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, Henry Cisneros (1996) cites four reasons that faith-based institutions (or, what he calls, faith communities) are able to promote development:

- Faith communities are still there [in central city neighborhoods]
- Community is central to the mission of charity
- Faith communities have unique resources
- Faith communities touch the soul

Similarly, Thomas and Blake (1996) suggest that the presence, the values and ideology and the “ready-made leadership” of faith-based institutions equip them to be instrumental in developing communities.

The ideological foundation of faith-based institutions provides a powerful force for social and spatial transformation (Bjorklund, 1964; Cisneros, 1996,

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Levine, 1986; Pacione, 1989; Ramsay, 1998). This foundation enables the faith-based institution to insert sets of ideals and beliefs into the routine interactions of a society. For example, Bjorklund (1964) argues that ideologies of the Christian Reformed denomination such as “obligation to perform both physical and spiritual work” (p. 230) and “individual responsibility” (p. 231) played a role in the 19th century formation of settlements near Grand Rapids. Cornell West “believe[s] that prophetic churches, prophetic mosques, prophetic synagogues can all play a fundamental role in nurturing children by transmitting non-market values...love, care, service to others, sacrifice, risk, community, struggles for justice, solidarity, all of these are non-market values against a market culture” (Ramsay, 1998, p. 617).

Faith-based institutions can also hold tenets that *discourage* engagement with society. The Christian Reformed denomination, for example, has a long history of isolation (Bjorklund, 1964; Snapper, 1980). Snapper describes its separating itself from surrounding institutions for the sake of theological purity and orthodoxy. Ideological outsiders were also spatial outsiders through the creation of what Bjorklund identifies as “church-centered communities” (p. 237) where “outsiders have little place...since they do not belong to the institutions around which life revolves” (p. 231). To maintain its authenticity, the denomination established its own educational system that includes day schools and Calvin College in Grand Rapids. Even 20th century evangelistic efforts were marked by spatial separation. Instead of inviting converts into existing churches,

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the denomination established spatially separate “gospel halls” for congregations of new believers (Snapper, 1980).

However, the Calvinist theology of the denomination can be interpreted as being particularly transformational. A recent doctrinal statement of the denomination suggests members should “do God’s work in his world” (CRC Publications, 1989, p. 955) and proclaims that “God uses our skills in the unfolding and well-being of his world” (p. 956). John Suk (1999), editor of the bi-weekly denominational publication, describes the denomination as “thoughtful, activist Evangelicalism”. He notes that Christian Reformed theology is both fundamentalist (ideologically rooted in scripture) and liberal (socially active and transformational). Snapper (1980) documents a denominational shift around 1950 to a greater willingness to engage the world. A good example of this lies in the denomination’s international development agency which facilitates sustainable development based on indigenous organizational development and capacity-building in dozens of countries worldwide. The Christian Reformed presence at the annual Christian Community Development Association conference, which attracts thousands of participants from around the nation, has been substantial in recent years.

More specifically, Baker (1995) finds that members of nine urban Christian Reformed congregations in Grand Rapids are open to interaction with their neighborhoods. For example, 63 percent of members surveyed believes their “church should be [racially] integrated” (p. 48). In addition, a large majority (83

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percent) sees "racial differences between the church and neighbors as an opportunity to learn from the neighbors about racial sensitivity" while only 47 percent sees these differences as a barrier to outreach (p. 47). Baker's survey also finds that 72 percent of members surveyed believes "[m]y church cares about its neighbors" (p. 48). Despite an isolationist past, this denomination seems to hold religious ideologies that can motivate urban residents to address the urban problems surrounding them.

The church congregation typically has a physical presence on the landscape, another potentially valuable community development asset. A church congregation is a private interest group (a social network) with a public presence (its church building). Unlike many other social networks, its public presence provides a potential conduit for the flow of resources from the private sphere to the public sphere. This public presentation of private resources enables the church congregation to facilitate urban development. Ammerman (1997) calls church buildings both "resource and artifact" and she notes that "[t]hey provide the congregation with the ability to carry on certain activities, to be a presence in the community..." (p. 336). Because of its foundational ideology, and its physical rootedness, the congregation is able to interject its moral and physical assets into real-world problems and neighborhoods.

As an agent of urban development, the faith-based institution can be both conservative and transformational. Churches are central institutions, sometimes the only institutions, in a neighborhood and are "anchors for community" (Ammerman, 1997, p. 36; Twombly & De Vita, 1998; Ramsay, 1998). Their

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presence can slow the flight of both residents and capital from marginal or transitioning neighborhoods. In this way they preserve the vitality of a neighborhood facing decline.

In addition, community organizing activists are tapping into the transformational power of the religious presence (Warren, 1998; Wood, 1997, 1998). Social organizations imbued with moral values have proven fertile settings for the projection of political power on behalf of disenfranchised people. The church-based community organizing movement is realizing the ability of churches to mobilize resources and convert them into political power that promotes change.

While many congregations adopt a service-provision model, faith-based institutions have more to offer than social service agencies. As tightly knit associations, faith-based institutions are able to promote the integrated, holistic development necessary in urban areas (Thomas & Blake, 1996). Congregations are repositories of substantial stores of information, technical knowledge and expertise (Green, 1996b). These resources can be especially valuable in divested urban neighborhoods.

The spatiality of church congregations is of particular interest in this study. The spatial organization of a congregation will likely influence both its own social network and its ability to impact society. For example, in a series of self-published monthly reflections about his community development efforts in Atlanta, Dr. Robert Lupton (1999b) notes that both Judaic and Muslim theologies promote spatially concentrated faith communities. Neighborhood development

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results, in part, because members desire to live in close proximity to their place of worship (1999b). Lupton (1999a) also describes the powerlessness of commuter churches to transform urban neighborhoods. "Community," he says, "has been redefined as the interaction among commuters who participate together in church activities". While churches and other faith-based institutions should promote social and neighborhood development and cohesion, spatially dispersed congregations may actually contribute to fragmentation. Lupton (1999b) states:

Community disconnected from the places where people live is transitory; church disconnected from the soil of neighborhood is impotent. Church that extracts the best of its members' time, talent and tithe out of their neighborhoods rather than mobilizes members to invest their lives where they live actually serves as the competitor to community life. The commuter church may be successful as an institution but, unlike the parish church, it no longer has the power to infuse neighborhoods with the moral and spiritual glue needed to hold them together.

The subjects of this study are the 101 congregations of the Christian Reformed Church in greater Grand Rapids, Michigan. The Christian Reformed Church in North America was comprised of 285,864 members in 1997 (Office of the General Secretary, 1997). The 101 congregations examined in this study contained 52,166 or 18 percent of the North American members. This denomination is the second largest in the greater Grand Rapids area with approximately 13 percent of the area population and 19 percent of the area religious population as members (Grand Rapids Area Center for Ecumenism,

1998)⁵. The

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1998)⁵. This substantial presence in West Michigan is due largely to 19th century immigration from the Netherlands (Bjorklund, 1964).

A recent survey (Rice & Annis, 1997) of 488 members shows that the denomination has not strayed far from its northern European origins. Only one percent of the members is a racial minority. The denomination is relatively wealthy and well educated. The median household income for United States survey respondents' was \$48,690 in 1996 compared to a national median household income of \$35,492 (U. S. Bureau of the Census, <http://www.census.gov/hhes/income/income96/in96sum.html>). Similarly, 65 percent of respondents has more than a high school education. Only 49 percent of the general population greater than age 25 has more than a high school education (U. S. Bureau of the Census, http://www.bls.census.gov/cps/pub/1997/educ_att.htm). While the response rate for this survey was only 44.4 percent of the original sample, casual observation suggests that these characterizations are not inaccurate.

Baker (1995) documents substantial differences between nine Christian Reformed churches and their urban neighborhoods in Grand Rapids. Only 20 percent of 277 congregation members surveyed live one mile or less from their urban church. While 100 percent of the congregational respondents was

⁵ These data from an unpublished survey by the Grand Rapids Area Center for Ecumenism (GRACE) coincide with those from a survey by *The Grand Rapids Press* (Honey, 1999) of 800 West Michigan residents which finds that 16 percent of the area population belongs to the Christian Reformed Church or the very similar Reformed Church of America. Both the unpublished study by GRACE and the survey by *The Grand Rapids Press* indicate that the Roman Catholic Church is the largest denomination in Grand Rapids.

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Caucasian only 37 percent of 227 church neighbors surveyed was Caucasian. Elsewhere in the Grand Rapids metropolitan area the Christian Reformed congregations more closely reflect the economic and racial composition of the neighborhood of the church.

The congregations in this study reside in communities, and they are communities. To begin understanding the communal nature these socio-spatial entities, the following chapter explores the concept of community. This review lays the foundation for an analysis of the sense of community and the spatial distribution of the members of the Christian Reformed churches. The study then addresses the capacity of Christian Reformed congregations to be transformational, especially by promoting community development in distressed urban neighborhoods.

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Chapter 2

COMMUNITY IN POSTMODERN SOCIETY

Most of us value community; but it often eludes us. Indeed, defining it, understanding it, and ultimately building or developing it is complicated. The confusion grows as the concept of community evolves over time. Yet, living in communities remains central to the human experience. Fischer (1975) goes so far as to describe the discipline of sociology as, largely, a study of “How can the moral order of society be maintained and the integration of its members achieved within a highly differentiated and technological social structure?” (p. 67-68). He labels this moral order *Community*. This chapter reviews and critiques the meaning of community. It seeks to understand the interplay between different facets and understandings of community, an important objective if communities are to be built and strengthened. The chapter concludes that substantial features of community are lost as the term is liberalized.

Communities have traditionally been defined by geography and ethnicity. Redfield (1967a) describes these communities as distinctive, small, homogeneous and self-sufficient (p. 4). Elsewhere, he notes that “[a]nthropologists have seen the primitive isolated community as several kinds of complete and self-contained systems” (1967b, p. 23). Many theorists still include geography or locality in the definition of modern community. For example, Christenson, Fendley and Robinson (1989) define community as “people that live within a geographically bounded area who are involved in social interaction and

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have one or more psychological ties with each other and with the place in which they live" (p. 9).

However, the geographic basis of community has been debated of late. Some community theorists downplay the role of space in the formation and definition of community. "...[Edward J.] Blakely...argues that place is becoming less relevant, that it is being replaced by networks. People can form their own community of interest independent of spatial boundaries" (Christenson et al., 1989, p. 8).

As contemporary society has grown in complexity, the meaning of community has diversified and liberalized. Warren (1978) explains that "[s]ociologically, the term *community* implies something both psychological and geographical. Psychologically, it implies shared interests, characteristics, or association, as in the expression 'community of interest' or the term 'the business community.' Geographically, it denotes a specific area where people are clustered" (p. 5-6). Warren calls community shared values and a "shared way of life" (p. 32). Similarly, Baker Brownell describes community as "people who know one another well" (cited in Warren, 1970, p 15). Harold Kaufmann (1959), searching for an adequate description of modern community, calls it an "interactional arena."

Jnanabrata Bhattacharyya (1995), a geographer and Director of the Community Development Department at the Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, suggests *solidarity* as one of the more simple but comprehensive definitions of community. He says, "Defining community as solidarity, and

solidarity as deeply shared identity and code for conduct serves to bound the concept in a distinctive and intrinsic manner" (p.61). This definition, while limiting the concept, implies that community can be experienced in varying degrees. Effrat (1974) calls community an *ordinal variable*. "This means", she says, "that instead of saying something either is a community or it isn't, we can talk about the *degree* to which something is a community. 'Ordinal' indicates that we can have more or less 'communityness' in any given situation" (p. 21).

Among the most common indicators used to identify community are those found in the 1955 study of 94 community definitions by George Hillary. He discovered that social scientists describe community as *area*, *common ties* and *social interaction* (Effrat, 1974). Willis (1977) revisited Hillary's *Definitions of Community* study and showed that social scientists still saw community as area, common ties and social interaction. He found, however, a slight relative decrease in the importance of social interaction to the definition of community.

Many theorists have specified community types and attached to them a linear model of community change. Ferdinand Tönnies conceptualized types of social organization as *gemeinschaft* and *gesellschaft*. Emile Durkheim used the similar *mechanical solidarity* and *organic solidarity*. Robert Redfield distinguished between *folk society* and *urban society*. While a strictly linear model of community change is generally discounted today, these types and others help one understand the form and character of contemporary social organization.

Wellman and Leighton's (1979) review of community literature categorizes several conceptions of community. *Community lost* researchers, echoing Wirth's

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1938 *Urbanism as a Way of Life* essay, suggest that fast-paced urban individualism has rendered territorially-defined community irrelevant. Wellman and Leighton point out that several studies have refuted this assertion, presenting evidence that territorial urban or neighborhood communities still exist.

Others claim, according to Wellman and Leighton (1979), that community has not been lost but rather liberated. *Community*, here, refers to interest groups, such as bowling leagues, office friendships and professional affiliations rather than territories. Social network analysis is a helpful tool for the study of liberated community. These communities of interest, while still existing in space, have become deterritorialized. The most absolute example of the liberated community is the virtual community created over computer networks between people that rarely if ever occupy the same physical space (Adams, 1998; Blanchard & Horan, 1998; Wellman et al., 1996). Wellman et al. (1996) call virtual communities “a technologically supported continuation of a long-term shift to communities organized by shared interests rather than by shared neighborhoods or kinship groups (Fisher 1975; Wellman 1979, 1994)” (p. 224). They point out that the virtual community may be more socially diverse than other communities because it is “based more on shared interests and less on shared social characteristics” (p. 231).

Between the poles of the neighborhood community and the liberated community is the *community of limited liability* concept developed by Morris Janowitz in 1952 (cited in Effrat, 1974). Limited liability community members pledge only limited allegiance to their neighborhood and participate in a variety of

other communities as well. As individual prosperity and mobility have increased, ethnically homogeneous neighborhoods have become less central to individual life worlds. Urban residents have become free to participate in and spread their allegiances among a variety of social groups and networks.

Knox (1994) echoes Wellman in summarizing the possible conceptions of community as *community lost*, *community saved*, *community transformed* and *community commodified*. *Community lost* suggests that the traditional holistic community has been supplanted by atomistic individualism. *Community saved*—the community of limited liability—asserts that community still exists with both territorial and nonterritorial attributes. *Community transformed* seems to refer to the new deterritorialized associations or networks formed by interest groups. Finally, the commodified community is characterized and defined by conspicuous consumption. To further clarify the terms, Knox (1994) presents a rough hierarchy in which *neighborhood* refers to place, *community* refers to social interaction and *communality* refers to community spirit. He notes that, “[I]ike community...communality does not necessarily have to be based on territorial cohesiveness” (p. 275).

Urbanization has been the backdrop of much of the *community lost* debate. However, Fischer (1975) contends little evidence exists that population concentration (urbanization) produces the “alienation, disorganization, or apathy” (p. 72) hypothesized by Wirth. Ammerman (1997) agrees that community has not been “lost” in urban places. “Urban life,” she says, “is not best characterized by a decline in the number and closeness of a person’s ties, but by the fact of their

chosenness and their embeddedness in a larger matrix of the very sorts of segmented relationships that are indeed a new feature of life in modern cities" (p. 351).

Liberated communities and those of limited liability are characterized by choice. They have emerged as a response to competing values of freedom and cooperation. Berger (1988), for example, critiques the parochial nature of community as solidarity, saying, "The history of liberation from the authority—sometimes the tyranny—of communities is a great psychological adventure story" (p. 326). Fukuyama (1999) acknowledges that modern individuals seem to want both individuality and community. He suggests that people may be able to "reconcile [these] contradictory desires" by engaging in "smaller, more flexible groups and organizations whose loyalties and membership can overlap." "Each community," says Fukuyama, "shares less with neighboring ones, and has relatively little hold on its members." He calls this shift the "rise of moral individualism and the consequent miniaturization of community" (p. 72, see also Wellman et al., 1996, p. 232).

Sociologist, Amitai Etzioni (1993) says that "...communities are best viewed as if they were Chinese nesting boxes, in which less encompassing communities (families, neighborhoods) are nestled within more encompassing ones (local villages, towns).... Moreover, there is room for nongeographic communities that crisscross the others, such as professional or work-based communities" (p. 32). Individuals are now able to join communities that suit their interests with little regard for spatial constraints. In addition, more intimate,

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cohesive communities can be nested inside communities of less relevance or solidarity. Each community is limited in scope, meeting only a portion of one's needs for communal living.

Aginsky (1952) calls these nonterritorial or spatially liberated communities *lateralizations*. His study of "California Town" illuminates the coexistence and interplay of spatial and nonspatial communities. "[W]e might define," he says, "the modern American community of California Town as being the nexus of plural lateralizations" (p. 129). He suggests that

the American community should no longer be considered as an integrated population confined to a definite geographic locus with its members having a majority of like interests in common. Rather, with increasing rapidity the various lateralizations having membership beyond the local community and in the majority of cases being headquartered in distant places have much influence upon some portion of the local population. (p. 131)

Aginsky continues by reflecting on the ramifications for community development:

Recognition of the two groupings—the locus community and the lateralization—is important. Any plan for community development which does not include the problem of integrating into a functioning interrelationship these two types of participation is omitting one of the most important aspects of the American community. (p. 131)

In addition to growing more specialized, communities increasingly are built on an economic foundation rather than a social or geographic one. Material consumption has become the basis for the formation of both social networks and physical space. Knox sees the development of "landscapes of conspicuous consumption" (1993, p. 26) and "commodified" communities (1994). He calls shopping, the search for and purchase of goods, a "framework around which increasing numbers of people structure their lives" (1993, p. 26). The pursuit of leisure, amusement and entertainment has become a primary objective of life as

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the capitalist system enhances productivity and frees individuals from many of the constraints of labor. Communal and cooperative relations are replaced by competitive ones as neighborhood and community members compete for jobs and other resources (Gottodiener, 1985, p. 210).

An individual's role as a consumer of goods and services, including community, has come to dominate his or her daily life. Choosing from a menu of options, the individual makes utilitarian decisions about participation in communities. Community consumers base these decisions on their knowledge about a community's ability to meet needs and provide benefits. This perceived utility is what compels individuals to travel long distances to be members of, for example, a church congregation that they value.

Unfortunately, the impulse to accumulate and consume corrupts commitment to individuals (see Schaal, 1970) and places. Social space surrenders to economic space (Friedmann, 1988), and a "balanced community life" is threatened (Gottodiener, 1985, p. 291). In a barrio economy, for example, Friedmann hypothesizes an inverse relationship between employment and productivity in the exchange economy and "investment of...resources in the territorial community of the barrio"(p. 119). Needs are increasingly met in the marketplace rather than in communities. The disintegration of life spaces (Friedmann, 1988, p. 79) has rendered churches, for example, spatially irrelevant as their functions are appropriated by marketplace actors. The use of utility economics in social decision-making promotes spatial separation and segregation. In particular, it marginalizes low-income individuals. "Andrew Mair

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(1986) has argued that the nature of the post-industrial city, with its emphasis on materialism, demands the invisibility—through displacement, removal, exclusion or segregation—of the homeless and the poor” (Knox, 1993, p. 28).

The domination of daily life by economic decision making is, in part, the totalization of capital to which Harvey (1987) refers when he exclaims, “...[N]othing appears more ‘totalizing’ to me than the penetration of capitalist social relations and the commodity calculus into every niche and cranny of contemporary life” (p. 374). Apparently, the totalization of capital and the imperative of choice have displaced the integrated holism of territorial communities.

The voluntary, fluid, fragmented, overlapping and exclusive nature of postmodern communities of interest leaves them degraded and spatially irrelevant. When the geographic rootedness of a social group decays, space can no longer be used as a bonding or organizing asset. It no longer is a feature of shared interest or concern. In addition, nonterritorial communities of interest are unable to speak to or act upon neighborhood-scale spatial concerns. While communities of interest are of value, they are more appropriately called associations or networks. The label *community* should be reserved for a social organization that holistically retains both geographic proximity and “interdependent relationships” (Lupton, 1993, p. 30). According to Effrat (1974), “[F]ull-scale community studies people have suggested that the limited liability community is only an anachronism, a remnant of a once strong and full community now in the process of disintegration” (p. 18). It is a strong, inclusive

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and comprehensive community that is equipped to promote human development in a neighborhood setting. (See chapter 5, *Building Community: A Congregational Opportunity*, for a more thorough description of this type of community.) Limiting the use of the term *community* is difficult in light of its liberalization in the literature. Therefore, this study uses the phrase *community of interest* to denote the specialized associations that are differentiated from holistic and comprehensive communities of territory.

This chapter has reviewed the evolution of *community*. It began to address the association between space and communities of interest. Especially important in this study is the cohesiveness of communities of interest and the role of space in promoting or weakening that cohesiveness. The next chapter reviews social capital and sense of community as conceptual indicators of community cohesiveness and as potential assets for neighborhood development.

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Chapter 3

SOCIAL CAPITAL AND SENSE OF COMMUNITY

Social capital is both an indicator of community strength and a resource for community development. Social capital is a productive "asset" that exists in the relationships between people (Coleman, cited in Greeley, 1997; Putnam, 1993, 1995). Social capital describes those features of relationships such as trust or expectations of returned favors that produce benefits for participants. Putnam (1993) calls it "features of social organization, such as networks, norms, and trust, that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit". Similarly, Portes (1998) concludes that the term refers to "the ability of actors to secure benefits by virtue of membership in social networks or other social structures" (p. 6). Adler and Kwon (1999) focus less on internal benefits and more on collective action calling social capital "the features of social structure that facilitate action".

Concern has been expressed about the imprecision of the term *social capital* and its use as a concept (Greeley, 1997; Newton, 1997; Portes, 1998). Therefore, it is important to distinguish between social capital as a resource and the social interactions in which the resource resides and is developed. Social capital is useful conceptually because it explicitly acknowledges resources available in and the transformational power of social networks and communities. The benefits of community participation can be tangible or psychological. Social capital is capable of generating valued goods and services for its holders. Like financial or physical capital, social capital can be accumulated, drawn-down,

expended or invested. However, unlike other forms of capital it increases when used (Putnam, 1993).

Adler and Kwon (1999) note that definitions of social capital can be categorized by whether they concentrate on the internal or the external relationships of an actor. The internal orientation describes the relationships between members of a group and, in particular, focuses on the “features [of the group]...which facilitate the pursuit of collective goals”. Social capital can both improve the collective efficacy of a group and be valuable to members as they receive benefits from the relationships in which they are engaged. A focus on external relationships considers the resources available to an individual or collective actor as a result of the actor’s relationships with others. Figure 1 contains a diagram of dense linkages within social groups or congregations and less dense ties between individuals inside and outside of social groups and neighborhoods.

