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# Community Revitalization and the Arts in Philadelphia

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# Community Revitalization and the Arts in Philadelphia

## **Abstract**

This paper explores the contours of community revitalization and its relationship to arts activity. The authors found that in Philadelphia, neighborhoods in which the arts were a visible presence were more likely to have fared better—as measured by changes in poverty and population—than the rest of the city.

The paper begins with an examination of trends in revitalization in the city of Philadelphia during the 1980s. The team found little relationship between declines in poverty and changes in the racial composition of the city's neighborhoods—a classic indicator of gentrification--during this decade. When they examined the relationship of the arts to revitalization, they found that sections of the city that consistently emerged as “high participation” neighborhoods—whether looking at presence of cultural organizations or levels of local involvement--were precisely the places likely to have higher than average growth of income and population during the 1980s.

The authors then turn to patterns of participation in community arts activities. What they found was extraordinarily high levels of participation from across the region in community cultural activities. And, consistent with previous SIAP studies, they found that the diverse neighborhoods of the city account for the lion's share of this regional participation in community arts.

## **Disciplines**

Arts and Humanities | Civic and Community Engagement | Urban Studies and Planning

## **Comments**

SIAP's *Culture Builds Community* inquiry was undertaken from 1996 to 2001 with support by the William Penn Foundation.



Social Impact of  
the Arts Project

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University of Pennsylvania  
School of Social Work

**Working Paper #8**

**Community Revitalization and the Arts in Philadelphia**

**Mark J. Stern and Susan C. Seifert**  
**January 1998**

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## INTRODUCTION

One of our concerns in the current phase of the Social Impact of the Arts Project has been the relationship of arts and cultural institutions to processes of community development. In previous papers, we have demonstrated that arts and cultural institutions and participation are integrally connected to the broader development of community infrastructure and to the strengthening of diverse communities in Philadelphia.

In this paper, we address more directly the issue of community revitalization. Through the use of data on community arts participation and the 1980 census, we assess the role of arts and cultural institutions in strengthening neighborhoods between 1980 and 1990 and the processes through which that influence is manifested. In particular, we argue:

- that sections of the city with a strong arts presence had greater population growth and a more rapid decline in poverty during the 1980s;
- that this revitalization does not fit common notions of gentrification;
- that patterns of participation of community arts programs contribute to revitalization by breaking down social and economic barriers separating communities; and
- that community arts programs are strategically located to serve as facilitators of community economic revitalization.

This focus on the positive role of arts and cultural institutions to processes of community revitalization stands in marked contrast to the most common scholarly views of the topic. A number of scholars, most notably Sharon Zukin and Neil Smith, have argued that arts and culture play a critical role in *gentrification*—the displacement of poor and middle-income residents in urban neighborhoods. Relying primarily on evidence for New York City and other “world cities,” Zukin and Smith see artists and cultural organizations as the first wave of gentry, who clear out older uses and make way for more elite residents and uses.

Zukin refers to the process through which the arts are linked to urban redevelopment as the “artistic mode of production.” In *Loft Living: Culture and Capital in Urban Change*, she writes:

[Art] in twentieth-century America showed that it had a more directly “capitalist” use. Particularly striking was art’s utility to urban real estate development. In burgeoning centers of international trade and finance, such as New York on the East Coast and San Francisco in the West, developers found that art, when it was set within the proper physical and institutional framework—the museum or the cultural center—could become a vehicle for its own valorization. The growing value of related factors: the urban forms that grew up around it, the activity of doing it, and most important, the status of consuming it. These processes of valorization commanded—or even demanded—a wider public for art and culture than had existed until this time.<sup>1</sup>

Neil Smith, in his *The New Urban Frontier: Gentrification and the Revanchist City*, also sees the promotion of arts as a critical accumulation strategy focused on displacement.

[Artists and arts organizations] came to function as “broker” between the culture industry and the majority of still-aspiring artists . . . Representing and patronizing the neighborhood as a cultural mecca, the culture industry attracted tourists, consumers, gallery gazers, art patrons, potential immigrants—all fueling gentrification.<sup>2</sup>

The link of arts and accumulation in these contexts, however, was transitional. In both Soho and the Lower East Side, the arts served as a strategy for ridding a district of older land uses and residents. But after the old uses were cleared out and the real estate market picked up, the arts too were soon displaced by higher-rent tenants. Thus, Zukin and Smith tell a story in which the role of arts in *economic* revitalization is antithetical to processes of *social* revitalization.

Zukin and Smith’s image of arts and gentrification, although based largely on research in New York City and other “world cities,” has dominated scholarly thinking. Its central tenets--that gentrification is a major social process and that the arts are one strategy for gentrification--has been claimed by researchers in other cities as well.

Yet, it is fair to ask if New York is really representative of a set of social processes that are present in other cities. The literature on globalization and economic restructuring suggests that we should be skeptical about over-

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<sup>1</sup> Sharon Zukin, *Loft Living: Culture and Capital in Urban Change* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1989), 177.

<sup>2</sup> Neil Smith, *The New Urban Frontier: Gentrification and the Revanchist City* (New York: Routledge, 1996), 19.



generalizing from New York. As Saskia Sassen<sup>3</sup> has noted, the wave of urban restructuring since the 1970s has pushed us in the direction of a system of “primate” urban systems in which the gap between “world cities” like New York, London, and Tokyo and second- or third-tier cities has increased. The geographical manifestation of globalization is an increase in economic pressure in those areas that are at the core of the business service complex.

Certainly, it seems clear that arts and cultural activity has played a variety of roles in the working out of the land pressures that accompany these processes of globalization. The emergence of major exhibitions as a tourist draw, for example, is a notable feature of late twentieth-century cities. And the number of cities that look to cultural districts—often tied to a “special services district”—continues to grow.

Yet, a great gap separates these phenomena in world cities from the character of redevelopment in other urban areas. First, the scale of renewal varies greatly. While redevelopment pressures have transformed a third of Manhattan, in most cities only a few square miles have been subject to the dynamics of the super-profit land market. Second, the temporal dimension of redevelopment is quite different in a world city compared to a city like Philadelphia. While in New York, for example, the signs of redevelopment are often visible on a weekly basis; in smaller cities, years can pass between the advent of a project and its completion.

The issue of the pace of change is of central importance to the social revitalization of cities and neighborhoods. The crux of gentrification is the *rapid* displacement of a low-income population by higher-income residents or uses. As Jane Jacobs notes in *The Life and Death of Great American Cities*, “cataclysmic money” pour[ed] into an area in concentrated form produc[es] drastic changes.” She argues instead for “instruments of regeneration” that buy “continual, gradual, complex and gentler change.”

City building that has a solid footing produces continual and gradual change ... Growth of diversity itself is created by means of changes dependent upon each other to build increasingly effective combinations of uses. Unslumming—much as it should be speeded up from the glacial pace at which it now proceeds—is a process of steady but gradual change. All city building ... that preserves the freedom of the streets and upholds citizens’ self-management requires that its locality be able to adapt, keep up to date, keep interesting, keep convenient, and this in turn requires a myriad of gradual, constant, close-grained changes.”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Saskia Sassen, *Cities in a World Economy* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press, 29-52.

<sup>4</sup> Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Random House, 1961), 293-294, 317.

If the process of “unslumming” is slow, if low-income and high-income people live together for years, the quality of the experience of redevelopment is likely to enhance rather than detract from urbanism. First, as in any community, the process of coexistence in space is likely to generate situations in which all residents have an interest. Second, to the extent that these situations force all sides to confront diversity, the life-style of all groups must change to accommodate one another. Thus, when the process of small-scale redevelopment is drawn out over a long period of time, it leads not to the classic displacement of gentrification, but to the construction of a particular kind of urban community—a community that must face up to diversity.

This paper explores the contours of community revitalization and its relationship to arts activity. We discover that in Philadelphia, neighborhoods in which the arts are a visible presence are more likely to have fared better—as measured by changes in poverty and population—than the rest of the city.

We then turn to a related phenomenon—the patterns of participation in community arts activities in our case study neighborhoods. We find that the participant base in these neighborhoods comes disproportionately from *outside* of the neighborhoods in which the groups are located. At first glance, this might suggest a deep problem. After all, we expect community arts groups to be based in their neighborhood. Yet, on further examination, this pattern can be seen as an asset.

Certainly there is room for strengthening arts groups roots in their community. As we have discovered, arts resources for children need to have a strong local presence. But, their ability to reach across communities—not only of geography but also of social class and ethnicity—may very well be one of the unique strengths of community arts institutions. Our analysis suggests that it is precisely those communities most open to “difference”—the diverse neighborhoods of Philadelphia—that account for the largest share of the “regional” audience of neighborhood arts. The fact that local arts organizations draw a considerable portion of their audience from diverse neighborhoods provides one visible means through which the historical barriers of race and class are overcome in contemporary Philadelphia.

In a larger sense, this is as it should be. Over the past decade, community development has been the dominant movement for urban revitalization. Built partially on the historic tradition of “self-assertion” among African-American, the community development movement has argued that the internal strengthening of minority communities is a critical strategy for rebuilding our cities.

Yet, recently, a number of activists and scholars have raised doubts about the ability of communities to rebuild themselves in isolation. Some have argued that the institutional weakness or “social disorganization” of black and Latino

communities explains their current predicament. However, as we demonstrated in Working Paper #4,<sup>5</sup> social disorganization is not the case in our community case study neighborhoods. To the contrary, they have a level of institutional strength that is at least comparable to that of more prosperous neighborhoods in the city.

Poor neighborhoods lack resources. They need employment, money capital, and integration into the wider urban community. Only strategies that better connect poor neighborhoods to the rest of the city are likely to succeed.

Yet, most forms of neighborhood organization do not encourage these types of connections. Place-based organizations like civic associations, neighborhood improvement groups, and community development corporations are organized to work within communities. Efforts to reach outside the neighborhood's borders are likely to be restricted only to leaders and are often confrontational.

The connections fostered by arts organizations are of a quite different character. First, they are more broadly based. Every year, hundreds of different individuals travel to Point Breeze, Powelton, and North Philadelphia from across the metropolitan area to attend performances or participate in classes and other activities. Second, the basis of engagement is an assertion of mutual interest, not an assertion of self-interest. Finally, cultural participation speaks to an interest in a new beginning in the history of race and class in our city. Rather than accept as "given" a cognitive map of the city in which the poor, the rich, the black, the white, and the brown each claim their own zones—separate and unequal, the regional character of community arts participation challenges these barriers. It is hardly coincidental that it is those areas in which residents most visibly challenge the past—the ethnically and economically diverse neighborhoods of the city—that provide this audience.

So, the connections fostered by the regional character of community arts form a new foundation for the social revitalization of the city's neighborhoods. It would be foolhardy to claim they are the whole solution, but they provide at least a first step and a fresh perspective.

Thus, the hopeful conclusions that we reach in this paper are based on what are—at first appearance—liabilities. If Philadelphia were a "hotter" city, we might not have the time and space to allow this new situation to take root. If the forces of capital investment were as immense here as in New York or Los Angeles, we would not have the time for the innovation and risk-taking that are necessary if we were to turn our backs on the legacy of segregation and isolation. At the same time, it is the fact that arts and cultural organizations are not based *solely* in their communities, but draw in a regional audience, that provides the impetus for the connections across geographical and social barriers.

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<sup>5</sup> Mark J. Stern and Susan C. Seifert, "Civic Engagement and Urban Poverty," *Social Impact of the Arts Project, Working Paper #4*, (University of Pennsylvania School of Social Work, February 1997).

## **FINDINGS**

The paper begins with an examination of the trends in revitalization in the city of Philadelphia during the 1980s. We discover that there was little relationship between declines in poverty and changes in the racial composition of the city's neighborhoods—a classic indicator of gentrification--during this decade.

