

Culture, social wellbeing, and neighborhood change

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Social Impact of the Arts Project

University of Pennsylvania

July 2015



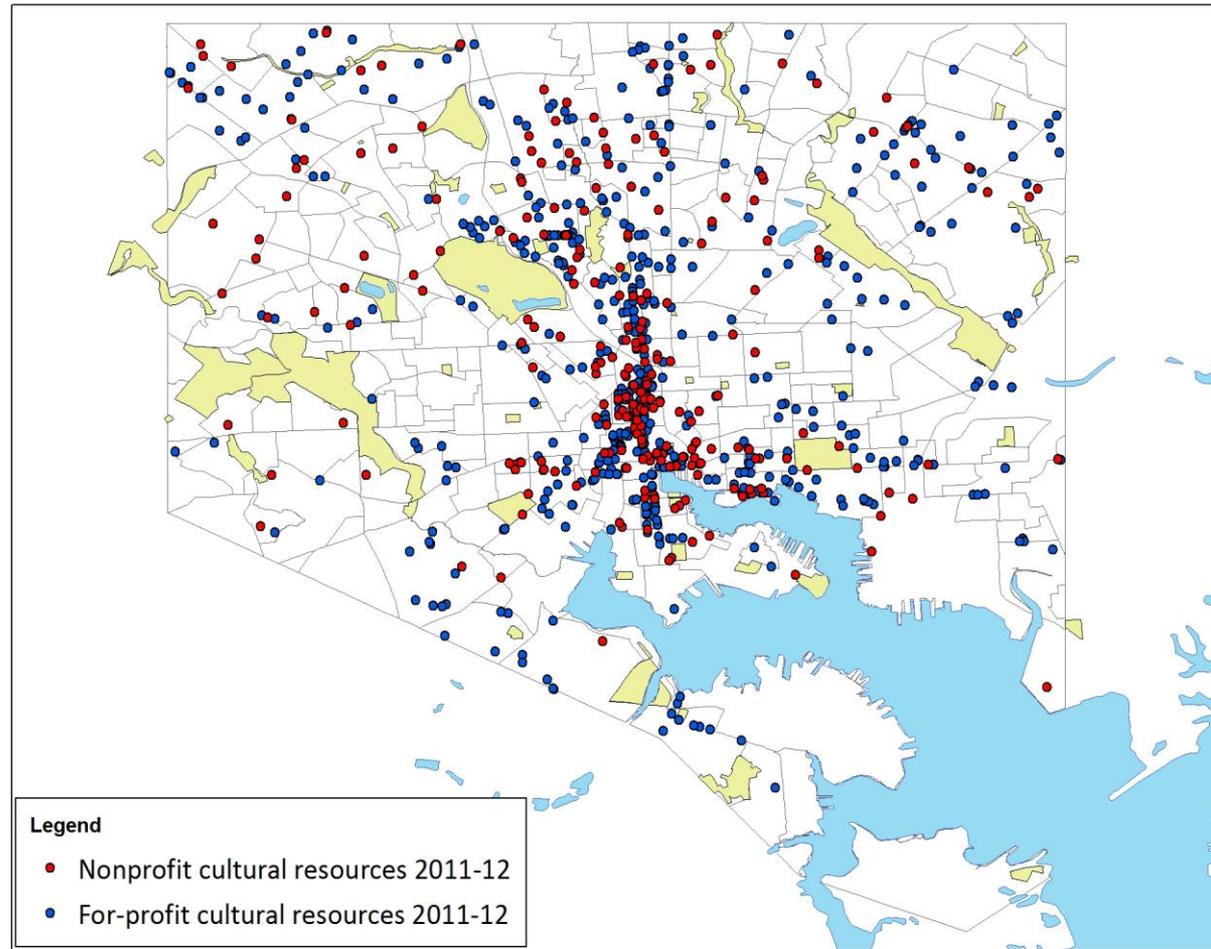
Two propositions

- Tracking arts and cultural resources is a critical element of a neighborhood's "vital signs."
 - It takes a neighborhood. Community groups, academic researchers, and advocates—all have a role to play to discovering the community impacts of the arts and culture.
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Why measure neighborhoods' cultural assets?

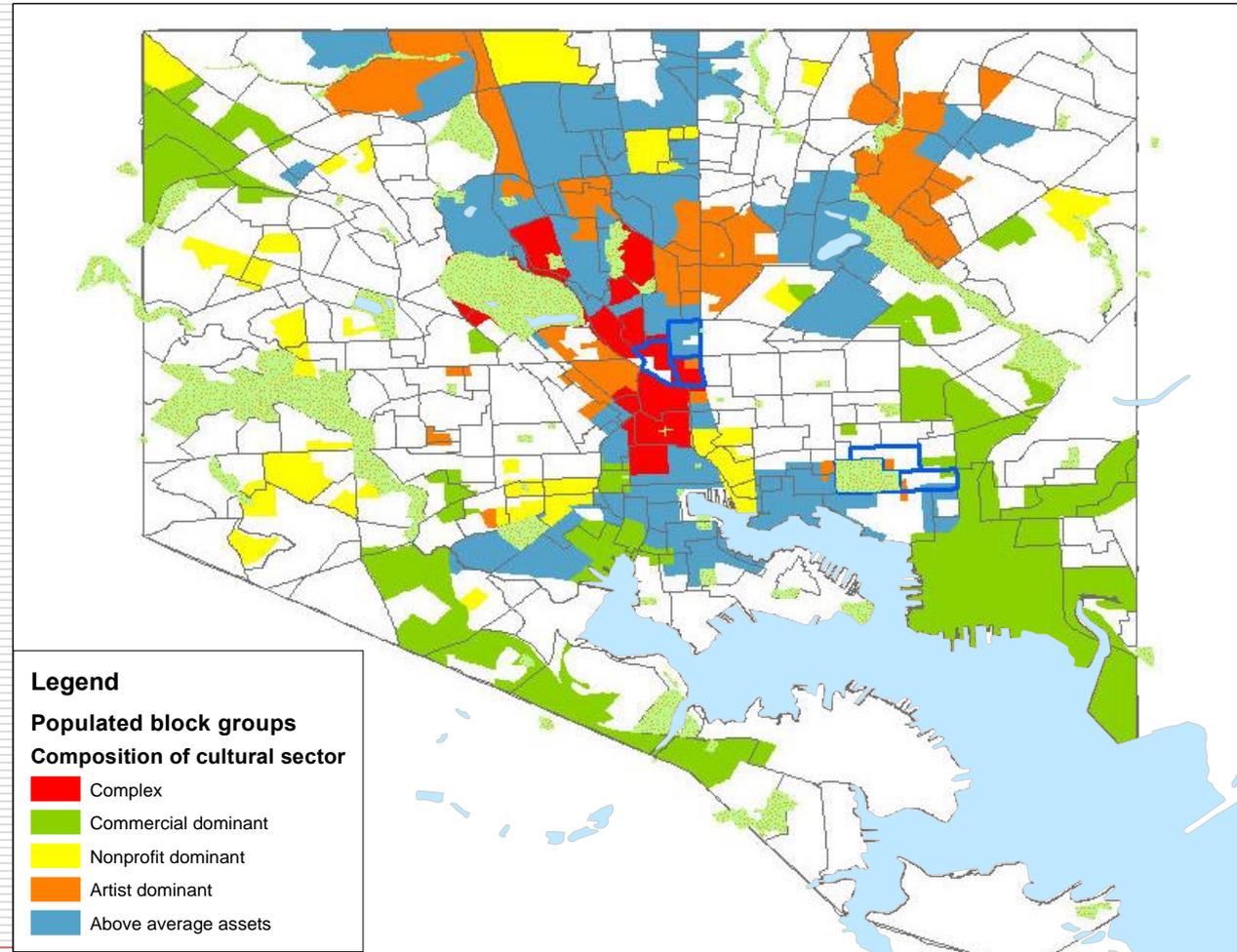
Often we have a one-sided view of low-asset communities.

