

Mapping and Visualizing Congregations and Their Communities



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Scriptural Framework

The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood (John 1:14 -Message)

To the saints *in Ephesus* ... (Ephesians: 1:1)

...you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. (Acts 1:8)

Three Geographic Concepts: Scale, Space, and Place

Scale: the level of “zoom” in our view (Global, National, Local, Site)

Space: location on the earth’s surface: pattern, movement, dispersion, clusters, associations

Place: location, material setting, social setting, + emotional content

Towards a Global Sense of Place

Mapping Resources

Global Perspectives

Joshua Project Viewer from Dr. Jason VanHorn, Calvin College; <http://tiny.cc/rqt4by>

Lift Up Your Hearts Story Map Prototype by Kyle Bradshaw, student at Calvin College; <http://tinyurl.com/jhrfjbn>

United States Perspectives

Digital Atlas of American Religion, Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis; <http://religionatlas.org/>

Dr. Jon Kilpinen's Maps of U.S. Church Bodies; <http://planetpreterist.com/content/map-gallery-religion-united-states>

Understanding Your Geography; <http://gis.calvin.edu/apps.htm>

United States Human Geography Map Gallery at Valparaiso University; <http://scholar.valpo.edu/usmaps/>

Local Perspectives

Social Explorer for Census Data; www.socialexplorer.com

U.S. Address Geocoder; <http://geocoding.geo.census.gov/>

Calvin College Geographic Information Systems Programs; email: mdb38@calvin.edu

Thinking Spatially: Location and Distance

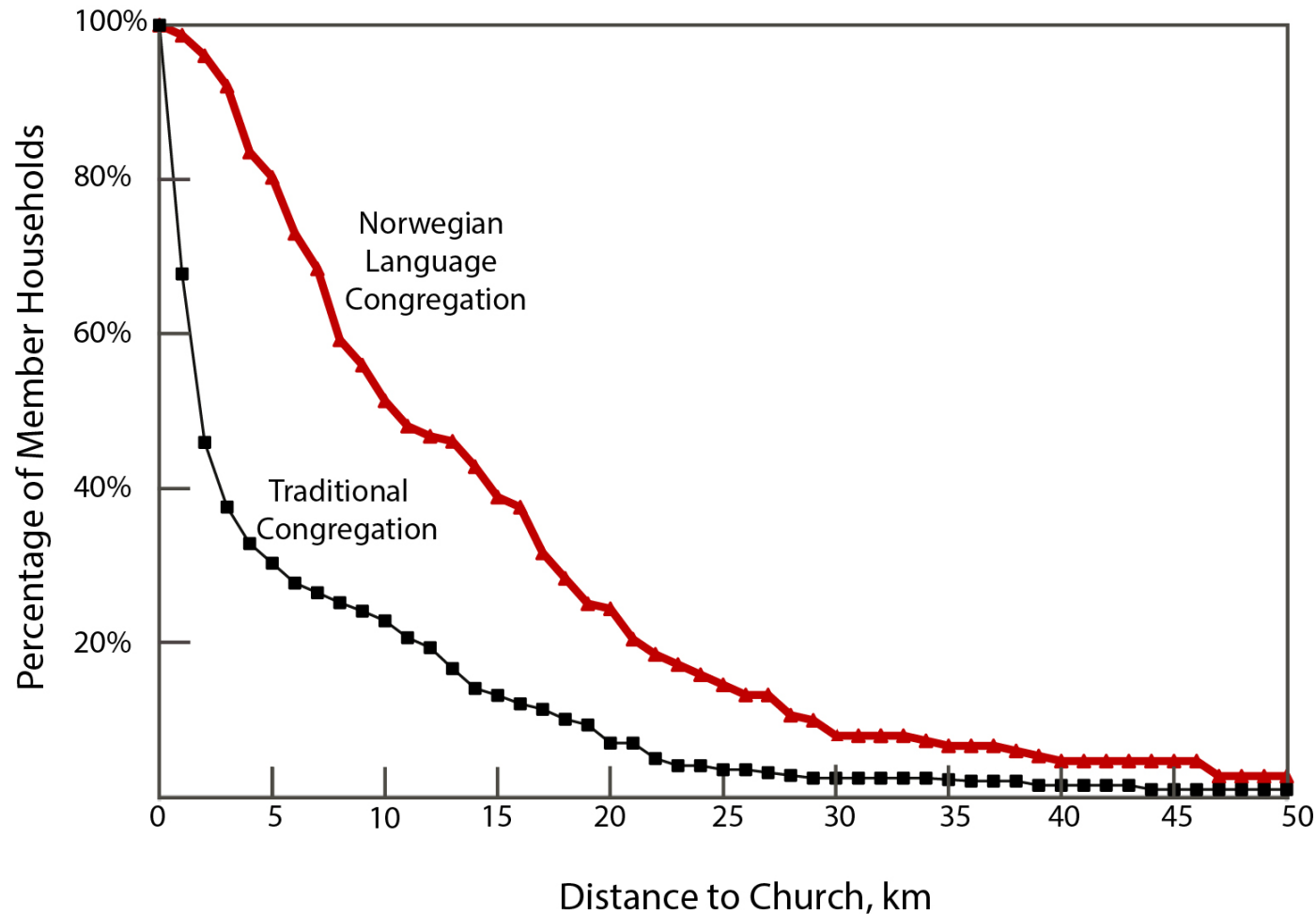


Figure 3. Distance decay in journey-to-worship travel for a traditional and a niche Lutheran congregation. Graph depicts the percentage of congregants travelling further than the specified distance.

