



Social Impact of the
Arts Project

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Summary of Findings

March 2001

The Social Impact of the Arts Project was founded in 1994 with the purpose of gathering systematic data on the role of arts and cultural activity on the life of Philadelphia. During its first three years, the Project developed databases on arts and cultural institutions, levels of participation in regional cultural institutions, and participation in community arts programs in metropolitan Philadelphia. In addition, the Project carried out a series of community case studies in six neighborhoods which included surveys of community participation, inventories of traces of attention and neglect, and interviews with the leaders of cultural and non-arts community groups in each neighborhood.

Beginning in 1997, SIAP expanded its work in two ways:

- We developed a “first approximation” of our Philadelphia databases in three additional cities: Chicago, Atlanta, and San Francisco
- In association with the William Penn Foundation’s *Culture Builds Community* initiative, we tracked the organizational and community life-histories of approximately fifty community cultural providers in the metropolitan area

This report summarizes our significant findings. Those interested in a more in-depth presentation of our findings should consult our website and the appropriate working paper.

Diverse neighborhoods and cultural engagement are strongly linked.

During the 1990s, the proportion of Philadelphia’s population living in ethnically diverse block groups increased from 22 to 39 percent

Economic and ethnic diversity in 1990

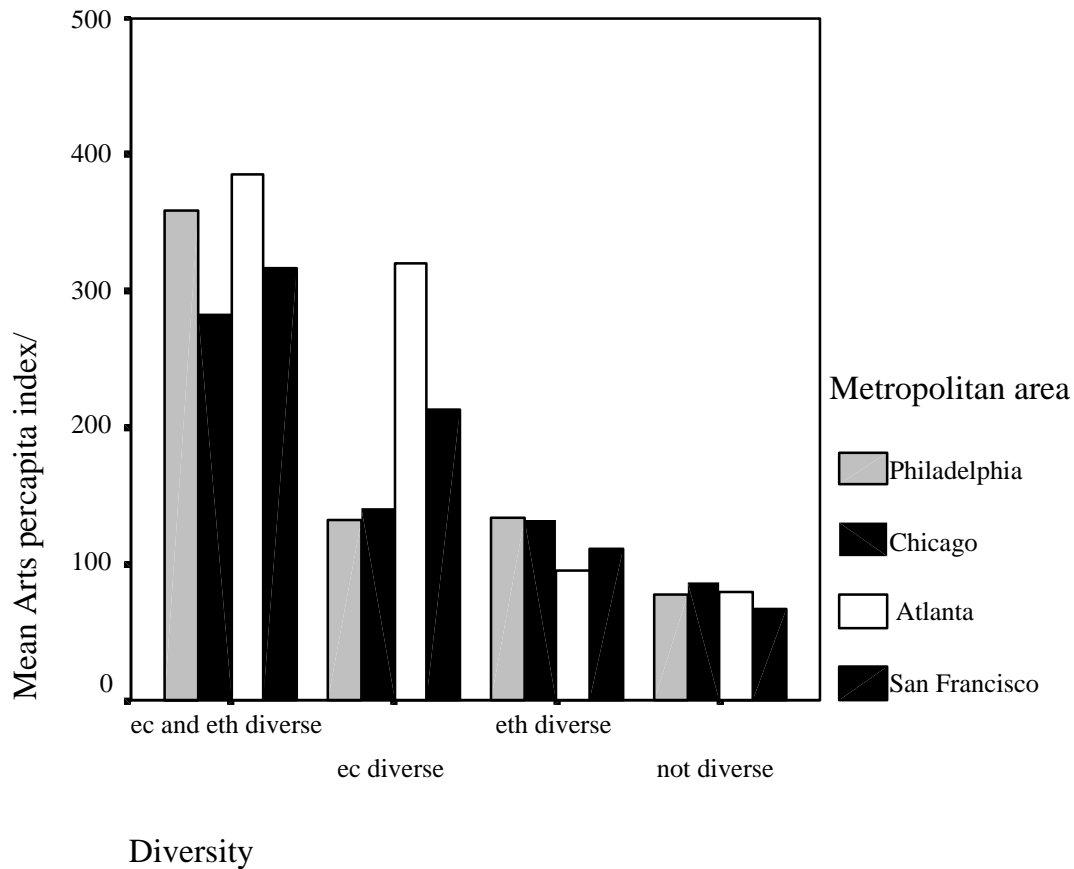
<i>Metropolitan status</i>		<i>Philadelphia</i>	<i>Chicago</i>	<i>Atlanta</i>	<i>San Francisco</i>
Other	Economically & ethnically diverse	.6%	.6%	1.3%	1.4%
	Economically diverse only	.6%	.7%	.5%	.8%
	Ethnically diverse only	7.2%	13.6%	24.9%	46.9%
	Not diverse	91.5%	85.1%	73.3%	50.9%
	Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Central city	Economically & ethnically diverse	6.9%	5.7%	4.5%	14.4%
	Economically diverse only	10.3%	7.6%	8.8%	2.0%
	Ethnically diverse only	14.9%	14.5%	12.2%	65.2%
	Not diverse	67.9%	72.2%	74.6%	18.5%
	Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