- Not just an aggregation of a set of social problems.
- Community-based cultural providers offer a more balanced view of a neighborhood's assets and challenges.
- Neighborhood cultural resources are often "hidden" —a cluster of small groups can have a big impact.



Placing the arts in space & place

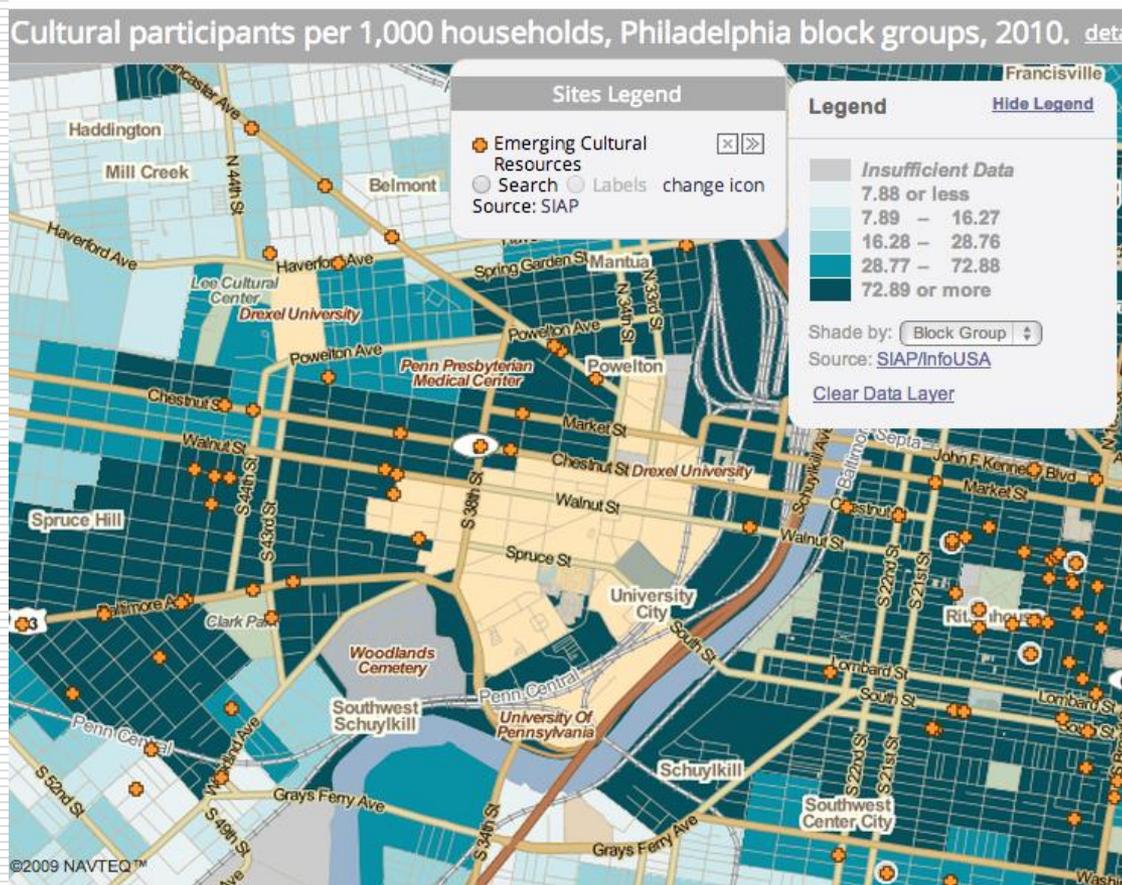
The cultural sector is not just individuals & organizations. The clustering of cultural resources—what we call its **cultural ecology**—has a strong influence on the internal structure of art worlds & their impact on neighborhoods & regions. **“Natural” cultural districts** are critical to the arts’ social impact.