We then examine the relationship of community revitalization to the arts. We find that those sections of the city that have consistently emerged as “high participation” neighborhoods--whether we look at the presence of arts organizations or at levels of local involvement--are precisely the places that were likely to have higher than average growth of income and population during the 1980s.

Finally, we turn to patterns of participation in community arts activities. Once again, we find extraordinarily high levels of participation from across the region in community arts activities. And, once again, we find that it is the diverse neighborhoods of the city that account for the lion's share of this regional participation.

### **Patterns of Community Revitalization**

Between 1980 and 1990, the population of the city of Philadelphia fell from 1,666,000 to 1,576,000 (a decline of 5.4 percent), while its poverty rate remained essentially stable, falling from 20.8 to 20.4 percent. Yet, the decline in population and changes in poverty were not uniform across the city. A quarter of block groups recorded population increases of over four percent, while another quarter lost more than 15 percent of their population. Just as one quarter of block groups saw their poverty rate rise by as much as 6.3 percent, at the other extreme a quarter of block groups saw their poverty fall by more than 6.7 percent (Table 1).

We use an index to examine community change during the 1980s. Our definition focuses more precisely on revitalization: a block group is defined as revitalized if its poverty rate decline was in the top quarter and its population rise was in the top quarter of all block groups during the 1980s.

The block groups exhibiting both a strong decline in poverty and a clear rise in population were scattered across the city (Figure 1). Haddington, Kingsessing, and Belmont-Mantua in West Philadelphia had the largest concentrations of economic revitalization. Wharton and Pennsport in South Philadelphia, and Logan-Fern Rock, Tioga-Nicetown, Frankford, and Richmond in North Philadelphia and the River Wards were the largest centers of growth, although other block groups were scattered across the city. Among the revitalized block

groups, the largest increases in population (over 30 percent) were in the areas nearest Center City and in Tioga-Nicetown and Logan-Fern Rock. Block groups with the largest declines in poverty were located in North Philadelphia (West Kensington, Poplar).

As we have noted, an issue that has confused the debate over revitalization has been the fear of the negative effects of gentrification. Although our database does not allow us to examine all dimensions of the issue, we can examine the racial character of gentrification. That is, did neighborhoods that underwent economic revitalization--defined by poverty decline and population gain--during the 1980s also undergo racial or ethnic displacement?

Among the 94 block groups that saw both an increase in population *and* a decline in poverty of greater than six percent, the connection of ethnic change and revitalization did not fit the stereotype of gentrification (Table 2, Figure 2). More than one-third of these block groups was black or Latino in both 1980 and 1990. In fact, only four of the ninety-four shifted during the decade from black, Latino, or diverse to predominantly white.<sup>6</sup> (See Table 2 and Figure 2.)

The majority of the revitalized block groups did have a distinctive social structure in 1980 (Table 3). Almost half of these were *economically diverse*--that is, had above average poverty *and* above average number of professionals--in 1980, nearly three times the rate among all city block groups. Looked at another way, in 1980 58 percent of the 94 revitalized block groups were either economically or ethnically diverse. A decade later, 42 percent of these block groups--well above the citywide average of 35 percent--were still diverse. In short, the block groups that underwent economic revitalization during the 1980s remained more diverse in 1990--both ethnically and economically--than the rest of the city.

### **Community Revitalization and Arts Organizations**

Was the revitalization of these neighborhoods related to the presence of arts organizations? We know for certain that there is a strong relationship between

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<sup>6</sup> Areas of the city that gained population during the 1980s were also likely to be racially dynamic. In block groups that remained racially stable, black and Latino block groups lost nine percent of their population and white block groups lost about 4.5 percent. Sections of the city that had been either minority or diverse in 1980 and then became white gained about 13 percent, while areas that became black or Latino or remained or became diverse remained essentially stable in population.

Across the entire city, sections that remained minority neighborhoods had a poverty decline of about one- percent, while sections that remained white, became or stayed diverse had no significant change in their poverty rate. The poverty rate dropped by about 7.5 percent in block groups that became white and rose by 4.7 percent in block groups that became black or Latino.

existing arts organizations and their neighborhood's history of revitalization during the 1980s.

For example, a block group currently in the top quartile with respect to number of arts organizations within one-half mile was nearly three times as likely as one in the bottom quarter to undergo economic revitalization during the 1980s (Figure 3). Similarly, a block group with high participation in regional arts activities had a significantly higher chance of having experienced 1980s revitalization than the rest of the city (Figure 4). Thus, it is clear that involvement in the arts was connected with sections of the city that *had* revitalized.

Yet, we would like to know if the opposite were true--if neighborhoods that had many arts organizations *at the beginning of the 1980s* were the ones most likely to undergo revitalization. Although we do not have a comprehensive count of arts organizations that existed in 1980, we can provide at least a partial answer to this question.

We have data on the year established—either the actual year founded or the year that federal tax-exempt status was granted—for about half of the organizations in our arts and culture database. Of these groups, then, we were able to estimate the number that existed in 1980 as a proxy for total number of groups. This measure is flawed in at least two ways. First, it does not account for groups that disappeared after 1980. Second, it does not account for groups that may have relocated between 1980 and the present. Still, we are confident that the index is good enough to justify its use.

Using the year established, we have classified block groups into three categories: those that have a high number of arts organizations established before 1960; those that have a high number of organizations established between 1960 and 1980; and those that have a high number of organizations established since 1980.

These data are interesting in their own right. As Figure 5 shows, they identify a set of longstanding “core” neighborhoods that have had a large number of cultural institutions since the pre-NEA era.<sup>7</sup> Not surprisingly, these include Center City, the Art Museum area, Pennsport, and University City.

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<sup>7</sup> The National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities were created by Congress in 1965.

During the past thirty-seven years, much of the spawning of arts and cultural organizations has occurred in areas of the city near this core. In South Philadelphia, the greatest growth occurred in Pennsport and Point Breeze. The Cobbs Creek, Cedar Hill, and West Park sections of West Philadelphia all increased the number of groups. The most dramatic expansion occurred in North Philadelphia. Before 1960, the city's cultural core stopped at Spring Garden Street. By the 1990s, it had expanded up Broad Street all the way to Lehigh Avenue. In addition, much of Fishtown saw growth. Finally, Chestnut Hill, West Oak Lane, and sections of Logan and Hunting Park had been added to the Germantown Avenue core.

This historical development of the city's nonprofit arts organizations was strongly related to the sections of the city that revitalized during the 1980s (Table 4). Block groups that had the greatest number of arts organizations founded before 1980 were more than twice as likely to revitalize during the 1980s than the average block group. Block groups that joined the cultural core after 1980 were nearly twice as likely to revitalize as sections of the city that are still without a large number of arts organizations.

Overall, the sections of the city that had arts organizations present before 1980 experienced a four-percent increase in population and a two-percent decline in poverty during the 1980s. Among block groups that were not part of the cultural core, poverty rose and population declined over the same period. (See Figures 6 and 7.)

To summarize these findings, we performed a logistic regression on our measure of revitalization with ethnicity, economic diversity, and historical presence of arts organizations as independent variables (Table 5). The analysis demonstrates that ethnic composition had little impact on economic revitalization, but that economic diversity and the presence of arts organizations before 1980 had a strong impact. Controlling for the other variables, an economically diverse block group was seven times as likely to revitalize during the 1980s, and a block group with many organizations founded before 1980 was more than twice as likely.

Economic revitalization has been the holy grail of urban policy for the past fifty years. The findings of this analysis demonstrate that arts and cultural organizations provide part of the answer to this puzzle. Neighborhood economic revitalization in Philadelphia during the 1980s was not strongly related to ethnic displacement; indeed a third of block groups that did revitalize remained African-American across the decade. In any case, however, economic diversity and the presence of arts organizations did make a difference.

## Community Arts Participation

The historical evidence on economic revitalization and community arts presence suggests that there is a relationship between the two. Yet, it leaves unanswered the question of the nature of the relationships. In this section, we propose one answer to this question. We use evidence on participation in community arts activities to suggest that—in contrast to other types of civic engagement—the arts are unique in that they simultaneously build links *within* and *between* communities.

This argument has two parts. First, we will demonstrate that community arts participation differs from other types of civic engagement, which tend to have a geographically specific dimension. A significant proportion of community arts participants travels across the city to involve themselves in arts activities. Second, we want to argue—following our discussion in Working Paper #3<sup>8</sup>—that the communities in which “outside” participants live are strategically located in diverse sections of the city that readily build bridges across historical gaps of race, ethnicity, and social class.

### Dimensions of community participation

The data for this section of the paper are drawn from a series of community arts participant databases provided to us by arts centers located in our case study neighborhoods. These databases are of two distinct types.

**Registration and participant lists.** These are generally the best source because they represent actual participation in a class or an event that is recorded at the time it occurs.

**Mailing lists.** These are a less accurate source because a person’s name can remain on a mailing list long after his or her participation is active.

The actual size of the source participant lists ranged from a few dozen individuals, for some of the smaller after-school programs, to over four thousand names (Table 6).

We geocoded each source listing by place of residence and then aggregated the results by block group.<sup>9</sup> We thereby developed a database in which we have a count for the number of community arts participants by organization residing in each block group in the metropolitan area.

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<sup>8</sup> Mark J. Stern, “Re-presenting the City: Arts, Culture, and Diversity in Philadelphia,” *Social Impact of the Arts Project, Working Paper #3* (University of Pennsylvania School of Social Work, February 1997).

<sup>9</sup> Census tracts are divided into block groups, each of which is comprised of approximately six to eight city blocks.



To determine the proportion of participants who came from inside and from outside of the community, we identified participants into three groups: 1) those who lived *inside* the neighborhood in which an arts organization was located; 2) those who lived *near* the arts organization (outside the neighborhood but within one-half mile; and 3) those who lived more than one-half mile *outside* the neighborhood. In other words, by *outside participants* we mean those who lived more than one-half mile outside the neighborhood in which a group was located. We defined neighborhood using our community case study boundaries. (See map of community case study neighborhoods in the Appendix, Figure A-1.)

Based on our “inside-outside” analysis, it is clear that a large proportion of participants, regardless of the size of the program, do not live in the immediate neighborhood of the centers (Figure 8). The lowest percentage of outside participants came from the mailing list of the Sedgwick Cultural Center in Mount Airy (38 percent). The highest percentage of outsiders came to Point Breeze’s annual show; over 90 percent of the participants resided outside of Point Breeze. Overall, 19 percent of participants came from inside the neighborhood, 13 percent came from near the neighborhood, and 68 percent came from at least a half-mile beyond the neighborhood’s borders.

If we examine each of our neighborhoods in turn (Figures 9a-9d), there emerge two distinct patterns of “outside” participation. First, a proportion of participation is drawn from areas just outside of the neighborhood where the organization is located. Second, there are certain sections of the city that appear consistently in every center’s participation database.

For example, taking all the databases together, Center City, West Philadelphia, and Mount Airy-Germantown are consistently among the areas where there is a concentration of participants. Even in our North Philadelphia and Point Breeze case studies, this appears to be the case.

One division, however, distinguishes participation patterns (Figure 10). Children-oriented programs are more likely to draw from the immediate neighborhood. Whereas overall nearly 80 percent--four in five participants--came from outside the neighborhood; for children’s programs, the figure was only 56 percent. Still, even for children’s programs, traveling from outside the neighborhood is the norm.

### **Factors related to community arts participation**

The pattern of “outside” community arts participation is similar to that of regional arts participation, which we discussed in Working Paper #6.<sup>10</sup> Indeed, the two are correlated at .50--a very strong relationship. Outside community

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<sup>10</sup> Mark J. Stern, “Dimensions of Regional Arts and Cultural Participation: Individual and Neighborhood Effects on Participation in the Philadelphia Metropolitan Area,” *Social Impact of the Arts Project, Working Paper #6* (University of Pennsylvania, September 1997).

participation is also correlated with the two major dimensions of regional participation: the mainstream factor (.36) and the diversity factor (.31). In short, at least as measured by these data, there is not a clear distinction between community arts participants and patrons of regional institutions.