One of SIAP’s most consistent findings is the relationship between diversity and arts and cultural activities. We’ve operationalized diversity in two ways:

- A block group is defined as *economically diverse* if its poverty rate and the percent of professionals and managers in the labor force are both above the average for the metropolitan area as a whole.
- A block group is defined as *ethnically diverse* if the largest ethnic group in the area makes up less than 80 percent of the population.

Using these definitions, we identified those sections of Philadelphia and other metropolitan areas that were diverse on one or both of these dimensions. Between 25 and 91 percent of the residents of the central cities we’ve examined lived in diverse neighborhoods.

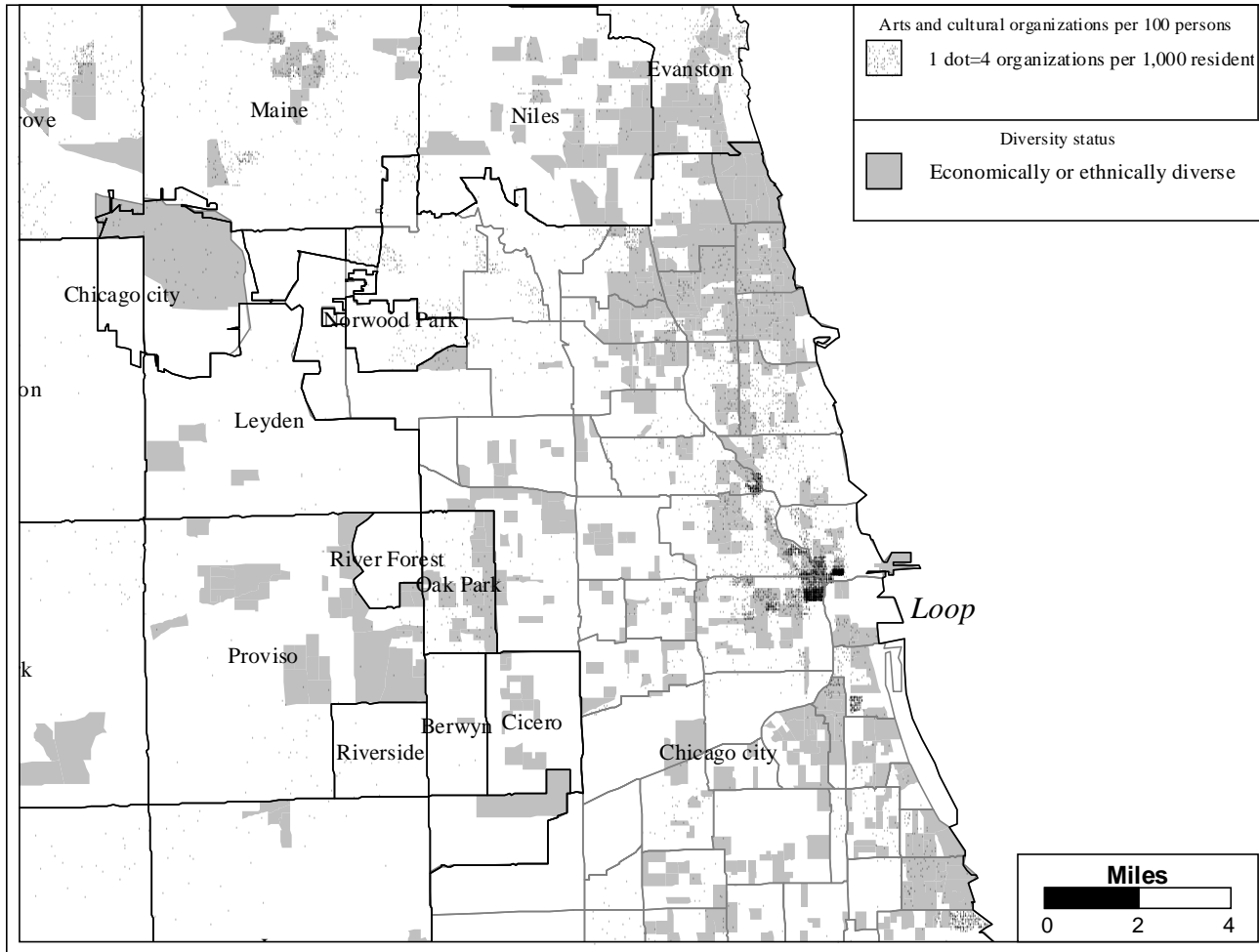
In this respect, recent findings from the 2000 census provide a reason for optimism. Ethnic diversity exploded in Philadelphia during the 1990s. Between 1990 and 2000, the proportion of residents living in diverse block groups increased from 22 to 37 percent.