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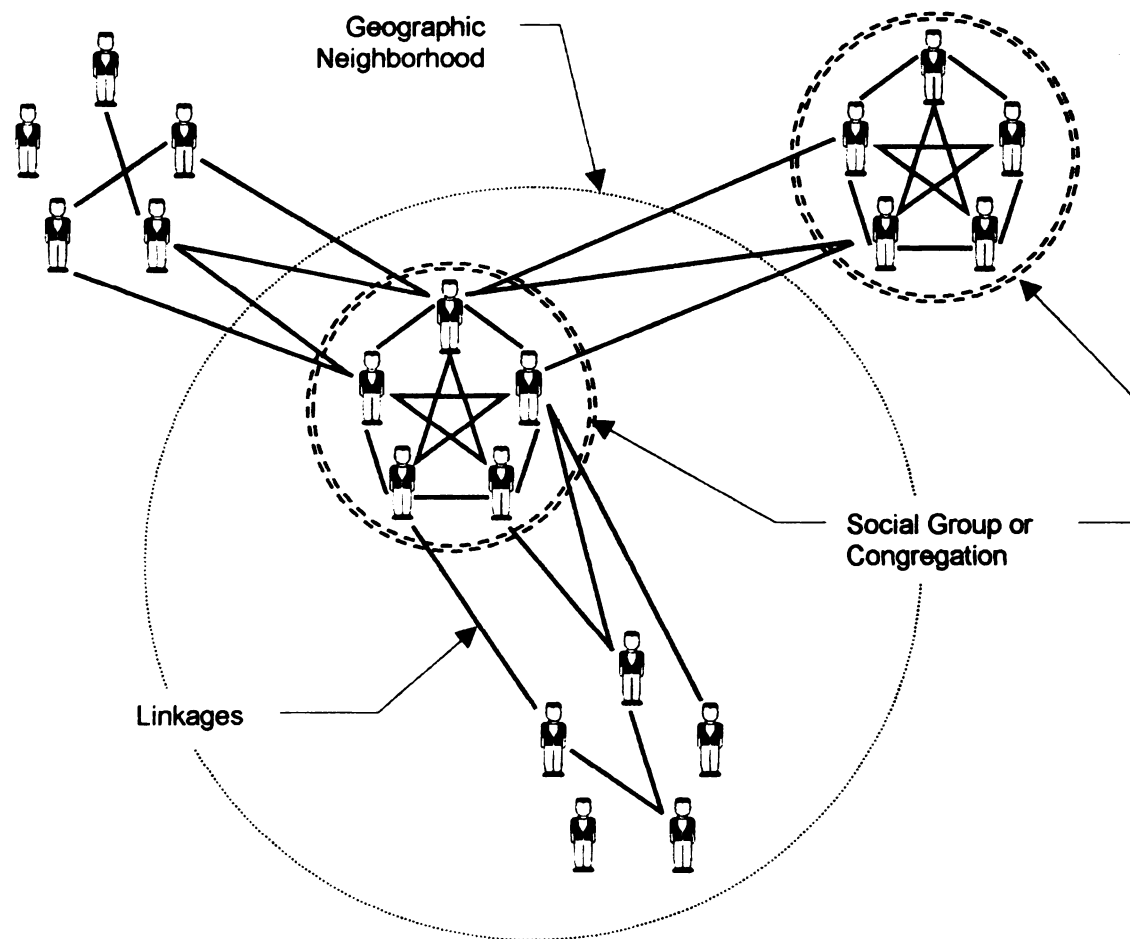


Figure 1: Linkages Internal and External to Groups and Neighborhoods

Perhaps most helpful is a combination of the two perspectives, since, as Adler and Kwon (1999) note, “[a] collective actor such as a firm is influenced both by its external linkages to other firms and institutions and by the fabric of its internal linkages....” The relationship between the composition of a group and its linkages with outside entities is of particular interest in this study.

For example, high levels of social capital within a group could correspond to an insular organization with few outside linkages. Some evidence suggests social groups concerned about survival may experience a high sense of community. Small or declining congregations may have particularly high levels of

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commitment, for example (Iannaccone, cited in Ammerman, 1997, p. 327; McWilliams, cited in London, 1997; Wilson, cited in Ammerman, 1997, p. 386). Congregations buffeted by outside forces and in decline may exhibit “circling-of-the-wagons” behavior that appears to be a sense of community but that reflects little energy for concerns outside the group. Olson (1989) finds that high levels of friendship within a congregation may limit growth or social attractiveness because new members find it difficult to penetrate the strong existing social network. Similarly, Wunthrow warns of the privatized, consumptive nature of “small groups” (cited in Putnam, 1995). According to Newton (1997), church congregations are particularly well suited to producing dense networks of trust but may be prone to an associated withdrawal from the outside world (p. 578). As mentioned in chapter 1, this type of behavior has been common in the Christian Reformed Church. At best, the presence of social capital within a group does not ensure that its benefits will be projected outside the community of interest. At worst, social capital in an interest group can inhibit engagement with other groups and a surrounding neighborhood.

This interplay of the internal and external relationships of a group is further illuminated by Woolcock in his study cited by Adler and Kwon (1999). They describe Woolcock’s two-by-two matrix of high and low internal and external linkages. Three of the cells characterize somewhat weak organizations. However, the organization with strong internal *and* external linkages “holds great promise” to contain social capital. One could also assume that the strong external linkages could become conduits for making the social capital *within* the

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congregation available to those *outside* the congregation. Without external linkages, the social capital within a congregation can institutionalize the exclusion and marginalization of those outside the network. While the presence of social capital within a congregation does not *guarantee* the production of tangible benefits for those outside the congregation, this capital is a resource that could have a transformational influence on distressed neighborhoods.

This study contends, for example, that social capital within a community of interest may be capable of producing change and promoting human development in urban neighborhoods outside the group. This occurs as resources reside in and flow through both internal and external relationships. A congregation, comprised of private and public facets, embodies ties of trust and cooperation that benefit not only its own members but also, potentially, those outside the congregation. These benefits could be extended in a couple of ways.

First, the congregation can make an intentional effort to influence its surroundings. Presumably, a congregation could choose to expend a portion of its internal social capital outside of the congregation. This resource allocation would be especially valuable in distressed urban neighborhoods that have been divested of both financial and human capital. The simplest mechanism is the use of what Ammerman (1997) calls the “remarkable organizational energy generated in and by congregations” (p. 3). Organizational cohesion and energy (which are related to social capital) can be an effective tool for producing change. It can represent a strong basis and large capacity for planning collective action by the congregation on behalf of a neighborhood. In addition, a congregation can

use its internal goodwill and cooperation to release time and other resources of members to the neighborhood. Similarly, informational linkages can be made available to residents of the neighborhood as they seek jobs or services.

Second, and more generally, Putnam (1993) argues that participation in private networks produces public benefits. He notes a “close correlation between social trust and associational membership” (1995, p. 7). Those who are members of associations, he says, are more likely to participate in society at large.

“Community associations provide especially valuable social capital when they cross ethnic or other cleavage lines” (Putnam, 1993; see also Newton, 1997, p. 579). By participating in numerous overlapping groups, participants interact with diverse individuals and communities (Ammerman, 1997, p. 357). Thus, group membership benefits society, in part, through the “cross-cutting ties” (Ammerman, 1997, p. 357; Newton, 1997, p. 579) it fosters. Networks expand and become more dense as bonds of trust grow. As ties extend outward from a congregation, they strengthen the entire fabric of which the congregation is a part. According to Ammerman (1997) citing Hawley, “The social ties formed in the congregation are essential links in the community’s infrastructure” (p. 361). These “external effects” (Newton, 1997, p. 579) of social capital are an important supplement to the self-evident internal benefits of social capital.

Interestingly, a mutually reinforcing, relationship may characterize the presence and extension of social capital in a congregation. First, the presence of social capital in a congregation can be an asset that attracts others to the congregation. The Barna Research Group (1998a) asked church congregation

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members to rank 22 “factors that you might consider as you look for a church”. Two factors related to social capital are ranked highly in the survey. Survey respondents considered “how much the people seem to care about each other” and “how friendly the people in the church are to visitors” very important (ranked second and fourth most important, respectively). In comparison, the pastor and the quality of the sermons (two intuitively important factors) were ranked third and seventh respectively. Obviously, new members join congregations because they value a sense of community and the social capital the congregation provides.

In addition, congregational growth may be enhanced by the external expenditure of congregational resources. The Barna Research Group (1998a) survey found that the fifth most important factor to individuals looking for a church is “how much the church is involved in helping poor and disadvantaged people”. Group members seem highly attracted to a social group concerned about issues other than its own survival or maintenance. In other words, group attractiveness seems related to the ability of the group to address needs of those that may be outside the group membership. In this way, the external expenditure of social capital need not drain the organization of resources. Rather, expending resources, including social capital, outside the congregation can be an investment—creating goodwill in the neighborhood and potentially attracting new members and resources to the congregation. This growth mechanism both increases congregational resources and builds new linkages between the congregation and its surrounding environment.

The distinctions between internal and external relations are also clarified when the sense of community is used as an indicator of social capital. Sense of community consists of those psychological and emotional feelings of closeness and belonging by the members of a social group. Social capital, on the other hand, refers to the transformation of these bonds or feelings of closeness into productive assets. Social capital suggests that social bonds are capable of producing positive change and benefits, including tangible goods and services. The link between sense of community and social capital is evident in this description of the traditional, rural Mennonite church: "The church itself represents the most concrete expression of the 'fellowship of believers.' Members of the community can count on each other for aid when necessary..." (Smucker, 1986, p. 274). Smucker (1986) shows that as Mennonites urbanize, however, this linkage may weaken. They alter their conceptions of community and responsibility to the community to correspond more closely with a modern, individualistic understanding of a community of interest. Again, sense of community can be beneficial to those that comprise the network, but does not necessarily benefit those outside the network.

The measurement of social capital is complicated and problematic (see a brief discussion at <http://www.worldbank.org/poverty/scapital/SChowmeas1.htm>, a World Bank site dedicated to social capital). Clearly, social capital and sense of community are not synonymous. At best, the observation of sense of community suggests or indicates the possible presence of an internally-oriented social capital. In other words, sense of community may be a necessary but not a

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sufficient prerequisite of social capital at the scale of a social group. Sense of community is used in this study as an indicator of social capital. Because sense of community is a psychological feeling, it is more easily measured than social capital with a survey instrument, such as the one used in this study. The concept of sense of community is more tangible to survey respondents than that of social capital. Sense of community also may be more observable than social capital by social group members.

The use of sense of community as an indicator of social capital is somewhat problematic. It does not confirm the transformation of positive feelings into tangible benefits. In addition, sense of community focuses only on the group's internal relationships and benefits. It provides no evidence that these internal relations are instrumental in promoting social development for those outside the membership of the organization. Still, high sense of community reflects organizational strength and is a resource that could be used to promote neighborhood development. The use of sense of community as an indicator of social capital is, therefore, considered satisfactory for the discussion of the congregation and community development in this study.

In summary, church congregations and other faith-based institutions can be important repositories of social capital. Putnam's (1995) analysis of the General Social Survey reveals that Americans join faith-based institutions more than any other type of organization. Coleman (1988) suggests that the church, in particular, has an ability to provide social capital to developing youth (p. 9). The psychological sense of community in a church congregation is an indicator of the

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presence of productive social capital. Community development for a community of interest becomes strengthening the linkages between members for the benefit of the group. "Maintaining these bonds [in a congregation] is a central "good" in the moral universe of congregational life", according to Ammerman (1997, p. 57). In addition, a congregation can contribute to change in distressed urban neighborhoods by mobilizing and disbursing social capital, intentionally directing its benefits toward people and places of need. In this way, the congregation promotes community development for the territorial community of the neighborhood surrounding the church. This strengthening of social networks revitalizes civic society, and potentially extends the assets of strong communities of interest into distressed communities of territory.

Presumably, the spatial organization of a congregational network influences the ability of the congregation both to generate and to distribute social capital. Before these relationships are explored the spatial context of community life must be examined. The next chapter examines the metropolitan setting as an outcome and an agent of community formation.

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Chapter 4

URBAN FORM AND SOCIAL PRACTICE

The nature of urbanization should be examined as a context for community formation, evolution and development. Urbanization is a key feature of contemporary society. It is the lived experience of most Americans and is becoming increasingly important elsewhere in the world. Urbanized populations have unique problems to be addressed by their component communities and faith-based institutions. A brief review of urbanization and urbanism is necessary in this exploration of the church's role in urban community development. This chapter specifically addresses the reciprocal relationship between urban social space and urban physical space. A better understanding of this relationship and the role of space in the formation of strong communities can have important implications for the creation of social capital, the production of social change and the development of vibrant, sustainable urban places.

Geographic conceptions of urban places have evolved from simple and orderly models to complex and fragmented postmodern collages. Increasingly, social relationships and social distance can explain the formation, maintenance and destruction of urban lives and space. In this way, the spatial organization and form of the city can be seen as a documentation of the human processes which initiated and maintain it (see Miggins, 1996).

A sociological framework for the city proposed by Wirth (1938) suggests that the city is a sizable number of people and activities—a “characteristic mode

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of life" (p. 18)—densely packed into a physical space. The "characteristic mode of life" can be seen as a "physical structure", a "system of social organization" and a "set of attitudes and ideas" (p. 18, 19). As such, the city becomes primarily a concentration of social relations or functions.

More specifically, urban places can be characterized by relations of the capitalist mode of production. Harvey (1989) describes three circuits of capital, which encompass most of the social relations of the city. The primary circuit is comprised of production and consumption. The secondary circuit includes investment in productive or consumptive assets, and the tertiary circuit consists of the bureaucratized relations necessary in a complex capitalist society. As capital flows through these circuits it is accumulated by individuals, corporations and places. Both capitalism and urbanization, Harvey notes, are processes that accumulate and concentrate capital.

These processes become mutually reinforcing but unstable as capital circulates. Both are plagued by inherent contradictions (Harvey, 1989). The drive to accumulate capital produces a "restless urban landscape" (Knox, 1993) characterized by uneven development and stark inequalities (Gottdiener, 1985, p. 19). Both capitalism and urbanization are aggressively transforming society and the landscape in attempts to resolve their internal contradictions and perpetuate themselves. "Capitalism," Lefebvre says, "has found itself able to attenuate (if not resolve) its internal contradictions for a century, and it has succeeded in achieving 'growth.' We cannot calculate at what price but we do know the means: by occupying a space, by producing a space" (cited in Gottdiener, 1985, p. 144,

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145). These processes of concentration and accumulation mold the built environment of the city and the relations of the people in it.

Industrialization, in particular, has produced massive social and geographic changes over the last two centuries. For example, the scale and pollution of industrialization required that residences and workplaces be separated spatially. This was one of the simplest but most far-reaching changes in modern society. Marsten (1988), citing Katznelson's *Urban Trenches*, says, "for [him] the urban setting of spatially separate workplace and domicile fostered distinctive sets of ['partial'] relationships..." (p. 415). Certain types of relationships are formed at work, others in the neighborhood, and still others at church. The fragmentation of community caused by these partial relationships was described in chapter 2. According to Gordon, spatial separation in a deconcentrated city was used by capitalists to protect their factories and assets from potential labor unrest (cited in Gottdiener, 1985, p. 75). Industrialization has clearly had a huge impact on the development of urban space and community.

Technological advances in transportation, construction and communication continue to be instrumental in developing the form of the contemporary city (Borchert, 1967; Massey, 1996). The spatial impact of the streetcar, the private automobile, the elevator, the telephone and now the Internet are observable in the built environment and in the social relations of the city.

The development of the built environment of the city can be traced to interrelated historic forces as humanity learns to manipulate and control the

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natural environment to accomplish its ends (Harvey, 1973, p. 310). Once it is established, the built environment conditions and congeals social change. “[A] particular spatial form...institutionalize[s]...the future development of social process”, notes Harvey (1973, p. 26). Gottdiener (1985) calls the built environment both “a barrier to use as well as a potential for use” (p. 179). More than a passive “container”, the built environment acts on humanity as an agent of change. The influence of the interstate freeway system is an example of the power of the built environment. It was intended only to link cities (Hyman & Kingsley, 1996, p. 116). By entering the urban core it entrenched the automobile dependence that influences daily life and land use a generation after its construction. The freeway system now prevents the emergence of alternative modes of public transportation. In ongoing iterations, social practices shape the environment, which then shapes social practices. A circular causation unfolds such that “the context is directly involved in the constitution of social practices, just as these practices, in turn, are forming the context” (Simonsen, 1996, p. 407).

Clearly, social relations, capital accumulation, technological advances, historic trends and the built environment itself are instrumental in producing and maintaining urban form and function. Comprehensive models of urban development seek to synthesize many facets of urbanism, particularly its recently emerging deconcentration and fragmentation. Gottdiener (1985), for example, proposes a holistic and dialectical explanation for the city that takes into account economic, social and political forces. A postmodern perspective is also being

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used to describe urban fragmentation and unevenness (Cooke, 1988; Dear & Flusty, 1998; Knox, 1993). Cooke (1988) calls the postmodern city a “terrain of paradox” (p. 74). Here, global capitalist forces extract and invest capital in an apparently random fashion (Massey, 1996) producing a “noncontiguous collage of parcelized, consumption-oriented landscapes” (Dear & Flusty, 1998, p. 66). The deconcentrated, fragmented character of the postmodern city is receiving particular attention because of the social and economic disparities it exacerbates.

Although partially a response to market forces, deconcentration is inconsistent with the goals of urban places. It restricts opportunities for interaction. In a summary of his book, urban design expert David Engwicht (1999) calls cities “an invention to maximize exchange opportunities [including exchanges of ‘goods, friendship, knowledge, culture, work, education or emotional and financial support’] and minimize travel.” Yet contemporary urban form and individual locational decisions often *maximize* travel and *limit* exchange opportunities. “The more diluted and scattered the exchange opportunities,” Engwicht says, “the more the city begins to lose the very thing that makes a city a city: a concentration of exchange opportunities.” The primary asset of urban places—density—no longer accomplishes the promotion of interaction that was intended.

In addition, deconcentration deepens social divisions. Gottdiener (1985) points out that the consequences of urban deconcentration are “residential exclusivity and spatial distance” that have “sheltered [individuals] from others with different socioeconomic statuses” (p. 248; see also Frug, 1996). Harvey

(1973) has observed "...the paradox of capital withdrawing from areas of greatest need to provide for the demands of relatively affluent suburban communities". Ironically, "[u]nder capitalism this is good and rational behaviour—it is what the market requires for the 'optimal' allocation of resources" (p. 112). Again, one sees social space and needs submitting to the accumulation of capital (Friedmann, 1988).

The contemporary urban landscape is plagued, therefore, by uneven development and persistent (even increasing) segregation by race and class (Darden, 1995; Dear & Flusty, 1998; Jargowsky, 1994; Knox, 1993, p. 28; Krumholz, 1996; Massey, 1996; Orfield, 1997; Rusk, 1993). Harvey (1973, 1989) attributes this phenomenon to the internal contradictions of capitalism, which have produced both spectacular skyscrapers and dingy urban slums. Massey and Denton call segregated communities "an institutional tool for isolating the by-products of racial oppression: crime, drugs, violence, illiteracy, poverty, despair and their growing social and economic costs" (cited in Nyden, Maly & Lukehart, 1997, p. 492). Accompanying the social separation is a privatization of urban space and life (Aurigi & Graham, 1997; Gottdiener, 1985, p. 248-249) and a subsequent marginalization of disenfranchised individuals.

The theory that segregated neighborhoods develop because similar people simply prefer to live in close proximity is attractive but only partially valid. Rather, powerful social forces produce segregated landscapes and homogeneous communities. Lieberman and Carter, for example, "...estimate that 85% of the Black segregation in the 1970s was due to involuntary causes" (cited

in Darden, 1995, p. 682). In addition, Anthony Downs (1998) demonstrates the emergence of “almost total segregation...from free choice of locations” (p. 10) despite individual willingness to experience some racial integration. He points out that both African Americans and Caucasians value some racial diversity, albeit in different proportions. Typically, African Americans that integrate a Caucasian neighborhood will surpass the Caucasian integration comfort level before reaching their own integration comfort level. This mismatch in preferred levels of racial integration precipitates the “white flight” which produces a homogeneously black neighborhood.

Ian Thrall (1987) explains the process of socio-economic segregation with his Consumption Theory of Land Rent. According to him, each household in an urban place attempts to maximize utility using the financial means at its disposal. The poor, unable to bear high transportation costs, live on small plots of more expensive land close to the city center. The poor tolerate high land costs by living at very high residential densities (Harvey, 1973). According to Thrall’s theory, suburban land will have lower land rent than urban land. The basis for these land rent differentials is an attempt by the system to equalize utility. The rich enjoy more land in the suburbs to compensate for the high cost of transportation there.

Regardless of the explanation, racial and economic segregation are harmful (Massey, 1996). Fragmented and low-density urban landscapes that promote isolation are most damaging to already disenfranchised communities and individuals. Darden (1995) notes that the “...overconcentration of Blacks in the central city of Detroit has continued to have severe social and economic

consequences, and jobs have continued to leave the city, reducing the opportunity for social and economic mobility for the Black population left behind” (pp. 685, 686). Isolation and marginalization usually accompany involuntary segregation, ensuring the persistence of poverty for those that are already low-income (Sommers & Mehretu, 1994). Orfield (1997) describes the circular causation and fiscal strain that develops as disparities between contiguous municipalities grow. He shows that the tax bases of the most wealthy, typically suburban, jurisdictions are expanding. Meanwhile, central cities and suburbs that are most in need of social services and investment experience the flight of financial and human capital.

Despite the deconcentration and segregation of the city, urban residents continue to form local communities (Mesch & Manor, 1998) and territorial urban communities still exist (Wellman & Leighton, 1979). However, urban residents increasingly form communities of interest to meet social needs (see chapter 2). This phenomenon further contributes to the fragmentation of the city. It weakens the social network on which the functioning of the city relies.