As we might expect, “outside” community arts participation tends to be associated with a particular set of neighborhood characteristics.

### ***Civic infrastructure***

People who participate in community arts activities across the region are quite likely to live in neighborhoods with many types of social organizations, particularly arts organizations. The correlation with the number of all social organizations is .46 and that with number of arts groups is .48. Neighborhoods with a high proportion of arts organizations are more likely to have high outside the neighborhood participation; by contrast, neighborhoods with many churches have lower rates of participation (Table 7).

### ***Socio-economic status***

Sections of the city where residents have higher income and educational attainment are somewhat more likely to have higher rates of “outside” participation than less prosperous areas. However, although statistically significant, the correlation coefficients are quite low: .13 for per capita income, .09 for family income, .18 for proportion of college graduates.

### ***Economic diversity***

One of the most notable factors associated with “outside” community participation was the economic diversity of the neighborhood (Table 8b). Economically diverse neighborhoods (higher than average poverty *and* higher than average proportion of professionals and managers) had outside participation rates that were nearly twice the population average. Poor neighborhoods had higher rates of outside community arts participation than those with below average poverty. Outside participation was somewhat higher in neighborhoods with concentrated poverty than in economically diverse neighborhoods.

### ***Ethnic diversity***

Another notable factor associated with cross-community cultural participation was the ethnic diversity of the neighborhood (Table 8a). Block groups that were ethnically diverse (black-Latino, black-white, and other diverse) had outside participation rates that were roughly twice the population average, while predominantly white neighborhoods had rates well below the population average.

### ***Ethnic and economic diversity***

Neighborhoods that were both ethnically and economically diverse had the highest rates of outside participation. The city's most heterogeneous block groups had a rate of outside community arts participation that was three times that of the average block group citywide.

### **Historical change and community participation**

The history of community change that we examined in the previous section also had a bearing on the outside community participation rate. Ethnic change, the history of arts organizations in the area, and economic revitalization were all related to the level of arts engagement outside one's own neighborhood.

Sections of the city that were either diverse or experienced ethnic change during the 1980s had higher rates of community arts participation than were racially stable sections of the city (Table 9). The rates in stable white and black-Latino areas were almost identical, 2.6 and 2.5 respectively. In the sixteen block groups that became homogeneous white, the rate was 14.1. Finally, in sections of the city that became or remained ethnically diverse, the outside participation rate was 6.5, twice the rate for the average block group.

The participation rate was related, as well, to the historical presence of arts and cultural organizations in the neighborhood (Table 10). Sections of the city that were part of the historical core of the arts and cultural community (high number of groups established before 1960) had a participation rate of 3.4 per 1,000 residents, fifty percent higher than the rate for the average block group. The remainder of the metropolitan area had rates below that of the average block group.

Block groups that have experienced recent economic revitalization, as measured by population increase and poverty decline during the 1980s, were only marginally related to the outside community arts participation. The rate in these block groups—3.0 per thousand—was about twenty percent higher than the rate for the average block group.

In order to summarize our findings on the determinants of the outside participation rate, we ran two regression models. One examined the entire metropolitan area and included only contemporary variables. The other included historical data on ethnic change, presence of arts and cultural organizations, and economic revitalization but was restricted to the city of Philadelphia.

The models generally confirm our previous findings. For the metropolitan area, when all variables are taken into consideration, the number of social organizations near a block group and arts and cultural groups as a percentage of all social organizations explained the most variance in outside participation rate. Together they explained over three percent of the variance. The proportion of

adults in the block group who had a bachelor's degree and the ethnic diversity of the block group were also significant in explaining the participation rate. Taken together, the multiple correlation coefficient was .20, suggesting that the model explained four percent of the variance in the participation rate (Table 11).

For the city's block groups, the historical presence of arts organizations, ethnic change, and the percentage of college graduates in the area were the strongest predictors of outside community arts participation. Socio-economic status—per capita income, percentage of college graduates--explained about 10 percent of the variance in the participation rate. When other factors were accounted for, the betas for historical presence of arts and ethnic change were .12 and .16. Together, the model explained 23 percent of the variance (Table 12).

Thus, our investigation of patterns of participation in community arts groups found that:

- Nearly four-in-five of community arts participants live outside the neighborhood in which the organization is located. The proportion is somewhat lower for programs serving children.
- The socio-economic standing, number of social organizations, and diversity of neighborhoods strongly influence the rate of outside community participation.
- Patterns of outside community participation closely mirror patterns of regional participation. (Alternately, we could say that regional arts participation closely mirrors community participation patterns.)
- Historical change—ethnic transitions and the historical presence of arts participation—are also strong predictors of the outside participation rate.

In short, the findings on community arts participation reinforce a consistent set of findings of the Social Impact of the Arts Project—that is, the strong link among neighborhood diversity, civic infrastructure, and cultural participation.

## **CONCLUSION**

Do the arts promote economic revitalization? All over the country, policy makers, planners, and investors have answered this question in the affirmative. They have supported a variety of cultural districts that apply the lessons learned in theme parks and commercial developments to their city's major cultural institutions.

This strategy tends to focus on downtown areas and often overlooks a city's neighborhoods. The economic benefits are thought to trickle down to local

communities in the form of increased service employment and a more robust regional economy.

Critics believe that, in fact, art as development agent actually does harm to the neighborhoods. Manifesting itself as the “artistic mode of production,” cultural development is a strategy for the displacement of the poor and disaffiliated and for their replacement with a more “upscale” population.

This paper has discovered a more humble but no less important role of the arts in urban revitalization. Community arts organizations—arts centers, performing groups, resource organizations—are a major presence in Philadelphia. By the Social Impact of the Arts count, there are at least 1,000 such organizations in the five-county metropolitan area. When we examine the neighborhoods in which arts organizations have an historical presence, we find that these are the precise sections of the city that underwent economic revitalization during the 1980s. At a time when much of the city was losing population and holding its own with poverty, these neighborhoods gained people and reduced their poverty rate.

Yet, this small economic miracle was not associated with rapid racial turnover. The vast majority of revitalized areas had the same racial composition in 1980 as they did in 1990. Only four of the ninety-four block groups that revitalized became predominantly white during the same period.

How do we explain the connection of the arts to community revitalization? We propose two answers to the question. First, the number of arts organizations within a neighborhood is one indicator of civic engagement. As we demonstrated in Working Paper #3, the number of arts organizations in an area is highly correlated with the number of other types of social organization. As the “social capital” theorists—most prominently Robert Putnam—have argued, a mobilized citizenry is a moving force for community renewal. In this respect, the arts act in concert with other types of neighborhood organizations to promote revitalization.

But this is not *all* that the arts do. The participation pattern of community-based arts organizations is unique. Even groups that define their mission in narrow geographical terms often draw participants from across the metropolitan area. Indeed, four-in-five community arts participants do not live in the neighborhood.

The arts build networks of association across the metropolitan region. People who have never been to Point Breeze in South Philadelphia or to 5th and Lehigh Streets in North Philadelphia go to visit the Point Breeze Performing Arts Center or Taller Puertorriqueno. In so doing, they learn about the region and build relationships that bridge the social and geographic divides that haunt the city. In contrast to a neighborhood improvement association in which the vast majority

of members come from the immediate community, arts organizations build links across the city.

The links they build are deeper because of the nature of the connections as well as their geography. Whereas a civic association's link to other communities is restricted to a few leaders, the ties that bind community arts groups are their entire audience. In this respect, the participants in community arts events may very well be ahead of the leadership.

Not surprisingly, the neighborhoods *from* which the outside participants come tend to be the diverse neighborhoods that also serve as the seedbed for many arts and other social organizations and much of the region's participant base. The strategic location of these neighborhoods—*between* the rich and poor, *between* different ethnic groups—puts them at the center of the process of social reconciliation that is critical to economic renewal. Diverse neighborhoods, therefore, are not at the *margins* of communities; they are at the *center* of a new set of social processes.

Ironically, then, what we have uncovered is a local variation on “tourist destination.” Community arts are important not only as a neighborhood resource but because they serve as a draw. At a time when there is much concern about the economic irrelevance of much of the city, community arts creates a unique “value” that provides a reason for people from outside a neighborhood to visit. In addition to the direct return, local arts participation creates a variety of “multiplier effects” in community building that serve as a spur to broader revitalization.

This is the *social impact of the arts*. By promoting processes through which local residents take an interest in their own communities, while building social links that bind the city's neighborhoods, arts and culture contribute to the social reconstruction that works in concert with economic revitalization.

Table 1. Quartiles of population change and poverty change, Philadelphia block groups, 1980-1990

**Statistics**

	N	Percentiles		
	Valid	25	50	75
Population change, 1980-1990	1744	-15.0000	-6.0000	4.0000
Poverty change, 1979-1989	1731	-6.6718	-.3497	6.2637

Table 2. Ethnic status by revitalization, Philadelphia block groups, 1980-1990

			Revitalized block groups	Total block groups
Ethnic status, 1980-90	Stable, Black/Latino	Count % within Revitalization status	35 37.2%	638 37.0%
	Stable White	Count % within Revitalization status	26 27.7%	673 39.0%
	Became White	Count % within Revitalization status	4 4.3%	13 .8%
	Became Black/Latino	Count % within Revitalization status	7 7.4%	109 6.3%
	Became/stayed diverse	Count % within Revitalization status	22 23.4%	292 16.9%
Total	Count % within Revitalization status	94 100.0%	1725 100.0%	



Table 3. Economic and ethnic diversity in 1980, by economic and ethnic diversity in 1990, revitalized block groups

**Economic and ethnic diversity, 1990 \* Economic and ethnic diversity, 1980 Crosstabulation**

			Economic and ethnic diversity, 1980				Total
			Ethnic & economic diverse	Other economic diverse	Other ethnic diverse	Not diverse	
Economic and ethnic diversity, 1990	Economic & ethnic diverse	Count % within Economic and ethnic diversity, 1990	5 50.0%	2 20.0%	1 10.0%	2 20.0%	10 100.0%
	Other economic diverse	Count % within Economic and ethnic diversity, 1990	4 26.7%	3 20.0%	1 6.7%	7 46.7%	15 100.0%
	Other ethnic diverse	Count % within Economic and ethnic diversity, 1990	6 42.9%	3 21.4%	4 28.6%	1 7.1%	14 100.0%
	Not diverse	Count % within Economic and ethnic diversity, 1990	2 3.6%	18 32.7%	6 10.9%	29 52.7%	55 100.0%
Total		Count % within Economic and ethnic diversity, 1990	17 18.1%	26 27.7%	12 12.8%	39 41.5%	94 100.0%

Table 4. Historical presence of arts and cultural organizations, by revitalization status

			Revitalized	Total
Historical presence	pre 1980	Count	54	573
		% within Revitalization status	57.4%	33.2%
	after 1980	Count	5	101
		% within Revitalization status	5.3%	5.9%
	not in core	Count	35	1051
		% within Revitalization status	37.2%	60.9%
Total		Count	94	1725
		% within Revitalization status	100.0%	100.0%

**Table 5. Logistic regression model for revitalization status**

Core pre80	.7578	.2439	9.6553	1	.0019	.1025	2.1335
Core post80	-.0019	.5084	.0000	1	.9971	.0000	.9981
<b>Ethnic status</b>			<b>2.3148</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>.8886</b>	<b>.0000</b>	
Black	.0421	.6387	.0043	1	.9474	.0000	1.0430
White	.4446	.6493	.4688	1	.4935	.0000	1.5598
Latino	.3408	.7872	.1874	1	.6651	.0000	1.4061
Black/Latino	.1471	1.2219	.0145	1	.9042	.0000	1.1585
Black/white	.3616	.6588	.3013	1	.5831	.0000	1.4356
Asian 10%+	.0516	1.2449	.0017	1	.9670	.0000	1.0529
<b>Economic status</b>			<b>35.7963</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>.0000</b>	<b>.2022</b>	
Econ. diverse	2.0019	.3359	35.5305	1	.0000	.2144	7.4033
Concentrated pov	1.4248	.4495	10.0479	1	.0015	.1051	4.1570
Above av. pov	1.2848	.3607	12.6912	1	.0004	.1211	3.6141
Constant	-4.5310	.6848	43.7742	1	.0000		