Across the four cities we've examined, diversity has been a strong predictor of the concentration of arts and cultural organizations. Neighborhoods that were both ethnically and economically diverse had nearly three times more groups located near them than the average block group. In most cities, neighborhoods that are either ethnically or economically diverse also have substantially more organizations located near them than the average block group.

Note: metropolitan regional average=100

Source: Source: U.S. Treasury, Internal Revenue Service, master file of exempt-organization, March 1999; U.S. Census, Standard Tape Files, block group counts, 1990



In Chicago, for example, arts and cultural organizations are concentrated in diverse neighborhoods North and West of the Loop, in Lincoln Park and Uptown, Hyde Park, and in the suburb of Oak Park.

For-profit cultural firms are an important component of natural “cultural districts” across the region

For profit cultural firms, Metropolitan Philadelphia, 1997

<i>Type of firm</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent of firms</i>
Photo	341	26.4
Commercial design	238	18.4
Dance school	196	15.2
Music or art school	107	8.3
Music store	86	6.7
Art supply	52	4.0
Audio studio	48	3.7
Theatre	42	3.3
Art restoration	40	3.1
Theatre support	29	2.2
Movie theater	28	2.2
Other	25	1.9
Art studio	23	1.8
Gallery	21	1.6
Art school	15	1.2
Total	1,291	100.0

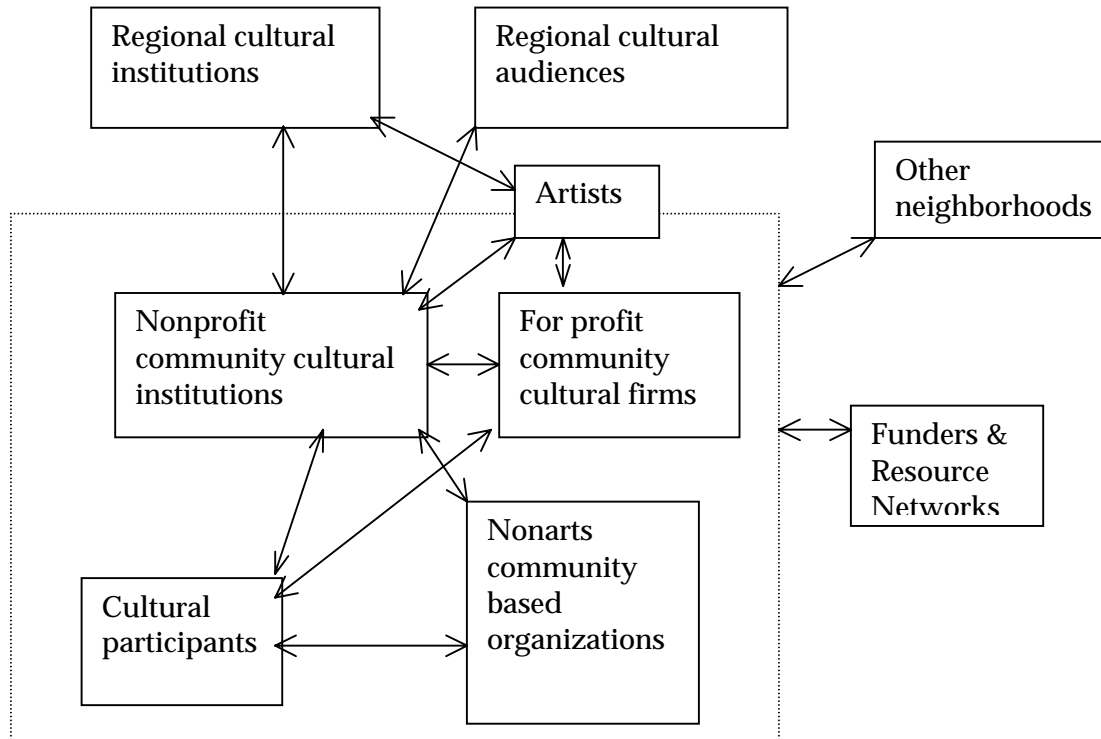
Source: SIAP for-profit cultural firm database