The spatial behavior of church congregation members contributes and responds to metropolitan spatial patterns. At one time, individuals attended neighborhood churches. Snapper (1980) suggests that Christian Reformed churches in Grand Rapids, for example, may have been established near to the residences of members (p. 100). According to a former leader of one central city congregation, board members previously divided annual house visitation responsibilities by block: one taking the south side of the street, another taking

the north side of the street (personal communication). In this way, neighborhood churches integrated communities of interest and communities of territory. As congregation members became more mobile, they took up residence outside the neighborhood of their church building. The spatial decisions of congregation members have transformed churches into communities of interest with little territorial grounding. The model of membership in a church parish (more common in the Roman Catholic tradition) has been replaced by that of a marketplace whereby consumer members “shop” for the congregation that meets their needs.

As urban neighborhoods change demographically, the neighborhood church has a number of choices, according to Ammerman (1997, p. 44–45). It can decline, move out of the neighborhood with its members, adapt to the new residents of the neighborhood, or become a “niche congregation” (p. 36), attracting members from outside the immediate neighborhood. The niche congregation has identified a specific type of person by which it defines itself. Its membership can be drawn from across the metropolitan region. The church building remains the public presence of the congregation in a neighborhood. However, commuter members have limited interaction with the neighborhood of the church. These members divide their attention between their residential neighborhoods, their religious community and other communities of interest.

While faith-based institutions are inherently concerned with the spiritual lives of individuals, they must adopt a holistic perspective that includes social and urban development as well. Bishop Anthony Pilla (1996) and Phillip Bess (1999) call the church to engage in positive land use because of the “moral implications

of regional sprawl" (Pilla, 1996, p. 49). Faith-based institutions can be instrumental in reintegrating severely segregated urban spaces and communities. This holistic, integrated praxis is necessary because, "...man will be reshaped to fit whatever environment he creates. The long-range question is not so much what sort of environment we want, but what sort of man we want" (Sommers, cited in Harvey, 1973, p. 46). As an institution equipped to decide "what sort of man we want", the faith-based institution must examine its spatial decisions and those of its members, understanding how its spatial organization influences its social relations in the urban environment. With intentionality, congregations can reblend communities of interest and communities of territory.

Bess (1999) calls cities "competitive and cooperative enterprises that human beings have built to achieve the good life." "The good life for individual human beings," he says, "is the life of virtue lived in community." Unfortunately, urban places do not often live up to this standard. In particular, the deconcentrated and homogenized spaces of segregated, postmodern cities inhibit social interaction, especially between people with differences (Bess, 1999; Frug, 1996; Gottdiener, 1985, p. 248). Faith-based institutions can and should pursue the vision of a "life of virtue lived in community". The next chapter summarizes and synthesizes the preceding chapters, presenting a case for the development of communities that are territorial, diverse and justly ordered.

Chapter 5

BUILDING COMMUNITY: A CONGREGATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

Community is clearly an important social unit that should be intentionally built and strengthened. Humans are social beings that enhance their lives by residing in groups and communities. While not comprehensive, even the recently emerging communities of interest, such as niche or commuter congregations, sewing circles and gardening clubs, play valuable roles in society by stimulating learning and promoting collective action. Yet the dilution of comprehensive community into narrowly-focused interest groups has left this core social unit without some key components that should be restored. Communities of interest cannot offer, for example, the integrity and holism one finds in an all-encompassing community. Typically, communities of interest lack the ideological roots, the diversity of membership and the territorial groundedness necessary to be foundational social units.

The communities that should be built are those that are capable of promoting a just social order. These communities will require a degree of heterogeneity and territoriality. As mentioned earlier, church congregations frequently exhibit themselves as insular communities of interest. However, they have the ideological and spatial foundations necessary to be at the forefront of a powerful community-building movement. This normative chapter summarizes the previous ones by describing important features of integrated and holistic communities of justice. It links the disintegrated nature of postmodern society

with the responsibility of church congregations to use their unique capabilities to build valuable communities. Strategies that could be used in that endeavor are outlined.

Just Social Order

Communities worthy of pursuit promote social order characterized by justice. Roland Warren (1970) has lamented that "...there must be a way to love and to care, but our local communities today fail miserably in measuring up to this simple image of what human life might be..." (p. 15). Sociologist Amitai Etzioni (1993) echoes Warren, calling for strengthened communities that are deeply meaningful. "Our society," Etzioni says, "is suffering from a severe case of deficient we-ness and the values only communities can properly uphold; restoring communities and their moral voice is what our current conditions require" (p. 26). Etzioni sees the community as a framework for moral socialization. "[T]o the extent we have lost community," he says, "we must rebuild it, not only because community life is a major source of satisfaction of our deeper personal needs, but because the social pressures community brings to bear are a mainstay of our moral values" (p. 40). The socializing role of communities is particularly important when the potency of the nuclear family has diminished, as it has in many urban neighborhoods.

Community-building efforts must focus, therefore, on strengthening a shared pursuit of higher values and ideals, particularly those which characterize social justice. According to John Schaar (1970), Professor Emeritus of Political Philosophy at the University of California at Santa Cruz, Aristotle argues that

the pursuit of justice and goodness ["must characterize the political bond"] and that without this capstone all the rest is defective-- sociability and fellowship become mere herding together undistinguished by any nobler purpose of gain, and the community itself becomes little more than a commercial enterprise.

Citing Plato's myth of Prometheus, Schaar claims that "political community is possible only...where, first of all, men are bound together by a common reverence for the same conception of justice and of virtue".

The community that is defined by common higher-order values has the capacity to promote true well-being for its members and for those around it. Bess (1999), for example, calls the city a "community of communities" the objective of which is "nothing less than the good life [moral and intellectual excellence] itself". According to Bess, the city traditionally has modeled itself on, among others, Jerusalem, which exemplifies a city of excellence in terms of the "care it exhibits for its weakest members". Faith-based institutions, which claim to mediate values such as justice, mercy and goodness, are, therefore, well equipped to form the basis for truly valuable community.

Diversity

Community must be comprised of members with some commonality. Key to the building of significant communities, however, is understanding what features of individuals and groups *should* be held in common and what features should be diversified. As society develops, the features held in common should increasingly be values and principles of goodness rather than the tangible attributes of culture, race and wealth by which community has traditionally been organized.

Of course, some common attributes, values and interests are necessary for any community to exist. Both Harvey (1973) and Warren (1978) allude to the value of homogeneity in promoting unity and minimizing urban conflict. Traditionally, community bonds have included kinship, ethnicity, culture, and geography. More recently, other attributes such as age, gender, education, occupation and avocation, have formed the bases of communities of interest. The specialized social units that have emerged promote innovation, create tremendous material wealth and provide other benefits. R. J. Johnson points out that "congregation and segregation are obvious means to this end, ensuring that one's neighbors are potentially valuable social contacts, even if that potential is never realized" (cited in Knox, 1994, p. 201). "Extreme heterogeneity," according to Herbert Gans, "is likely to inhibit communication and to encourage mutual resentment..." (cited in Frug, 1996, p. 1061). Most valuable, perhaps, is the sharing of a common purpose or goal by community members. Bess (1999), for example, defines community as "a group of people with a shared objective, and [with] specific roles and duties performed for the achievement of that objective". Obviously, the emergence of a community requires some commonality among individuals.

However, the natural inclination for similar individuals to reside and interact together can degenerate into fragmented social misunderstanding. Members of racially homogeneous and segregated communities, for example, have little opportunity to learn about or correct misconceived stereotypes about other races. Economically homogeneous and segregated communities

perpetuate injustice and marginalization by limiting the access of outsiders to resources and power (Harvey, 1973; Blizek & Cederblom, 1973). In this way, community form reinforces existing and unequal power relations. Social capital, for example, can be excessively insular (Wall, Ferrazzi & Schryer, 1998; Portes, 1998) benefiting insiders at the expense of outsiders (Putnam, 1993). Frug (1996) contends that the misguided objective of a faulty, romantic notion of community as solidarity perpetuates segregation and fear of "otherness". The insistence on complete homogeneity in community encourages misunderstanding of people and groups that are different and promotes the fragmentation of urban landscapes.

Community must be characterized by unity of purpose, but not by homogeneity in all aspects. The pursuit of the community objective can be enhanced by the intentional inclusion of members with a variety of attributes. Interaction among different individuals promotes learning and understanding. "[M]oderate heterogeneity," says Gans, "provides enough compatibility of interests and skills to enable communication—and therefore learning—to take place" (cited in Frug, 1996, p. 1061). According to Etzioni (1993), "What we need now are communities that balance both diversity and unity" (p. 122). A community-building effort should focus, then, on the creation of a common values commitment by a group of racially, culturally and economically diverse individuals. A community of shared values and intent, but which includes a plurality of backgrounds, resources, experiences and skills will have both the depth and the breadth necessary to be an effective institution in contemporary

society. This community will be comprised of the strong bonds of clear purpose and mutually held values. Yet, it will be flexible and robust enough to survive and thrive in a complex and evolving environment.

The building of community characterized by racial, cultural and economic diversity is difficult but not impossible. Research has shown that most people are willing to experience some racial heterogeneity (Farley, Fielding & Krysan, 1997) and that diverse communities do exist (Nyden, Maly & Lukehart, 1997). Frug (1996) presents a case for its importance based on the work of Iris Marion Young. According to him, community-building should entail "not cultivating a feeling of oneness with others but fostering a recognition that one has to share one's life with strangers, with strangeness, with the inassimilable, even with the intolerable" (p. 1049). For Young, "city life" (and, for Frug, "community") should promote "social differentiation without exclusion, variety, eroticism ['pleasure and excitement derived from the unusual'], and publicity ['feelings generated when entering a public space...that...provides exposure to opinions and cultures very different from one's own']" (p. 1051). "Living in a heterogeneous community," Frug says, "increases the kinds of otherness found to be bearable" (p. 1062). Civility in the context of diversity is what Young and Frug seek. Similarly, Chesterton (1919) applauds arbitrariness and difference as qualities that make life a romantic story. The valuing of difference and diversity is an important goal of community-building efforts. Of course, diverse members of a community must be bound together by mutual commitments to core values. Through these efforts

communities can be created that promote social well-being and the “good life” among complementary individuals.

Territoriality

Territoriality is an important component of holistically significant community. More specifically, the territorial community is important because it is a socially inclusive arena for the political negotiation of access to resources. Of course, a commitment to territoriality must be tempered by an acknowledgement that contemporary metropolitan landscapes are unevenly developed and inherently unjust. However, territorial communities remain socially and politically important, despite the unequal distribution of resources across regions and the advent of communities of interest.

The territorial community remains the most appropriate venue for organizing the sustenance of life, including the use of resources. Territorial jurisdictions are still the primary organizational mechanism by which society is governed (Aginsky, 1952, p. 132; Friedmann, n.d.). While representative democracy is influenced by electronic town meetings and the powerful special interest groups, the foundational role of geographic jurisdictions has not been usurped. Friedmann (1979) is a strong proponent of the importance of territorial community. “The territorial force,” he says, “derives from common bonds of social order forged by history within a given place” (p.7). According to him, a relevant community will be grounded in territory because

...we are social, that is political, beings first and foremost, which means that we have a collective history and a stake in the political institutions in which we make our home. We belong, by nature, to a territorially defined

political community. Deprived of this community, we lose a vital dimension of ourselves. (n.d., p. 5).

Especially important to Friedmann is the political discourse that is possible only in a territorial community. "The active, non-exclusive participation of the community in a discourse concerning human needs and the means for their satisfaction therefore becomes itself a high-order need." (n.d., p. 6). He summarizes a communalist order as "a new concern with territorial values, disaffection from crude materialism, struggles for a technology compatible with human needs, a politics of self-reliance, [and] democratic movements of liberation" (n.d., p. 13).

Warren (1978) also affirms the importance of territorial community as the mechanism for organizing the maintenance of daily life. "People's lives and their behaviour are significantly influenced by their propinquity," he says. "Living together in physical proximity requires social structures and social functions that sustain life in the locality and provide the satisfactions that people seek" (p. 8). It is in a territorial community such as a neighborhood that all members can be included in processes that use the available resources to sustain and enhance life.

Unlike exclusionary social groupings, the territorial community retains the potential for inclusion. By definition, each person within the geographic boundary of a territorial community is a member (Friedmann, n.d., p. 5). Everyone has a "place" in a territorial community. Chesterton (1919) acknowledges the inclusive, but, therefore, uncomfortable, nature of territorial community. "We make our friends;" he concludes, "...but God makes our next-door neighbour." The resident

of a street may feel uncomfortable with his or her neighbors because they hold the resident accountable for daily actions. Chesterton suggests that a person flees "from his street because it is a great deal too exciting. It is exciting because it is exacting; it is exacting because it is alive." The inclusiveness of territorial community is uncomfortable and can intensify the development of communities of interest. Participation in territorial community is then displaced by an allegiance to communities of interest. Those that reside in a neighborhood are frequently preoccupied with individual pursuits or communities of interest at work, at church, or in recreation. A renewed commitment to comprehensive territorial community is necessary to secure the inclusion of those isolated from communities of interest and the resources they command.

Youth, for example, can benefit from spatially compact, supportive neighborhood communities. Because of their limited mobility, youth require proximity to access resources. Urban planners Andres Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk point out that "[c]hildren in the postwar suburbs are kept in an unnaturally extended state of isolation and dependence because they live in places designed for cars rather than people" (cited in Frug, 1996, p. 1097). According to Coleman (1988), the social capital embodied in families and communities is "a resource that can be employed to aid in...the development of youth" (p. 8). This happens, Coleman says, when youth can "turn to adults other than their own parents, when necessary and find support" (p. 8). Spatial proximity is essential if children, and other less mobile members of society, are to access the social capital inherent in personal relationships.

Both communities of interest and territorial communities can empower or marginalize, provide or deny access to resources. Some territorial communities are relegated to marginal status because of the uneven distribution or development of metropolitan resources. Communities of interest can, in that environment, provide access to power and resources. However, admittance into these social networks remains limited. Since only those with certain characteristics are eligible for inclusion, communities of interest tend to be defined by exclusion. Particularly problematic is the coupling of exclusionary communities of territory and interest. Gated communities in high income neighborhoods, for example, exclude outsiders with both physical and financial barriers.

Still, a sustainable social order demands equality between territorial communities, not a retreat into unequal and competing communities of interest which further marginalize already isolated individuals or groups. Some policy makers are realizing that the unevenly developed landscapes which perpetuate injustice must be changed (Orfield, 1997). The reorganization of landscapes will permit a commitment to territorial communities that engage all members in political discourse regarding social well-being, justice and progress. Despite the increasing importance of virtual and other nonterritorial communities of interest, the development of cohesive, effective and spatially coherent communities remains an important social objective.

Church Congregations and Community-Building Strategies

An intentional community-building effort will be necessary if diverse, territorially grounded communities that pursue a just social order are to thrive. An overlay of competing “lateralizations” or communities of interest can drain the territorial community of resources (Aginsky, 1952, p. 133). For this reason, society must avoid investing in exclusive and specialized communities of interest at the expense of inclusive and holistic territorial communities. Instead, commitments must be made to and strategies developed for building comprehensive communities characterized by justice and integration.

Several efforts have modeled or envisioned the holistic and integrated community. Nineteenth century anarchist geographer Peter Kropotkin “...observed and stressed the role of co-operation and mutual aid in both organic evolution and peasant society. He opposed political centralization and economic concentration and favoured small-scale, self-sufficient social units living in greater harmony with their natural surroundings” (Agnew, Livingstone & Rogers, 1996, p. 139). Intentional communities and eco-villages are presented as viable social alternatives (see Conrad, 1995; Korten, 1994; Eco-village Information Service, <http://www.gaia.org>, Intentional Communities, <http://www.ic.org>). Peter Boothroyd envisions “a new ‘community in non-gemeinschaft forms’” (cited in Robinson, 1995, p. 22). Robinson says,

In essence this is a...face-to-face association in caring neighborhoods which retain individual liberty to act, open access to knowledge, and global inter-connections. The goal of non-gemeinschaft communities is fulfillment of basic human needs and the promotion of sustainable economies with reduced dependence on the industrial economy and the state. (p. 22).

Finally, holistic community-building efforts and comprehensive community initiatives are gaining attention (Kingsley, McNeely & Gibson, 1997; Smock, 1997). These efforts seek to integrate “people” and “place” strategies addressing multifaceted urban problems by building on community assets.

As argued in chapter 1, church congregations can be well placed (both ideologically and spatially) to promote the development of these types of movements and communities. However, ideological and spatial disintegration will limit the effectiveness of congregations to facilitate community development in urban places. Faith-based institutions perpetuate excessively homogeneous, segregated community structures by not adhering to their own core teachings about racial unity and social justice (Thomas & Blake, 1996). Martin Luther King, Jr. (1956) has called 11:00 on Sunday morning “the most segregated hour of Christian America.” According to Sack (2000), “90 percent of all congregations are at least 80 percent one race”. Church congregations should rely on their ideological foundations to provide leadership in the development of diverse and just communities. In addition, the spatial organization of a congregation will impact its ability to build networks and promote change. Congregations and their members should make spatial decisions that help them promote strong and integrated communities of interest and territory. The spatiality of congregational communities is a central concern of this study.

Chapter 6

SPACE AND SOCIAL INTERACTION

As suggested earlier, the spatial environment is one factor influencing the type of people and communities we become. Space is more than a passive “container”. It becomes an actor or an agent in the creation and transformation of daily life and social relations. Simonson (1996) describes a *social spatiality* such that “the spatial forms an integrated part of social practices and/or social processes” (p. 502; see also Soja, 1980). For this reason, an examination of space and its role in human and social development is important. Humanity may be transcending space by technologically reducing the friction of geographic distance. However, a disregard for the importance of spatial proximity may incur social and psychological costs (Wellman, 1988).

The deconcentration and fragmentation of urban space and community generates the theoretical question: What type of reciprocal relationship exists between physical space and social relations? The answer to this question will be an important step in constructing strategies for strengthening institutions (including church congregations). Understanding the relationship can also promote the development of deteriorated neighborhoods and their residents. This chapter reviews theory related to space and physical distance at an abstract level. It seeks to discover how physical distance affects the quantity and quality of social interaction that occurs between actors.

Theoretical and empirical studies from a variety of disciplines argue that social interaction is enhanced by physical proximity. For example, Ley (1983) states that “ [r]eciprocal identification and understanding occur most usually and easily in the immediacy of a face-to-face interaction, where time and space are shared” (p. 172-173). Expanded daily action spaces have been made possible by a technological “time-space compression” (Harvey, 1990, p. 241). Still, Harvey (1989), describing Hägerstrand’s work, notes the need to have “...time-space paths of two or more individuals intersect to accomplish any social interaction” (p. 210).

Hägerstrand illustrates how physical proximity can facilitate the quality of social interaction necessary for relevant community. He explores space and time by mapping the daily paths of people. Interactions are shown as “bundles” or meetings in both time and space (cited in Gregory, 1994). These face-to-face interactions are clearly valuable for strengthening community. Increased value is being attributed to spatial proximity in the New Urbanism planning movement (see <http://www.cnu.org>). The spatial neighborhood can become a relevant community of solidarity as relationships are built through daily interactions. Without the time or space for personal interaction, communities of interest become shallow and anemic.

Five concepts related to socio-spatial interaction are briefly reviewed here. First, theories of urbanization and urban social behavior are described. Second, geographic distance decay or gravity models help explain spatial interaction and the creation of central places. Third, the sociological concept of social distance,

usually measured in relation to comfort levels at spatial distances, is mentioned. Fourth, social impact theory suggests that the impact of individuals on each other is a function of three factors, one of which is physical distance. Finally, social network analysis provides a methodology for studying the spatiality of communities of interest. This type of analysis provides evidence that physical proximity is important in networks. Four of these five theoretical streams suggest that interaction is enhanced by proximity. They contribute to an understanding of the socio-spatial organization of communities of interest, including church congregations, especially the relationship between physical distance and social distance.

Theory of Urbanization

The Wirthian theory of widespread alienation in cities has not been supported (Fischer, 1975; Frug, 1996; Massey, 1996). As mentioned before, urban residents continue to form localized communities (Mesch & Manor, 1998; Wellman & Leighton, 1979). Intuitively, the proximity afforded by urban life would seem to *enhance* opportunities for relationship-building rather than constrain them.

However, urban relationships seem different from more traditional, rural relationships. Proximity likely does influence the types of relationships and communities that form by offering the numerous choices craved by contemporary society. Wirth (1938) acknowledged that urbanites might have more numerous but weaker social ties than the kinship ties of rural residents. Hofferth and Iceland (1998) find evidence that supports this characterization of urban social relations.

The existence of diverse and specialized urban ties proposed by Wirth has also been supported by Wellman (1988). Fischer (1975) conceptualizes the fluid, hierarchical nature of urban social structure. “[I]ndividuals can be seen,” he says, “constructing personal social worlds by ‘recruiting’ people from categoric ‘pools,’ as in choosing which co-workers or neighbors to befriend (Whitten & Wolfe 1973, White 1965)” (p. 79, 80).

Density and proximity may influence the quality of relationships in addition to the number and type. After examining studies of territorial communities, Ottensmann (1978) presents evidence that either high residential density or low social class or both are positively associated with sense of community. Coleman and Segal show that the number of friends a group member has seems to reach a threshold as the group continues to grow in size (cited in Olson, 1989). Kochen claims that, typically, intimate relationships are limited to about 20 although a person might know 1000 other persons (cited in Wellman et al., 1996). Specific communities of interest and social networks develop in dense and highly populated urban places because of these limits on the number of meaningful relationships that can be maintained. Still, the close proximity afforded by urban living seems to present an opportunity for intentional community-building if a relationship saturation point is not surpassed.

Distance Decay Model and Central Place Theory

The distance decay model of spatial interaction states simply that the closer two objects are to one another the more they will influence one another. More precisely, the attractive pull of an object on another is, like gravity, a

function of the sizes of the objects and the inverse square of the distance between them. When one or more of the objects is human, the interaction assumes rational decision-making that decreases cost (of travel over distance) and increases utility (of interaction with the other object). When one object is human and the other is a place, a pattern of central places develops on a featureless landscape. Places are ordered hierarchically according to the number of functions or level of utility they provide. Economically rational humans will patronize the nearest place that provides the function they require. Places that provide a greater number of functions or higher utility will exert a stronger attractive force and will draw patrons from a greater distance.