<i>Neighborhood . Source</i>	<i>Total participantscommunity</i>		<i>Number outside community</i>	<i>Percent outside community</i>
<i>Hartranft-Fairhill</i>				
<b>Asociacion de Musicos Latino Americanos</b>				
<i>Taller Puertorriqueno</i>				
Children	213	130		61.0
<i>Village of Arts and Humanities</i>				
Class registration	128	74		57.8
<i>Mount Airy</i>				
<i>Allens Lane Art Center</i>				
Class Registration	50	22		44.0
Summer Camp	111	45		40.5
Art Mailing List	164	94		57.3
<i>Sedgwick Cultural Center</i>				
Mailing List	434	164		37.8
<i>Point Breeze</i>				
<i>Point Breeze Performing Arts Center</i>				
Class registration ('96)	157	91		58.0
Class registration ('97)	139	78		56.1
Spring performance ('96)	141	128		90.8
Spring performance ('97)	275	254		92.4
<i>Powelton-Mantua</i>				
<i>Community Education Center</i>				
After School Program	42	22		52.4
Summer Camp	54	36		66.7
Mailing List:	4,280	3,844		89.8
<b>Children's programs</b>	<b>498</b>	<b>395</b>		<b>79.3</b>
<b>IPAP performances</b>	<b>1,294</b>	<b>1,159</b>		<b>89.6</b>
Jazz series	665	597		89.8

Table 7. Pearson's correlation coefficients, number and rate of outside community arts participation (per 1,000 residents) by selected variables

		Number, outside participation	Rate, outside participation
Pearson Correlation	Poverty rate	.072	.086
	Per capita income	.134	.013
	Percent high school dropout	-.060	-.038
	Percent w/o bachelor's degree	-.179	-.071
	Percent managerial & prof	.224	.050
	Percent non-family households	.239	.067
	Percent 18-34 years old	.141	.136
	Number of arts organization	.481	.312
	Number of social organizations	.458	.296
	Percent arts organizations	.304	.166
	Percent houses of worship	-.111	-.073
	Regional participation rate	.502	.292
	Poverty change, 1980-90	-.014	.009
	Population change, 1980-90	.078	.135

Table 8. Number and rate of outside community arts participation (per 1,000 residents), by economic and ethnic diversity, metropolitan Philadelphia

a. Economic diversity

Economic diversity		Outside participation rate	Outside participation count
povprof	Mean	4.3463	2.8509
	N	385	389
concentrated pov	Mean	2.1972	1.7156
	N	213	218
above av pov	Mean	2.2948	1.7756
	N	398	401
below av pov	Mean	1.7749	1.4467
	N	2398	2503
Total	Mean	2.1541	1.6565
	N	3394	3511

b. Ethnic diversity

Ethnic composition		Outside participation rate	Outside participation count
black	Mean	2.3622	1.9038
	N	683	686
white	Mean	1.4662	1.2455
	N	2128	2155
latino	Mean	3.7621	2.2857
	N	91	91
black,latino	Mean	4.1007	2.7500
	N	36	36
black white	Mean	4.8457	3.2736
	N	314	318
oth asian 10+	Mean	3.5218	2.7867
	N	74	75
other	Mean	4.4885	1.7933
	N	68	150
Total	Mean	2.1541	1.6565
	N	3394	3511

c. Economic and ethnic diversity

Economic and ethnic diversity, 1990		Outside participation rate	Outside participation count
Economic & ethnic diverse	Mean	6.8339	4.1933
	N	147	150
Other economic diverse	Mean	2.8099	2.0084
	N	238	239
Other ethnic diverse	Mean	3.7254	2.3665
	N	418	502
Not diverse	Mean	1.5748	1.3431
	N	2591	2620
Total	Mean	2.1541	1.6565
	N	3394	3511





Table 9. Outside community arts participation, by ethnic status 1980-1990, Philadelphia block groups

Ethnic status, 1980-90		Outside participation rate	Outside participation count
Stable, Black/Latino	Mean	2.5104	1.9937
	N	639	639
Stable White	Mean	2.5886	1.9662
	N	680	680
Became White	Mean	14.0748	5.8750
	N	16	16
Became Black/Latino	Mean	3.9308	2.7658
	N	110	111
Became/stayed diverse	Mean	6.5371	4.3389
	N	298	298
Total	Mean	3.4252	2.4685
	N	1743	1744

Table 10. Outside community arts participation, by historical presence of arts organizations, metropolitan Philadelphia block groups

Historical presence		Outside participation rate	Outside participation count
pre 1980	Mean	3.3727	2.4638
	N	1241	1242
after 1980	Mean	1.9855	1.4425
	N	348	348
not in core	Mean	1.3487	1.1956
	N	1805	1805
Total	Mean	2.1541	1.6848
	N	3394	3395

**Table 11. Multivariate analysis, outside participation rate, metropolitan Philadelphia**

**ANOVA<sup>a,b</sup>**

			Experimental Method				
			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Outside participation rate	Main Effects	(Combined)	19679.644	9	2186.627	14.580	.000
		Economic and ethnic diversity, 1990	1162.213	3	387.404	2.583	.052
		Arts & cultural groups as percent of all soc. organizations	6056.468	3	2018.823	13.461	.000
		Number of social organizations (quartile)	5752.790	3	1917.597	12.786	.000
	Covariates	(Combined)	1564.668	2	782.334	5.216	.006
		Per capita income	38.282	1	38.282	.255	.613
		Percent w/o bachelor's degree	924.138	1	924.138	6.162	.013
	Model		21244.312	11	1931.301	12.877	.000
	Residual		507229.1	3382	149.979		
	Total		528473.4	3393	155.754		

a. Outside participation rate by Economic and ethnic diversity, 1990, Arts & cultural groups as percent of all soc. organizations, Number of social organizations (quartile) with Per capita income, Percent w/o bachelor's degree

b. Covariates entered after main effects

**MCA<sup>a</sup>**

			N	Predicted Mean		
				Unadjusted	Adjusted for Factors	Adjusted for Factors and Covariates
Outside participation rate	Economic and ethnic diversity, 1990	Economic & ethnic diverse	147	6.8339	4.2191	3.8668
		Other economic diverse	238	2.8099	1.0778	1.2443
		Other ethnic diverse	418	3.7254	3.1183	3.2314
		Not diverse	2591	1.8321	2.2375	2.2240
	Arts & cultural groups as percent of all soc. organizations	0-24th	846	.6137	1.5690	1.8019
		25-49th	838	1.3658	1.3820	1.4817
		50-74th	862	1.9517	1.6969	1.7551
		75-99th	848	5.4616	4.7516	4.3616
	Number of social organizations (quartile)	fewest	855	.5811	.8070	.6231
		25-49th	834	1.2108	1.4818	1.4599
		50-74th	861	2.1740	2.3532	2.4084
		most	844	5.4492	4.7698	4.9213

a. Outside participation rate by Economic and ethnic diversity, 1990, Arts & cultural groups as percent of all soc. organizations, Number of social organizations (quartile) with Per capita income, Percent w/o bachelor's degree

**Model Goodness of Fit**

	Factors		Factors and Covariates	
	R	R Squared	R	R Squared
Outside participation rate by Historical presence, Arts & cultural groups as percent of all soc. organizations, Economic and ethnic diversity, 1990 with Per capita income, Percent w/o bachelor's degree	.170	.029	.175	.031

**Factor Summary<sup>a</sup>**

		Eta	Beta	
			Adjusted for Factors	Adjusted for Factors and Covariates
Outside participation rate	Economic and ethnic diversity, 1990	.092	.047	.043
	Arts & cultural groups as percent of all soc. organizations	.149	.111	.094
	Number of social organizations (quartile)	.150	.120	.129

a. Outside participation rate by Economic and ethnic diversity, 1990, Arts & cultural groups as percent of all soc. organizations, Number of social organizations (quartile) with Per capita income, Percent w/o bachelor's degree

**Table 12. Multivariate analysis, outside participation rate, Philadelphia**

MCA<sup>a</sup>

			N	Predicted Mean		
				Unadjusted	Adjusted for Factors	Adjusted for Factors and Covariates
Outside participation rate	Economic and ethnic diversity, 1990	Economic & ethnic diverse	127	7.3910	5.3273	5.1154
		Other economic diverse	214	2.9971	2.8126	2.7210
		Other ethnic diverse	264	5.0404	4.3648	4.7350
		Not diverse	1120	2.3934	2.8219	2.7762
	Arts & cultural groups as percent of all soc. organizations	0-24th	239	1.1883	1.8338	2.7624
		25-49th	401	1.8568	2.1865	2.7259
		50-74th	511	2.6140	2.7931	3.0626
		75-99th	574	5.6219	4.9634	3.9600
	Number of social organizations (quartile)	fewest	88	2.1566	2.2277	1.8664
		25-49th	347	1.6632	1.8710	2.0793
		50-74th	540	2.5574	2.9261	3.0251
	Revitalization status	most	750	4.5912	4.2212	4.0960
		Not revitalized	1631	3.1808	3.2307	3.2502
	Ethnic status, 1980-90	Revitalized	94	4.2926	3.4259	3.0871
		Stable, Black/Latino	638	2.5047	2.3178	3.3874
		Stable White	673	2.3893	3.6115	2.9573
		Became White	13	10.1880	8.7055	5.5859
		Became Black/Latino	109	3.6333	3.6348	4.0938
		Became/stayed diverse	292	6.3592	4.0161	3.1543

a. Outside participation rate by Economic and ethnic diversity, 1990, Arts & cultural groups as percent of all soc. organizations, Number of social organizations (quartile), Revitalization status, Ethnic status, 1980-90 with Per capita income, Percent w/o bachelor's degree

**Factor Summary<sup>a</sup>**

		Beta		
		Eta	Adjusted for Factors	Adjusted for Factors and Covariates
Outside participation rate	Economic and ethnic diversity, 1990	.257	.139	.151
	Arts & cultural groups as percent of all soc. organizations	.299	.216	.090
	Number of social organizations (quartile)	.211	.161	.144
	Revitalization status	.043	.008	.006
	Ethnic status, 1980-90	.272	.144	.062

a. Outside participation rate by Economic and ethnic diversity, 1990, Arts & cultural groups as percent of all soc. organizations, Number of social organizations (quartile), Revitalization status, Ethnic status, 1980-90 with Per capita income, Percent w/o bachelor's degree

**Model Goodness of Fit**

	Factors		Factors and Covariates	
	R	R Squared	R	R Squared
Outside participation rate by Economic and ethnic diversity, 1990, Arts & cultural groups as percent of all soc. organizations, Number of social organizations (quartile), Revitalization status, Ethnic status, 1980-90 with Per capita income, Percent w/o bachelor's degree	.398	.158	.493	.243