Commercial cultural firms are an important part of the region’s cultural resources, both in Center City and in neighborhoods. Galleries and theaters are more likely to locate in Center City, but other types of firms cluster in the region’s neighborhoods. Dance schools and music stores and schools are highly visible in urban and suburban neighborhoods. For example, there are more for-profit dance schools in metropolitan Philadelphia than there are nonprofit cultural providers that focus on dance.

Interviews with community-based artists underline that these for-profit firms are critical to the economic support of many artists who teach and get other work through their connections to these firms.

SIAP has found that when we examine nonprofit and for-profit cultural providers, a set of natural “cultural districts” emerges in the metropolitan area. These concentrations of resources provide milieux within which cultural producers and consumers come together to forge a vital cultural scene.

One of the challenges for cultural providers is to overcome a number of “structural holes” in the existing networks that link cultural resources



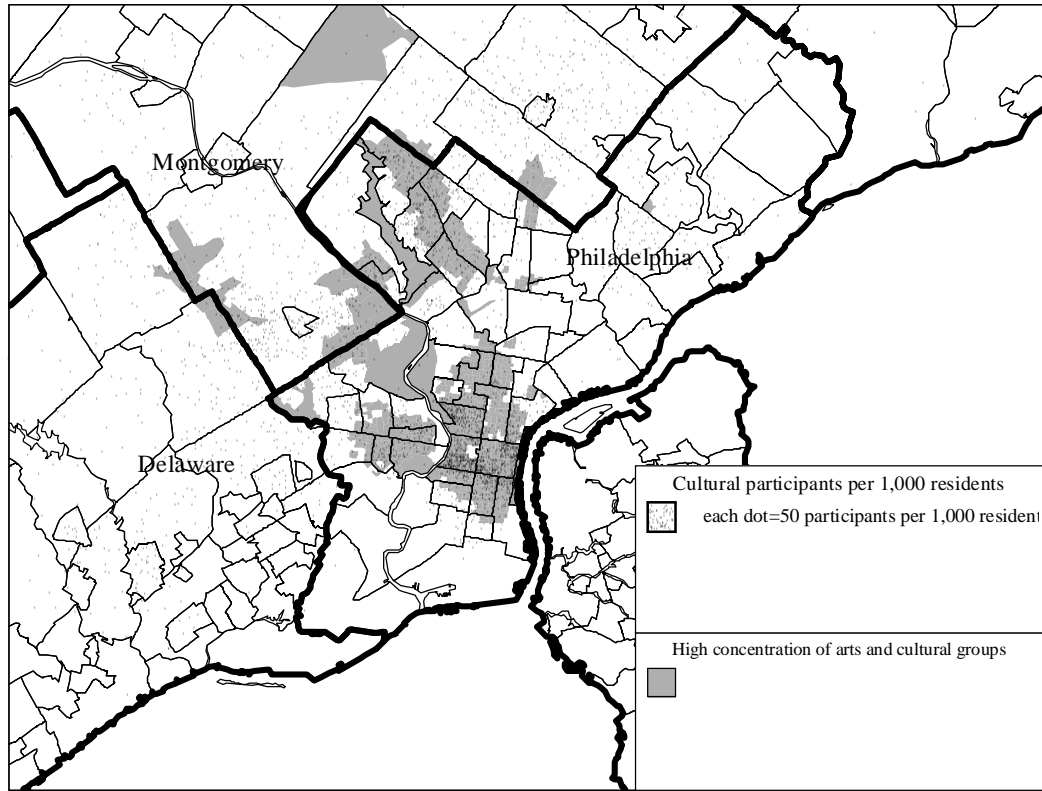
Through our research, we have discovered that the networks developed by community cultural providers are critical to their success. Among the important networks we have identified are:

- Networks that link cultural providers in different communities
- Networks that link community-based and regional cultural resources
- Networks that link community cultural providers to other community-based organizations
- Networks that link *for-profit* cultural providers with non-profit resources
- Networks that link community-based artists to cultural institutions.
- Individual participants that link cultural institutions to other community resources

Yet, some of these networks work less effectively than others. Preliminary results suggest, for example, that several important community resources—including religious congregations—are less connected to cultural providers than their numbers would lead us to expect. Although for-profit cultural firms are an important presence in many neighborhoods, they are poorly linked to nonprofit institutions.

Most importantly, the links between community-based resources and regional institutions are often characterized by friction and suspicion, especially when they are reinforced by socio-economic and ethnic differences.

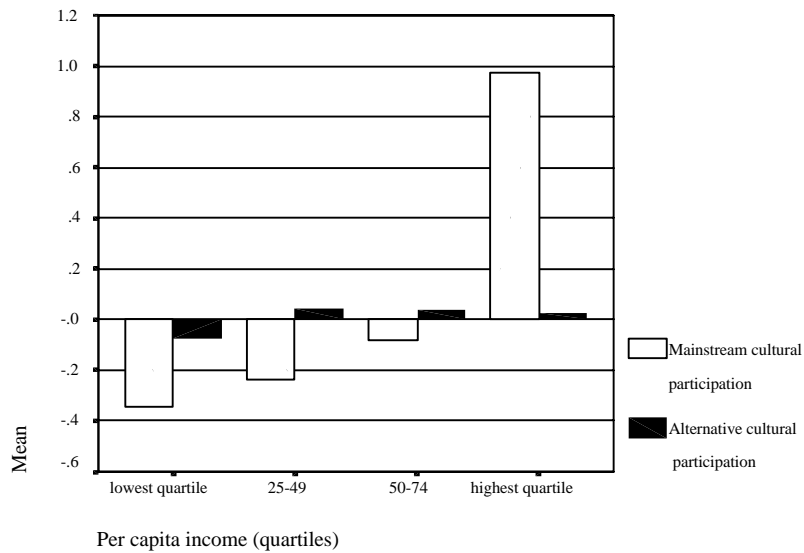
Neighborhoods with a high concentration of community arts and cultural providers have higher rates of regional cultural participation.



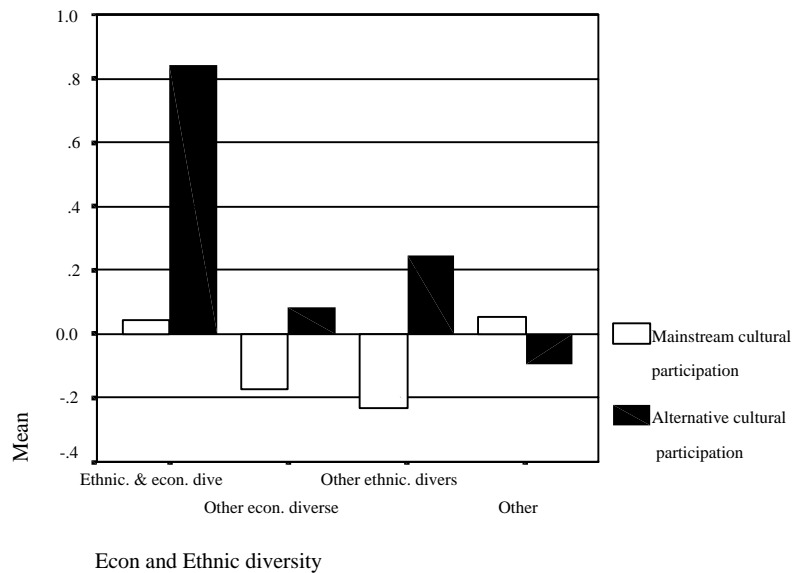
SIAP identified the address of over 200,000 participants in regional arts organizations and calculated a *regional cultural participation* rate for each block group in metropolitan Philadelphia.

The number of arts and cultural groups in a neighborhood is a strong predictor of the area's cultural participation rate. The concentration of arts and cultural organizations in a neighborhood explains more variance in participation rates than income or education.