A distance decay or gravity model and central place theory are often invoked to explain economic activity and the spatial behavior of consumers in relation to retail centers. For these pecuniary functions an urban resident will clearly maximize utility (and minimize cost) by traveling to the nearest provider of a good or service provider. For non-pecuniary utility such as that obtained by participation in a church (Ammerman, 1997, p. 326), the costs and benefits are more difficult to quantify. For example, an individual may appear to irrationally travel great distances to participate in a specific church. However, the theory also can explain social interaction and community formation. Humans seek to maximize utility by engaging others in relationship. One should be able to classify church congregations, for example, into orders in a hierarchy based on the utility each provides. One could then predict that a church member would participate in the nearest congregation that provides the level of utility she or he demands.

These interactions would be very complicated to model, however, because of the many types of utility individuals seek: economic, social, cultural, theological, nostalgic and others.

In addition, transportation networks have made time-distance and cost-distance more important than Euclidean distance in determining interaction. The congregational participant may travel further than otherwise expected to participate in some community through which he or she can obtain higher levels of perceived utility. Traditionally, social interaction and community formation were determined by utility based on kinship, ethnic identity and Euclidean distance minimization. Now, however, some church members seem to find optimal utility by living on one side of the city and attending a traditional church on the other. The city, then, becomes a set of overlapping layers of spatial and aspatial communities, each defined and understood by a type of utility maximization.

Social Distance Theory

Social distance, a conceptual integration of "geometric and metaphoric distance" between individuals and groups (Ethington, 1997), is a "product of similar biographical situations" (Ley, 1983, p. 174). Ethington claims that Simmel's original emphasis on geometric distance is deemphasized in later work by Park, Burgess and Bogardus. They treat "instincts" and "attitudes" about social difference as the cause with geometric distance being only the effect. Ethington, like numerous other geographers, calls for the study of the "reciprocal reproduction of social and spatial relationships". Geometric distance, he suggests, both represents and causes difference.

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Social difference and social mobility exhibit themselves in physical distance and mobility. Technological and economic advances have permitted some social groups in urban society to voluntarily segregate themselves from other groups. The result is the postmodern metropolis of “fortified cells of affluence and places of terror where police battle the criminalized poor” (Dear & Flusty, 1998, p. 570). These spatial behaviors and patterns also reinforce social difference. “Space...consolidates the social structure by limiting intergroup contact...” (Beshar, cited in Ley, 1983, p. 159). This practice of institutionalizing social relations and social isolation in the built environment reinforces a circular causation and a widening social and economic gap between groups (Harvey, 1973). In contrast, Ethington (1997) notes that “...geometric distance is the structure of everyday life in space-time that permits or promotes the formation of familiarity....”

Paul Knox (1994) asserts the reciprocal relationship between space and community using social distance terminology. He says, “...physical distance and social distance continue to act as mutually reinforcing aspects of social interaction...” (p. 199). He continues, “The less the social distance, the greater the probable physical proximity between people--their residential propinquity. Conversely, the greater the residential propinquity, the greater the likelihood of social interaction.” (p. 200). Social distance, then, becomes both a cause and effect of physical distance.

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Social Impact Theory

Dynamic social impact theory is another very spatial theory of social interaction and effect. With this theory social psychologist Bibb Latané is interested in explaining the creation of culture. He notes that “[d]ifferences in spatial location turn out to have significant theoretical and empirical consequences for the dynamics of social interaction” (Latané, 1996, p. 14). More specifically, the theory posits that individuals are influenced by other individuals and this influence depends on the number, strength, and immediacy or distance of those doing the influencing (Latané, 1996; Mullen, 1985). Latané, Liu, Nowak, Bonevento & Zheng (1995) test the spatiality of the theory by asking three groups of people the residential locations of the persons with whom they have had recent “memorable interactions”. They find that the “density of memorable interactions decreased regularly with distance” (Latané et al., 1995, p. 801) for residents of Boca Raton, for Chinese students and even for social psychologists. Because the interaction is shown to be a function of the square of distance, the study by Latané supports the geographic gravity model for interaction between individuals.

Most valuably, Latané and his colleagues posit reasons for this relationship. It is not, they suggest, “simply a matter of proximity increasing the chance of casual contact” (Latané et al., 1995, p. 803). Rather, they speculate that individuals seek out nearby relationships because of their high benefit to cost ratio. In addition, nearby relationships bring with them an accountability due to

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anticipated future interactions. Both reasons have important implications for the production of social capital in church communities.

Social Network Analysis

Social network analysis promises to clarify some of the confusion over the existence and form of community in the contemporary era (Ethington, 1997; Fischer, 1975). Wellman (1988) uses the concept of social network to define the liberated community as

the basic metaphor for that most important class of relationships: the primary ties extending outside of our households which articulate people with larger social systems and provide them with imaginative, flexible means for gaining access to the resources of these social systems. (p. 96)

The linkages of a social network are useful, therefore, for the distribution of resources (Wellman, 1988). However, Wellman (1988) points out that “most ties specialize in the kinds of aid they provide” (p. 88). Network members must, therefore, maintain a diverse set of ties at different locations and scales to meet a variety of needs. This aspect of network analysis interfaces with social capital literature and contributes to a framework for discussing the ability of a church to facilitate urban development.

Social networks or communities of interest tend to be somewhat unstable (Wellman, Wong, Tindall & Nazer, 1997) and less holistic than neighborhood communities might be. According to Wellman et al. (1997),

Rather than dealing with one densely knit set of community members who provide a wide range of support, these Torontonians [in his longitudinal study] must maneuver among thinly connected partial communities and search among their supporters who are willing and able to provide the kind of help that is needed at the moment. (p. 48)

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In this study, Wellman and his colleagues find a “relative weakness of intimate neighbor ties as compared with intimate ties with immediate kin and friends” (p. 46). Elsewhere, Wellman (1996) notes that the strongest, most important ties in a network are not necessarily the nearest ones geographically.

However, Wellman (1996) also finds that proximity does play a role in the frequency of face-to-face contact between members of the network. They say

“[T]he physical availability of neighbors means that contact with them forms a relatively large proportion of a household’s interaction time (Wellman, 1996)....[W]e cannot dismiss the fact that any move out of a neighborhood will increase the difficulty of meeting network members in person. The Torontonians we have studied are in more contact with their neighbors than with their intimate network members (Gates et al., 1973, Wellman, 1996). (p. 40, 41)

Interestingly, the ability of contact to preserve ties has limits. Weekly telephone contact is as effective in preserving ties as more frequent telephone contact. In addition, daily face-to-face contact (likely through weak ties with neighbors or co-workers) is associated with less durability than less frequent contact (Wellman et al., 1997, p. 33). While interpersonal contact may reach a saturation state or even a point of diminishing network returns, the potential value of proximity is clear. While proximity does not ensure intimacy, it can obviously be used as an asset to develop mutually beneficial relationships. Wellman (1996) concludes that

...we cannot base an analysis of community solely on the neighborhood because so many intimate and active ties are not local. Yet the predominance of frequent contact with neighborhood and workmates should lead network analysts to bring proximity back into their investigations of community, along with the existing criteria of intimacy and supportiveness. (p. 353)

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Wellman (1988) notes with some concern that this turn in community research toward network analysis tends to neglect public communities (p. 87). As suggested earlier, the private-public divide in society may be bridged in part by church congregations. The congregation, like most social networks, is comprised of linkages between individuals. However, unlike many social networks, it also has a public presence embodied in its church building.

The spatial concentration of urbanization has changed the nature of interpersonal relationships, although not necessarily toward increased alienation as originally suggested. Instead, urbanization presents opportunities for more specialized relationships. Social distance implies an inherent spatiality in relationships. Distance decay theory posits decreasing social interaction with increasing distance between actors. Some empirical evidence from social impact theory and social network analysis suggests that more spatially concentrated social groups may have more opportunities for interpersonal interaction. Spatiality should be considered in any attempt to build community, those of interest or those of territory.

A recent transportation survey suggests that church congregations are spatially dispersed communities of interest. According to the National Personal Transportation Survey (Center for Transportation Analysis, 1995), the mean vehicle trip length for religious activities was 6.49 miles. Trip lengths of this magnitude also confirm society's automobile dependence. Data gathered for this study further quantify the dispersed spatial organization of congregations. Residential dispersion likely impacts communities of both interest and territory.

This study builds on theories described here to argue that the spatiality of congregations is consequential. The following methodology tests the relationship between spatial dispersion and social relations in church congregations.

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Chapter 7

THEORY, METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION

This study has suggested that faith-based institutions, such as church congregations, can be instrumental in promoting human, social, community and urban development. The study has reviewed the status of community in urban space and concluded that the concept of community is changing and becoming deterritorialized. However, evidence was also presented that spatial proximity is still an important factor in social relations. The objective of this study is to better understand the relationship between social organization and space for the purpose of improved community development praxis by church congregations. Assuming that the residential locations of church members reflect the spatial and social decisions of these individuals, this study seeks to answer the question: What if any impact does the spatial organization of a congregation have on its social organization? Based on the evidence presented, the study expects that the residential concentration or dispersion of members influences the level of social capital or sense of community in a congregation. More specifically, the study hypothesizes that higher levels of social capital in a congregation will be associated with greater spatial proximity between members of the congregation.

A second objective of the study is to address how congregational characteristics including the residential locations of members and the social capital within the congregation might impact the ability of a congregation to promote community development by extending its social capital outside of its

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membership. Because the data and construct validity for this second objective is weaker, the second portion of the study should be considered exploratory and speculative.

The research methodology consisted of data collection from three sources, data processing and analysis of patterns and relationships. Congregation member residential locations were identified and patterns were quantified. Data for this spatial analysis consisted of an address list processed with a geographic information system. Demographic data from the U. S. Bureau of the Census was assigned to churches and members based on their locations. Finally, a survey instrument was used to assess the sense of community or social capital present in the congregation and, to a limited extent, the congregation's engagement of the broader society. These data were processed to generate 21 variables for each congregation. A complete list of variable names and their meanings is included in Appendix A. Patterns were identified and relationships between variables were analyzed.

Preliminary Data

The area under study was an eight county region including the four-county Grand Rapids-Holland-Muskegon Metropolitan Statistical Area. Four counties contiguous to the metropolitan statistical area were included in the study area to maximize the percentage of household addresses georeferenced and to minimize boundary effects for congregations at the outskirts of the study area. A smaller study area may have increased biases for congregations that have greater percentages of members residing outside the study area.

The ARC/INFO[®] and ArcView[®] geographic information system software programs were used for geographic processing. U. S. Bureau of the Census TIGER⁶/Line[®] base files were obtained from three sources. TIGER/Line[®] files released in 1995 and 1997 were obtained directly from U. S. Bureau of the Census compact discs. TIGER/Line[®] files were also obtained from the World Wide Web site of Environmental Systems Research Institute, Inc. (ESRI) (<http://www.esri.com>). The TIGER/Line[®] files from ESRI were found to provide the best address match rate. Church buildings were georeferenced using the ArcView address-matching process so that their proximity to member residences and their neighborhood characteristics could be assessed. Figure 2 is a map of 91 churches that were successfully georeferenced. Measures of spatial organization and demographic variables were unavailable for the 10 churches that were not georeferenced.

⁶ Topographically Integrated Geographic Encoding and Referencing

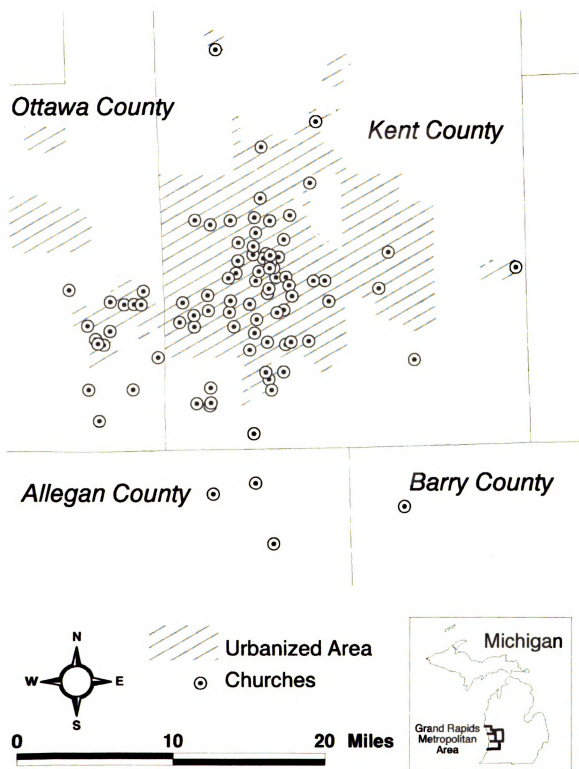


Figure 2: Christian Reformed Churches in Grand Rapids, MI

Congregational Spatial Organization

The Christian Reformed denominational authority provided 22,129 addresses of the church members of 101 congregations in the Grand Rapids area. Some of the addresses (1,087 or 4.9 percent) were eliminated from the dataset because they clearly could not be georeferenced. These included faulty addresses, post office boxes and those addresses obviously located outside the eight county study area. ArcView®'s address-matching process successfully georeferenced 78 percent (16,506) of the remaining 21,042 addresses.

Two tests were conducted to assess bias in the sample of addresses. First, the number of addresses georeferenced was compared to the number of families in the congregation. The original number of addresses (21,204) is greater than the number of families (13,461) as recorded in denominational membership records (Office of the General Secretary, 1998), but less than the number of total members (50,996). These differences occur in part because single member households are not considered families in the denominational census. The number of addresses georeferenced per congregation correlates very well ($r=0.93$) with the number of families per congregation.

Second, spatial bias was assessed by regressing the number of georeferenced addresses in each zip code area on the number of original addresses in each zip code area. Only 42 zip code areas with 30 or more addresses expected to be georeferenced were included in the regression. The association between the number of addresses actually georeferenced and the number expected to be georeferenced was high ($r=0.97$). The residual for each

zip code is mapped in Figure 3. The spatial distribution of residuals reveals some spatial bias. The highest positive residuals are in the center of the urbanized area, while the highest negative residuals are on the southern and eastern edge of the urbanized area. This bias is likely due to the changes of some zip codes in this part of the study area⁷.

⁷ The TIGER/Line® files probably contained older zip codes than those in the address list.

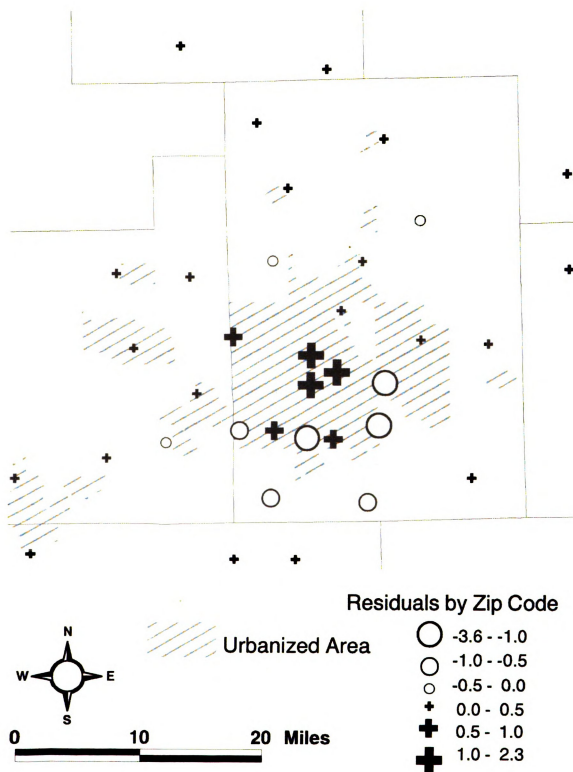


Figure 3: Spatial Bias in Address-Matching by Zip Code

Demographic Variables

Congregation variables include congregation size, three-year growth rate and youthfulness. Data for these variables was obtained from the annual yearbooks of the Christian Reformed Church in North America (Office of the General Secretary, 1996, 1997, 1998).

Additional demographic information was inferred about the members of each congregation by attributing to them the characteristics of the neighborhoods in which they lived. The racial, social and economic character of the neighborhood (census block group) was determined with data obtained from the U. S. Bureau of the Census Summary Tape File 3 through ESRI. These variables included the percentage of the population that is white, the percentage of the population that is college graduated and the poverty rate.

Values for these variables were assigned to each congregation member, and the median value for the congregation was used as a characterization of the congregation. Given the segregated nature of American cities (see chapter 4), this inference is not unreasonable. However, congregational heterogeneity was also inferred from the standard deviation of the poverty rate of the members' neighborhoods.

Similarly, neighborhood variables were assigned to each church building based on the census block group in which it was located. These demographic variables were included in the study to establish more comprehensive descriptions of the socio-spatial organization of the congregations.

Congregational Social Capital

The mobilization and expenditure of congregational social capital was measured with a two-page survey instrument (see Appendix B) mailed to pastors or council clerks of 101 congregations. The items of the survey included indicators of social capital and assessments of the congregation's valuing of internal and external congregational functions. The pastors or clerks were also asked to have two other key individuals complete the survey. Participating congregations could, therefore, provide up to three respondents, one of which was likely the pastor. The number of surveys returned was 103 from 49 congregations. The use of key informants in this study was the most manageable way to assess the social capital of numerous congregations. This methodology often provided data for survey questions that were left unanswered by some respondents. In addition, the methodology moderated the responses by producing an average response for a congregation with more than one key informant.

The methodology for assessing congregational social capital is not ideal. First, key informants can provide only limited, individual assessments of congregational social capital. Pastors may have perceptions of the church different from those of lay members (Barna Research Group, 1998b). Since responses were anonymous the study cannot differentiate between the perceptions of pastors and those of other key informants. A preferred methodology would have been to survey a sample from each congregation. Second, the sample of congregations was not random and could be skewed

toward those pastors with a greater interest in congregational social capital.

Third, the study uses sense of community as an indicator of social capital. A more direct and sophisticated measure of social capital would be valuable. For these reasons, this study should be considered exploratory of possible socio-spatial relationships in church congregations.

Chapter 8

ANALYSIS OF SPATIAL AND SOCIAL DATA

The spatial, demographic and social capital data formed a composite socio-spatial picture of each congregation. These data were analyzed to identify patterns and draw conclusions about relationships within the congregation. The analysis was comprised of four parts. First, the spatial organization, the demographic character and the social capital of each congregation were quantified. Second, the analysis used simple correlation as a preliminary examination of potential relationships. Third, regression models were developed to explain social capital and neighborhood interest. Finally, two cluster analyses were conducted to identify sets of socio-spatially similar congregations.

Congregational Character

Congregational Spatial Organization

The most common measures of central tendency and dispersion of a point distribution are the mean center and standard distance. Unfortunately, both of these measures are sensitive to extreme observations (Barber, 1988). To minimize these effects, two alternative measures, a median center and a median distance, were used in this study. A median center of a congregation was determined by calculating the median of the x coordinates and the median of the y coordinates of the members' residential locations. This measure of central tendency is a simplified modification of the Manhattan Median (Barber, 1988). In

addition, the median distance rather than the standard distance of residences from the median center was calculated as a measure of concentration or dispersion.

Two other statistics were calculated to describe the spatial organization of a congregation. The median distance of residences to the church building was considered important since the church building is the primary meeting location for most congregations. Not surprisingly, the median distance to the church correlates very highly with the median distance to the median center ($r=0.94$). Finally, the distance from the median center of the congregation to the church building was calculated as a measure of displacement of the congregation from its church.

Measures of spatial organization and demographic variables (see below) were not calculated for eight congregations with fewer than 30 households georeferenced. This sample was considered too small to adequately describe the congregation. The most spatially concentrated congregation had a median distance to its median center of 0.63 miles. The most dispersed congregation had a median distance to its median center of 6.24 miles. The mean median distance for all 93 congregations was 2.04 miles. Displacement of the median center of the congregation from the church was measured for only 84 congregations. The maximum displacement was 3.19 miles. The minimum displacement was 0.04 miles. The mean displacement was 0.75 miles. Dispersion is not merely a function of congregation size. The correlation between dispersion and size is nearly zero, although displacement is positively correlated

with size ($r=0.22$). Graphical examples of concentrated congregations are shown in Figure 4. Graphical examples of dispersed congregations are shown in Figure 5. The figures contain both urban and suburban congregations as well as centered and displaced congregations.

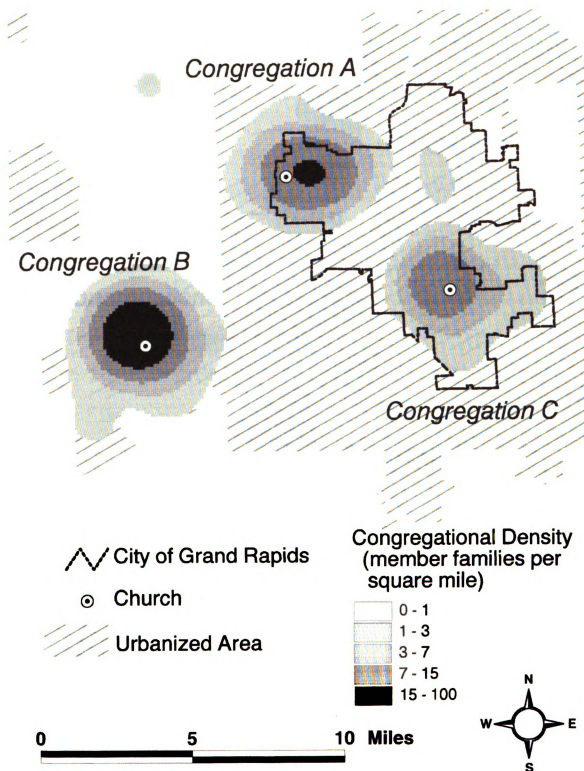


Figure 4: Selected Concentrated Congregations

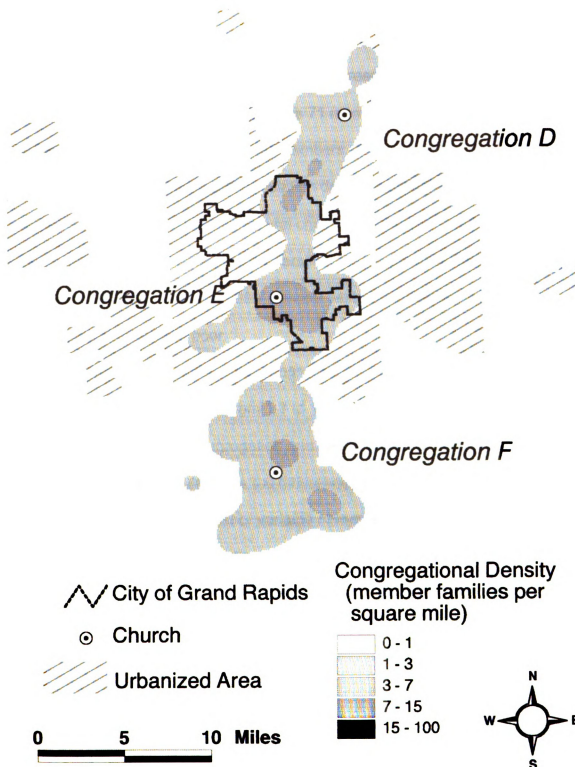


Figure 5: Selected Dispersed Congregation

Demographic Variables

A broad range of characteristics were represented by the congregations in the data set. The smallest congregation is 71 members, the largest is 2727 members, and the median size is 485 members. Some churches are located in highly urban neighborhoods with population densities greater than 14,000 persons per square mile. The most rural church is located in a census block group with a population density of 44 persons per square mile. Church neighborhoods also range from 99.7 percent white to 3.3 percent white and 75.7 percent poor to 0 percent poor.