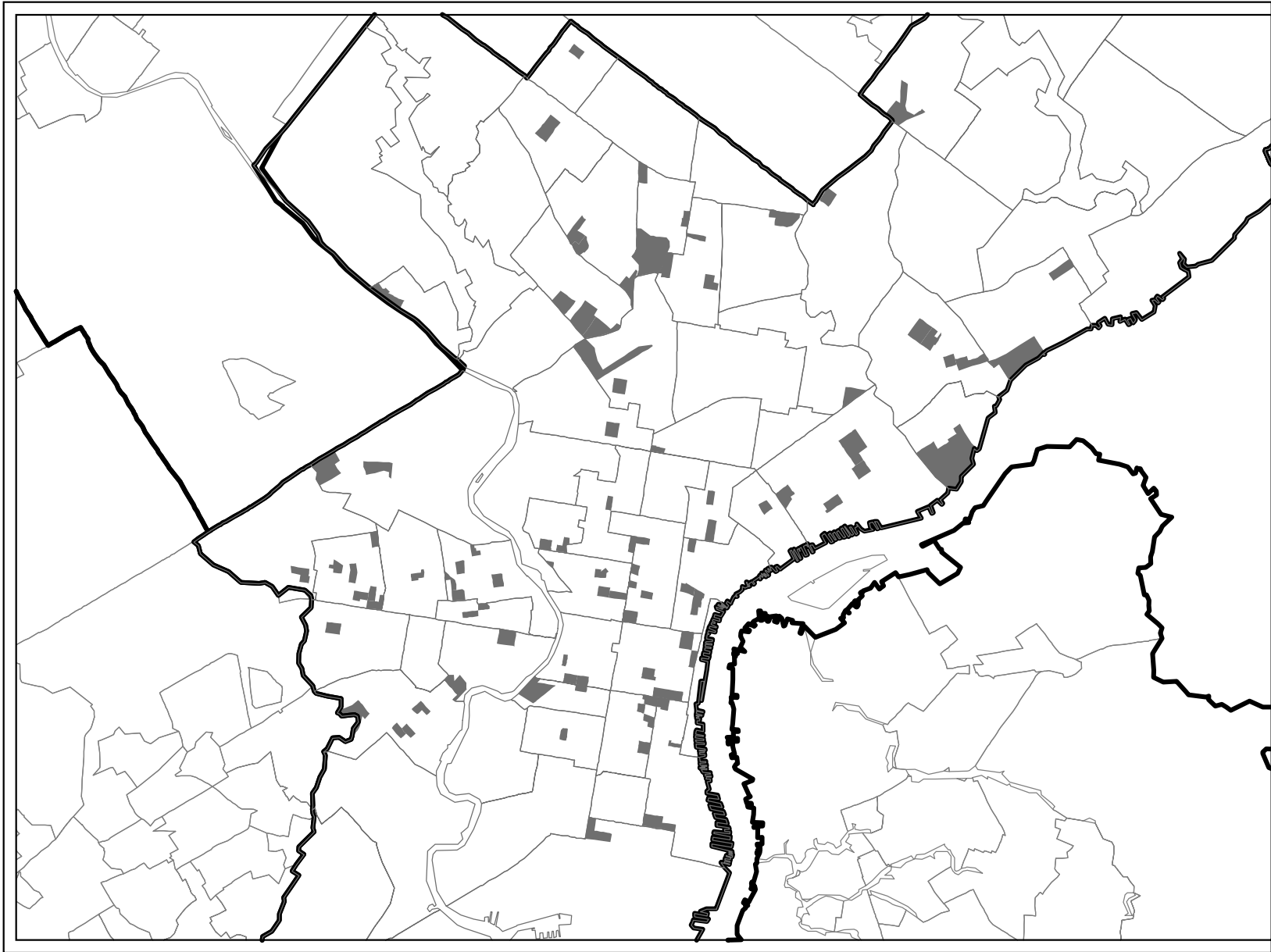


**Factor Summary<sup>a</sup>**

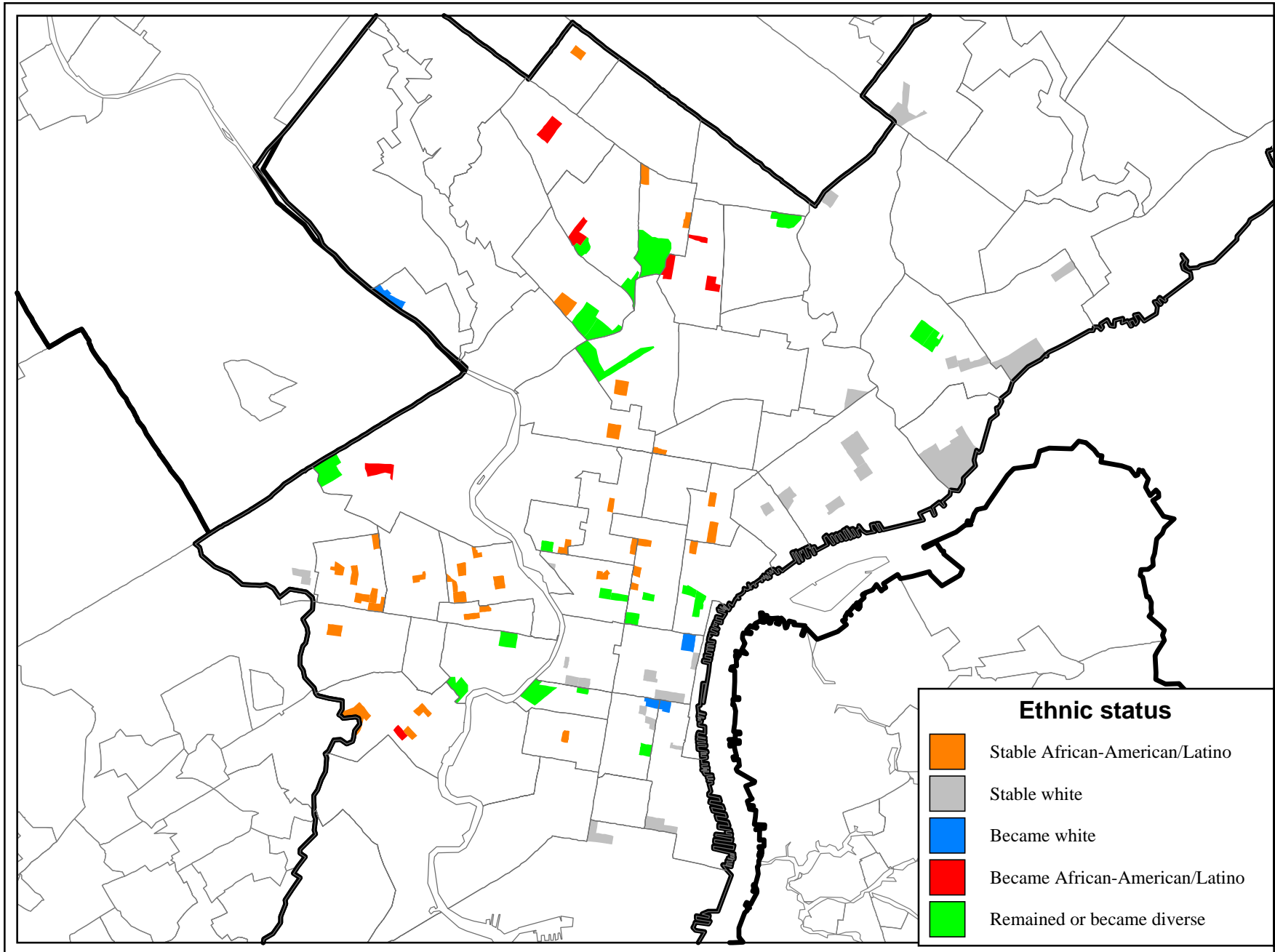
		Eta	Beta	
			Adjusted for Factors	Adjusted for Factors and Covariates
Outside participation rate	Economic and ethnic diversity, 1990	.092	.047	.043
	Arts & cultural groups as percent of all soc. organizations	.149	.111	.094
	Number of social organizations (quartile)	.150	.120	.129

a. Outside participation rate by Economic and ethnic diversity, 1990, Arts & cultural groups as percent of all soc. organizations, Number of social organizations (quartile) with Per capita income, Percent w/o bachelor's degree

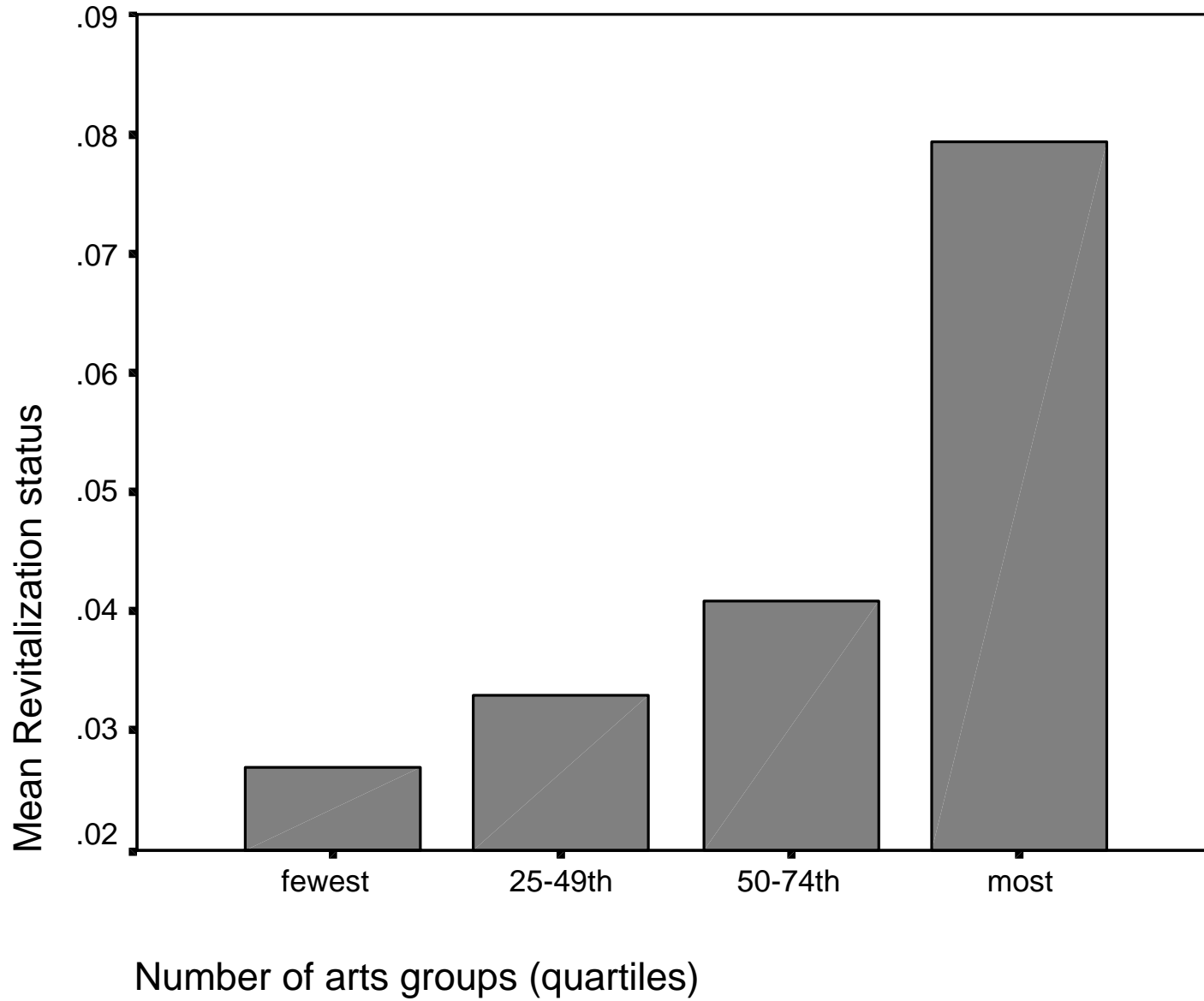
**Figure 1. Economically revitalized block groups, poverty decline of greater than 6.7 percent and population gain, 1980-1990**