Source: SIAP regional participation database and inventory of arts and cultural providers



In addition, the Project was able to isolate two-dimensions of participation: a “mainstream” participation factor that was strongly related to participation in organizations like the Philadelphia Orchestra and the Museum of Art, and an “alternative” cultural factor, which was related to organizations like the Painted Bride Art Center and folk music programs. A neighborhood’s score on each factor was strongly related to the concentration of arts and cultural programs near the area. However, well-off neighborhoods were more likely to have higher “mainstream” participation than poorer neighborhoods. Socio-economic status was not strongly related to “alternative” cultural participation.



Diverse neighborhoods--in contrast--were more likely to have higher “alternative” participation than homogeneous sections of the Philadelphia metropolitan area. “Mainstream” participation was not statistically related to a neighborhood’s diversity.

Note: Scores are normalized with a mean of 0 and a standard deviation of 1.

Neighborhood effects are a powerful influence on cultural participation

Across four cities, neighborhood diversity was nearly as strong as education in explaining cultural participation rates.

Average events attended in previous year, by diversity of respondent's neighborhood, four metropolitan areas

<i>Neighborhood diversity factor (quartiles)</i>		<i>Chicago</i>	<i>Philadelphia</i>	<i>San Francisco</i>	<i>Atlanta</i>	<i>Total</i>
1 Lowest quartile	Mean	3.52	3.97	3.70	1.99	3.40
	N	125	23	137	49	334
2 25-49th percentiles	Mean	2.33	3.39	3.18	1.49	2.76
	N	101	84	109	44	338
3 50-74th percentiles	Mean	2.65	2.01	6.60	3.62	3.82
	N	126	67	100	52	345
4 Highest quartile	Mean	5.34	3.43	9.63	5.82	5.77
	N	107	102	73	18	300
Total	Mean	3.44	3.12	5.30	2.79	3.88
	N	458	276	419	163	1317

Source: Survey of Public Participation in the Arts, 1997.

Note: The "neighborhood diversity factor" derives from a factor analysis of information about the zipcodes in which respondents' lived. The variables most associated with this factor were: percent of population living in economically and ethnically diverse block groups, percent of non-family households, housing built before 1940, cultural providers per capita, and smaller household size.

Diversity and the presence of cultural providers had a powerful influence on levels of cultural participation across the four cities we have studied.

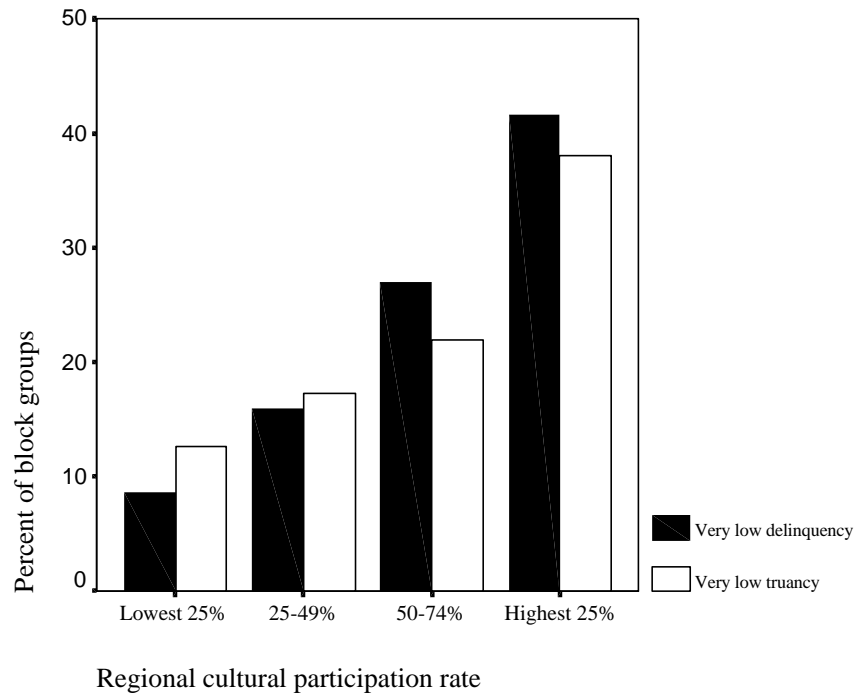
Using the National Endowment for the Arts' *Survey of Public Participation in the Arts* from 1997, we found that respondents' educational achievement was the single most important influence on the number of events an individual attended during the previous year. However, characteristics of the respondents' zip code explained nearly as much of the variance in cultural participation as did education.