How SIAP measures cultural resources

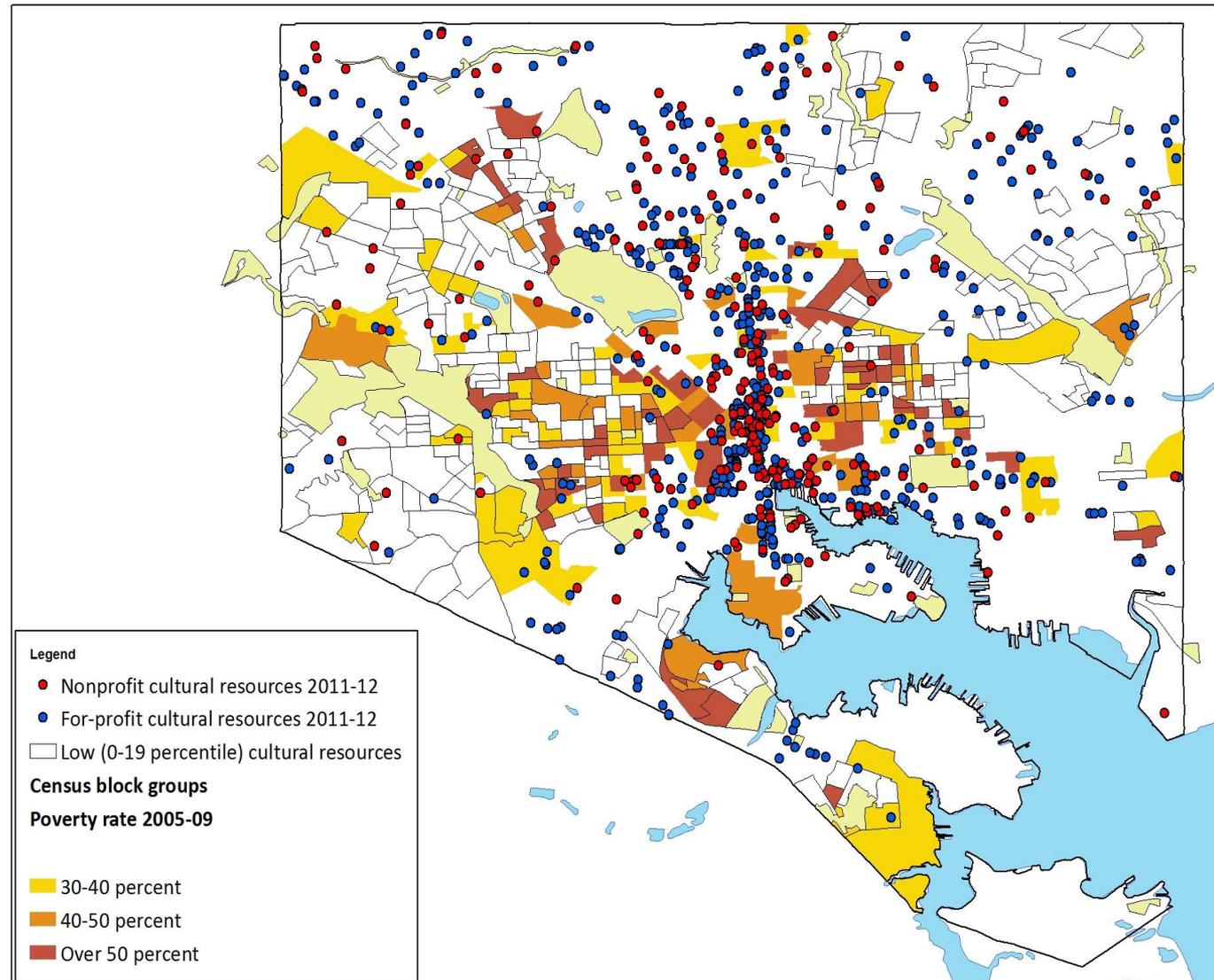
Four types of cultural resources:

- Nonprofit cultural programs (whether 501c3 orgs or not)
- Commercial cultural firms
- Resident artists
- Cultural participants



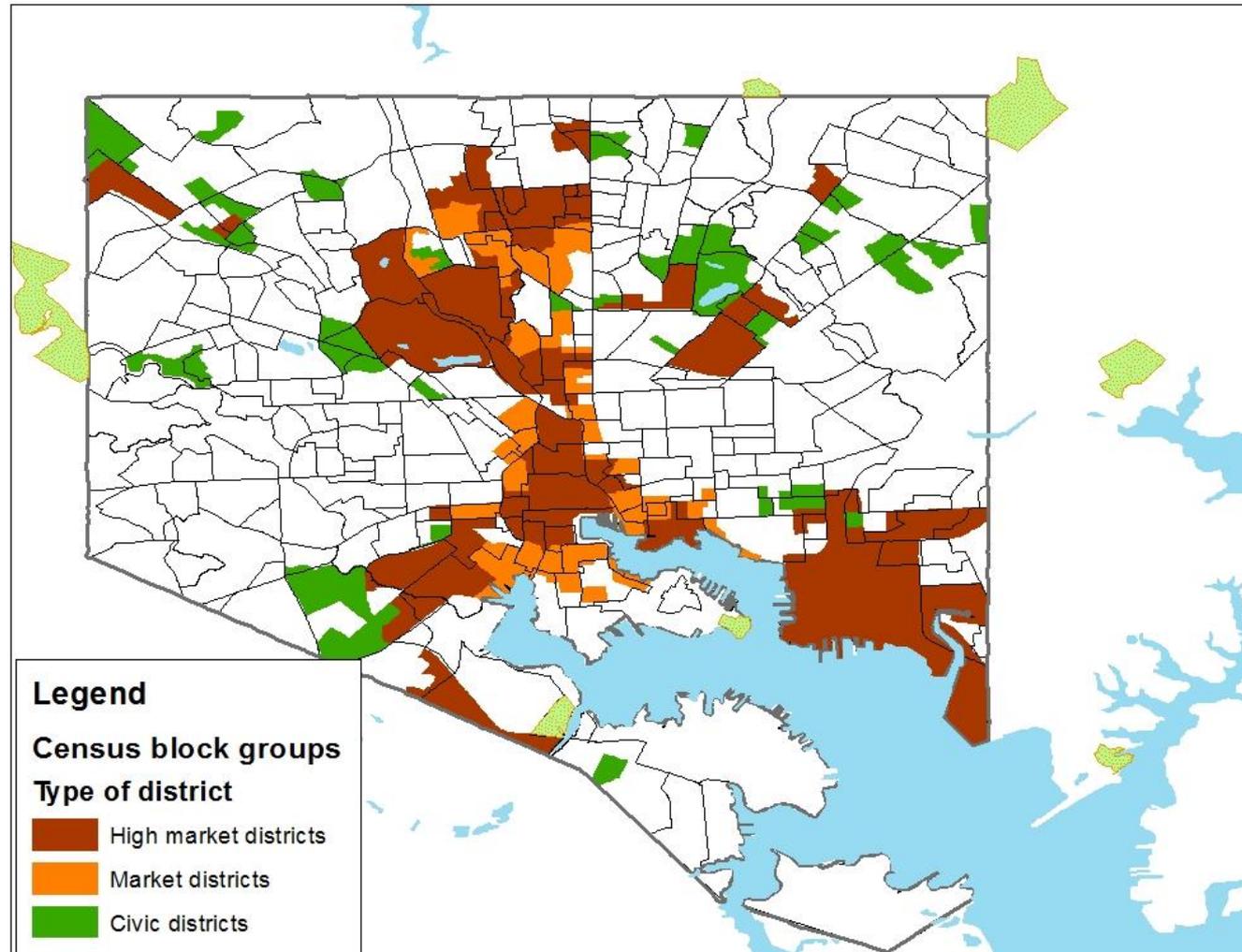
A right to culture: a public responsibility

