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Irina V. Sharkova
Portland State University

Thomas W. Sanchez
Portland State University

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**An Analysis of Neighborhood Vitality:
The Role of Local Civic Organizations**

Irina V. Sharkova

Center for Population Research and Census
Portland State University
PO Box 751
Portland, OR 97207-0751
503-725-5160
sharkovai@pdx.edu

Thomas W. Sanchez

Center for Urban Studies
Portland State University
PO Box 751-CUS
Portland, OR 97207-0751
503-725-8743
sanchezt@pdx.edu

ABSTRACT

This paper addresses the issue of neighborhood vitality from the perspective of social capital building. Numerous studies have shown that social capital - a complex of networks, norms, and social trust that promotes citizens involvement in local affairs - is crucial for the continuous well-being of communities. Among many political, economic, and cultural factors influencing social capital, the spatial dimension is most often overlooked. Yet the accessibility of places promoting social interactions and interpersonal communication between local residents should have a direct effect on the vitality of a neighborhood. Among these *civic places* are formal institutions - churches and locally oriented membership organizations, and informal, or “third places” such as small retail establishments including coffee shops, pubs, markets, and beauty parlors. While having different functions they all provide opportunities for individuals, and especially - for local residents, to transcend the “work-home” dichotomy, to become a part of local social networks.

We assess the vitality of urban neighborhoods in the city of Portland, Oregon, using four indicators: residential stability, degree of racial integration, and the frequency of property crimes and crimes against persons. We hypothesize that the spatial concentration of civic places in neighborhoods should be associated with a higher share of non-migrants, higher racial integration, and lower per capita crime rates. These neighborhood outcomes serve as indicators of social capital and have received little or no attention in earlier research. This analysis is conducted at the census block group level using a geographic information system (GIS) to generate spatial indices of urban accessibility, and an ordinary least squares model to examine the spatial distribution of civic organizations on neighborhood vitality. This research contributes in several ways to the theoretical and methodological debates related to the concept of social capital. The results suggest that civic places influence neighborhood vitality outcomes and provides additional evidence that such places may facilitate formation of social capital by creating opportunities for informal interactions and civic engagement. We argue that the formal definition of social capital should be expanded to include its spatial component - the notion of place - together with social and psychological components of networks, norms, and social trust.

INTRODUCTION

Studying social capital has become almost an obligation for a social scientist concerned with sustainability and livability issues (Johnson 1998). Research programs such as Social Capital Initiative (The World Bank), The National Commission on Civic Renewal (School of Public Affairs, University of Maryland), Civic Practices Network (Heller School for Advanced Studies in Social Welfare, Brandeis University), to name but a few, have been established to investigate the influence of social capital on political, social, economic, and environmental outcomes. Yet, a majority of this research – rarely empirical – focuses on large-scale spatial entities such as nations, metropolitan areas, counties, and cities. It was only recently that several scholars turned their attention to the neighborhood-level of social capital and provided the much-needed empirical evidence to support some of the claims of the social capital theory (Temkin and Rohe 1998). Still, many questions remain unanswered including how to define social capital, how it can be operationalized, and better understood (Grootaert 1998). While some neighborhood-level outcomes were studied, it is not clear whether the social capital of a local community

has a uniform and positive influence on different aspects of neighborhood vitality.

Most studies on social capital employ surveys to investigate the “norms, networks and mutual trust” existing in communities to create measures of social capital (Knack and Keefer 1997; Narayan 1997; Temkin and Rohe 1998). These surveys, while indeed useful, tend to ignore the spatial accumulation of social capital: the places, public and private, where interactions between neighbors, residents, citizens occur. These places, especially public ones, are of crucial importance for the social capital. Indeed, Putnam (1998) calls attention to studying the “social location” as one of the dimensions of social capital. Among public places promoting social interaction between local residents, some are more important than others are; therefore, different types of these “civic places” should be analyzed. Unequal spatial distributions and the accessibility of such places should have a different influence on desirable neighborhood outcomes.