Two distinctive factors emerged from this analysis. One factor was associated with socio-economic variables like educational attainment, the percent of managers and professionals in the zip code, the cultural providers per capita, and gross housing values. The second factor was associated with the concentration of ethnic and economic diversity in the neighborhood and the incidence of non-family households in the neighborhood.

A multivariate regression analysis found that the proportion of variance explained in cultural participation nearly *doubled* when the neighborhood effects were included. The diversity factor was the more powerful of the two neighborhood factors

Our research provides a strong case for the community-building capacity of arts and cultural activities

1 Percent of block groups with very low delinquency and truancy rates, by regional cultural participation rate, highly disadvantaged block groups, Philadelphia, 1995-1999



Individuals who are most involved in arts and cultural activities are much more likely to rate the quality of life in their neighborhood as “excellent”.

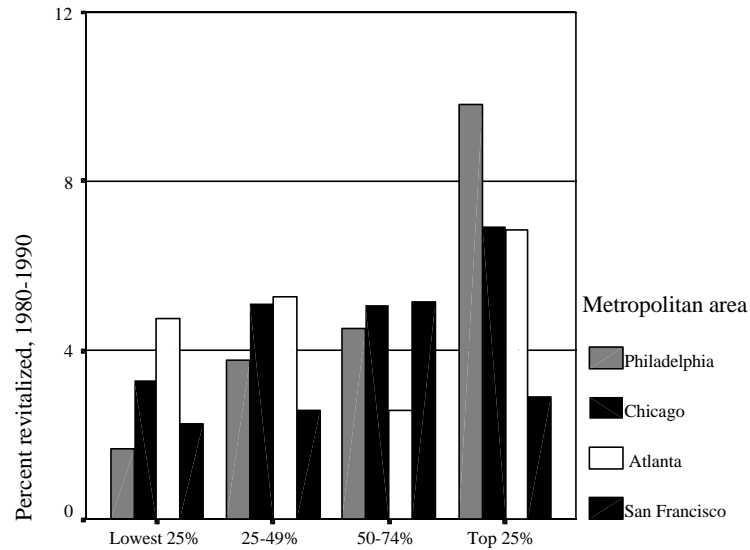
Furthermore, there is a clear spill over effect between arts and cultural activities and other forms of community engagement.

But cultural engagement changes more than attitudes. Cultural participation has a clear and significant relationship to indexes of social well-being. For example, among low-income neighborhoods, those with high levels of cultural participation were five times more likely to have very low levels of delinquency and three times more likely to have very low rates of truancy.

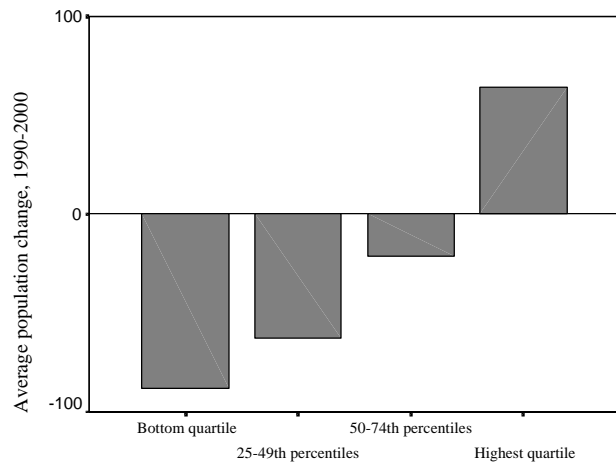
The arts don’t simply influence the lives of those involved in programs. Higher levels of participation change the social environment by fostering a sense of “collective efficacy.”

1. “Highly disadvantaged block groups”—based on a factor analysis of 1990 census data that included: per capita income, poverty rate, unemployment rate, percent African-American, median rent, and female headed households as a percent of all households. Highly disadvantaged block groups were in the top quartile on this measure.

2. **Delinquency and truancy rates. Based on average delinquent out-of-home placements (1995-1999) and truancy rates (1998) per 1,000 children ages 10-17. “Very low” rate placed the block group in the bottom quartile citywide.**



Arts & cultural organizations within 1/2 mile per capita (quartiles)



Mainstream cultural participation (quartiles)

Source: US Census 1980, 1990, 2000; IRS master file of tax exempt organizations 1999.