Although many neighborhoods with few cultural resources have high poverty rates, the “fit” between poverty and cultural resources is far from absolute.



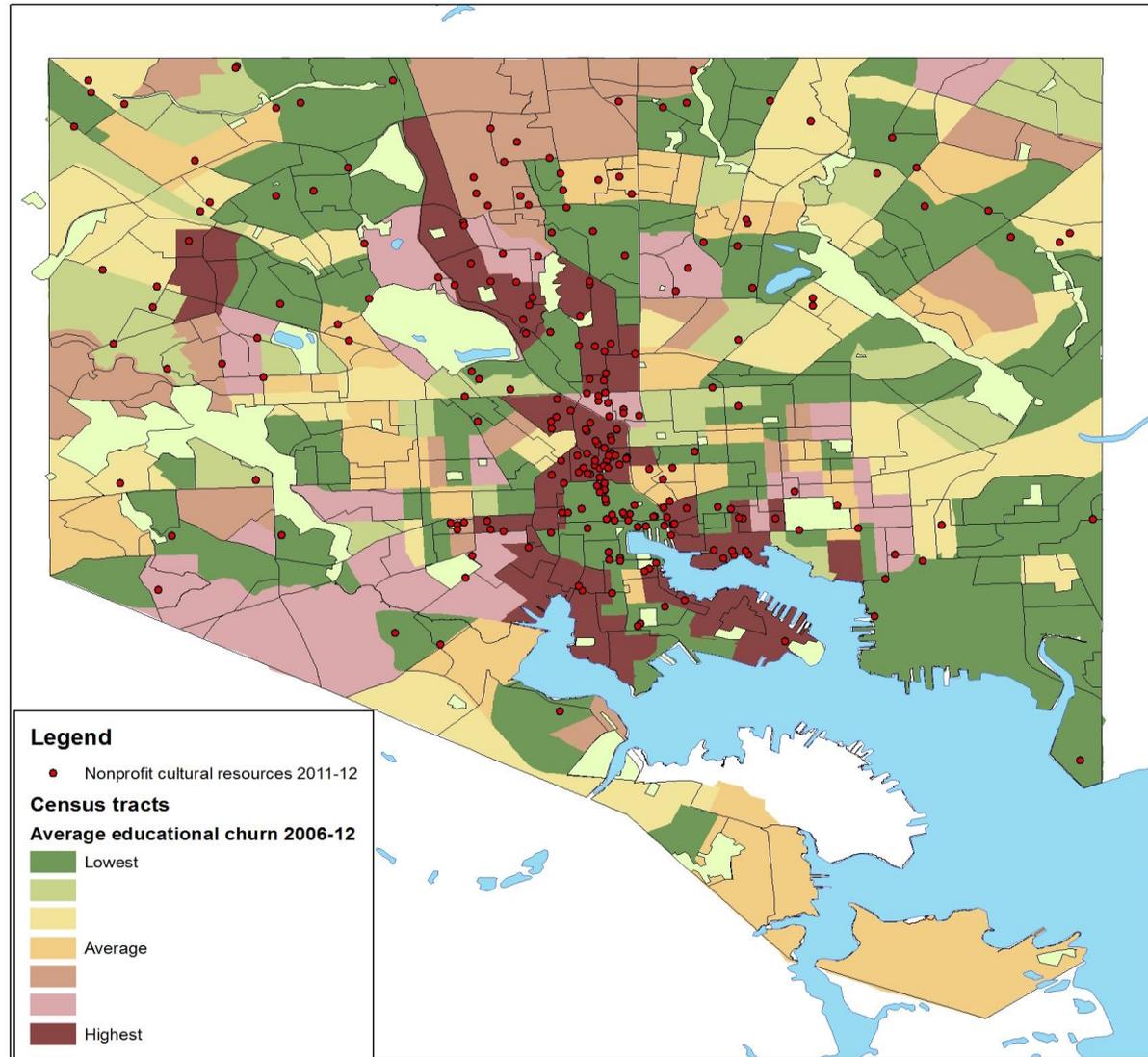
The “spill-over” effect of “natural” cultural districts

Philadelphia neighborhoods with concentrations of cultural resources—including many low-income areas—enjoyed non-economic benefits including lower morbidity and better school outcomes. Developing cultural indicators for Baltimore would allow researchers to estimate their impact here.



Social displacement, population turnover, and the arts

SIAP has been developing measures of social displacement. “Education churn” measures the extent to which residents with a high-school diploma or less are leaving a neighborhood and residents with at least a college degree are moving in.



It takes a community to integrate culture into “vital signs.”

Until government takes on the task of documenting cultural engagement, it will require cooperation between:

- community organizations
- researchers and
- regional funders

to develop evidence of equitable access and opportunity in the arts and culture and their role in building community and revitalizing neighborhoods.



