

HOW VARIABLES OF SOCIAL CAPITAL IN THREE HISPANIC NEIGHBORHOODS RELATE TO AN INDIVIDUAL'S ACTIVITY SPACE

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1. ABSTRACT

Inner-ring ethnic enclave neighborhoods are often subjects of debate concerning immigration, civic engagement, urban development, and citizenship. How different socio-demographic groups engage and perceive urban space can shape their physical and political environment, foster or hinder community capacity building, and foster feelings of belonging and exclusion. This case study focused on three inner-ring Latino enclave neighborhoods: Pilsen in Chicago, Garfield in Phoenix, and Little Havana in Miami. All three have a history of civic engagement and are dealing with a range of social urban prospects and challenges whether in the form of newly arriving immigrants, or gentrification. With this paper, we take up the idea that there is a spatial aspect of social capital that remains largely unexamined. Using geographic information systems along with mental mapping techniques, and survey data related to civic and place engagement, we query the extent to which gender, ethnicity, educational achievement, income level, voter registration status, and the spatial perception of safety and trust predict a person's aggregate activity space. Activity space, in this context, reflects a person's social and spatial mobility in a city and their perception of that city. Data derived from an extensive residential survey done (n=1,200) in the neighborhoods and a mental map exercise (n=120). Our findings show that ethnicity and the spatial perceptions of trust and safety when used in combination, predicted the size of an individual's activity space.

1.1. Keywords

Social Capital, Activity Space, Environmental Perception, Mental Maps, Civic Engagement.