This study addresses several theoretical and methodological issues related to social capital. It analyzes how the spatial component of social capital influences aspects of neighborhood vitality. Among the former are civic places, both formal, such as churches and locally oriented membership organizations, and informal, also called “third places” including coffee shops, pubs, markets, beauty parlors, etc. While functionally different, they all provide opportunities for individuals, especially local residents, to become a part of local social networks. We argue that the location and accessibility of these civic places is crucial for neighborhood vitality. The latter includes measures of residential stability, racial integration, and crime. We hypothesize that the spatial concentration of the civic places in neighborhoods is associated with an increased proportion of non-movers, more racial integration, and lower crime rates.

As previously noted, most empirical studies on social capital are conducted at a city, county or even at a national level with many of them being case studies focusing on one, often small, area or a social group, very few involve an analysis of a spatial continuum (Crenson 1978; Portney and Berry 1997). Moreover, even a neighborhood or census tract level analysis may be too geographically aggregated for the study of civic places and may mask important relationships and strengths of association. It seems intuitively obvious that in order to be regularly attended; civic places have to be located in close proximity to one’s residence within an easy walking or driving distance. While some people maintain loyalty to their church or fraternity after moving to another part of the city, it is hard to imagine that attendees coming from all over town would more positively influence a given neighborhood than its immediate residents would. In a study of church-going attendance at a local church was found to be a largest single predictor of the number of neighborhood acquaintances (Greenbaum and Greenbaum 1985, *cited in* Irwin, Tolbert and Lyson 1997).

For the above stated reasons this analysis is conducted at a small geographic scale, i.e. census

block groups. Specifically we analyze the effect of civic places on the parameters of neighborhood vitality in 388 block groups in the City of Portland, Oregon, using the 1990 U.S. Census and the 1996 American Community Survey (ACS). To do so we use the 1990 and 1996 data with locational information on civic organizations derived from telephone business directories and data from the Regional Land Information System for Portland Metropolitan Area (Metro RLIS). The Portland Police Bureau provided geocoded 1990 and 1996 crime data. A geographic information system (GIS) was used to generate spatial indices of accessibility. This data was analyzed with ordinary least squares regression (OLS) to examine the coincidence of civic organizations with indicators of neighborhood vitality.

Previous Research

A fast-growing body of scholarly research has established links between the well-being of nations, cities, villages and neighborhoods, and substantial amounts of social capital in those communities (Putnam 1993, 1995a, 1995b, 1998; Fukuyama 1995; Lang and Hornburg 1998). Although some researchers argue that social capital is value-neutral (Briggs 1997) or may be even detrimental to a larger public good (Coleman 1988; Fox 1995; Grootaert 1998), most agree that the “good” social capital is instrumental for healthy communities (Coleman 1988, 1990).

While there is a general agreement that the concept of social capital has a lot of promise both for scholarly research and for practitioners, many unanswered questions remain. They include the definition of the social capital, ways of quantifying it, understanding of its types, how it is created and functions (Grootaert 1998; Putnam 1998). For example, Putnam (1995) defines social capital as “networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit.” While Putnam puts an emphasis on horizontal social networks, Coleman (1988) adds vertical dimension to it by including hierarchical institutions and firms into the concept. As noted by Grootaert (1998), “the most encompassing view of social capital includes the social and political environment that enables norms to develop and shape the social structure”. This last definition comes very close to describing the role of an environment in its broadest sense by including the geographical milieu.

Contrary to what many studies imply, accumulation of social capital does not occur a-spatially, but in very real public and private spaces such as grocery stores, churches, mosques and synagogues, libraries, parks, neighborhood organizations, coffee shops, etc. These civic places, while often incomparable and functionally quite different, provide opportunities for individuals, and for local residents, to interact socially outside of the “work-home” dichotomy, and to become a part of local social networks. This suggests that the formal definition of social capital should be expanded to include its spatial component - the notion of place - together with social and psychological components of networks, norms, and social trust.