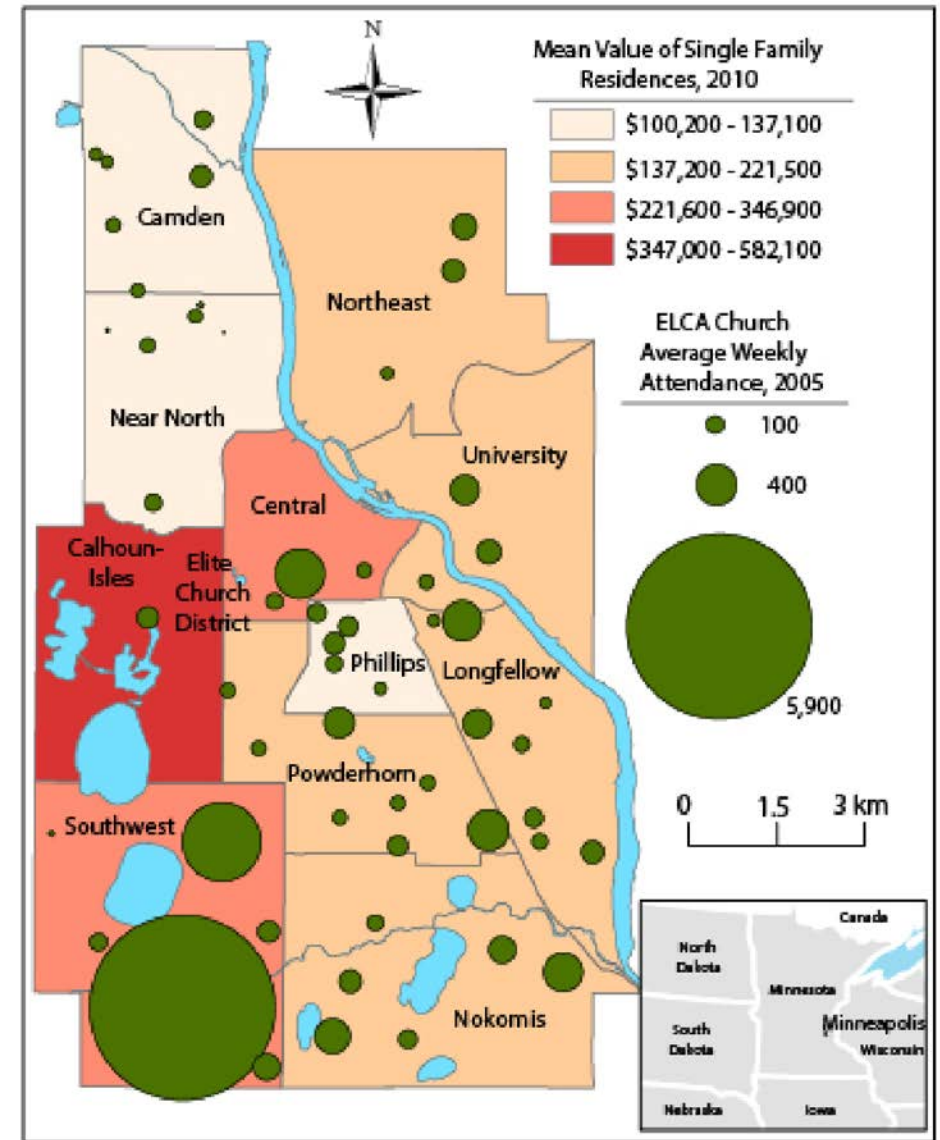
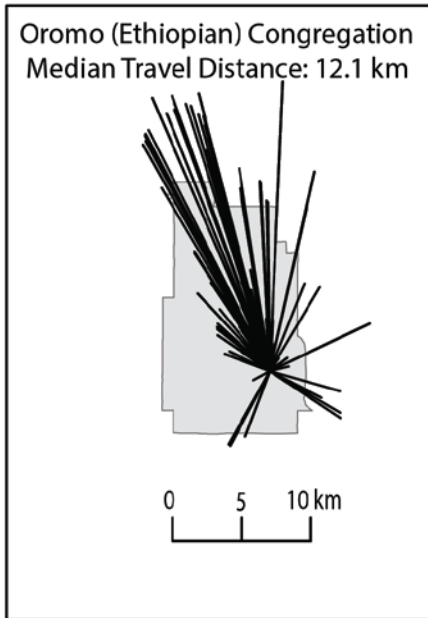
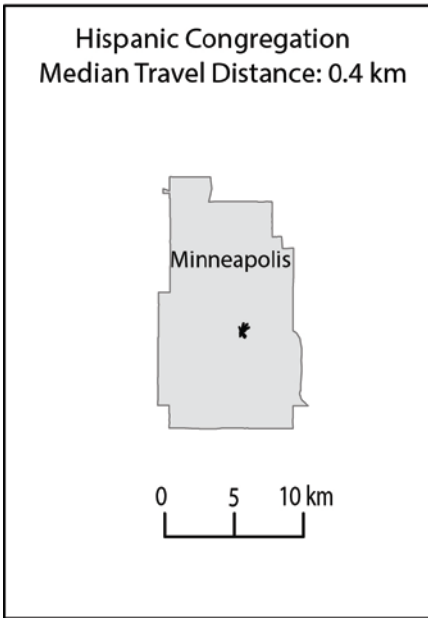
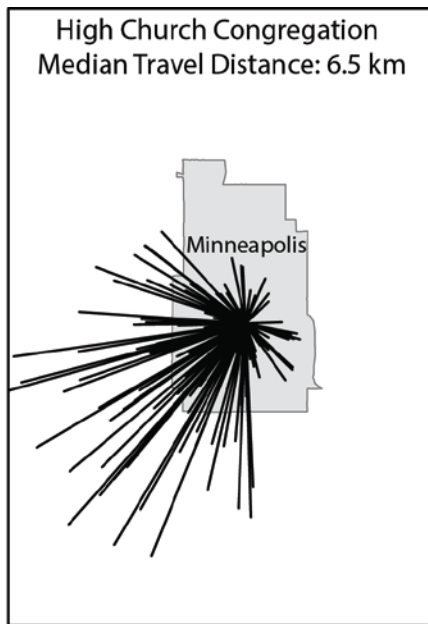
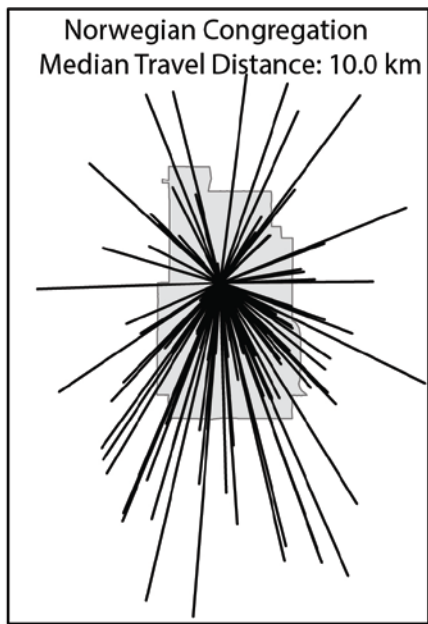
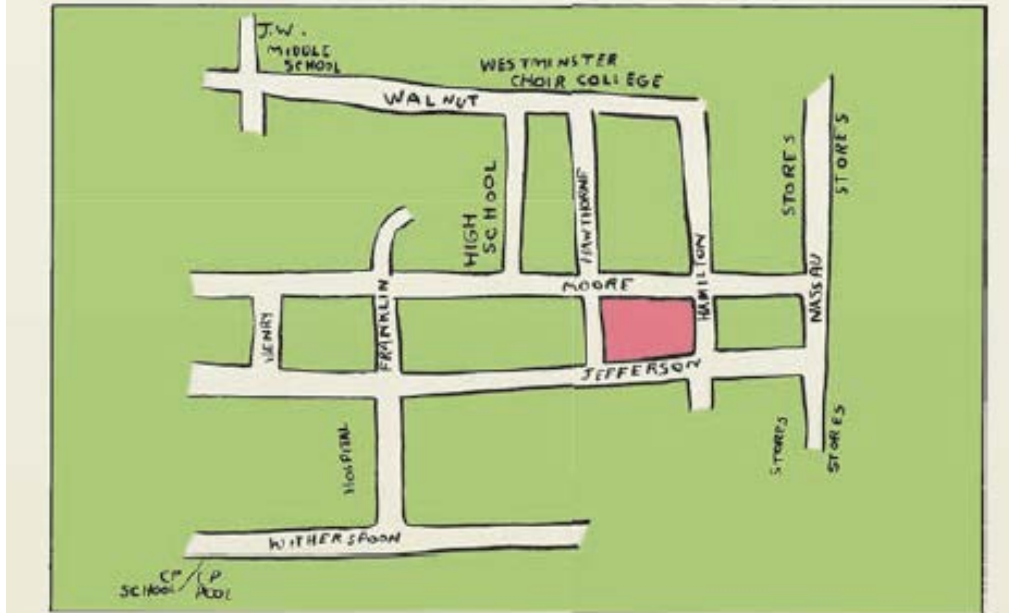


Figure 2. Average weekly attendance at ELCA Lutheran churches in Minneapolis, 2005, and mean value of single-family residences by community, 2010. Data: ELCA, 2010 and Minneapolis Assessor's Office, 2012.

Space and Place



6-year-old



13-year-old

Figure 6. Journey-to-worship spider diagrams for ethnic and worship niche style congregations (travel paths were clipped to boundaries of the 1.0 standard deviational ellipses).