

Abstract:

This research examines the congregations of two relatively young, “western” Christian churches (namely the Seventh-day Adventist Church and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints - Mormons) within Czechia, as sources of social capital for their members. To place these congregations into a spatial context and to shed light on the organizational base of their extensive social networks, the distribution and position (in terms of percentage of adherents as a portion of the total population) of the respective churches are explored at global, regional (European) and local (Czechia) levels. Quantitative and qualitative methods are used to attempt to measure the strength of Adventist and Mormon congregations in Czechia as a viable source of social capital and to explore the diverse ways in which members benefit from belonging. The levels of trust and participation measured within congregations indeed suggest that they present ideal conditions for the development of social capital. Experiences and specific examples of active participants in Adventist and Mormon communities in Czechia confirm the existence of social capital benefits arising from their participation in a congregation.

Keywords: Adventists, geography of religion, Mormons, religious communities, social capital