The arts and civic engagement:
A field guide for practice, research, and policy

Social Impact of the Arts Project
July 2009



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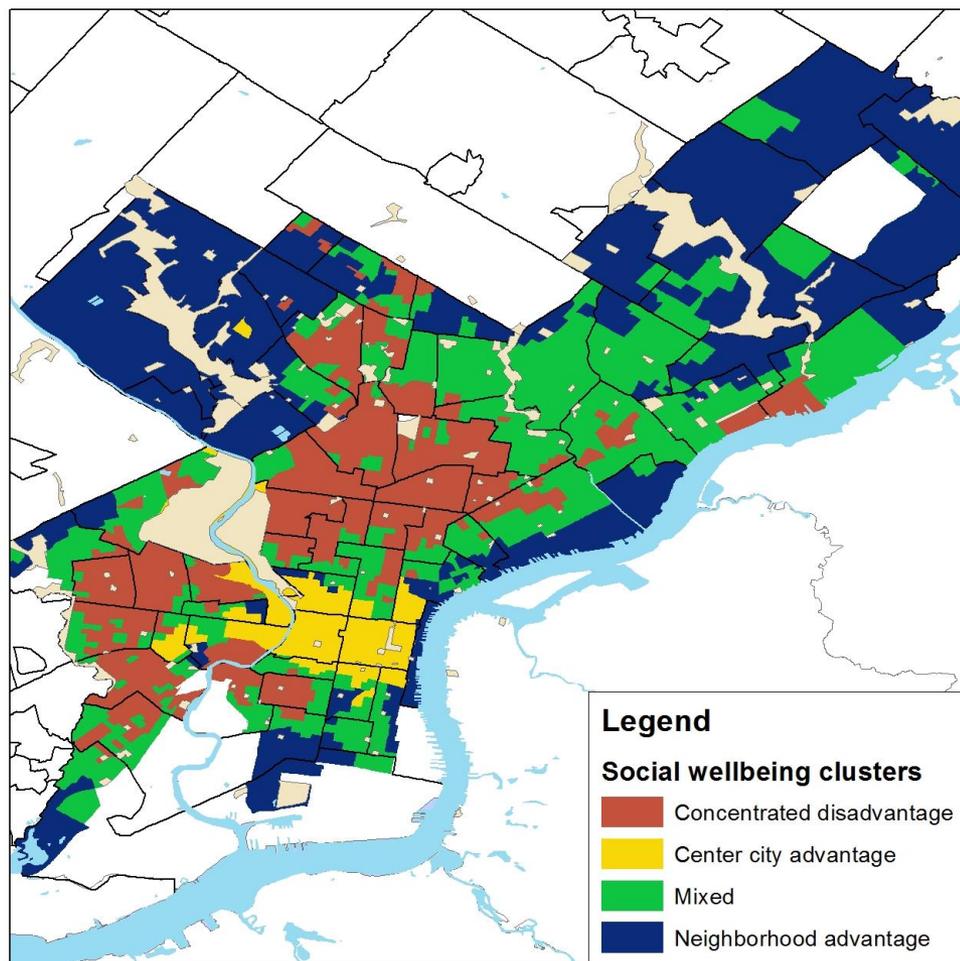
Two approaches to community-based data development

- *Organizational data gathering.* Individual organizations can contribute to understanding the relationship of culture to community vitality by developing systems for tracking program participation and using qualitative methods to document the broader connection of culture and wellbeing.
- *Regional database development.* Once a system is in place to gather participant, artist, and institutional network data, a regional entity (a funder, arts council, government agency, or university) can develop a means of integrating these data into a unified database.

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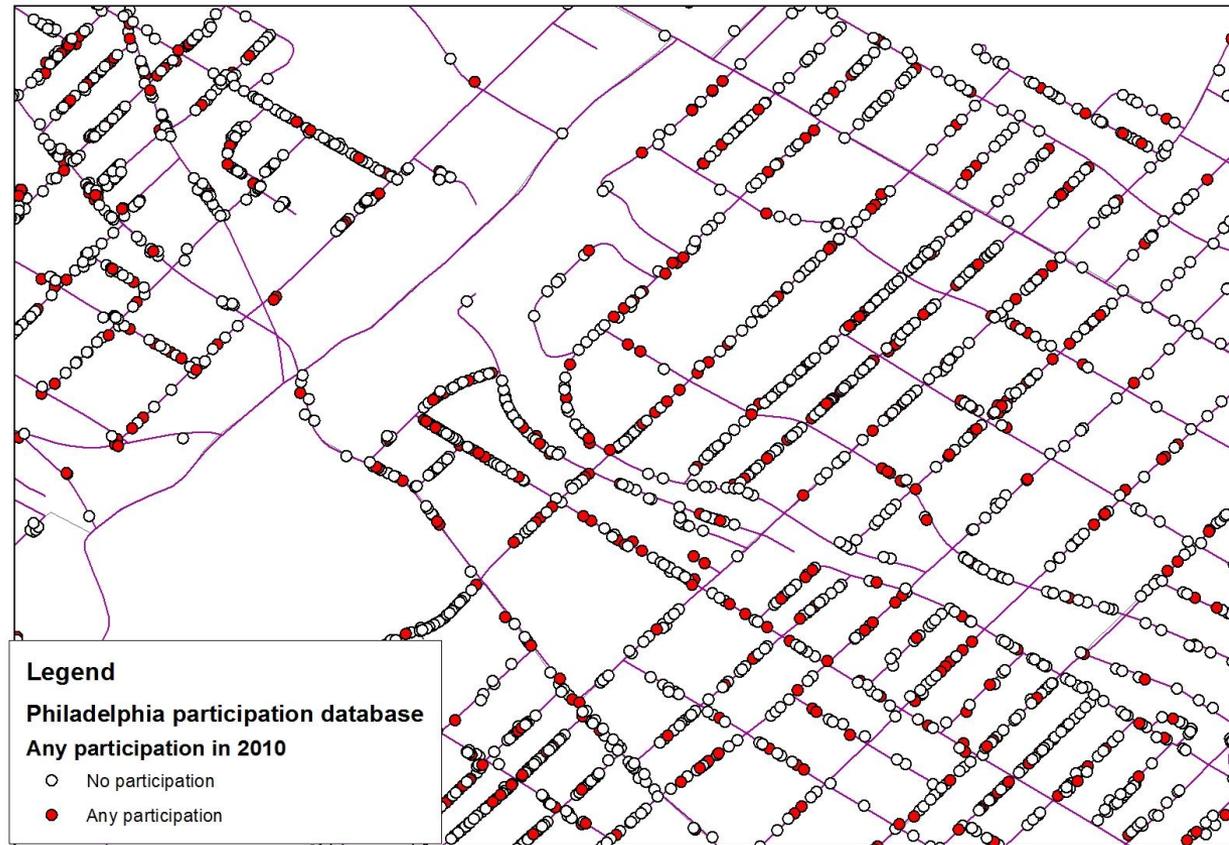
From data to policy impact