The median members of the congregations live in neighborhoods from 85.3 to 99.6 percent white and from 1.3 to 14.9 percent poor. The social distance between members of the congregation and residents of the neighborhood of the church building was calculated as the difference between values of demographic variables. Again, a complete list of variable names and their meanings is included in Appendix A. A statistical summary of the data set is shown in Table 1.

Congregation Statistics	
Median size	485 members
Maximum median distance of members to median center	6.24 miles
Mean median distance of members to median center	2.04 miles
Maximum social capital (1-5)	4.21
Median social capital (1-5)	3.58
Maximum percent poor (location of church building)	75.7%
Maximum median percent poor (location of median congregation member)	14.9%
Median median percent poor	4.3%
Maximum standard deviation of percent poor (congregational heterogeneity)	17.4%
Median standard deviation of percent poor (congregational heterogeneity)	4.9%
Maximum growth rate	25.0%
Median growth rate	-1.4%

Table 1: Summary of Selected Congregation Statistics

Congregational Social Capital

An index of social capital was constructed from 12 Likert Scale-type items on the survey instrument. These items included:

Compared to other CRC congregations in the area...

1. ...the sense of community in this congregation is...
2. ...the level of intimacy in this congregation is.....
3. ...the level of trust between members in this congregation is...
4. ...congregation members are in each other's homes...
5. ...congregation members borrow belongings from each other...
6. ...members socialize with each other outside of church events...
7. ...new members find it easy to make friends in this congregation.
8. In a time of crisis almost all families in this congregation would immediately turn to other families in the congregation for support.
9. Almost all congregation members have many friends in this congregation.
10. Almost all members have a sense of belonging to the congregation.
11. Almost all members feel a sense of obligation toward the congregation.
12. Almost all congregation members would consider the congregation their primary or most important community.

Respondents were asked to choose one of five responses on scales such as "very weak, weak, average, strong, very strong" and "strongly disagree, disagree, unsure, agree, strongly agree". The five possible responses were

assigned values from one for low social capital to five for high social capital.

When a congregation was represented by more than one respondent, the mean of the responses for each item was considered the congregational response for the item. The mean of the congregational responses for all 12 items was considered the measure of congregational social capital. This self-reported measure of social capital had a median of 3.58 with a standard deviation of 0.33 on a scale of one to five. The maximum congregational social capital score was 4.21; the minimum was 2.83.

The items in the scale measured a relative strength of social ties within the congregation. Most of the items in the scale measured an aspect of sense of community. The study assumes that this sense of community and the social ties it represents were indicative of the presence of productive social capital.

However, two of the twelve items, related to borrowing belongings and support in times of crisis, addressed the productive potential of social capital more directly.

Other items in the survey instrument also attempted to measure the presence of social capital directly. For example, two questions asked the number of volunteer hours and the amount of financial gifts given by the congregation. A scale of the above 12 items was considered the most valid measure of social capital. The internal consistency reliability of the index, as measured by coefficient alpha, was 0.81.

The effectiveness of the congregation in promoting community development in the neighborhood of the church was not assessed by this study. However, respondents were asked to indicate the "priority most of your members

would give each of these [13] external or outreach church functions” on a scale from “not important” to “priority”. External functions included items such as prayer for others, food programs and counseling ministry. These responses were compared to a similar prioritization of internal church functions, such as Sunday worship, fellowship and Bible study to create a ratio of external orientation. This ratio indicates the extent to which the congregation is interested in the world outside itself relative to its emphasis on the maintenance of the congregation and its members. In addition, one of the external functions, “neighborhood ministry/mission”, was used as a specific measure of the importance to the congregation of neighborhood outreach.

These variables permit a cursory comparison of congregational social capital with congregational outreach. This comparison forms the basis of speculative commentary on the extension of social capital outside the congregation into the neighborhood. The results of the study would be far more conclusive if it measured the positive impact by congregations on neighborhoods. Still, this study argues merely that social capital is a potentially valuable resource that congregations can use to improve distressed neighborhoods surrounding their churches.

Variable Correlations

Pearson’s product moment correlation coefficient was calculated for each pair of variables as an initial analysis of relationships between variables. The complete correlation matrix is available in Appendix C. The correlation matrix reveals the potential presence and absence of several interesting relationships.

The congregational social capital (SOCINDEX) has no significant relationship with the spatial measures of dispersion (MEDDISTMEDCE) ($r=0.15$) or displacement (DSTMEDCENTCH) ($r=0.21$). The study had hypothesized that social capital would increase as spatial dispersion decreases. These correlation coefficients provide no evidence of a strong relationship between social capital and distance and suggest that the hypothesis should be rejected.

Other relationships between variables were not hypothesized; however, several potential patterns emerge from the data. First, and not surprisingly, congregational social capital seems to decrease as the size of the congregation (AVGTOTMEMB) increases ($r=-0.42$). Congregational social capital increases with interest in neighborhood ministry (NEIGHBINTER) ($r=0.40$). This correlation is supportive evidence that congregational social capital is a resource that could be transformed into positive benefits for a surrounding neighborhood. In addition, congregational social capital increases as the socio-economic status of the neighborhoods of the members (MEDPCTPOOR) declines ($r=0.30$) indicating that social capital could be an especially valuable resource in lower income neighborhoods.

Second, congregation dispersion (MEDDISTMEDCE) apparently has no relationship with congregation size (AVGTOTMEMB) ($r=-0.06$). Large congregations do not appear to be more dispersed than smaller congregations. Congregation dispersion is significantly associated with population density of the neighborhoods in which the members live (MEDPOPPSQMI) ($r=-0.42$). The finding that rural congregations tend to be more dispersed than urban

congregations is not surprising. Dispersed congregations seem also to be characterized by growth (GROWTH) ($r=0.27$) and youthfulness (YOUTHFULNESS) ($r=0.30$). In addition, dispersed congregations seem to have a high rate of voluntarism (VOLUNTRATIO) ($r=0.37$).

Third, interest by the congregation in the neighborhood of the church (NEIGHBINTER) seems highest for congregations that are displaced from the church (DSTMEDCENTCH) ($r=0.48$) and for churches located in neighborhoods with urban characteristics such as high population density (POPSPQMI) ($r=0.38$) and high poverty rate (PCTPOOR) ($r=0.39$). Similarly, an external orientation in the congregation (EXTERNALRATIO) increases with urban characteristics of the church. Congregations that have an external orientation also appear to be more heterogeneous (STDEVPCTPOOR) ($r=0.41$) suggesting that heterogeneity may contribute to a greater understanding of and concern for others.

Fourth, the further a congregation is displaced from its church building (DSTMEDCENTCH) the greater its social distance (racial, social and economic differences) will be from the residents of the neighborhood surrounding the church ($r=0.41$). However, social distance (SOCDIST) seems to increase with the congregation's interest in neighborhood ministry or mission (NEIGHBINTER) ($r=0.45$). This association may indicate that congregations that attend churches located in low-income neighborhoods are interested in the development of those neighborhoods, although the congregants generally are not willing to live in the neighborhoods. The social and physical distance between congregation

members and neighborhood members will likely limit the effectiveness of these congregations to facilitate neighborhood change.

Finally, congregations with members that live in poorer neighborhoods (MEDPCTPOOR) seem to be dispersed ($r=0.57$) and live far from their church ($r=0.51$). One might expect members in lower income neighborhoods to be *less* mobile and *more* likely to attend a nearby church than those in higher income neighborhoods. This result could reflect the general displacement of congregations (DSTMEDCENTCH) from churches in poor neighborhoods (PCTPOOR) ($r=0.48$).

Multiple Regression Models

Multiple regression was used to develop a model that explains the level of social capital in a congregation more fully. This technique identifies the impact of each explanatory variable on social capital. Independent explanatory variables should be selected for potential inclusion in the model based on previous research or theoretical reasoning that suggests a relationship between them and the dependent variable. This practice permits specific hypotheses to be tested. The first regression model developed for this study included only terms that appear to be theoretically related to social capital.

Theoretical Regression on Social Capital

Of particular interest in this study is whether spatial distance influences the sense of community or the level of social capital within a congregation. The literature reviewed in chapter 6 supported a hypothesis that decreased spatial

distance between actors will increase opportunities for social interaction and increase the level of social capital in the congregation. Several other potentially important variables were also included in the development of the model.

The distance of the members from one another (MEDDISTMEDCENT) was expected to contribute negatively to social capital because physical distance will inhibit social interaction. The rate of voluntarism (VOLUNTRATIO) was expected to contribute positively to social capital since social capital increases with use (Putnam, 1993). Because voluntarism could also be an indicator or result of social capital, inclusion of this variable may constitute a specification error in the model. The size of the congregation (AVGTOTMEMB) was expected to contribute negatively to social capital because of the greater intimacy available or perceived in smaller groups. Sense of community, for example, seems more easily observed in smaller groups. The rate at which members leave and join the congregation (VOLATILITY) is expected to contribute negatively to social capital since membership change inhibits opportunities to develop relationships of trust. The economic diversity in the congregation (using STDEVPCTPOOR as an indicator) was expected to contribute negatively to social capital since diversity or increased social distance between members may inhibit relationship-building. MEDPOPPSQMI, the population density of the neighborhoods of the congregation members, was also included in the development of the model. According to Wirth (1939), density or urbanization would contribute negatively to social capital since urban residents have numerous relational resources readily available and depend less on any particular set of relationships. Rural residents,

on the other hand, may depend more on their interest group (congregational) membership for social capital support. That population density would decrease social capital and member proximity would increase social capital is not contradictory because two separate mechanisms may be at work. Finally, the expected contribution of the poverty level of member neighborhoods (MEDPCTPOOR) was unclear. It could be expected to contribute negatively to social capital because increased member wealth may make more time available for volunteering within the congregation (Qiaoming, Ryan, Aurbach & Besser, 1998). Alternatively, lower income congregation members may depend on social capital relatively more than on financial or other types of capital.

Five cases were eliminated from the dataset because they were identified as being outliers or having high leverages. The case with the greatest positive residual and the case with the greatest negative residual were also eliminated. The results of the multiple regression are shown in Table 2. Significant contributions are shaded.

Dep Var:	SOCINDEX					
N:	33					
Multiple R:	0.766					
Squared multiple R:	0.586					
Adjusted squared multiple R:	0.471					
Standard error of estimate:	0.201					
Effect	Coefficient	Std Error	Std Coef	Tolerance	t	P(2 Tail)
CONSTANT	4.042	0.231	0.000		17.518	0.000
MEDDISTMEDCE	-0.065	0.069	-0.172	0.493	-0.940	0.356
VOLUNTRATIO	-8.119	6.558	-0.180	0.786	-1.238	0.227
AVGTOTMEMB	-0.001	0.000	-0.588	0.688	-3.791	0.001
VOLATILITY	-1.810	1.014	-0.239	0.925	-1.785	0.086
STDEVPCTPOOR	0.054	0.028	0.457	0.303	1.954	0.062
MEDPOPPSQMI	-0.000	0.000	-0.609	0.237	-2.304	0.030
MEDPCTPOOR	0.058	0.031	0.293	0.703	1.912	0.067

Table 2: Output of Theoretical Regression on Social Capital

The output in Table 2 indicates that group size (AVGTOTMEMB) and neighborhood population density (MEDPOPPSQMI) contribute significantly ($\alpha=0.05$, one-tailed test) to the model, explaining 47.1 percent of the variation in congregational social capital. Both of these variables have a negative influence on social capital.

Assumptions of Multiple Regression

Several assumptions of multiple linear regression must be satisfied for the results to be valid. First, an assumption is made that linear relationships exist between independent and dependent variables. A scatterplot of relationships between variables is shown in Figure 6. Most variables have little apparent relationship, satisfying the assumption of linearity. Only MEDPOPPSQMI appears to have a possible curvilinear relationship with SOCINDEX. To examine this relationship further, an added-variable plot, shown in Figure 7, was constructed. This plot also reveals a possible curvilinear relationship between residuals indicating a potential problem with the satisfaction of this assumption.

A second assumption of regression is that weak correlations exist between independent variables. The correlation coefficients for pairs of independent variables are shown in Table 3. The highest correlation, 0.761, is near to the 0.8 level of concern. The lowest tolerance, 0.237, is approaching zero. Tolerances should be above 0.5 to provide evidence of no multicollinearity. Two condition indices, 17.533 and 19.328, fall between 10 and 30 indicating moderate multicollinearity between variables.

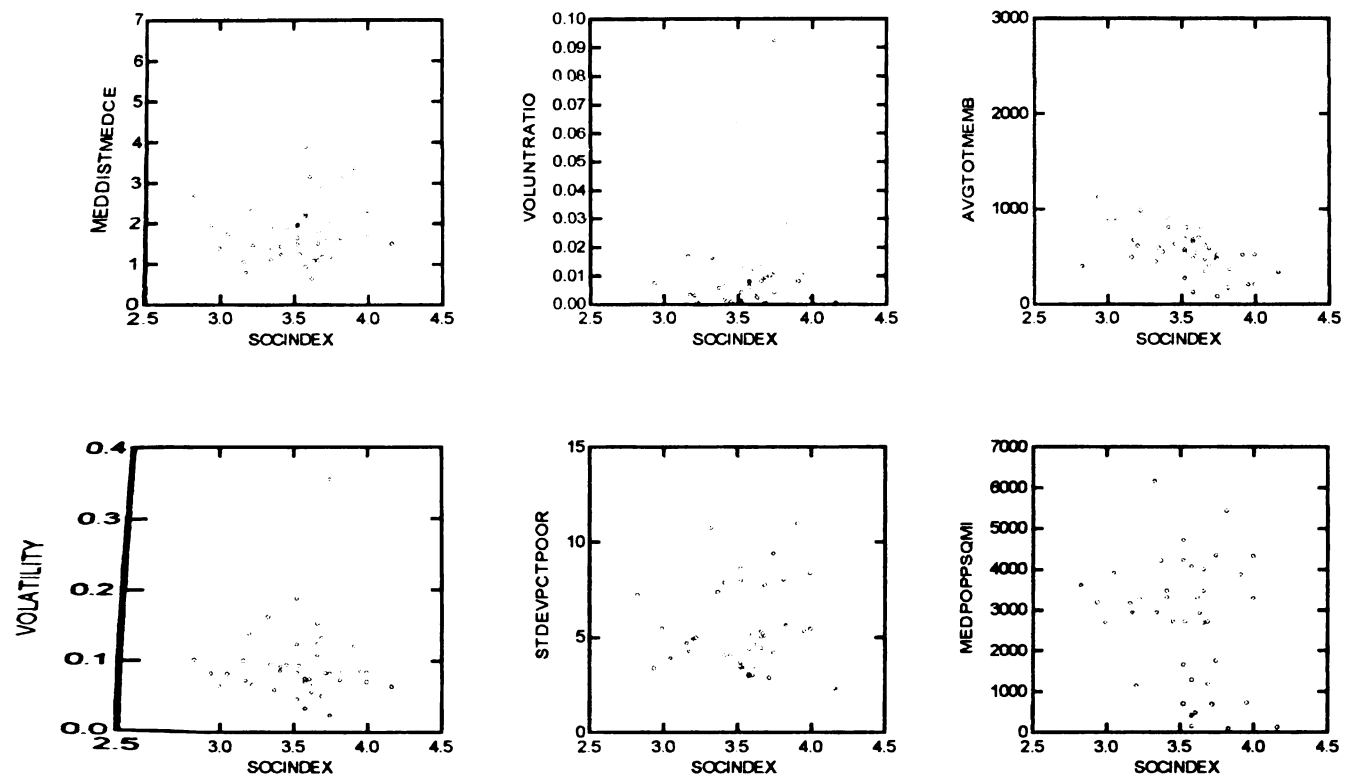


Figure 6: Scatterplots of Independent Variables against Dependent Variable

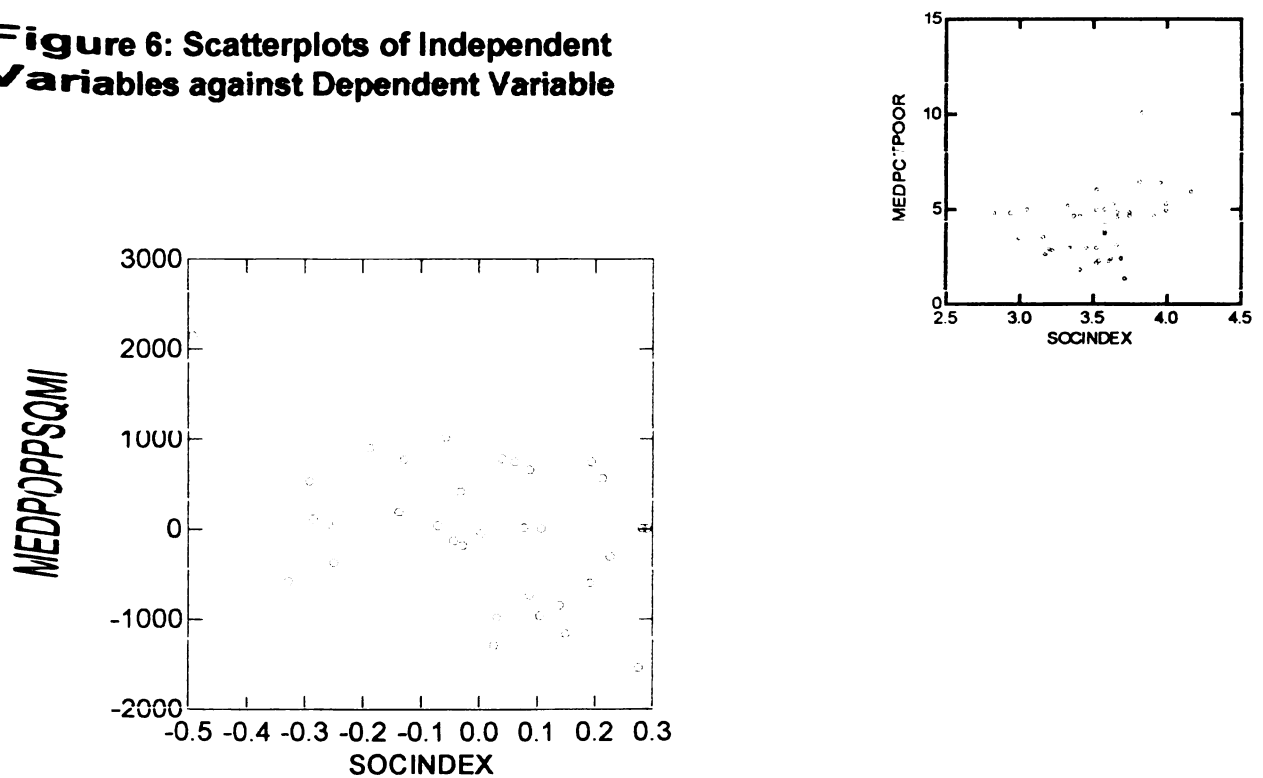


Figure 7: Added-Variable Plot for MEDPOPPSQMI and SOCINDEX

	MEDDISTMEDCE	VOLUNTRATIO	AVGTOTMEMB	VOLATILITY	STDEVPCTPOOR	MEDPOPPSQMI	MEDPCTPOOR	RESIDUALS
MEDDISTMEDCE	1.000							
VOLUNTRATIO	0.119	1.000						
AVGTOTMEMB	0.028	-0.483	1.000					
VOLATILITY	0.165	0.761	-0.071	1.000				
STDEVPCTPOOR	0.150	0.182	-0.057	0.174	1.000			
MEDPOPPSQMI	-0.374	0.110	0.054	0.105	0.575	1.000		
MEDPCTPOOR	0.454	0.205	-0.304	0.042	0.395	0.093	1.000	
RESIDUALS	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	1.000

Table 3: Correlation Coefficients for Independent Variables and Residuals

Third, a valid multiple regression assumes a lack of relationship between **residuals** and independent variables. These correlation coefficients, all zero, are **also** contained in Table 3.

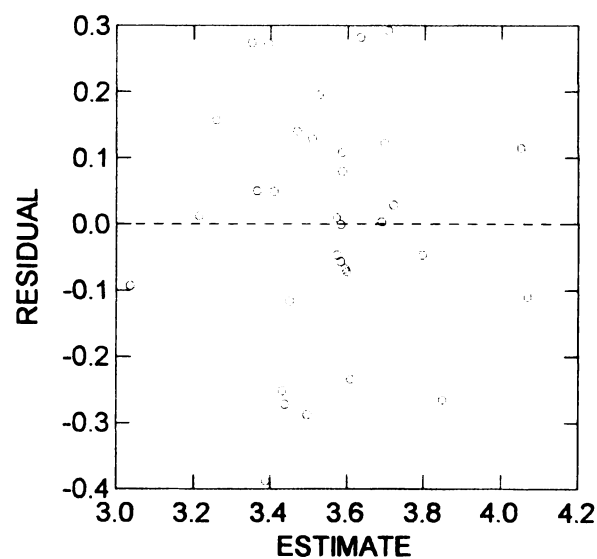


Figure 8: Plot of Residuals against Estimates of Dependent Variable

Fourth, the assumption of homoscedasticity was examined.

Homoscedasticity is the extent to which the residuals have no pattern relative to the dependent variable. The plot of residuals against estimates of the dependent variable in Figure 8 appears fairly random, indicating homoscedasticity in the data.