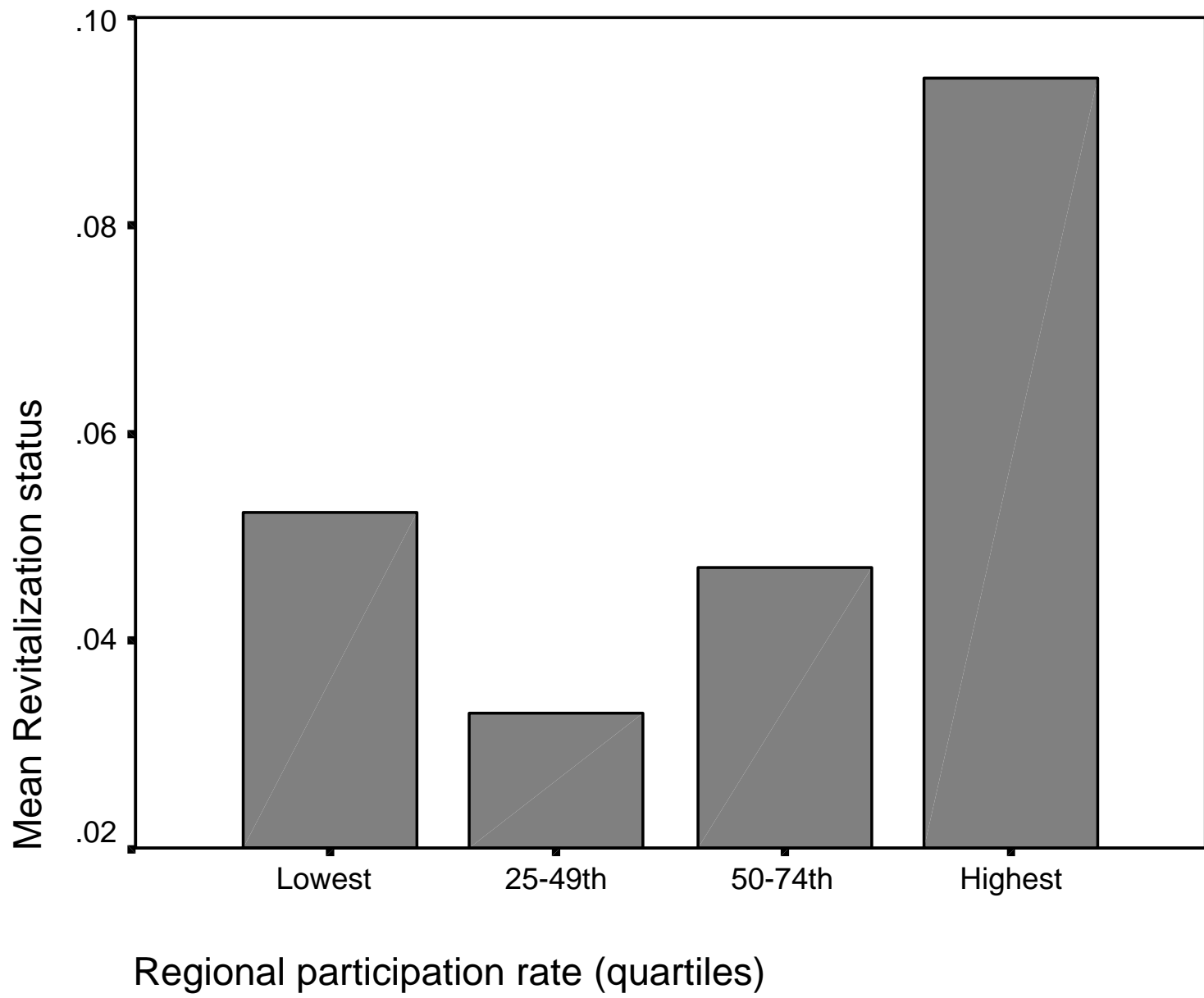
**Figure 2. Ethnic status, economically revitalized block groups, 1980-1990**



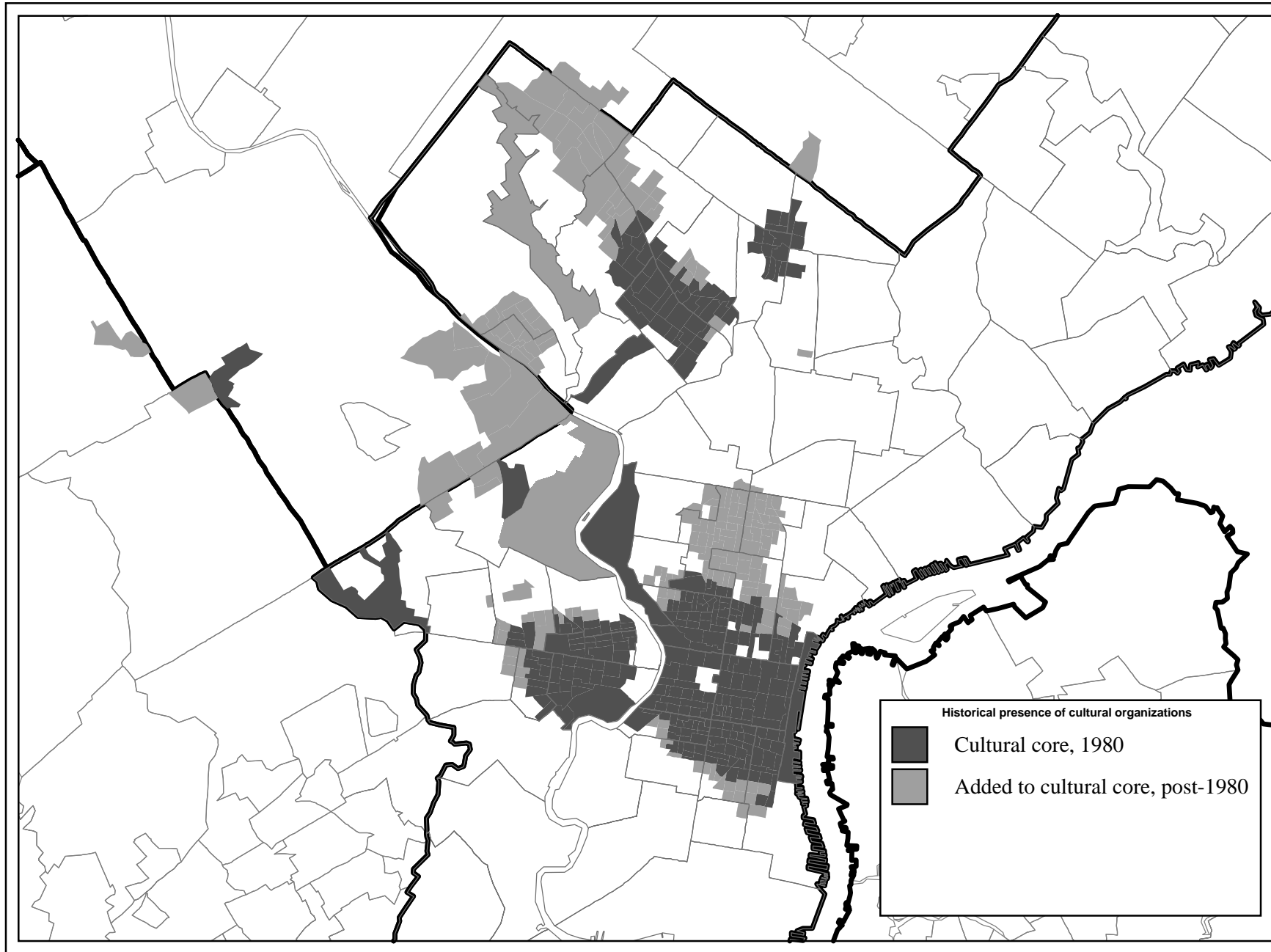
**..Figure 3. Economic revitalization status of block groups, by number of arts organizations within one-half mile**



**Figure 4. Economic revitalization status of block groups, by rate of participation in regional arts**



**Figure 5. Historical presence of arts and cultural organizations**



**Figure 6. Economic revitalization status of block groups, by historical presence of arts organizations**

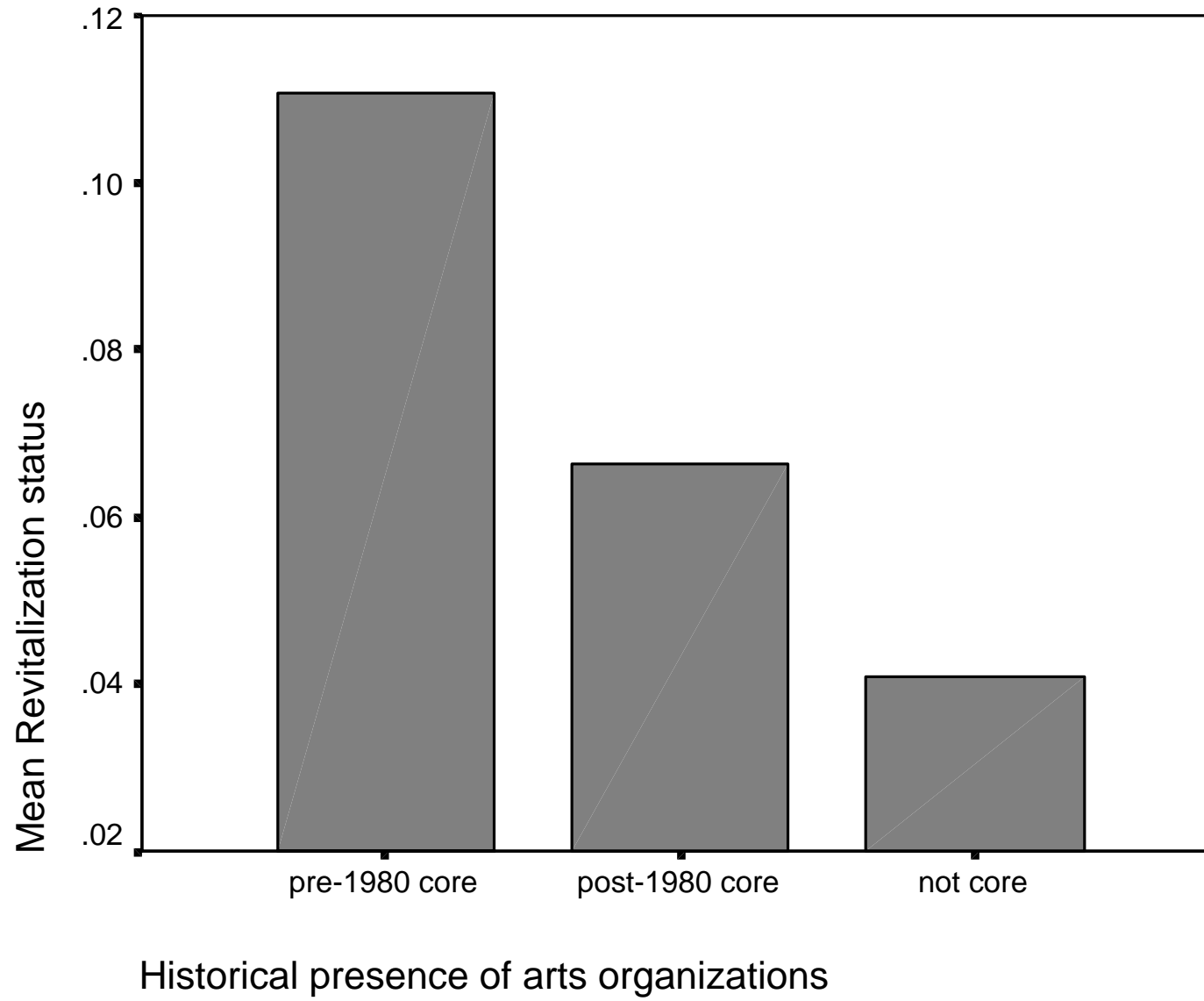
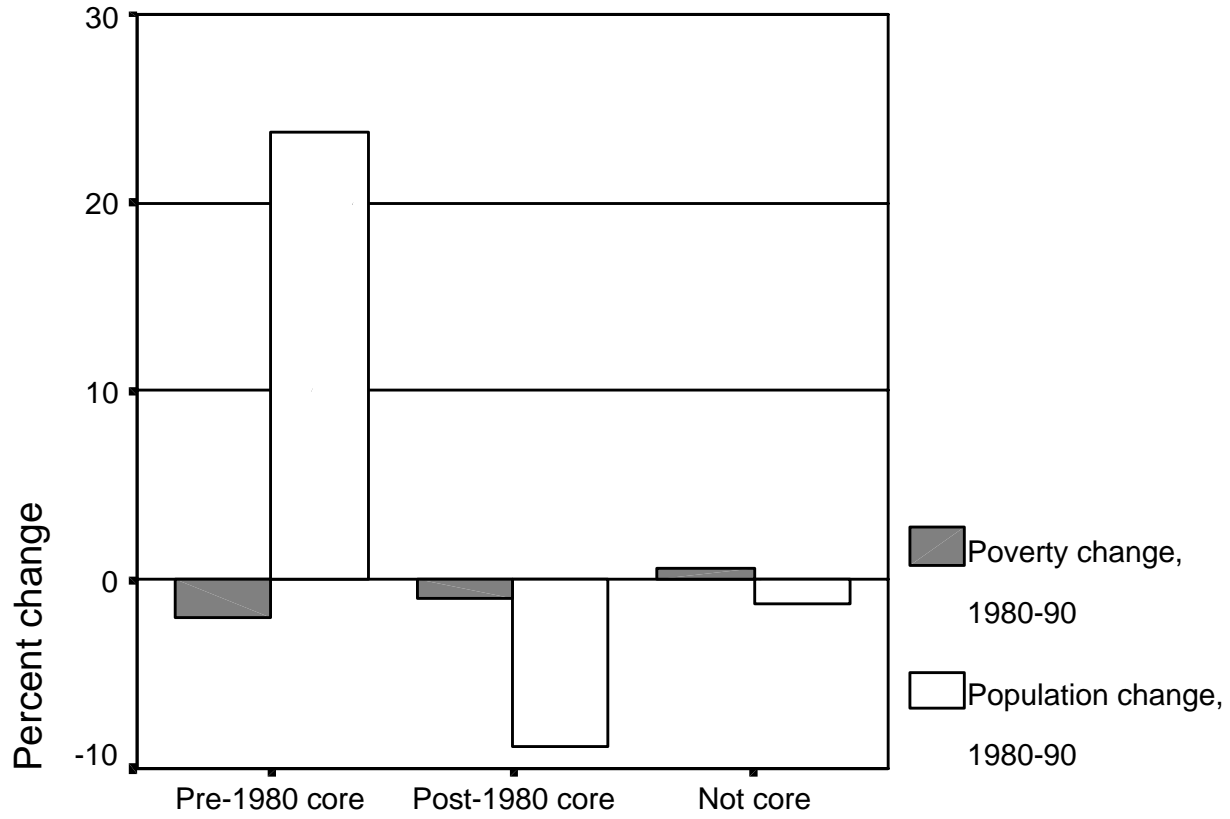