An integrated database provides the opportunity to examine the aggregate impact of cultural engagement on region-wide measures of social wellbeing. In addition, through the use of a geographic information system (GIS), this approach allows policymakers to link data on cultural engagement to other socio-economic and neighborhood data



Encouraging organizational-level data gathering

- Much participant data is **already being collected** (subscribers, student registration)
- Need incentive for sharing data at regional level
- List cooperative provides structure to bring many organizations' data together



It doesn't have to be fancy

Free events (or small groups or embedded programs) could incorporate sign-in sheets (with address) into their procedures. Over time sign-in can provide important clues about who is involved and where they live.



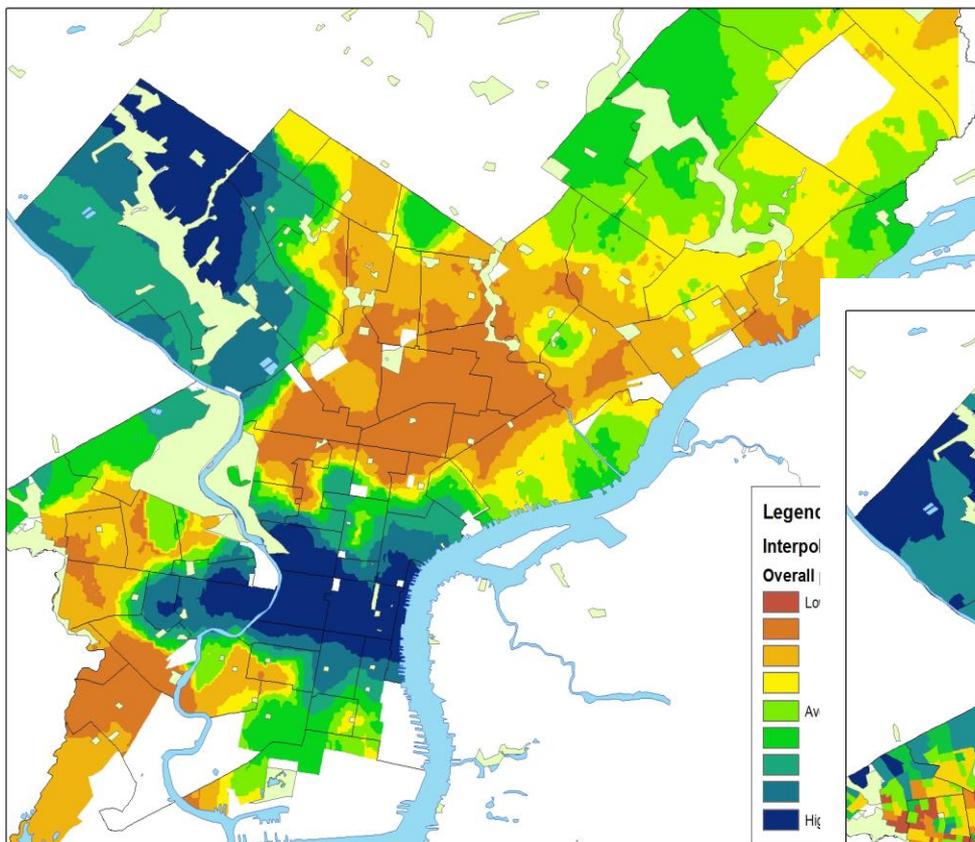
TALLER
PUERTO RIQUEÑO
El Corazón Cultural Del Barrio
The Cultural Heart of Latino Philadelphia

Name of Event *Bohemia*
Subtitle *Vereda Cultural*
Date of Event *08-10-07*
Time of Event *08-9M*