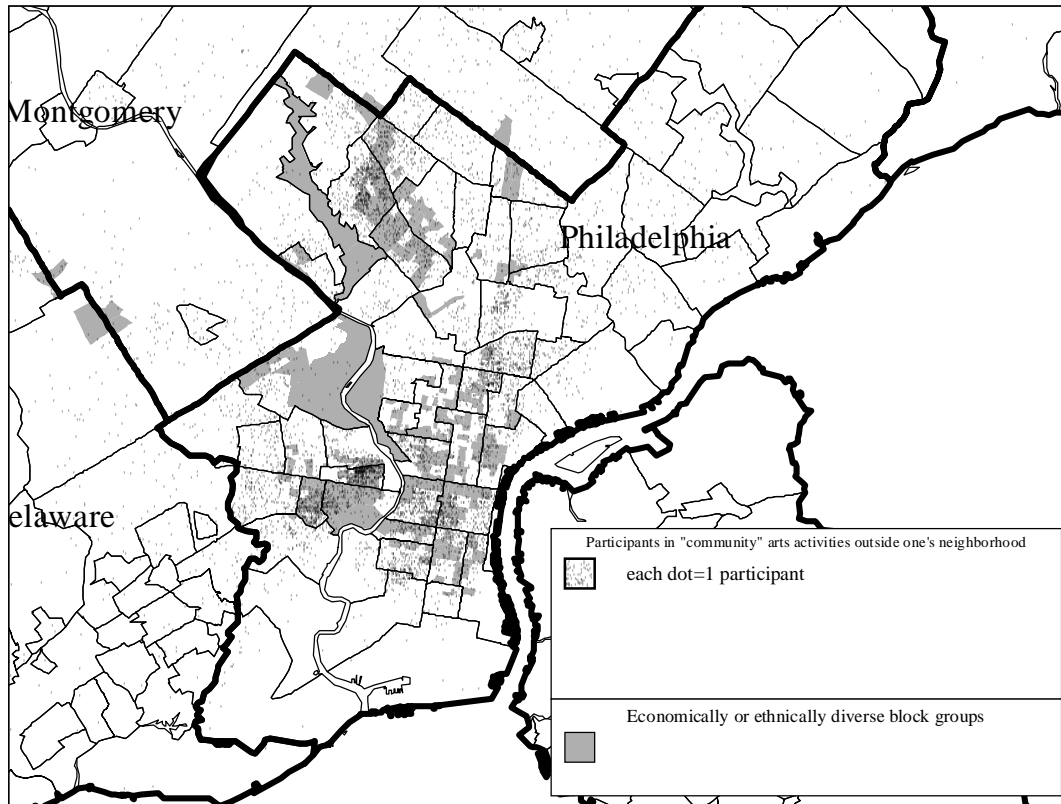
SIAP also examined the likelihood that a neighborhood would *revitalize* during the 1980s--which we defined as having a larger than average decline in poverty without a loss of population.

In Philadelphia, the historical presence of arts and cultural providers, levels of regional cultural participation, and economic and ethnic diversity were all related to the chances that a block group would undergo revitalization.

The relationship between the presence of arts and cultural providers and the chances of revitalization was present in Chicago and Atlanta as well.

Looked at from another perspective, we found that diverse neighborhoods with many arts and cultural providers were more likely to remain diverse than other diverse areas. In other words, arts and cultural institutions provide one means of moving a neighborhood from “accidental” diversity to “intentional” diversity.

A recent analysis of the 2000 census data suggests that diversity and cultural participation rates were strong predictors of the likelihood that a Philadelphia block group would increase its population during the 1990s.



Source: SIAP community cultural participation database, 1990 US census

One mechanism through which revitalization is stimulated is the *regional audience for community arts*.

We discovered that more than 80 percent of the participants in "community" arts and cultural programs we examined came from outside the neighborhood in which the program was located. Diverse neighborhoods and those with many arts and cultural programs provided a large share of these "outside" participants in community arts.

These "non-geographical" communities that community arts and cultural providers help create serve as a counter-balance to the barriers that separate rich and poor neighborhoods. By fostering participation across the divides of social class and ethnicity, cultural activities make a unique contribution to overcoming exclusion and fostering revitalization.