Fifth, a valid multiple regression assumes that residuals are normally distributed. The distribution of residuals was examined with a histogram, a probability plot and the Lilliefors goodness-of-fit test. The histogram and probability plot, shown in Figures 9 and 10, indicate some possible non-normality in the distribution of the residuals. However, the Lilliefors goodness-of-fit statistic provides evidence that the residuals are normally distributed. The test statistic is 0.088, which is less than 0.154, the critical value of this test statistic ($n=33$, $\alpha=0.05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis that the distribution is normal is not rejected.

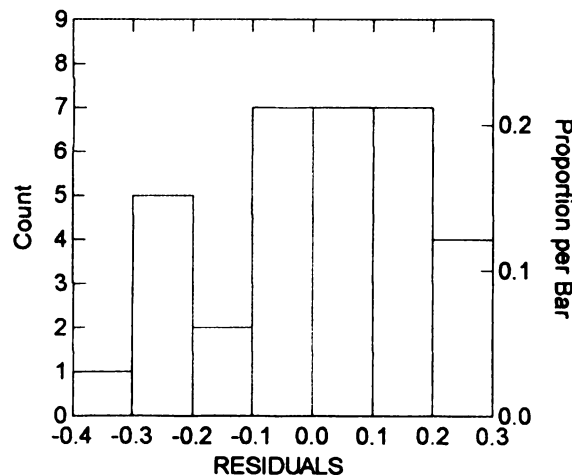


Figure 9: Histogram of Residuals

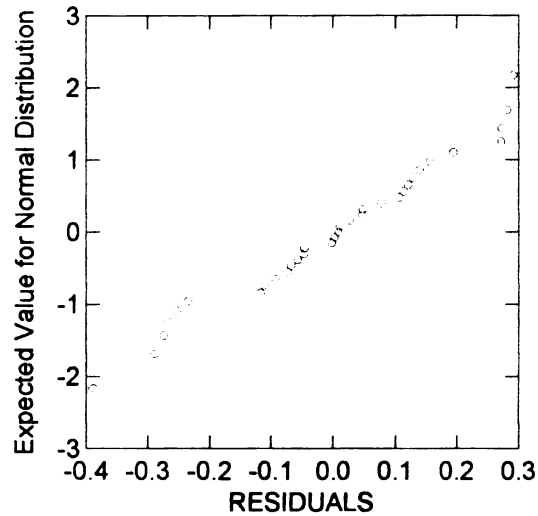
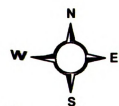


Figure 10: Probability Plot of Residuals

Finally, spatial autocorrelation, the principle that geographically proximal units behave or are characterized similarly, can invalidate multiple regression. Figure 11 is a map of residuals for the regression on social capital. As the map indicates, some spatial patterns may be present in the residuals with highly positive residuals clustered toward the west.



Residuals for Social Capital Regression



0 5 10 Miles

Urbanized Area

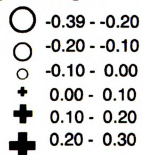


Figure 11: Social Capital Regression Residuals

In summary, the examination of assumptions of multiple regression reveals some potential problems with the regression, calling into question the validity of the model. Interpretation of these results should be made with the understanding that some assumptions of regression may have been violated. More credible results may be achieved through further manipulation of variables and the use of a larger sample.

Regression of Principal Components on Social Capital

A second regression model was developed using principal components of the data. Variables (excluding social capital, the dependent variable) were grouped into five sets of similar variables called components or factors. One variable (that which "loaded" most heavily on the component) was selected from each component to represent that set of variables. The components were broadly defined as urbanness, dispersion/commitment, size/social status, youthful stability and outreach orientation. The variables selected to represent these components were racial composition of the neighborhood of the church (PCTWHITE), distance of members to the church (MEDDISTCHUR), education level of the neighborhood of the church (PCTCOLLGRAD), youthfulness of the congregation (YOUTHFULNESS), and relative importance of external to internal congregational functions (EXTERNALRATIO). The matrix of how each variable contributed to each extracted component is shown in Table 4.

VARIABLES	FACTORS				
	URBANNESS	DISPERSION/ COMMITMENT	SIZE/ SOCIAL STATUS	YOUTHFUL STABILITY	OUTREACH ORIENTATION
PCTWHITE	-0.900	-0.042	0.008	0.223	-0.102
MEDPCTWHITE	-0.897	-0.020	-0.294	0.001	-0.026
POPPSQMI	0.895	-0.147	-0.144	0.087	0.059
SOCDIST	0.881	0.059	-0.140	-0.321	0.165
PCTPOOR	0.820	0.259	-0.136	-0.341	0.227
MEDPOPPSQMI	0.797	-0.259	0.033	0.323	0.231
STDEVPCTPOOR	0.664	0.223	0.072	0.259	0.514
MEDPCTCOLLGR	0.559	-0.020	0.701	0.010	0.127
CONTRIBRATIO	0.526	0.416	0.327	0.133	-0.114
MEDDISTCHUR	-0.102	0.971	0.032	-0.079	0.061
MEDDISTMEDCE	-0.271	0.825	0.009	-0.146	0.136
DSTMEDCENTCH	0.369	0.821	0.089	-0.078	0.200
VOLUNTRATIO	-0.044	0.744	-0.280	0.136	-0.392
MEDPCTPOOR	0.269	0.670	-0.401	0.095	-0.339
PCTCOLLGRAD	-0.257	0.005	0.774	0.313	-0.024
AVGTOTMEMB	-0.024	-0.481	0.598	-0.167	-0.076
YOUTHFULNESS	0.186	0.346	0.030	-0.760	-0.058
VOLATILITY	0.109	0.400	0.135	0.726	-0.206
EXTERNALRATIO	0.299	-0.085	0.002	-0.122	0.877
NEIGHBINTER	0.458	0.264	-0.389	0.020	0.561
GROWTH	0.272	0.338	0.435	-0.302	-0.241

Table 4: Rotated Loading Matrix of Principal Components for Regression

Two cases were eliminated from the dataset because they were identified as being outliers or having high leverages. The case with the greatest positive residual and the case with the greatest negative residual were also eliminated. A regression of these five variables produced the results shown in Table 5. Significant contributions are shaded.

Dep Var:	SOCINDEX					
N:	35					
Multiple R:	0.621					
Squared multiple R:	0.386					
Adjusted squared multiple R:	0.280					
Standard error of estimate:	0.239					
Effect	Coefficient	Std Error	Std Coef	Tolerance	t	P(2 Tail)
CONSTANT	2.913	0.531	0.000		5.487	0.000
MEDDISTCHUR	0.145	0.053	0.442	0.817	2.743	0.010
YOUTHFULNESS	-0.759	0.746	-0.170	0.757	-1.017	0.318
EXTERNALRATIO	0.701	0.422	0.270	0.802	1.661	0.108
PCTWHITE	0.001	0.001	0.150	0.750	0.893	0.379
PCTCOLLGRAD	-0.011	0.004	-0.389	0.878	-2.507	0.016

Table 5: Output of Principal Components Regression on Social Capital

This outcome indicates that the distance of members from their church (MEDDISTCHUR) and the social status of the church neighborhood (using PCTCOLLGRAD as a proxy) are significant factors in the equation, explaining 28.0 percent of the variation in social capital using a two-tailed test with $\alpha=0.1$. Assumptions were not examined for the regression on social capital by principal components of the data.

Interpretation of Social Capital Multiple Regression Models

The two regression models described above provide some evidence that the level of social capital in a congregation may be influenced positively by distance of members to the church building and negatively by congregation size, population density of member neighborhoods and educational attainment of the church neighborhood. This finding fails to support the hypothesis that physical proximity promotes social interaction and stimulates the development of social capital. Based on this evidence, the hypothesis that social capital increases with spatial proximity is rejected. In contrast, the social capital in the congregation

seems to increase as members disperse and their residential distance from the church increases. An alternative hypothesis is discussed in chapter 9. That social capital seems to be lower for congregations in more urbanized areas seems to support Wirth's argument that cities breed a certain amount of individualism.

While not statistically significant, the contributions of the economic status and economic diversity of the congregation may be meaningful. Social capital seems to be higher for congregations that live in a variety of somewhat low-income neighborhoods. These relationships suggest that social capital may be serving as an alternative to financial capital. Surprisingly, the effect of congregation economic diversity (STDEVPCTPOOR) on social capital appears to be positive, opposite to that anticipated. Volatility of the congregation (rates of members leaving and joining) seems associated with lower levels of social capital, as expected, although the contribution is not statistically significant.

Finally, that several other variables do not contribute to an explanation of social capital is itself an interesting finding. It may indicate that sense of community is fairly robust and could be intentionally developed in a variety of settings. These results suggest, at least, that complex relationships are at work between the variables measured for this study and others not included here. Future research with more carefully constructed causal processes, additional and more precisely defined variables, and larger datasets is required for more conclusive results regarding the development of social capital in organizations.

Theoretical Regression on Neighborhood Interest

A congregation can strengthen its own sense of community and generate internal social capital. It can also promote external community development by facilitating social development in the neighborhood surrounding the church. A regression model was constructed to explore potential correlates for congregational interest in the neighborhood of the church. This portion of the study relies on subjective data to draw speculative or exploratory conclusions about congregations and community development. The dependent variable selected was NEIGHBINTER. This survey item asked key informants to identify the "priority most of your members would give [to]...[n]eighborhood ministry/mission". Respondents were expected to circle one of five choices from "not important" to "priority".

Several explanatory variables were selected for potential inclusion in the model. The distance of the members from the church building (MEDDISTCHUR) was expected to contribute negatively to concern about the neighborhood because physical distance from the neighborhood of the church will decrease concern for or interest in the neighborhood. As mentioned earlier, the social capital of the congregation (SOCINDEX) may be indicative of a survival mentality. However, here the assumption was made that social capital represents a generally healthy organization and will contribute positively to concern for the neighborhood outside the church. The size of the congregation (AVGTOTMEMB) is expected to contribute positively to a prioritization of neighborhood in that a larger organization would have more resources (human, financial and physical)

available for outreach work. Finally, the poverty level of the neighborhood of the church (PCTPOOR) is expected to contribute positively to an interest in and concern about the neighborhood. The output for the neighborhood interest regression model is shown in Table 6. Significant contributions are shaded.

Dep Var:	NEIGHBINTER					
N:	37					
Multiple R:	0.696					
Squared multiple R:	0.484					
Adjusted squared multiple R:	0.420					
Standard error of estimate:	0.616					
Effect	Coefficient	StdError	StdCoef	Tolerance	t	P(2Tail)
CONSTANT	-2.949	1.509	0.000		-1.955	0.059
MEDDISTCHUR	-0.022	0.150	-0.021	0.789	-0.145	0.886
SOCINDEX	1.443	0.368	0.577	0.746	3.924	0.000
AVGTOTMEMB	0.001	0.001	0.301	0.661	1.927	0.063
PCTPOOR	0.052	0.013	0.575	0.787	4.021	0.000

Table 6: Output of Theoretical Regression on Neighborhood Interest

The sense of community of the congregation (SOCINDEX), the congregation size (AVGTOTMEMB) and the poverty level of the neighborhood of the church (PCTPOOR) all contribute significantly ($\alpha=0.05$, one-tailed test) and positively to an explanation of 42.0 percent of the priority a congregation places on ministry in the neighborhood of the church. These results suggest that large congregations located in poor neighborhoods have both the interest and the resources necessary to actively promote positive change. That sense of community is positively related to a high interest in and concern for the neighborhood again provides evidence that the social capital of a community of interest or social network could be transformed into benefits for those that are external to or on the fringes of the network. Assumptions were not examined for this regression on neighborhood interest.

A Socio-spatial Typology of Congregations

To conclude the statistical analysis of this study, principal components were again extracted from the data and congregations were clustered into similar **sets**. These analyses produced a general socio-spatial categorization of the **congregations**.

Because no time series data is included in the dataset, an R-mode **approach** was used with 21 variables. Only 33 cases had data for all 21 **variables**. The low ratio of cases to variables gives an exploratory tone to this **analysis**. Because the variables in this dataset are measured in different units, **the** correlation matrix (rather than the covariance matrix) was used in the **analysis**. Only five of the six factors with eigenvalues greater than one were **retained**. The sixth factor had a marginal eigenvalue of 1.058, and five factors **were** most easily interpreted. The resultant factors were rotated (using the most **common** varimax rotation) to assist in the interpretation of the factors. The **rotated** loading matrix for five factors is shown in Table 7. The loading of the **variables** contributing highly to each factor is shaded.

VARIABLES	URBANNESS	DISPERSION/ COMMITMENT	FACTORS SIZE/ SOCIAL STATUS	YOUTHFUL VITALITY	OUTREACH VITALITY
PCTWHITE	-0.922	-0.060	0.008	-0.181	-0.083
SOCDIST	0.906	0.060	-0.150	0.259	0.157
MEDPCTWHITE	-0.905	-0.052	-0.258	-0.016	-0.021
PCTPOOR	0.822	0.216	-0.171	0.200	0.252
POPPSQMI	0.816	-0.112	0.023	-0.012	-0.016
MEDPOPPSQMI	0.805	-0.233	0.147	-0.234	0.148
STDEVPCTPOOR	0.654	0.100	-0.062	-0.284	0.191
MEDPCTCOLLGR	0.522	-0.002	0.768	0.062	0.012
MEDDISTCHUR	-0.093	0.949	0.063	0.102	0.165
MEDDISTMEDCE	-0.253	0.804	0.052	0.141	0.224
VOLUNTRATIO	-0.098	0.781	-0.259	-0.101	-0.310
DSTMEDCENTCH	0.383	0.773	0.102	0.111	0.253
MEDPCTPOOR	0.294	0.707	-0.392	-0.093	-0.173
PCTCOLLGRAD	-0.216	0.045	0.834	-0.284	-0.086
AVGTOTMEMB	-0.070	-0.468	0.563	0.264	-0.126
SOCINDEX	-0.091	0.340	-0.501	-0.043	0.627
YOUTHFULNESS	0.181	0.338	-0.052	0.752	0.002
VOLATILITY	0.152	0.426	0.073	-0.696	-0.173
EXTERNALRATIO	0.412	-0.147	0.082	0.086	0.803
NEIGHBINTER	0.444	0.242	-0.188	0.002	0.676
GROWTH	0.132	0.353	0.357	0.409	-0.249
"Variance" Explained by Rotated Components	5.994	4.223	2.413	1.718	2.031
Percent of Total Variance Explained	28.545	20.109	11.490	8.179	9.673

Table 7: Rotated Loading Matrix for Principal Components Analysis

The variables combined to create five factors or variable composites.

Combinations of different types of variables made clear interpretations of the components somewhat difficult. The variables that loaded highly on factor one included demographic variables and social distance. This variable composite was called *Urbanness*. The variables that loaded highly on factor two include the spatial variables but also the variable of volunteering. This variable composite was called *Dispersion/Commitment*. The variables that loaded highly on factor

three include the congregation size and the percent of adult population that are college graduates in both the neighborhood of the church and the neighborhoods of the members. Social capital also loaded moderately on this component. This variable composite was called *Size/Social Status*. The variables that loaded highly on factor four include high youthfulness and low volatility. This variable composite was called *Stable Vitality*, assuming youthfulness is a sign of a healthy, vibrant organization. A congregation scoring low on this factor may be elderly and in decline. The variables that loaded highly on factor five include an interest in the church neighborhood as well as an external orientation in general. High sense of community or social capital also loaded highly on this factor. This variable composite was called *Outreach Vitality*, assuming social capital or sense of community indicate a healthy organization, strong enough to be both internally cohesive and externally engaged. A congregation scoring low on this factor may be traditional and formal, neither warmly communal nor active outside its walls. These factors explain 78.0 percent of the variance in the data.

Factor scores are a measure of the impact of each factor on each case. These standardized scores were used to group cases into clusters. First, Ward's minimum variance method was used in a hierarchical clustering. The resulting dendrogram (see Appendix D) indicated that congregations were likely to form three or five clusters. The K-means partitioning clustering method was used with five cluster seeds and two cases removed. Only 21 of the 31 cases were classified the same by the two methods, reflecting the complexity of both the

principal components and the clusters. Cluster statistics are contained in Appendix E.

The cluster parallel coordinate plots and cluster profile plots in Appendix F are graphic representations of the cluster descriptive statistics. They suggested the following characterizations of the clusters:

- Cluster one contains congregations that scored low on *Urbanness*, *Size/Social Status*, and *Outreach Vitality*. These congregations are likely to be small, rural and traditional.
- Cluster two contains congregations that scored very high on factors one and four indicating that they are urban and somewhat youthfully vital.
- Cluster three contains congregations that scored high *Size/Social Status* but low on *Outreach Vitality*. These congregations tend to be large and traditional with limited social capital or outreach orientation.
- Cluster four is the largest cluster. The congregations in this cluster are typically characterized by a moderate score on most factors. They may be somewhat smaller, possibly in decline but with some social capital or outreach orientation.
- Finally, cluster five contains only three congregations, which are large and dispersed but, apparently, comprised of committed, outreach-oriented members.

The five clusters of congregations are mapped in Figure 12. Not Surprisingly, these classifications manifest themselves spatially. Many of the

variables have a spatial component. Because American metropolitan places tend to **be** highly segregated, demographic data and other social patterns are often **clearly** evident on the landscape. The spatial patterns correspond, perhaps, to **congregational** responses to an evolving urban landscape. This type of analysis is **helpful** for beginning to understand what Ammerman (1997) calls the "religious ecology" (p. 310) of greater Grand Rapids. For example, as the neighborhoods around the most urban churches have changed, these congregations may have **reinvented** themselves as stable "niche congregations" (Ammerman, 1997, p. 36) **with** a youthful orientation.

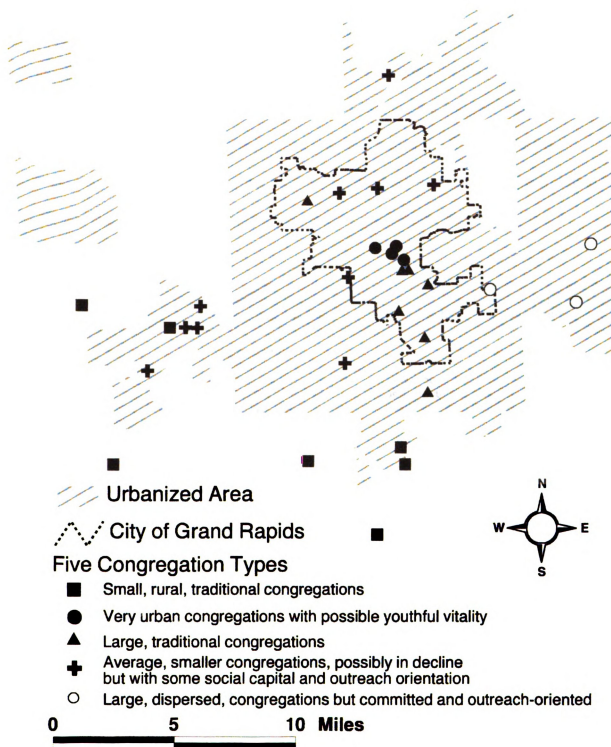


Figure 12: Socio-spatial Congregation Types

A simplified cluster analysis was conducted to classify the congregations' **ability** to facilitate neighborhood development. The analysis used only two **variables** of high interest in this study: social capital and distance of members to **the church**. It assumed these two qualities, social capital and the proximity **necessary** to build relationships, were valuable resources for the effective **facilitation** of community development in the neighborhood of the church. Table 8 is a simple matrix describing the expected effect of each variable on **congregation efficacy**.

	High Social Capital within the Congregation	Low Social Capital within the Congregation
High Distance to Church Neighborhood	Low Potential Many organizational resources but few opportunities to extend benefits to the neighborhood through relationships	Low Potential Few organizational resources and few opportunities to extend benefits to the neighborhood through relationships
Low Distance to Church Neighborhood	High Potential Many organizational resources and many opportunities to extend benefits to the neighborhood through relationships	Low Potential Few organizational resources although many opportunities to extend benefits to the neighborhood through relationships

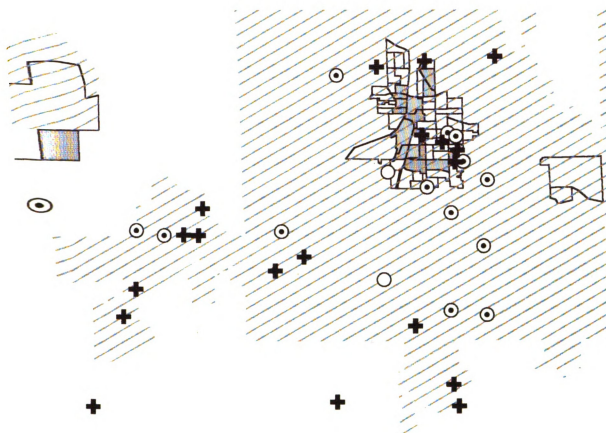
Table 8: Potential for Congregation to Facilitate Community Development

To improve the cluster analysis, two cases were eliminated from the dataset. Two factors were constructed from the two variables, and three congregation clusters were identified based on how the cases loaded on the factors.

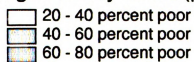
Cluster one contains congregations relatively high in social capital and low in distance from the church neighborhood. These congregations will have the best chance to use their proximity to build relationships that project the benefits of social capital into the neighborhood. One must remember, however, that even

the most concentrated congregations are still relatively dispersed. The minimum median distance of members to their church is 0.71 miles and the median median distance of members to their church is 2.04 miles. At these distances relationship-building based on frequent face-to-face interaction remains difficult. Cluster two is comprised of congregations of varying dispersions. These congregations also tend to be quite low in social capital. This type of congregation has few interpersonal resources to share (due to limited social capital) and, in some instances, few opportunities to facilitate neighborhood development (due to geographic distance). Finally, congregations in cluster three have moderate levels of social capital but are high in distance rendering difficult the transfer of their social capital. All three clusters are mapped in Figure 13. Cluster one is mapped with a plus sign to indicate high congregational potential to facilitate development. Clusters two and three are shown as circles to suggest lower congregation potential. Figure 13 also identifies the low-income neighborhoods in the Grand Rapids area. Those high potential congregations located in low-income neighborhoods have an excellent opportunity to be instrumental in community development.

The analysis in this chapter has identified several relationships between variables of congregations. The mapping of congregation types partially describes how congregations of specific character relate to metropolitan environments. The next chapter summarizes and interprets the findings regarding congregational socio-spatiality and presents some implications for community development.