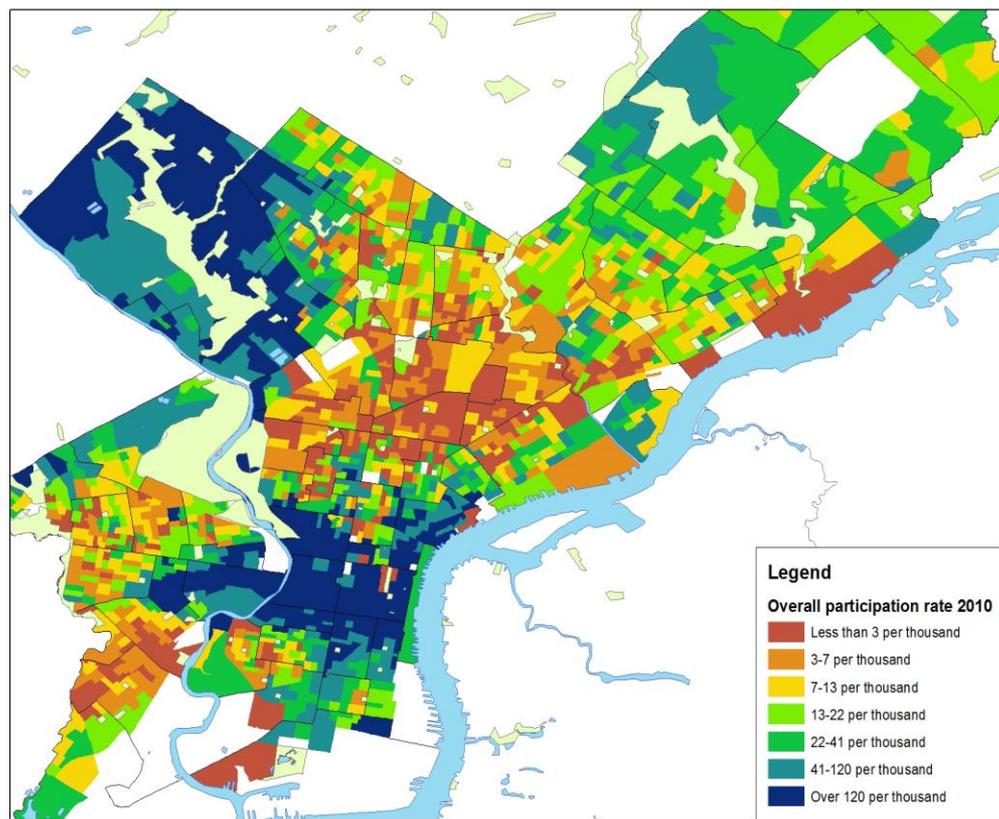
NAME	ADDRESS/CITY/STATE/ZIP CODE	E-MAIL	HOW DID YOU LEARN OF THIS EVENT? *NEWSPAPER *INVITATION *WORD OF MOUTH *E-MAIL * OTHER
	<i>[redacted] Whitaker ave</i>	<i>(215) 457-[redacted]</i>	<i>Email [redacted]@AOL.com</i>
	<i>[redacted] Esomas rd MT Laurel NJ 08054</i>	<i>[redacted].5@Yahoo.com</i>	<i>85695-[redacted]</i>
	<i>[redacted] E. Clearfield St</i>	<i>25 (4) 23-[redacted]</i>	
	<i>[redacted] N Meade rd</i>	<i>[redacted]@ntonline.org</i>	
	<i>[redacted] N Rose St</i>	<i>[redacted]@ad.com friend</i>	
	<i>[redacted] Loebel st</i>	<i>[redacted]@Yahoo.com friend</i>	

From dots to analysis

For analysis, we aggregate individual observations to some standard geography (typically block group) to link to census and other data sources.

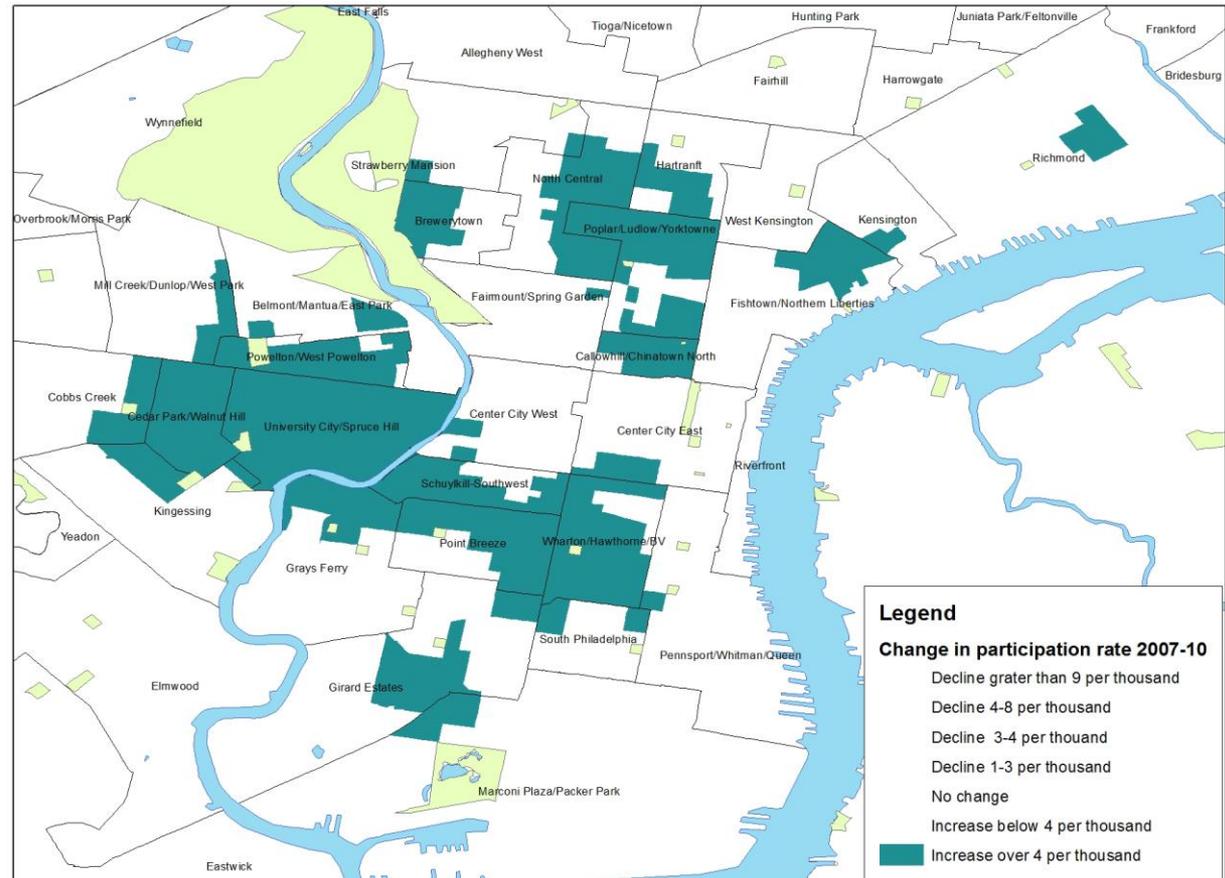


Sometimes it's helpful to use slightly fancier procedures to reduce the noise in the data (above).

