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Diseño de un indicador de necesidad socio-espacial para el análisis y la formación de decisiones sobre servicios sociales urbanos. Un estudio de caso

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Resumen. La toma de decisiones sobre servicios sociales requiere, como paso previo, un conocimiento de las necesidades y de su distribución en el espacio, cuestión singularmente acuciante en ámbitos menos desarrollados o en periodos de crisis económica, cuando la cohesión socio-territorial se ve más amenazada. La cuestión de medir esas necesidades sociales ha sido tratada con métodos variados, por ser aquéllas muy diversas en naturaleza y porque en ciertos casos resultan elusivas. Incorporar la dimensión espacial supone un reto adicional, pero añade utilidades significativas de cara a la planificación socio-espacial.

En línea con esa preocupación en este trabajo se aborda el problema de estimar las necesidades a atender por los centros de servicios sociales municipales (CSS). A tal fin se plantea el diseño de un indicador estadístico original por zonas intraurbanas, en cuya fórmula se integran los principales componentes generadores de la demanda real observada y también la renta per cápita, con el propósito de tomar en cuenta el relevante principio de equidad espacial. El indicador se ha aplicado experimentalmente, con el apoyo de un sistema de información geográfica (SIG) a la ciudad de Madrid para cuantificar la necesidad de CSS en dos tipos de unidades espaciales, distritos y secciones censales, que aportan utilidades complementarias. Los resultados desvelan las desiguales intraurbanas de ese tipo de necesidades y pueden servir de apoyo para la formación de decisiones públicas sobre dotación y localización de recursos sociales. Adicionalmente el trabajo incluye un ensayo preliminar de examinar estadísticamente las potencialidades y limitaciones del indicador propuesto para ambos tipos de unidades espaciales.

Palabras clave: Necesidades sociales, indicador social, servicios sociales, SIG, políticas públicas locales.

Designing a socio-spatial need indicator for urban social services analysis and decision making. A case study

Abstract. Decision-making regarding social services requires, as a preliminary step, a knowledge of the needs and their spatial distribution, a particularly pressing need in under-developed areas or during periods of economic crisis. It must also be borne in mind that, having establis-hed such needs, proposals should involve and be inspired on major principles such as socio-territorial equity and efficiency, as well as those of social cohesion and socio-demographic sustainability which are often violated or sidestepped.

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The task of measuring these social needs has been addressed from various disciplines (e.g. political science and public administration, economics, sociology, geography, marketing, urban planning, etc.) and with a variety of methods, owing to the wide diversity in the nature of such needs and because, in certain cases, they are elusive. Incorporating the spatial dimension adds a further challenge, but at the same time proves significantly useful for socio-spatial planning.

In line with this endeavour, this work examines the problem of estimating the needs that must be met by the municipal social service centres (CSS) of Madrid, which are set up as a civic facility to provide free assistance with social problems. Basically, they deliver information, guidance and help to resolve citizens' requests. Among their most conspicuous functions we can mention: *a)* Information on resources and social benefits: pensions, public grants, scholarships, infant schools, elderly people's homes, adult day-care centres, drug addiction treatment centres, minors, etc.; *b)* Management of social benefits, both financial (e.g. integration/insertion income), and service related (e.g. home assistance and tele-assistance); *c)* Social intervention, both individual and in groups; and d) Advisory services for organisations and associations operating in the field of social welfare.

For this purpose, an original statistical indicator for intraurban areas has been designed that is in keeping with the logic behind current use of the CSS and with the objectives for their provision. In short terms, it is assumed that the indicator should respond to the sum of several components generating current demand: on the one hand, the whole population, and on the other, the demographic segments most likely to have social needs: young people, the elderly and immigrants from less developed countries. The formal starting point for what we shall call the need-related or potential demand synthetic index (ISD) is the expression:

ISD = f (population, young people, the elderly and immigrants)

Each of the above components has been weighted. The weights of population groups are based on the proportion of actual users registered in one year. For the total population weight we have sought to take into account the important principle of spatial equity. As social needs, and by extension

the propensity to use the CSS, spring up unevenly depending on socioeconomic status, we have postulated weighting the total population according to personal income. Consequently, the weight wp_d, for a given area has been treated as a proportion of municipal income per capita with respect to that area, which may be a district or a small census unit (called census section). In formal terms:

$$wp_d = \frac{RPC_M}{RPC_d}$$

Where RPC_M = Income per capita in Madrid, and RPC_d = Income per capita in the spatial unit d.

The formula finally adopted for the **potential demand synthetic index** for any spatial unit d, ISD_d, is as follows:

$$ISD_d = P_d * wp_d + J_d * wj_d + A_d * wa_d + I_d * wi_d$$

Where:
P_d = Population of the spatial unit d,
wp_d = Weight for population in zone d, according to its level of income per capita, as described above,
J_d = Number of young people in the spatial unit d,
A_d = Number of elderly people in the spatial unit d,
I_d = Number of immigrants in the spatial unit d,
wj_d = weight for the young people group (0.10),
wa_d = weight for the elderly people group (0.42),
wi_d = weight for the immigrants group (0.27).

The indicator has been applied experimentally, with the support of a geographical information system, to the city of Madrid in order to quantify the need for CSS in two types of spatial units, namely districts and census sections that provide complementary utilities for political actions.

The results reveal intraurban inequalities in this type of needs, and may serve to support public decision-making on the provision and location of these social resources. This work further includes a preliminary statistical study of the potentials and limitations of the indicator proposed for both spatial unit types.

Key words: Social needs, social indicator, social services, GIS, local public policies.

INTRODUCCIÓN

Dentro de la denominada geografía social una de las parcelas más importantes y a la vez menos abordada concierne a la provisión de servicios sociales. Se podrían apuntar hipótesis varias sobre las causas de esa desatención, pero sean cuales fueren no justifican históricamente la postergación constatada y parece oportuno llamar la atención de la comunidad científica geográfica acerca de la urgencia en ponerlo en la agenda de investigación.

Ello es así por cuanto tales servicios se destinan a atender necesidades calificables de básicas o fundamentales de las personas, que adquieren el carácter de problemas severos, cuando no críticos. Como es bien sabido, los servicios sociales atienden problemas muy heterogéneos asociados a la pobreza, la marginación o la exclusión, etc., que afectan a grupos muy diversos: mujeres, niños, ancianos, inmigrantes, discapacitados, enfermos, dependientes físicos o psíquicos, delincuentes, drogadictos, etc. Con frecuencia la debilidad y vulnerabilidad