Such expanded definition would help in generating an all-inclusive typology of social capital

advocated by Putnam (1998). Irwin and Sharkova (1998) suggest the following classes of civic places based on their functions and type of interpersonal interactions that they facilitate:

- 1) *Churches* and other houses of worship;
- 2) *Membership Organization* including clubs, fraternity organization, civic, environmental and community organizations;
- 3) *Retail and Service “Hangouts”* including coffee shops, tea houses, ice-cream parlors, bars, pubs, restaurants, beauty parlors, barbers, health clubs, bowling alleys, gyms, billiards, recreation centers, and Laundromats;
- 4) *Retail Interaction Places* such as convenience and grocery stores, family markets, bakers, candy stores, book-stores, video rentals, health stores, and lawn and garden stores;
- 5) *Public Places* including libraries, museums and art centers, zoos, aquariums, public parks and gardens, nature centers, halls and auditoriums, and sport arenas (Irwin and Sharkova 1998).

Some of these places provide an environment conducive to stable, long-term relationships between attendees like in churches and membership organizations, while others barely provide a space to be seen “in public”, to get minimally acquainted with other visitors like in retail interaction places.

This study analyzes three important indicators of neighborhood vitality that have received little or no attention from researchers. The indicators include residential stability, degree of racial integration, and incidence of crime. A number of studies indicated that membership in local associations and churches may be associated with increased social capital and higher chances that residents will not move away from it (Finke 1989; Zimmer and Hawley 1959). Similarly, Oldenburg (1991) makes the argument that small, locally owned retail establishments may create horizontal linkages in a community that increased civic engagement. Similar to churches and associations, these “third places” provide opportunities for social interaction and help build social networks and trust. Several studies on civic engagement at the county and neighborhood levels demonstrated that a core population of ‘stayers’ or non-migrants is correlated with the number of civic places (Irwin, Tolbert and Lyson 1997; Sharkova and Irwin 1997; Sharkova and Irwin 1998). In areas where these places - civic associations, churches and small retail establishments – are plentiful, individuals are less likely to engage in economic comparisons among areas and a core population of ‘stayers’ is retained. This analysis continues this line of research by introducing a measure of concentration of civic places that is conceptually more sound by accounting for those civic places that are most likely to be attended by a local resident. A 1-mile radius aggregation of civic places from a centroid of each block group is used to delineate catchment areas. One mile is considered an easy driving and walking (or biking) distance and therefore the civic places within this distance should have the most affect on the area.

Social capital and ethnicity form a very complex relationship. On one side, social capital is abundant in mono-ethnic groups where people tend to connect with and support those perceived as close to them. As de Souza Briggs (1997) notes, “social capital is organized along the same fault lines that divide the society: race, class, gender, religion, ethnicity, etc.” On the other hand, it is important to differentiate between a social capital of support and one of leverage (Briggs 1998). The social capital of support helps one to “get by”, or to cope with problems, while the social leverage is defined as “social capital that helps one ‘get ahead’ or change one’s opportunity set through access to job information” (Briggs 1998). Whereas social support tend to be plentiful in ethnically homogenous neighborhoods, be them all-white or all-black, the areas where minority groups dominate lack the social leverage of more ethnically diverse and, therefore, affluent areas. Hence racially more integrated areas have a better combination of these two types of social capital than minority-dominant areas. Since social capital is “produced” in public places, their presence and accessibility should reinforce racial diversity of the neighborhoods.