High Poverty Areas (percent poor by census block group)



 Urbanized Area

Congregational Neighborhood Development Potential

- +** High Potential: high social capital, low distance
- ⊙** Low Potential: low social capital, variable distances
- Low Potential: moderate social capital, high distance

0 5 10 Miles

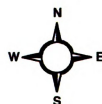



Figure 13: Congregations Clustered by Outreach Potential

Chapter 9

THE SOCIO-SPATIALITY OF CONGREGATIONS

This research explores associations between spatial and social variables of church congregations. The results presented in the previous chapter reveal the presence of several possible associations between these variables. These findings lead to a greater understanding of the composition of social organizations in space. The analysis of the data focused first on the relationship between distance and social capital. It also examined other potential influences on both social capital and neighborhood interest. Finally, it constructed a more comprehensive socio-spatial portrait of congregations.

This study expected the physical distance between the homes of congregation members to negatively influence the ability of the congregation to accumulate social capital as indicated by its sense of community. A negative association was expected because increased dispersion inhibits opportunities for face-to-face social interaction and the creation of social capital. An alternative rationalization for the same relationship is that high social capital and sense of community in the congregation motivate congregation members to reside near to one another. The data in this study indicate only weak relationships between physical and social distance. Of interest is the potential *positive* relationship between physical distance and social capital found in the regression of principal components of the data. This finding suggests that social capital may increase as

the members of congregations in this study disperse. Several explanations for this phenomenon are possible.

First, numerous variables, not measured by this study, will affect the mobilization of social capital. For example, a pastor or other key individuals in the congregation can promote a high sense of community. The dataset does not contain information about the charisma or capacity of the pastor, which may be important factors in this relationship. Historic trends in organizational culture of the congregation clearly play a role in the sense of community in a congregation.

Second, the impact of distance on social capital may be very difficult to detect for a nonlinear function of distance with respect to social capital. Gravity and distance decay models suggest interaction is a function of the inverse square of distance. In addition, the private automobile has afforded tremendous mobility and flexibility in contemporary society, further distorting a simple function by decreasing the friction of distance for moderate distances. For example, the level of interaction may be highest and most highly dependent on physical separation for distances less than 100 meters. At this scale face-to-face contact depends only on pedestrian transportation. At all distances from 100 meters to 1000 meters, the number of social interactions may be lower but constant with distance because each of these moderate trips is perceived to require the use of an automobile. At distances greater than 1000 meters, the number of face-to-face contacts may again decline with distance as the friction of distance limits automobile trips. In other words, increases in levels of social capital in

congregations may be observable only after a certain member concentration threshold is achieved.

Third, while Euclidean distance is used in this study, more subtle forms of distance, including time distance, may play a role in the amount of social interaction that occurs. Similarly, physical dispersion could *increase* interpersonal contact by other means (telephone or e-mail, for example). A positive association between distance and social capital could be explained, then, by an increased level of participation in virtual community. Social capital can be generated in virtual communities but is enhanced when these communities are associated with physical proximity (Blanchard & Horan, 1998). Research by Wellman (1996) shows that network members with local social ties (less than one mile) have *both* more face-to-face contact *and* more telephone contact than those with long distance ties (greater than five miles)⁸.

Other causal mechanisms could be at work to explain a positive influence of distance on social capital. For example, higher income congregation members have the means to travel greater distances to church. They are also more likely to volunteer time to the church congregation (Twombly & De Vita, 1998), a practice that builds social capital. That high member income would explain both member dispersion and high social capital, however, is unlikely. The data in this study showed social capital increasing with the poverty rate of member

⁸ Telephone contact is the greatest for those at intermediate distances (one to five miles). Wellman points out that, "...local ties have more contact (by telephone and face-to-face) than those who live further away.... Although most contacts are outside the neighborhood, local ties are important sources of people's routine interactions" (p. 350-351).

neighborhoods and decreasing with the level of education in member neighborhoods.

One could attempt to explain a positive association between distance and social capital by calling social capital, not distance, the independent or explanatory variable. Congregations that have intentionally developed a strong sense of community and high social capital may have a “product” attractive to potential members. Central place theory suggests that high-order centers (congregations) which offer more or better goods and services (such as high sense of community, for example) will exert a stronger gravitational pull on potential members and command a greater range attracting members from great distances. These congregations may draw members from outside the immediate neighborhood of the church. However, distance decay and gravity theories maintain that these congregations would draw even *more* members from nearby the church. The gravitational pull exerted by “products” such as social capital is exerted on nearby residents more strongly than on those at a distance.

Most likely, a positive relationship between dispersion and sense of community is explained by the nature of dispersed or commuter “niche congregations” (Ammerman, 1997, p. 36). According to Ammerman, one option for a congregation faced with a changing environment is to target a specific market segment. This congregation reinvents itself to appeal to a specific type of person. It attracts this type of individual from across the metropolitan area. Because its members fit a certain profile, the congregation is likely to be very

homogeneous. The low social distance within niche congregations would correspond to a high level of cohesion and sense of community.

Contemporary urban neighborhoods are typically characterized by ethnic, social and economic homogeneity. Yet, paradoxically, neighborhood congregations, which members attend because of proximity rather than "choice", may be more diverse than dispersed congregations. Communities of interest, such as niche congregations, may draw members out of socially homogeneous neighborhoods into even more homogeneous social groups (Rheingold cited in Wellman et al., 1996).

Earlier, the possible positive relationship between social capital and the economic heterogeneity (STDEVPCTPOOR) of the congregation was noted. Economic heterogeneity refers simply to the range of neighborhoods in which members reside. That social capital is higher for congregations of members from a variety of neighborhoods seems to conflict with this explanation for the relationship between distance and social capital. Still, this explanation remains the most compelling. Further research is necessary to clarify the causal processes in these relationships.

The data provides evidence that variables *other* than distance between members may have *more* impact on the development of social capital within a social group. The results suggest that social groups require a stability of membership for relationships to develop. The negative impact of group size on the formation of social capital coincides with the movement of many large churches toward a small group or "cell" model. These small groups of 6 to 12

provide members with an opportunity to develop more intimate relationships in the context of a large congregation. Low economic status and high economic diversity within the congregation both seem to contribute to the development of social capital. This finding supports to the idea that social capital is used as an alternative to other forms of capital as members draw on the skills, talents and resources of one another.

The analyses in this study have provided some understanding of the socio-spatial organization of Christian Reformed church congregations in west Michigan. The results suggest that a variety of variables contribute to a unique congregational socio-spatial character. Some evidence is presented that social capital or sense of community grows as residential distance between members increases. A possible explanation for this relationship is presented in this chapter. The concluding chapter summarizes the results of the study and comments on the implications for faith-based community development.

Chapter 10

CONCLUSIONS

This study has explored society and space. More specifically, it has examined the evolution of social organization in urban space. It has been particularly interested in church congregations as communities of interest and the potential relationship of congregations with distressed neighborhoods. The data indicate that congregations may be able to generate social capital despite being physically dispersed. However, this study has argued that spatial proximity can still be used as a resource for community-building, enhancing the ability of a community of interest to generate social capital. In addition, proximity to the church building can promote the linkages necessary to extend social capital into lives outside the membership of the community of interest.

The data and analyses in this study provide evidence that the spatiality of congregational communities is associated with congregational sense of community and the ability of the congregation to generate internal social capital. Surprisingly, however, social capital, as defined by this study, seems to be higher in dispersed congregations and lower in those congregations of members that live relatively near to one another. Several potential explanations for this phenomenon were presented in the previous chapter. The most compelling is based on the concept of "niche congregation" developed by Ammerman (1997). This congregation has become relatively homogeneous by serving a specific

market niche. Physical distance between members of this congregation may be indicative of low social distance and high social capital or sense of community.

In addition to testing the hypothesis regarding physical and social distance, the study identified several other relationships to construct a socio-spatial portrait of Christian Reformed church congregations in Grand Rapids, Michigan. It mapped clusters of similar congregations and speculated on their ability to facilitate community development in distressed neighborhoods.

This study should be considered exploratory for several reasons. Some of the variables used by this study were proxies of actual congregational characteristics. In addition, only a limited number of congregations was examined. All congregations in this study are members of the same denomination and are located in one metropolitan region.

The study could be improved with more sophisticated data collection on more observations from a variety of denominations and locations. However, the study provides some insight into social patterns in space. It permits an elementary exploration of the way variables (including spatial ones) may interact to promote, restrain or otherwise change the life of a social organization.

This study offers no direct evidence for the impact of space and spatial decision-making on neighborhood development. Nor is congregational efficacy in facilitating community development measured by this study. Still, the data allow for some speculation about the ability of congregations to facilitate neighborhood development based on assumptions about important factors. This type of analysis can be valuable as social organizations seek to shape the daily life of urban

places. The data permit reflection about the importance of space, its use as a tool for building community, and the potential for investing accumulated social capital in distressed urban neighborhoods.

Despite the evidence that social capital may decrease with physical proximity, this study has argued that proximity can be a valuable asset for strengthening social relationships and developing social capital within a congregation. Individuals and congregations intent on building relationships can use proximity to increase the amount and intensity of social interactions. By residing near to one another members of concentrated congregations can more easily develop and benefit from the social capital inherent in their relationships and interactions. Multiplier effects occur as members decrease their expenditures of valuable resources such as time and gasoline, redirecting those resources toward other productive activities.

The study has also maintained that social capital internal to a congregation can be used by that congregation to facilitate community development and promote change, especially in the neighborhood of the church building. It is here, at its building location, that the congregation is publicly manifested or embodied. In the neighborhood of the church the congregation will have the potential for greatest impact. However, the extension of social capital depends on the existence of interpersonal relationships. For this reason, proximity of church members to the neighborhood of the church building is considered a valuable asset for community development by this study. The role of congregations in community development is summarized here for three spatial

configurations: urban congregations residing near to urban churches, suburban congregations commuting to urban churches and suburban congregations residing near to suburban churches.

The data in this study indicate that urban churches and urban congregations (as identified by neighborhood population densities) are associated with an external orientation and high interest by the congregation in the neighborhood of the church. In other words, urban congregations seem interested in addressing needs typical of urban places. The urban congregation that resides in the distressed neighborhood of the church clearly has a spatial opportunity to facilitate community development. This type of congregation can draw on and expend the social capital inherent in its network. Neighborhood cohesion is reinforced when the relatively weak ties typical of neighborhoods (Wellman, 1996) are complemented by the stronger, more intimate ties present in a choice-based social network such as a congregation. The community of interest is also developed by the benefits of proximity between members. When a community of interest overlies a community of territory, both are strengthened.

Second, congregations that are displaced from and commute to an urban church have limited opportunities to build the relationships necessary for community development. The data in this study show that the social distance between the neighborhood of the church and the neighborhoods of the congregation increases as the location of the church becomes more urban. Not surprisingly, this social distance is accompanied by a physical distance between members and their church (the center of the congregation becomes displaced

from the church building). Unfortunately, both types of distance limit the ability of the congregation to understand the unique needs of the neighborhood of the church. Physical distance discourages interaction and inhibits the development of relationships for the effective transfer of congregational social capital to the church neighborhood. Occasional visitors to a neighborhood simply do not have the time, or the vested interest, necessary to develop strong relationships with neighborhood residents. Social distance also presents an obvious barrier to understanding and relationship-building.

These distances are mutually reinforcing. Physical distance increases as individuals avoid the “otherness” of those that are socially distant. Social distance increases when physical distance prevents an understanding of the “other”. Each type of distance both reflects and causes the other.

Still, commuter congregations, especially those of relatively wealthy suburban residents commuting to churches in low-income urban neighborhoods, can be instrumental in neighborhood community development. While their ability to form intimate personal relationships will be restrained by their spatial and social distance, they do bring valuable resources to a divested neighborhood (Green, 1996b, p. 287). Green notes that commuting to churches in urban neighborhoods provides some opportunities for learning by congregation members. The “windshield surveys” that commuters conduct can serve as a starting point for more empathetic understanding of complex urban social problems. However, the congregation must be intentional about understanding those in the neighborhood if these arms-length observations are not to merely

reinforce negative stereotypes. Green also notes that a commuter congregation has some opportunity to translate increased understanding into racially and economically diverse social networks. Connecting urban residents with the resources available to suburban residents is a valuable role of the commuter congregation.

Again, opportunities for interaction must be intentionally planned if commuters are to develop relationships with neighborhood residents. For example, congregation members can choose to buy goods and services from neighborhood establishments such as stores and restaurants. Church events, opened to the public, can be held in neighborhood parks. Families can also visit the parks and other facilities in the neighborhood of the church when selecting locations for recreation. Church-based community organizing, Green (1996b) suggests, can provide a forum for interaction that builds valuable, diverse social networks.

Relationships between members of a congregation and the isolated residents of a distressed neighborhood are an important conduit for resource transfer. "Fernandes-Kelly (1995) notes how the dense but truncated networks of inner-city black families not only cut off members from information about the outside world, but simultaneously support alternative cultural styles that make access to mainstream employment even more difficult" (Portes, 1998, p. 14). Commuter churches that are intentional about developing relationships mitigate this isolation and help reconnect marginalized urban areas to the broader economy and society. Through these relationships mutual learning can occur.

Neighborhood residents benefit as information about jobs and other resources is shared. Congregation members benefit by learning about the values of different races and cultures.

Finally, churches and congregations located in relatively high-income neighborhoods can also play a role in urban development, despite their spatial separation from many urban problems. Some suburban congregations develop partnering relationships with urban congregations (Green, 1996b). Suburban churches can also promote mixed-income neighborhoods in suburban communities. For decades urban neighborhoods have been divested of human, financial and physical resources. Political and economic barriers have prevented the development of moderately priced, affordable housing in suburban areas, further exacerbating metropolitan resource disparities. The concentration of poverty in certain neighborhoods (and wealth in others) is being recognized as a core problem in metropolitan spatial organization (Massey, 1996; Orfield, 1997). Reinvestment in urban neighborhoods is one important strategy for urban revitalization. However, gentrification—the relocation of middle-income households into low-income urban neighborhoods—can displace long time residents (Quercia & Galster, 1997). Regionalists are calling for the more equitable distribution of both wealth and poverty across the region (Orfield, 1997). While gentrification can bring valuable resources to divested neighborhoods, it must be accompanied by opportunities for low-income households to move to better-resourced, typically suburban, communities. Suburban resistance to the immigration of low-income households is usually

strong. However, suburban faith-based institutions can advocate for and facilitate the successful incorporation of poor families into suburban communities.

Congregations evolve with the changing metropolitan landscape. New congregations emerge; older ones decline. Neighborhood congregations are transformed into commuter congregations with a new character and capacity for action. The composition of a congregation and its presence in space and time will influence its ability to effectively facilitate community development. Some congregations are not located near to distressed neighborhoods. Others have geographic opportunities but few resources with which to promote change. Metropolitan deconcentration has divested core cities, transferring resources to suburban political jurisdictions. Correspondingly, suburban church congregations may be vital, energetic, and well resourced but geographically distant from neighborhoods of need. The typical urban congregation, on the other hand, is older, more traditional and, possibly, in decline. Unfortunately, these struggling congregations are ill-equipped to address the physical and social needs surrounding their churches. Exceptions certainly exist. Some congregations that worship in urban locations are growing and have a keen interest in community development. However, if the members of urban churches maintain a physical distance from the neighborhood of the church their ability to promote positive neighborhood change will be limited.

A broad vision is necessary to address urban problems at a regional scale (Orfield, 1997; Rusk, 1993). Faith-based institutions have been instrumental in promoting a comprehensive regional agenda (Orfield, 1997; Pilla, 1996). Green

(1996b) calls on the faith community to have a metropolitan vision in addition to its neighborhood focus. The cross-cutting ties established in diverse, interlocking networks (Ammerman, 1997, p. 357; Putnam, 1993; see also Newton, 1997, p. 579) are an important asset for promoting metropolitan action. Church congregations, both suburban and urban, can play a key “bridging” role, linking disparate jurisdictions across the metropolitan region.

According to McIntosh and Alston, religion “is a major source of social cohesion...[and, in a certain sense,] the church can be viewed as the symbolic, if not the physical hub of local communities in urban places” (cited in Qiaoming et al., 1989). However, congregations that are merely communities of interest can lose their grounding in the real world. “Many congregations”, says Ammerman (1997), “are already relatively disconnected from the communities in which they are located” (p. 64). Congregation members frequently choose a church based on social characteristics rather than spatial or historic ones. Ammerman calls congregations “gatherings of people who form a network of primary (face-to-face, familylike) relationships” (p. 57). She argues that choice promotes increased commitment and stronger congregational organizations (p. 354). As with other communities of interest, this internal sense of community can be a very valuable resource.

However, congregational choice also contributes to an increasingly fragmented metropolitan region. Robert Lupton observes this phenomenon as he facilitates community development in Atlanta. “On our street,” he says, “the most

unneighborly residents are those most involved in their churches” (Lupton, Lupton & Yancey, 1995, p. 86). He continues,

Our urbanizing society is coming apart in large measure because of the disintegration of our communities.... If our contemporary model of church encourages—implicitly or explicitly, by its demands or its theology—the withdrawal from active, redemptive community participation, it may unwittingly be promoting this disintegration. (p. 87-88)

In other words, the community of interest displaces and may contribute to the destruction of territorial communities.

To explore the interaction of spatial and social organization, this study addressed two questions. First, does the spatial dispersion of a congregation inhibit the development of a sense of community within the congregation? Might congregants that live in close proximity have more opportunities to interact socially than those that are widely dispersed? Evidence was presented that they do not. However, the study argues that proximity remains an asset that can be used to develop sense of community and social capital. Second, the study explored the question: Might the spatial organization of a congregation influence its impact on society? Again, this study argues for the value of proximity. It contends that the personal relationships and face-to-face social interactions made available through proximity are an important means by which congregations can facilitate community development.

The influence a congregation can extend in an urban neighborhood depends, in part, on its own spatial organization. The dispersion of congregation members has likely diminished the capacity of congregations to maintain or improve neighborhoods. This trend mirrors a broader change in contemporary

society. "Low cost, efficient and widespread transportation and communication facilities have made it easier to sustain long-distance ties, but at a possible large social cost. If cars, telephones and modems may have liberated community, they may also have fragmented it" (Wellman, 1988, p. 95). Church congregations have ideological and physical assets conducive to community-building and urban development. These assets become useful when the spatial decisions of congregation members promote social interaction that builds a sense of community and generates social capital. In addition, the congregation must be spatially capable of extending its internal resources into neighborhoods of high need.

Long-time community developer, John Perkins (1982) summarizes an effective community development process as being comprised of three components. He calls for *relocation* of practitioners "in the community of high need", *reconciliation* "across racial, cultural, and economic barriers", and *redistribution* "of our skills, our time, our energy...in ways that empower people to break out of the cycle of poverty and assume responsibility for their needs" (pp. 54, 55). It is this integration of spatial, social and economic lives that will produce vibrant, empowered communities and individuals. However, this type of integration becomes particularly difficult in the segregated, commodified environment of most American cities. Faith-based institutions are founded on principles that transcend the self-interest of the marketplace. They have the legitimacy and capacity to inspire change, motivating individual spatial decision-makers to revitalize distressed urban spaces.

Faith-based institutions (especially commuter congregations) typically adopt a service-provision model to address social problems. What Perkins envisions is a fundamental solidarity of congregation members with a distressed neighborhood. Only when congregation members are integral to the neighborhood in need will the congregation be able to build the relationships necessary to effectively facilitate lasting change.

This study finds that the members of many Christian Reformed congregations are spatially dispersed and displaced from their urban churches. This avoidance of declining central city neighborhoods is similar to more general patterns in most United States cities. Snapper (1980) attributes the flight of some churches and members from the central city, in part, to a denominational failure to develop a transformational theology. He declares that "...the Christian Reformed churches of North America have not developed a uniform, consistent theology of church and neighbor" (p. 149). He suggests that

...until most recently...[t]heology failed to integrate historical and eternal categories. The willingness to treat neighborhoods and housing as [disposable] "no deposit, no return" bottles underscores the discontinuity between the world and the Christian Reformed Church. The lack of commitment to community is currently evidenced in at least two ways: wholesale abandonment of inner-city housing, related to a score of declining congregations within the city; and a decrease in evangelism.... Congregations have existed—and still do exist, generally—independent of their neighbors. (p. 149,150)

Similarly, in her study of nine urban Christian Reformed churches, Baker (1995) concludes that "[n]ot enough church members live in the neighborhood [of the church building]" (p. 69). The practice of spatially separating residential and

church life restricts congregational ability to use social capital to facilitate neighborhood social development.

Robert Lupton (1999b) argues for an enhanced "community-friendly theology" that "causes Christian churches to be agents of transformation of the neighborhoods in which they are located". A compelling theology of location, that prompts congregation members to reintegrate their residential and church lives, would equip congregations to better use their social capital to develop positive and holistic communities. In this way, people of faith can blend communities of interest and communities of territory, creating vibrant, sustainable and just human habitats.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

VARIABLES IN THE STUDY

Variables used in this study include:

Spatial Variables:

MEDDISTMEDCE is the median distance of members' residential location from the median center of the congregation.

MEDDISTCHUR is the median distance of members' residential location from the church building.

DSTMEDCENTCH is the distance from the median center of the congregation to the church building. It is used as a measure of *displacement* of the congregation from the church building and its neighborhood.

Social Capital or Sense of Community Variables:

SOCINDEX is an index of 12 items on the sense of community survey and measures sense of community of the congregation.

VOLUNTRATIO is a ratio of the number of volunteer hours to the number of volunteers to the number of members of the congregation. It is an alternative indicator of social capital in the congregation.

CONTRIBRATIO is a ratio of the budget of the congregation to the number of families to the neighborhood income level of the median member of the congregation. As a proxy for the level of financial commitment by members to the congregation it is an alternative measure of social capital in the congregation.

Other Congregational Variables:

AVGTOTMEMB is a three year average of the number of members of the congregation.

AVGFAMILIES is a three year average of the number of families of the congregation.

YOUTHFULNESS is a measure of the youthfulness of the congregation and is calculate as a ratio of nonprofessing members (often children)

professing members who are under 18 to total members. This measure is a variation of one used in a previous statistical study of Christian Reformed churches (Knight, 1997).

GROWTH is a measure of the three-year growth rate of the congregation. It is the difference between congregational growth and decline but excludes growth or decline by births and deaths. By excluding births and deaths it is more a measure of social "attractiveness" than of organic growth.

VOLATILITY is a measure of the turnover or stability of membership in the congregation and is calculated by summing both growth and decline.