Figure 7.



Historical presence of arts organizations

Cases weighted by population of block group

Figure 8. Participants in community arts groups who live more than one-half mile outside of the neighborhood

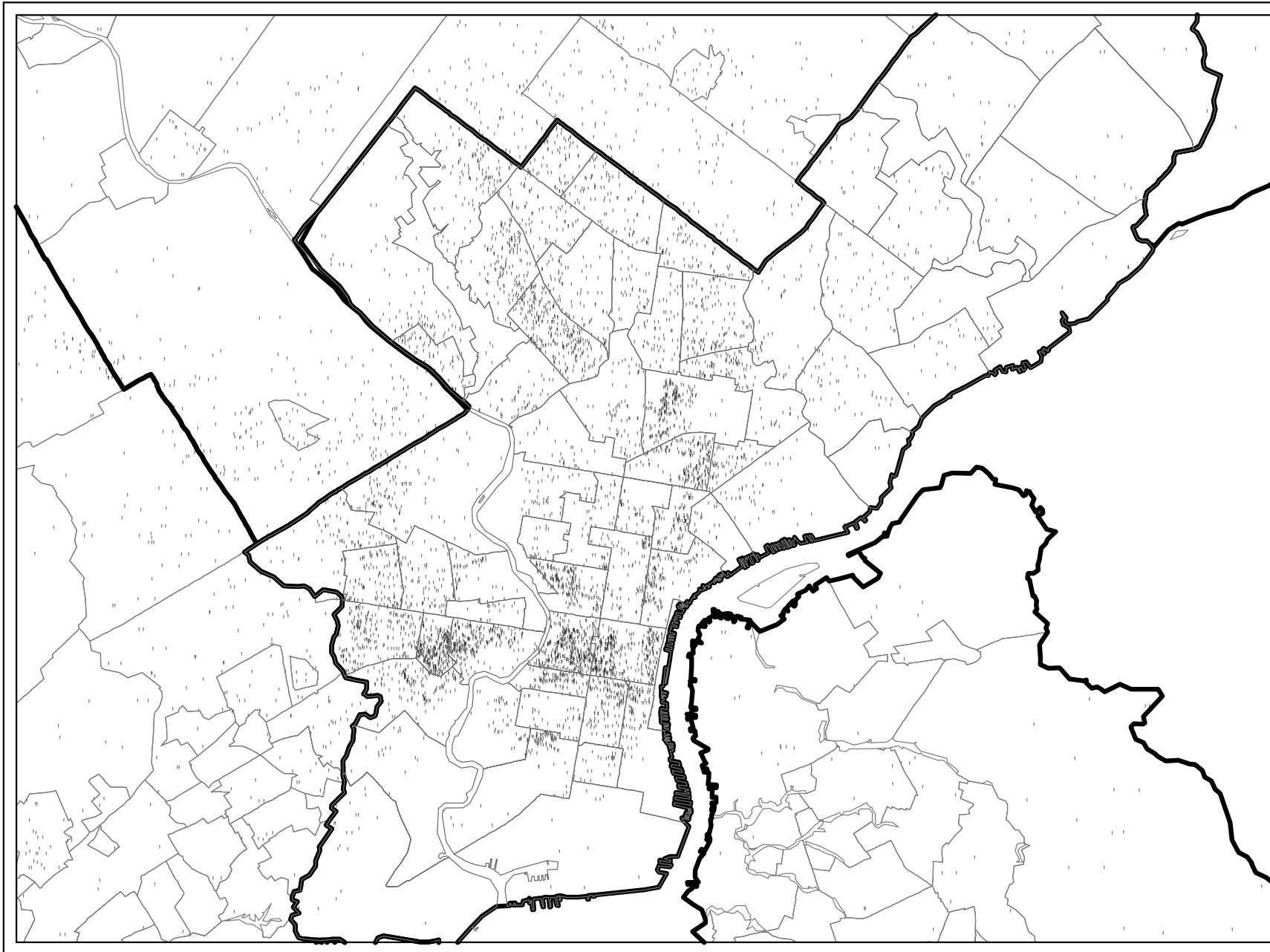


Figure 9a

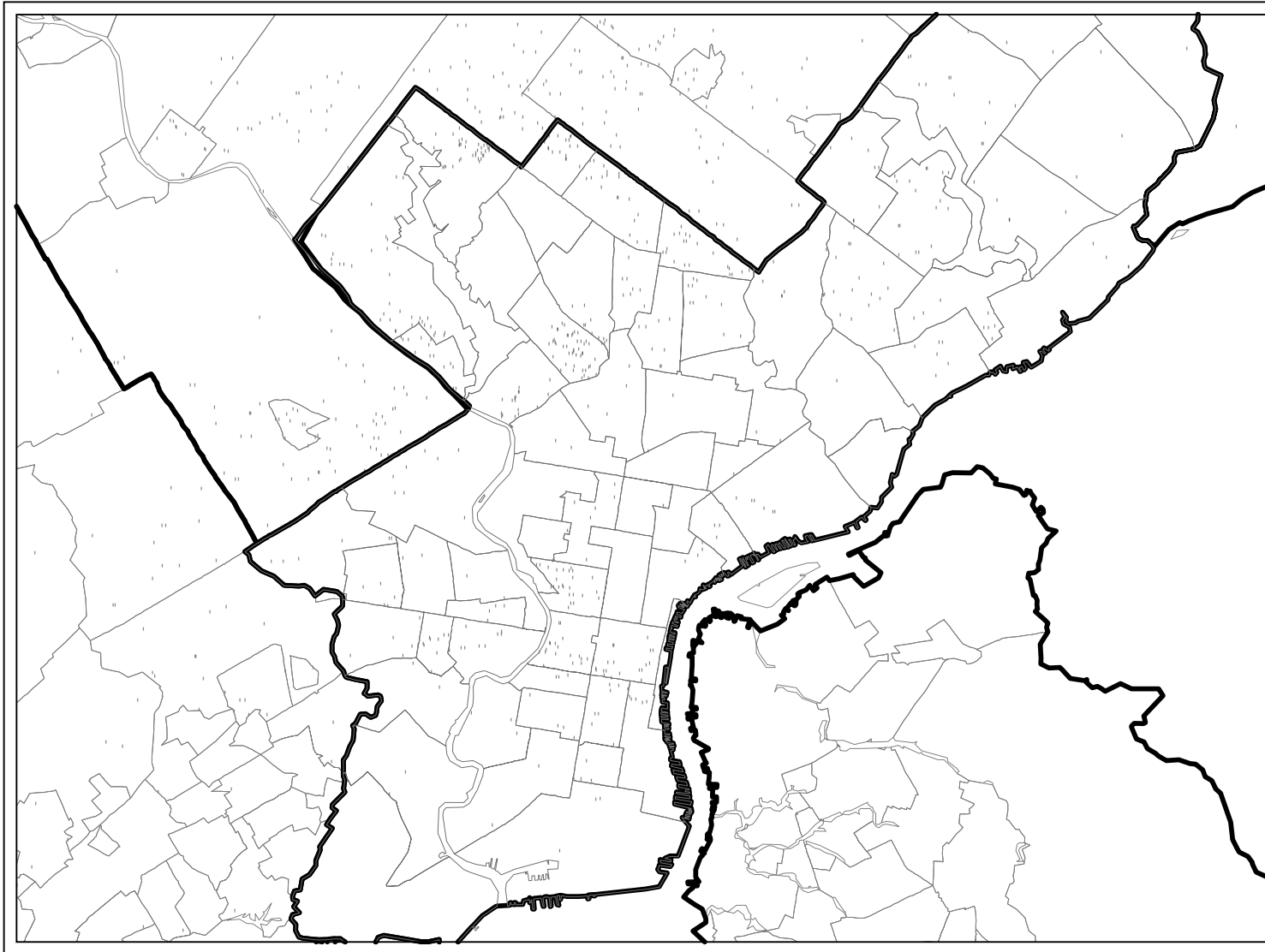


Figure 9b—Powelton