Several scholars have established the importance of social capital for the prevention of crime. In their study of the New York City distressed inner-city housing, Saegert and Winkel (1998) found that buildings with higher social capital “reported fewer crime problems.” The study of 500 street youth in Toronto and Vancouver demonstrated that the declining social capital of their families forces youth to “take to the streets in disproportionate numbers where they are likely to experience further disadvantages by becoming officially labeled and known as youthful offenders” (Hagan and McCarthy 1996). In Jamaica, Moser and Holland (1997) found that “informal justice systems have developed within poor communities as a response to the lack of law and order.” While these and other studies have provided notable evidence to the positive relationship between a rich social capital and declining rates of crime, such relationship has never been explored in a systematic fashion at the neighborhood or smaller level. Yet proximity to civic institutions - places where a sense of a stronger community is developed - should have a positive influence on the amount of crime in the area.

This research takes the perspective that neighborhood stability may be more a function of civic engagement through formal and informal community associations. While government programs provide greatly needed resources for housing, education, job training, mobility, and other services, we hypothesize that civic organizations are a significant source of community spirit and active participation of citizens. These forms of community cohesion translate into stable neighborhood environments.

METHODOLOGY

Three primary indicators of neighborhood vitality are examined in this analysis. The objective is to control for a range of neighborhood variables and test whether the presence of civic places has a detectable impact on neighborhood vitality: the number of “stayers”, the degree of change in

neighborhood racial integration, and the change in neighborhood crime rates. Each of these three indicators is used as a dependent variable in separate ordinary least squares regression (OLS) analyses. For the City of Portland, we hypothesize that spatial concentrations of civic places in neighborhoods should be associated with stable residential patterns, a higher degree of racial integration, and lower per capita crime rates. Census block groups are the unit of analysis examining these neighborhood characteristics for 1990 and 1996.

H₁: *Number of “stayers” from 1990 to 1996.* Stable, vital neighborhoods retain a higher share of their residents over time. Residents are considered “stayers” if in 1996 they were living in the same house that they did 5 years before. The number of stayers for each block group excludes persons in group quarters.

H₂: *Racial integration.* Vital neighborhoods experience increasing racial integration. Vital central city neighborhoods will be closer to a balance of racial and ethnic groups similar to the city average. An index of racial isolation measuring deviation from the city average ratio of non-White population is used in the model.

H₃: *Crime rates.* Vital neighborhoods experience lower crime rates. The change in per capita rates of crimes against persons from 1990 to 1996 is used in the analysis.

To test these three hypotheses, the general form of the OLS models is:

$$\text{Neighborhood Indicator}_{ij} = \beta_0 + \Sigma\beta_1X_{ji} + \beta_2\text{CIVIC}_{ij} + e,$$

where **Neighborhood Indicators** for block group *i* predict *j* outcomes in number of stayers, crime rates, and racial integration; $\Sigma\beta_1X_{ji}$ represents the vector of neighborhood variables *j* for each block group *i* (the variables that are included in the initial specification are shown in Table 1); **CIVIC_{ij}** is the set of variables that indicate the neighborhood presence of civic organizations; and **e** is the error component. The location of civic organizations were spatially aggregated within 1 mile of each block group’s centroid to create separate indices for the number of associations, churches, schools, and small retail establishments.

Data

The 1990 Census and 1996 American Community Survey (ACS) are the primary data sources for this analysis. A GIS was used to organize the data and to estimate spatial measures. The land use information was obtained from the Metro Regional Land Information System (RLIS) database, which is

an enhanced version of the county tax assessor's records and TIGER/Line files for the Portland metropolitan region. The City of Portland Police Bureau provided geocoded crime locations for 1990 and 1996. In addition, the locations of civic organizations were derived from the PhoneDisc Business Pro database, a digital telephone business directory. Each of the businesses was address-matched and classified by its standard industrial classification (SIC) code to determine whether it was a civic organization. Associations, churches, schools, and retail businesses are the primary types of civic organizations considered in this analysis.