STDEVPCTPOOR is the standard deviation of the percentage of the population that is poor in the census block groups of the members of the congregation. This variable is a proxy measure of the *heterogeneity* of the congregation.

NEIGHBINTER is the level of interest within the congregation in neighborhood ministry or mission on a scale of one to five.

EXTERNALRATIO is the ratio of the importance of external congregational functions to the importance of internal congregational functions. This variable measures the relative extent to which the congregation has an external or "outreach" orientation.

Church Building Neighborhood Variables:

POPPSQMI is the population per square mile of the census block group in which the church building is located. This variable measures *urbanization*.

PCTWHITE is the percentage of the population that is white in the census block group in which the church building is located. This variable measures the *racial* character of the church neighborhood.

PCTCOLLGRAD is the percentage of the adult population that is a college graduate in the census block group in which the church building is located. This variable measures the *social* character of the church neighborhood.

PCTPOOR is the percentage of the population that is poor in the census block group in which the church building is located. This variable measures the *economic* character of the church neighborhood.

Congregation Neighborhood Variables:

MEDPOPPSQMI is the population per square mile of the census block group in which the median congregation member resides. This variable measures *urbanization*.

MEDPCTWHITE is the percentage of the population that is white in the census block group in which the median congregation member resides. By inference this variable measures the *racial* character of the congregation.

MEDPCTCOLLGRAD is the percentage of the adult population that is a college graduate in the census block group in which the median congregation member resides. By inference this variable measures the *social* character of the congregation.

MEDPCTPOOR is the percentage of the population that is poor in the census block group in which the median congregation member resides. By inference, this variable measures the *economic* character of the congregation.

Social Distance between Congregation and Church:

SOCDIST is the average of the differences between the racial, social and economic characters of the church building neighborhood and the congregation. This variable measures the social distance between the congregation and the neighborhood surrounding the church building.

APPENDIX B

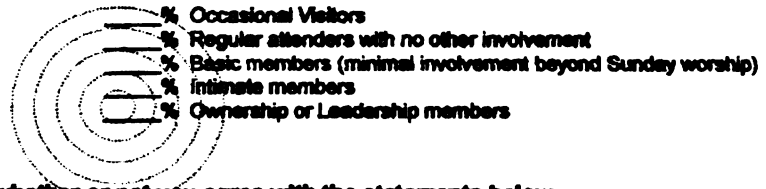
SENSE OF COMMUNITY SURVEY

Sense of Community in the Congregation

The purpose of this study is to compare the sense of community in the congregation, its relationship to the world and the residential location of its members. This questionnaire is intended to assess the strength of social bonds in the congregation and some of its outside relationships. These bonds can also be called "sense of community", social capital, communal social relations, collective identity, social connectedness or other names. I realize you do not know everything about all members of your congregation. I am merely asking for your best guess in order to compile a rough assessment of the nature of the congregation. All names will be kept confidential. Congregations will be referred to only by general descriptors. Please answer as many of the following questions as possible. When you have completed the survey, please mail it back to me in the stamped envelope. Thank you very much for your help.

If the congregation has a vision statement, mission statement, or purpose statement please attach a copy.

If the congregation is a series of rings, what percentage of families would be in each category?¹



Please circle the best answer or indicate whether or not you agree with the statements below.

Compared to other CRC congregations in the area...

- | | | | | | |
|---|-------------------|----------|---------|--------|----------------|
| 1. ...the sense of community in this congregation is... | very weak | weak | average | strong | very strong |
| 2. ...the level of intimacy in this congregation is... | very low | low | average | high | very high |
| 3. ...the level of trust between members in this congregation is... | very low | low | average | high | very high |
| 4. ...congregation members are in each other's homes... | almost never | rarely | some | often | very often |
| 5. ...congregation members borrow belongings from each other... | almost never | rarely | some | often | very often |
| 6. ...members socialize with each other outside of church events... | almost never | rarely | some | often | very often |
| 7. ...new members find it easy to make friends in this congregation. | strongly disagree | disagree | neutral | agree | strongly agree |
| 8. In a time of crisis almost all families in this congregation would immediately turn to other families in the congregation for support. | strongly disagree | disagree | neutral | agree | strongly agree |
| 9. Almost all congregation members have many friends in this congregation. | strongly disagree | disagree | neutral | agree | strongly agree |
| 10. Almost all members have a sense of belonging to the congregation. | strongly disagree | disagree | neutral | agree | strongly agree |
| 11. Almost all members feel a sense of obligation toward the congregation. | strongly disagree | disagree | neutral | agree | strongly agree |
| 12. Almost all congregation members would consider the congregation their primary or most important community. | strongly disagree | disagree | neutral | agree | strongly agree |

Please circle the priority most of your members would give each of these internal church functions:

- | | | | | | |
|---|---------------|-----------------|-----------|----------------|----------|
| ☐ Sunday worship | not important | some importance | important | very important | priority |
| ☐ Midweek worship | not important | some importance | important | very important | priority |
| ☐ Prayer for each other | not important | some importance | important | very important | priority |
| ☐ Fellowship | not important | some importance | important | very important | priority |
| ☐ Bible study | not important | some importance | important | very important | priority |
| ☐ Financial support for one another | not important | some importance | important | very important | priority |
| ☐ Physical and emotional support for one another | not important | some importance | important | very important | priority |

¹ I credit Saddleback Church for this diagram.

Please turn survey over

☐ Sunday school	not important	some importance	important	very important	priority
☐ Children and Youth ministry	not important	some importance	important	very important	priority
☐ Men's and women's ministry	not important	some importance	important	very important	priority
☐ Adult education	not important	some importance	important	very important	priority
☐ Recreation	not important	some importance	important	very important	priority
☐ Other _____	not important	some importance	important	very important	priority

Please circle the priority most of your members would give each of these external or outreach church functions:

☐ Evangelism	not important	some importance	important	very important	priority
☐ Prayer for others	not important	some importance	important	very important	priority
☐ Food programs	not important	some importance	important	very important	priority
☐ Financial assistance to the needy	not important	some importance	important	very important	priority
☐ Overseas ministry/mission	not important	some importance	important	very important	priority
☐ Neighborhood ministry/mission	not important	some importance	important	very important	priority
☐ Poverty alleviation or social justice	not important	some importance	important	very important	priority
☐ Education	not important	some importance	important	very important	priority
☐ Substance abuse ministry	not important	some importance	important	very important	priority
☐ Counseling ministry	not important	some importance	important	very important	priority
☐ Health care ministry	not important	some importance	important	very important	priority
☐ Youth ministry	not important	some importance	important	very important	priority
☐ Housing	not important	some importance	important	very important	priority
☐ Other _____	not important	some importance	important	very important	priority
☐ Other _____	not important	some importance	important	very important	priority

Please go back and check (X) all those functions in which the congregation is currently engaged.

Please write a number indicating your best guess in the blank:

- What is the number of people that attend a typical morning service? _____
- What is the number of people that attend a typical evening service? _____
- What is the number of bulletins used per Sunday? _____
- What is the total number of events held weekly at the church building (excluding Sunday worship)? _____
- What is the total attendance at these events at the church building during a typical week? _____
- What is the total number of events held weekly outside the church building? _____
- What is the total attendance at these events outside the church building during a typical week? _____
- What is the total number of volunteers in the congregation? _____
- What is the total number of hours volunteered per month? _____
- How many paid staff does the congregation employ? _____
- How many extended families (sets of grown children and parents) attend this church? _____
- How many times a year are meals eaten at the church? _____
- What is the average attendance at a typical meal? _____
- How many times per year are you in social settings (outside of church) with multiple church members? _____
- If you are willing, please indicate the annual budget of the congregation (member contributions only). \$ _____

Please place the survey in the stamped envelope and mail it to me by March 12.
Thank you again for completing the survey!!

APPENDIX C

CORRELATION MATRIX

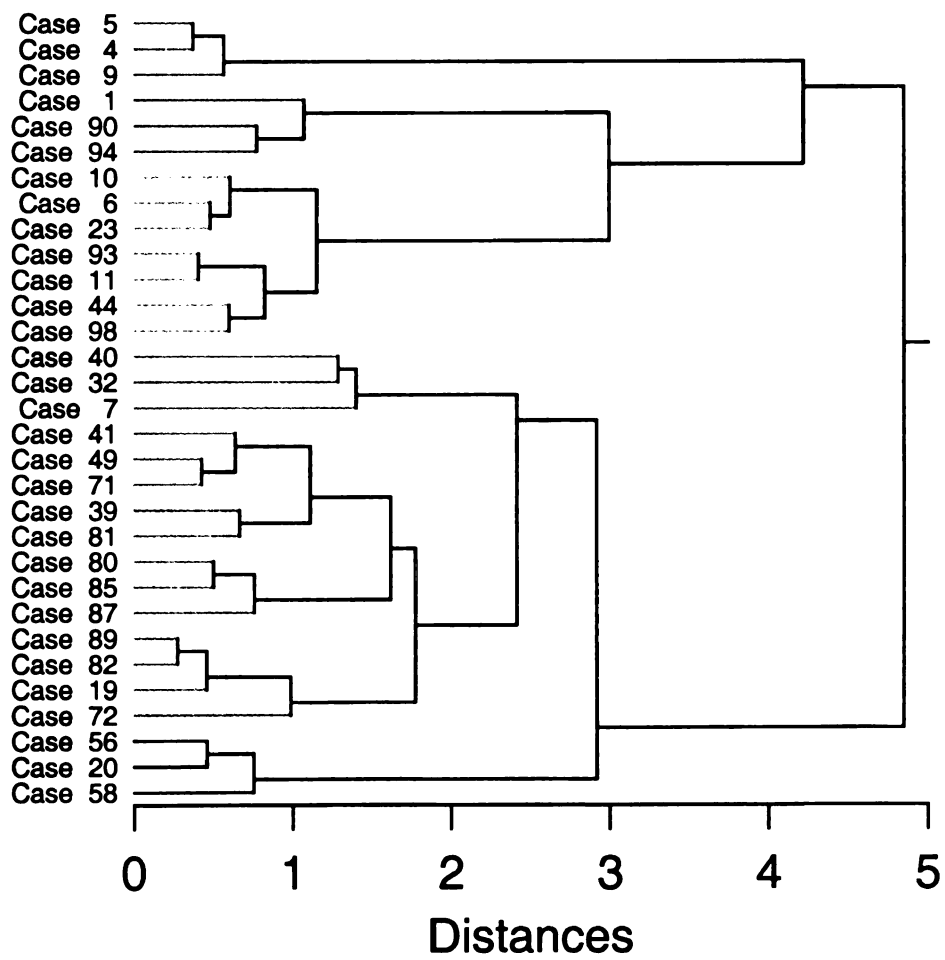
	MEDDISTMEDGE	MEDDISTCHUR	DISTMEDCENTCH	SOCINDEX	VOLUNTARATIO	AVGTOTMEMB	AVGFAMILIES	YOUTHFULNESS	GROWTH	VOLATILITY	STDEVPCTPOOR	NEIGHBINTER	EXTERNALRATIO	POPPSOMI	PCTWHITE	PCTCOLLGRAD	PCTPOOR	MEDPOPPSOMI	MEDPCTWHITE	MEDPCTCOLLGR	MEDPCTPOOR	SOCDIST
Spatial Variables	1																					
		0.84	1																			
		0.42	0.66	1																		
		0.15	0.26	0.21	1																	
		0.37	0.64	0.48	0.22	1																
Social Capital Variables		0.07	0.34	0.62	0.05	0.19	1															
		-0.06	0.05	0.22	-0.42	-0.49	0.06	1														
		0.00	0.12	0.25	-0.40	-0.49	0.00	0.36	1													
		0.30	0.13	0.04	0.05	0.32	0.08	-0.11	-0.17	1												
		0.27	0.35	0.23	0.09	0.53	0.09	-0.05	-0.02	0.23	1											
Other Congregational Variables		0.19	0.20	0.18	0.09	0.57	0.08	-0.09	-0.07	0.14	0.52	1										
		0.07	0.13	0.29	-0.04	-0.08	0.48	-0.09	-0.09	0.03	-0.05	0.19	1									
		-0.01	0.25	0.48	0.40	-0.02	0.09	-0.09	-0.15	-0.13	-0.15	0.22	1									
		-0.06	-0.06	0.25	0.05	-0.04	-0.04	0.02	-0.03	0.28	0.17	0.25	0.41	0.41	1							
		-0.28	-0.20	0.10	-0.19	0.06	0.24	-0.05	-0.08	-0.04	0.04	0.21	0.39	0.38	0.34	1						
Church Building Neighborhood Variables		0.07	-0.01	-0.34	0.08	0.08	-0.39	-0.00	0.04	-0.14	0.04	-0.13	-0.59	-0.38	-0.37	-0.66	1					
		-0.15	-0.10	-0.00	-0.28	-0.17	-0.03	0.23	0.22	-0.22	-0.04	-0.03	-0.11	-0.23	-0.17	-0.02	0.19	1				
		0.09	0.20	0.48	0.16	0.23	0.43	-0.02	-0.04	0.19	0.20	0.26	0.67	0.39	0.54	0.45	-0.72	-0.34	1			
		-0.42	-0.26	0.13	-0.16	-0.25	0.33	0.10	0.07	-0.33	-0.17	0.07	0.49	0.45	0.43	0.76	-0.55	0.11	0.44	1		
		0.18	0.08	-0.19	0.13	0.14	-0.54	-0.02	0.03	-0.01	0.15	-0.08	-0.56	-0.36	-0.36	-0.61	0.77	-0.11	-0.56	-0.72	1	
Congregation Neighborhood Variables		-0.31	-0.13	0.27	-0.31	-0.22	0.31	0.30	0.26	-0.24	-0.07	0.01	0.20	0.17	0.29	0.51	-0.44	0.61	0.23	0.56	-0.57	1
		0.57	0.51	0.11	0.30	0.61	0.29	-0.35	-0.32	0.21	0.07	0.13	0.30	0.13	-0.18	0.09	-0.15	-0.34	0.29	-0.03	-0.19	-0.37
		-0.04	0.05	0.41	-0.01	-0.09	0.38	-0.00	-0.04	0.14	-0.03	0.10	0.61	0.45	0.45	0.61	-0.95	-0.36	0.88	0.51	-0.66	0.35

Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient Matrix: Statistically significant correlation coefficients (at $\alpha=0.05$ for a two tailed test) are shaded.

APPENDIX D

CONGREGATIONAL CLUSTERING: CLUSTER TREE

Cluster Tree



APPENDIX E

CONGREGATIONAL CLUSTERING: CLUSTER STATISTICS

k-means splitting cases into 5 groups, distance metric is Euclidean distance

Summary statistics for all cases

Variable	Between SS	df	Within SS	df	F-ratio
FACTOR(1)	19.825	4	6.159	26	20.924
FACTOR(2)	5.462	4	7.449	26	4.767
FACTOR(3)	23.537	4	6.905	26	22.155
FACTOR(4)	9.994	4	21.224	26	3.061
FACTOR(5)	15.983	4	10.742	26	9.671
** TOTAL **	74.801	20	52.479	130	

Cluster 1 of 5 contains 7 cases

Members		Statistics				
Case	Distance	Variable	Minimum	Mean	Maximum	St.Dev.
Case 19	0.32	FACTOR(1)	-1.19	-0.71	-0.31	0.37
Case 20	0.55	FACTOR(2)	-1.24	-0.35	0.94	0.67
Case 56	0.24	FACTOR(3)	-1.90	-0.73	-0.01	0.61
Case 58	0.87	FACTOR(4)	-0.58	0.64	1.81	0.92
Case 72	0.80	FACTOR(5)	-1.80	-0.57	0.05	0.60
Case 81	0.62					
Case 82	0.57					

Cluster 2 of 5 contains 4 cases

Members		Statistics				
Case	Distance	Variable	Minimum	Mean	Maximum	St.Dev.
Case 4	0.43	FACTOR(1)	1.64	1.82	2.08	0.19
Case 5	0.52	FACTOR(2)	0.05	0.13	0.33	0.13
Case 7	0.88	FACTOR(3)	-0.84	-0.32	-0.12	0.35
Case 9	0.16	FACTOR(4)	-0.94	0.92	2.04	1.33
		FACTOR(5)	0.26	0.81	1.07	0.37

Cluster 3 of 5 contains 7 cases

Members		Statistics				
Case	Distance	Variable	Minimum	Mean	Maximum	St.Dev.
Case 6	0.28	FACTOR(1)	-0.41	0.24	1.10	0.53
Case 10	0.64	FACTOR(2)	-0.79	-0.38	-0.00	0.28
Case 11	0.28	FACTOR(3)	0.46	0.98	1.62	0.45
Case 23	0.38	FACTOR(4)	-0.97	-0.14	0.75	0.58
Case 44	0.48	FACTOR(5)	-1.82	-0.80	-0.17	0.56
Case 93	0.50					
Case 98	0.52					

Cluster 4 of 5 contains 10 cases

Members		Statistics				
Case	Distance	Variable	Minimum	Mean	Maximum	St.Dev.
Case 32	1.02	FACTOR(1)	-1.05	-0.38	0.74	0.51
Case 39	0.62	FACTOR(2)	-1.30	-0.31	0.63	0.67
Case 40	0.88	FACTOR(3)	-1.23	-0.48	0.70	0.58
Case 41	0.64	FACTOR(4)	-2.25	-0.60	0.44	0.81
Case 49	0.46	FACTOR(5)	-0.18	0.70	2.54	0.84
Case 71	0.38					
Case 80	0.56					
Case 85	0.56					
Case 87	0.61					
Case 89	0.59					

Cluster 5 of 5 contains 3 cases

Members		Statistics				
Case	Distance	Variable	Minimum	Mean	Maximum	St.Dev.
Case 1	0.62	FACTOR(1)	-1.32	-0.65	0.19	0.77
Case 90	0.36	FACTOR(2)	0.71	1.04	1.28	0.30
Case 94	0.60	FACTOR(3)	1.71	1.87	1.99	0.14
		FACTOR(4)	-1.40	-0.08	0.99	1.22
		FACTOR(5)	0.70	0.83	0.93	0.12

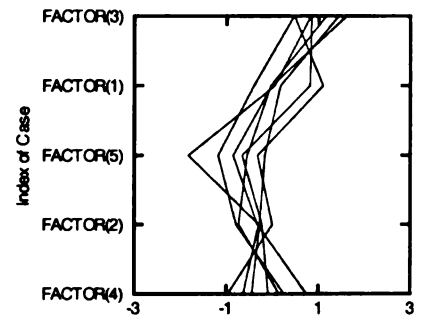
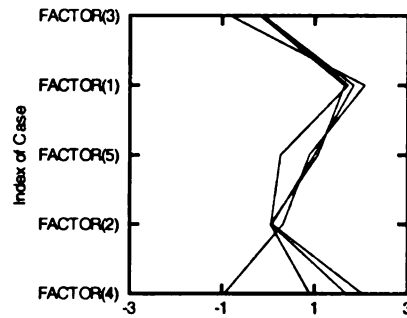
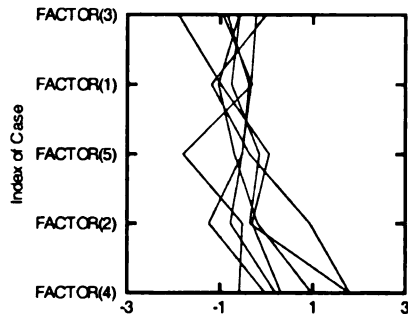
APPENDIX F

CONGREGATIONAL CLUSTERING: CLUSTER DIAGRAMS

1

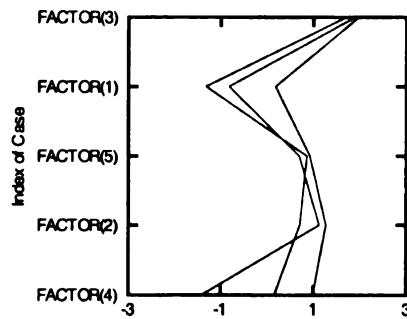
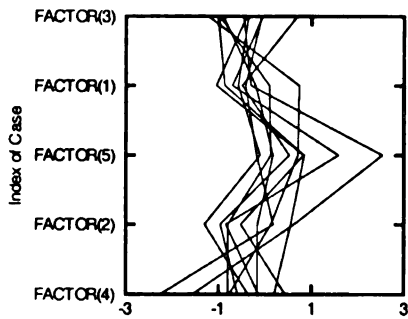
2

3



4

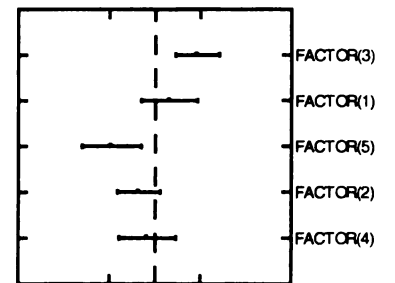
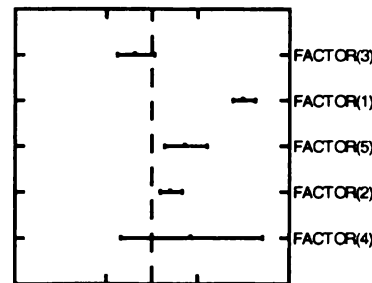
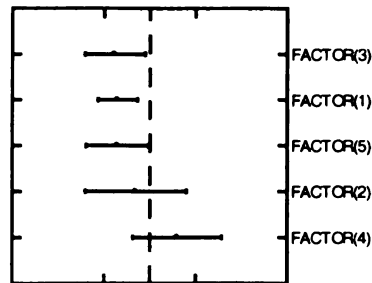
5



1

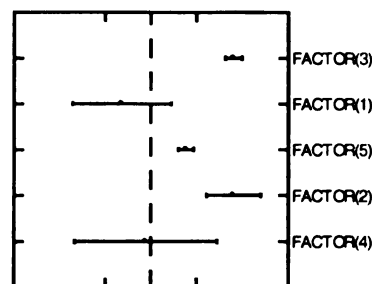
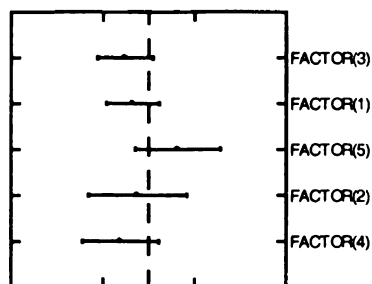
2

3



4

5



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