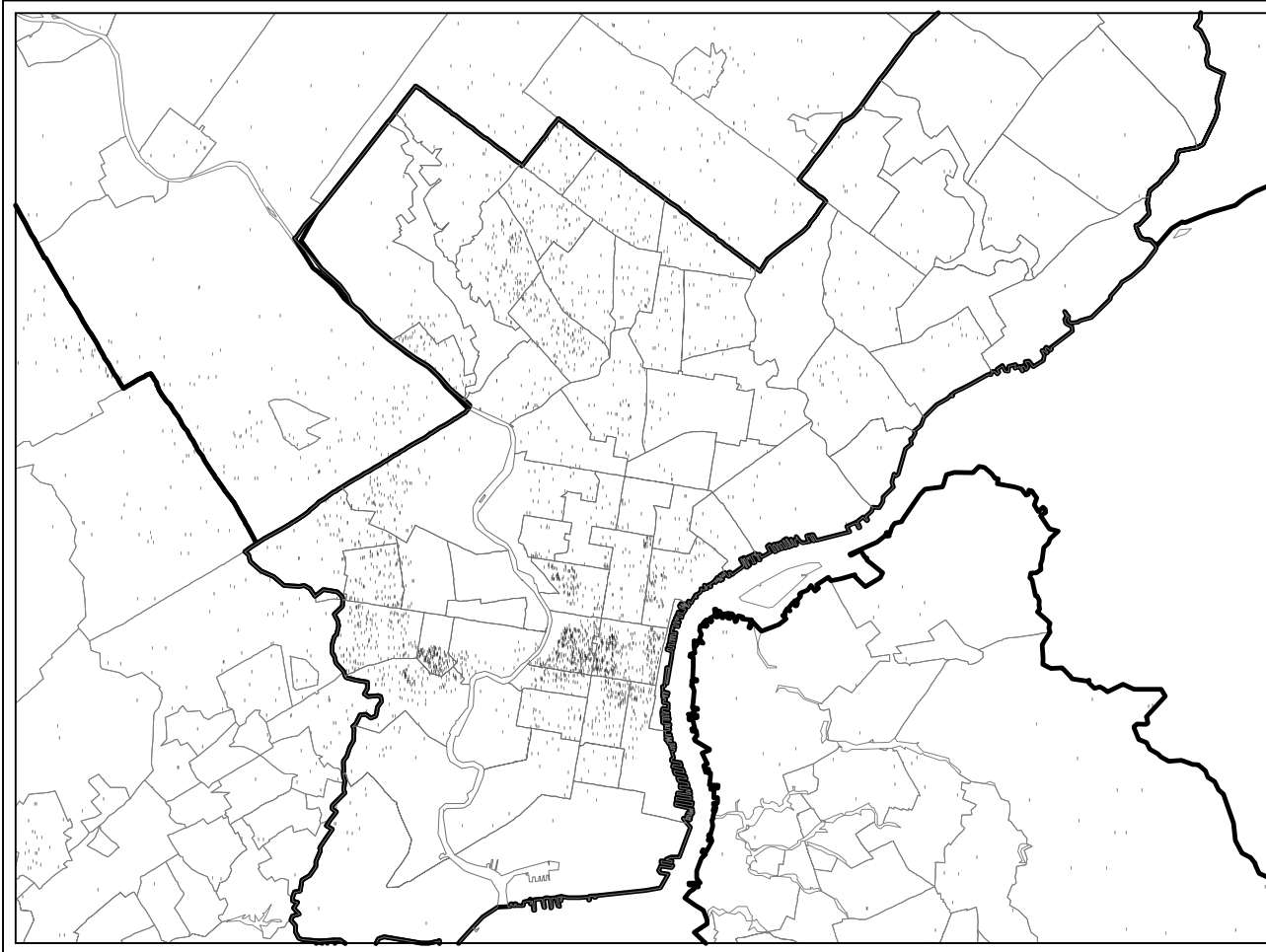


Figure 9c—Point Breeze

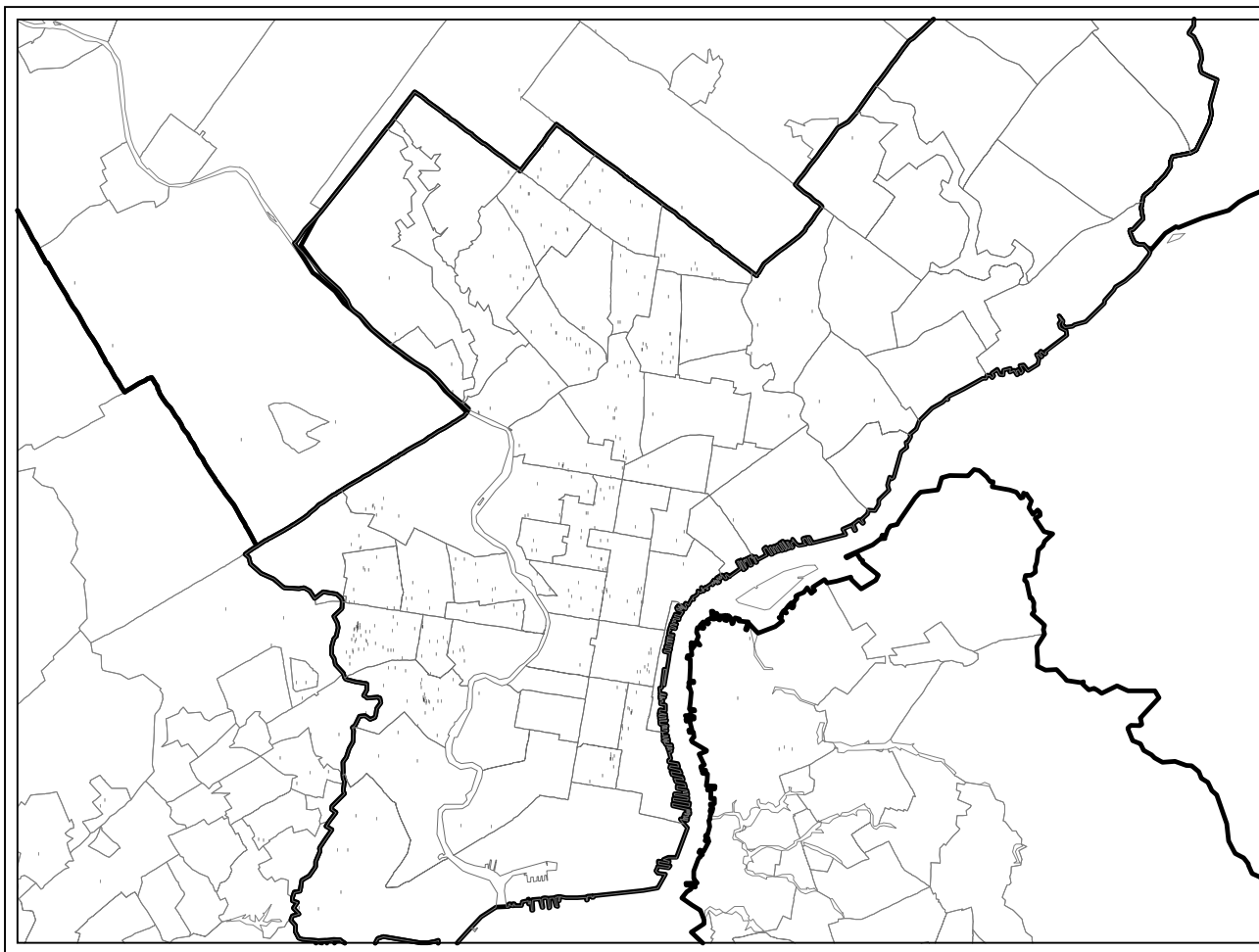


Figure 9d—North Philadelphia

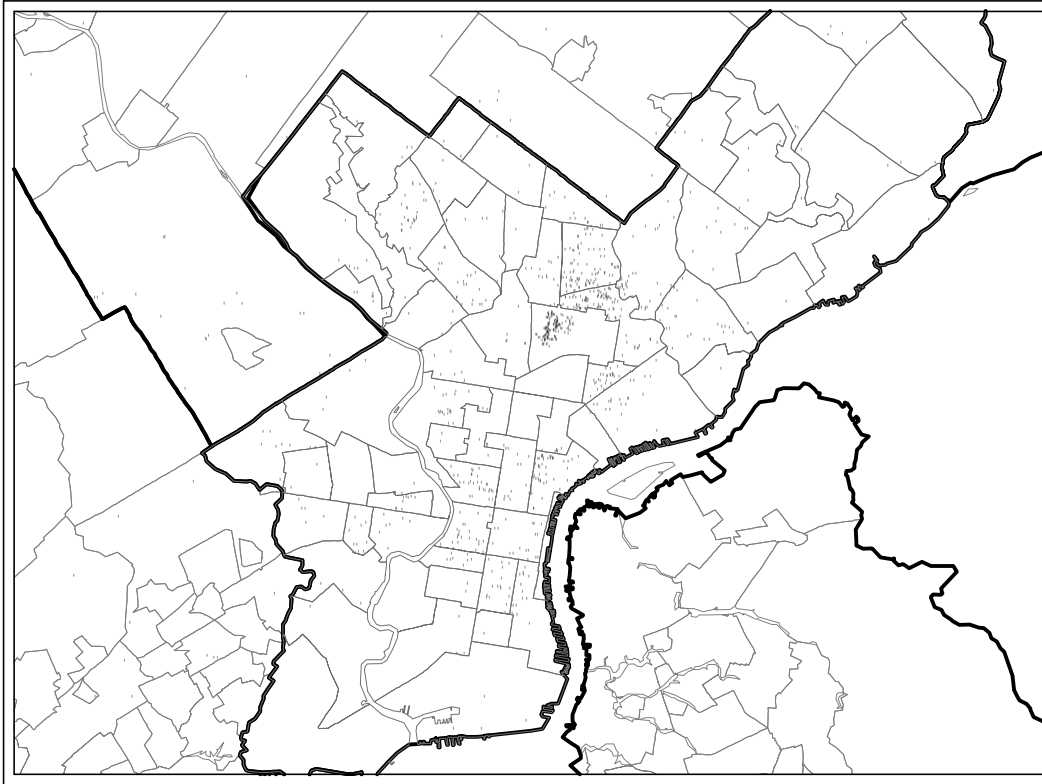
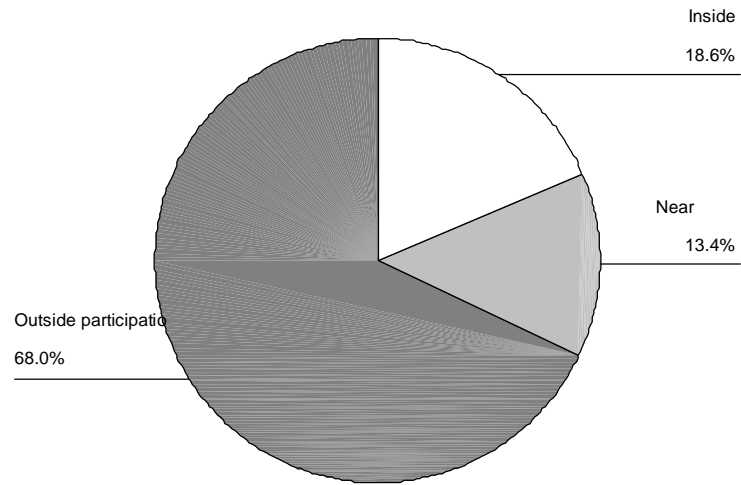
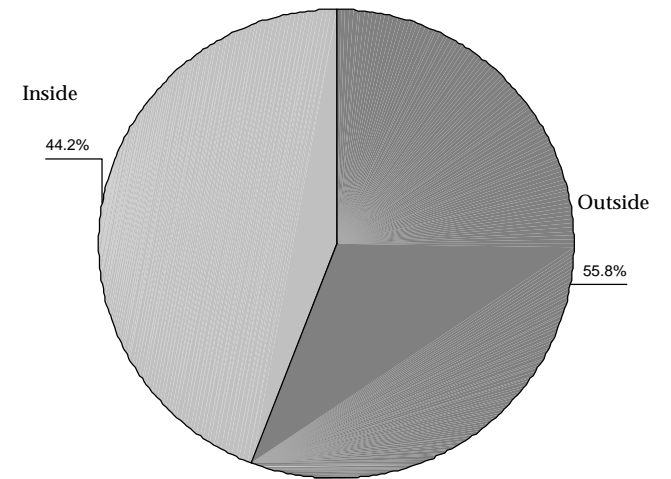


Figure 10a



Community Art Audience



Community Art's Children's Audience