Variables

The selected independent variables are indicators of neighborhood type, land use, socioeconomic characteristics, and urban accessibility. The density and land use variables are important indicators of neighborhood and residential quality. Density and age of structures characterize the conditions of the built environment, especially relative to other neighborhoods in the city. The rate of homeownership is a good predictor of potential population change because along with neighborhood conditions, neighborhoods with high concentrations of renters are likely to experience high rates of residential turnover. Renters tend to be more footloose and relocate more often than homeowners do. Neighborhoods with frequent movers are probably those with weaker social networks where residents tend to make smaller financial as well as social investments. In addition, increasing neighborhood crime rates are expected to correlate with transient, high-density populations (Galster 1998).

The socioeconomic characteristics of neighborhood residents are common indicators of neighborhood stability. Stable employment participation is in part a function of educational attainment and household structure. In addition, household income is directly affected by educational attainment and workforce participation. The degree to which a neighborhood changes in racial or ethnic composition is also seen as having an influence on neighborhood vitality. This concept is inherent to the "back-to-the-city movement" where a mixture of social and economic groups is seen as a positive attribute of neighborhood well being (Lang, Hughes, and Danielsen 1997).

Table 1 Variables in analysis

Dependent	Description	Independent	Description
Stayers	% non-movers	Residential density	Housing units/sq. mi.
Crime rate	Change in per capita Person crimes	Homeownership rate Age of structures	% owner occupied units Avg. age of all structures
Racial isolation	Change in deviation From city average	Income Household size Age distribution Household composition Labor participation Distance to downtown Transit access Employment accessibility Presence of civic organizations	Median household income Persons per household %<18, %>65 % single parent w/children % 16+ not working Linear distance Distance to nearest bus stop No. jobs within 30 min. drive Per capita no. within 1 mi. radius

In addition to neighborhood and socioeconomic characteristics, neighborhood location and proximity to employment opportunities are considered essential for vital neighborhoods (Downs 1997). The distance that a neighborhood is located from the downtown can either have a positive or negative impact on neighborhood vitality. Neighborhoods that are close to downtowns that have attractive residential amenities, and commercial opportunities are targeted as being areas with potential for revitalization. On the other hand, neighborhoods near downtowns may be adversely affected by shifting population and job concentrations that plague many U.S. central cities (Downs 1997). In these cases, declining investments negatively impact the condition of buildings, infrastructure, and other services. While jobs move to the suburbs and beyond, residents with poor transportation mobility have less access to new employment opportunities. This effect, commonly known as spatial mismatch, results in underemployed, low-income persons in older, declining neighborhoods near downtowns (see Ihlanfeldt and Sjoquist 1998). These problems may be counteracted by efforts to increase mobility and employment accessibility. Increased public transit service is one way neighborhoods can maintain connections with employment concentrations and needed services (Sanchez 1999). In this analysis, transit access is measured as the distance from the block group centroid to the nearest bus stop. Employment accessibility is measured with a street network-based gravity model. The accessibility index considers service and retail employment within a 30-minute travel time from each block group centroid.

RESULTS

Because there were a number of variables with relatively high levels of collinearity, a backward step-wise regression procedure was used to exclude variables not statistically significant. The initial specification included all variables shown in Table 1. Three variables (housing unit density, per capita income, and employment accessibility) were transformed to natural logarithms for scaling purposes. The descriptive statistics for the full set of variables is shown in Table 2. Per capita crimes against persons was used as a dependent variable to test the relationship of civic organizations and crime levels, instead of using the total number of crimes as a single indicator.

Overall, two of the three regression equations performed reasonably well predicting 55 to 62 percent of the variation in the dependent variables. The regression equation predicting change in racial isolation did not perform as well, predicting only 12 percent of block group variation. None of the independent variables were statistically significant in all three of the models (see Tables 3-5). Many of the variables were, however, significant in two of the three equations predicting the block group number of stayers, change in racial integration, and change in per capita person crimes. The location of schools was the only type of civic organization that was significant in two out of three regression models. The percent single-parent households and the employment accessibility measure were not retained by any of the three models. It is likely that these neighborhood characteristics are reflected in other significant variables.

Table 2 Descriptive statistics

Variable	Mean	Std Dev
Percent stayers	0.480	0.140
Percent owner-occupied housing units	0.587	0.230
Average age of buildings	62.162	14.203
Change in per capita rate of crime against persons	-0.006	0.027
Persons per household	2.359	0.442
Percent persons under 18 years old	0.219	0.082
Percent persons over 65 years old	0.134	0.073
Percent single-parent households	0.367	0.219
Index of racial isolation	0.000	0.001
Percent persons 16+ that did not work in the previous year	0.047	0.040
Distance to Central Business District	6.305	2.610
Distance to the nearest bus stop	0.226	0.151
Per capita no. of churches within 1-mi radius	0.073	0.149
Per capita no. of associations within 1-mi radius	0.014	0.044
Per capita no. of small retail establishments within 1-mi radius	0.348	1.193
Per capita no. of schools within 1-mi radius	0.006	0.006
Per capita no. of civic organizations within 1-mi radius	0.436	1.369
Housing unit density (natural log)	7.917	0.650
Employment accessibility (natural log)	5.659	1.285
Median household income (natural log)	9.737	0.375

N of cases = 388

Stayers

The regression coefficients for the statistically significant independent variables (at $p < 0.05$) predicting residential mobility (stayers) generally behaved as anticipated. A particular exception was the coefficient for change in per capita person crimes. The results suggest that increasing crime rates corresponded to a higher likelihood of stayers (other factors held constant). The coefficient for transit access suggests that transit availability does not correspond with stable residential populations. In addition, block groups with high proportions of homeowners, higher household incomes, older and younger persons, and larger households were associated with neighborhoods retaining their residents over the previous 5 years. In terms of civic organizations, neighborhoods with more schools and fewer retail opportunities had more residential stayers.

Racial Integration

For this analysis, the change in levels of block group racial segregation from 1990 to 1996 was used as an indicator of neighborhood vitality. As the isolation index increased, block groups became more racially homogenous. Older neighborhoods with more homeowners were associated with decreases in racial segregation. On the other hand, higher housing densities, further away from the downtown, with higher rates of unemployment and larger household sizes were correlated with increases in racial isolation from 1990 to 1996. Block groups with higher household incomes were also associated with increases in racial isolation. The results also suggest that the presence of civic organizations was not significantly related to changes in neighborhood racial mix.

Crime

Increasing rates of per capita person crimes from 1990 to 1996 were associated with greater distances from the downtown and percent stayers within each block group. Crime rates decreased away from areas with high transit access and as housing density increased. In addition, block groups with larger average household sizes and increasing racial isolation also experienced declines in per capita rates of person crimes. These relationships are contrary to anticipated findings, however, they appear to explain the changing patterns of crime relative to changes in city demographics. The results suggest that crime decreased in areas where it might be expected to increase (near transit and in higher density residential areas). On the other hand, increases might have been expected in areas with increasing racial isolation, but this was not the case. It is likely that these results indicate that from 1990 to 1996 crime rates stayed relatively unchanged or decreased slightly in previously high crime areas, while crime spread to other areas away from the CBD.

In terms of civic organizations, crime rates declined in areas near church organizations, and increased in areas near other civic associations and schools. While the location of civic associations in areas that experienced increased crime may indicate that these associations are not having a positive

influence, it might also indicate that these associations are located in areas with the greatest need for social capital building. The relative increase in per capita crimes near schools is potentially an indicator of areas with emerging problems.

Table 3 Dependent variable: Percent stayers (1990 to 1996)

Variable	B	Beta	T
Percent owner-occupied housing	0.366**	0.600	14.071
Average building age	0.001*	0.081	2.148
Change in per capita person crimes	0.441*	0.084	2.334
Percent 65 and older	0.458**	0.239	6.403
Distance to public transit	0.084**	0.091	2.643
Per capita retail establishments within 1 mi	-0.021**	-0.180	-3.553
Per capita schools with 1 mi	5.631**	0.246	4.652
Percent 18 and younger	0.275**	0.162	3.476
Median household income (ln)	0.032*	0.085	1.941
Constant	-0.256		-1.522

Adjusted $R^2 = 0.62$, $N = 388$, * Denotes $p < 0.05$, ** denotes $p < 0.01$

Table 4 Dependent variable: Change in racial isolation (1990 to 1996)

Variables	B	Beta	T
Percent owner-occupied housing	-0.00096**	-0.281	-3.746
Median household income (ln)	0.00031	0.147	1.864
Persons per household	0.00049**	0.276	3.985
Percent unemployed	0.00237*	0.123	2.330
Distance to CBD	0.00005*	0.156	2.039
Average building age	-0.00001**	-0.191	-2.874
Housing unit density (ln)	0.00016**	0.132	2.215
Constant	-0.00448*		-2.286

Adjusted $R^2 = 0.12$, $N = 388$, * Denotes $p < 0.05$, ** denotes $p < 0.01$

Table 5 Dependent variable: Change in per capita rate of crime against persons

Variable	B	Beta	T
Persons per household	-0.011**	-0.190	-4.769
Distance to CBD	0.002**	0.184	4.245
Distance to public transit	-0.017*	-0.097	-2.383
Per capita churches within 1 mi	-0.370**	-2.069	-16.151
Per capita schools within 1 mi	2.264**	0.519	6.055
Housing unit density (ln)	-0.006**	-0.138	-2.899
Per capita associations within 1 mi	0.755**	1.248	14.638
Percent stayers	0.024**	0.127	3.222
Change in racial isolation	-2.032	-0.060	-1.664
Constant	0.050*		2.538

Adjusted R² = 0.55, N = 388, * Denotes p < 0.05, ** denotes p < 0.01

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This study addresses several theoretical and methodological issues related to the concept of social capital. The results suggest that civic places have an influence on the parameters of neighborhood vitality and provides additional evidence that such places may facilitate formation of social capital by creating opportunities for informal interactions and civic engagement. Researchers should acknowledge the spatial context of social capital, and concepts of scale, accessibility, location, place, among others, should be included into studies of social capital. Because the empirical analysis is on a micro-level, it focuses on the issues of scale and accessibility of civic places and suggests measures that take into account local scale of person-to-person interactions.

Additional data on the length of time that a civic organization has been located within a neighborhood would further enhance this analysis. Because social capital building occurs over time, one can assume that civic organizations that have been located within a neighborhood for a long time have a greater chance of affecting the neighborhood. The length of operation may also indicate that an organization has been successful and become integrated into the neighborhood structure. The indicators of neighborhood vitality may also be expanded. The three chosen for this analysis were related to social aspects and were supported by the literature. Other economic indicators could include employment levels, income levels, and homeownership rates. Such indicators are related to the stability of a residential neighborhood.

Additional analyses will need to be performed to determine the appropriate geographic scale for the unit of analysis. In particular, the proximity measures to certain types of civic organizations may be variable rather than static as in this analysis. For example, the distances that residents will travel to church may be different from the distance that they would travel to get a cup of coffee. Variable distance

criteria may affect the results of such analyses perhaps reflecting a more realistic distribution of neighborhood impact. It is very likely that the data exhibits a strong spatial bias. Since neighborhood characteristics and the locations of civic organizations tend to be spatially interdependent, tests for spatial auto-correlation need to be included as part of the analysis.

More research is needed about how civic organizations select locations. These organizations may be competing with other land uses that may be needed within a neighborhood. Organizations that do not substantially contribute to economic development activities may not be viewed as highly as land uses that generate employment. The importance of new commercial, industrial, or manufacturing land uses within a neighborhood would be highly dependent upon whether such capital investments could be supported through private or public/private partnerships. It could be argued that if sufficient interest were expressed by such ventures they would easily succeed in out-competing civic organizations that are typically non-profit and marginally capitalized.

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