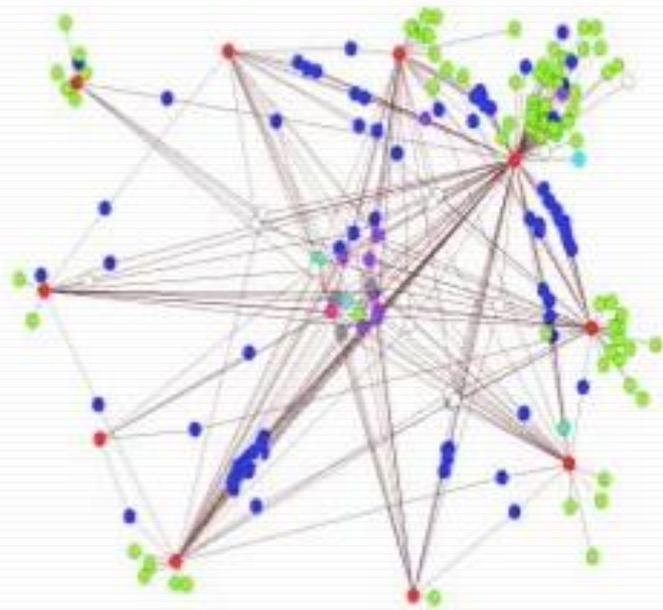


Tracking neighborhoods—changing cultural ecology—instead of individuals over time

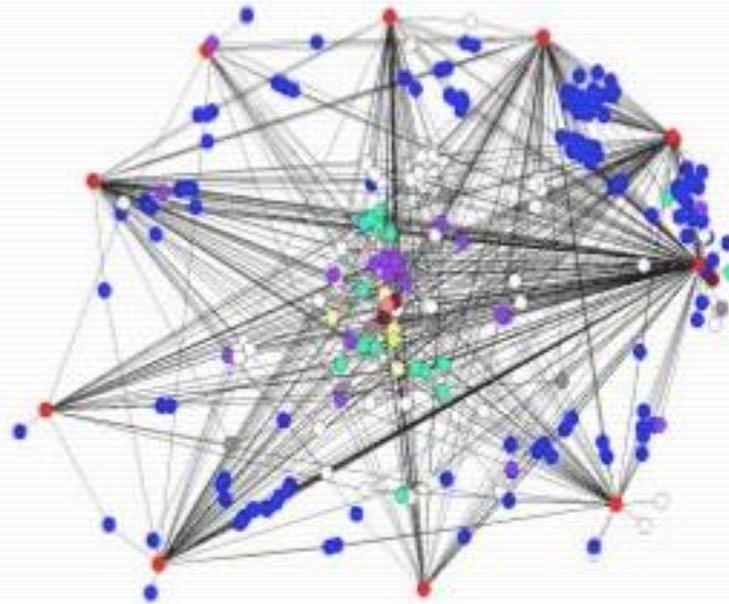
Although an ecological approach doesn't allow for longitudinal estimates at the individual level, it does provide stable estimates of how the geography of participation changes over time.



Institutional & artists networks



Institutional networks 1997

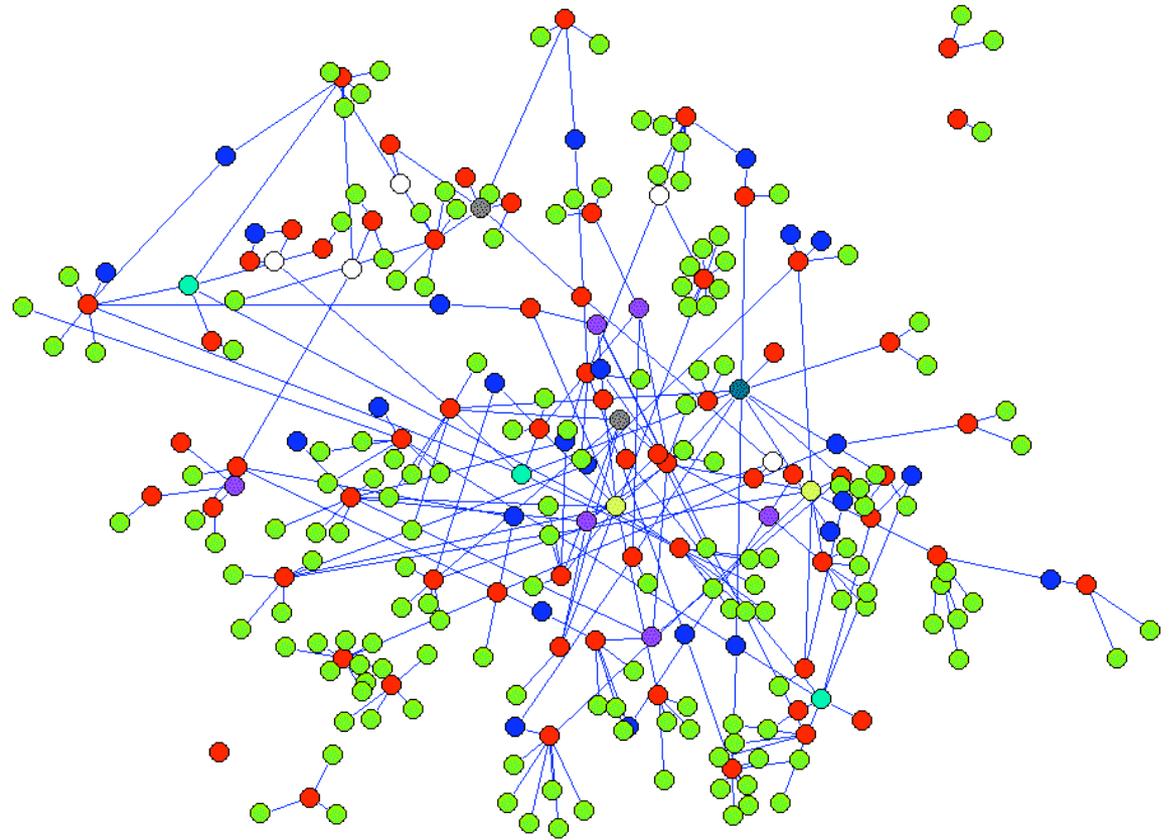


Institutional networks 2000

We found that participation in a community arts initiative greatly expanded the range of organizations with which grantees interacted.

Artists serve as often-invisible connectors between community-based organizations

We interviewed 60 artists about the places they worked during the previous year. The red dots represent artists and the blue and green dots their organizational contacts.



Bottom line

- Cultural resources are an important dimension of community assets. The arts provide opportunities for cultural and creative expression, stimulate social connection and community engagement, and build networks within and between neighborhoods.
 - A combination of bottom-up and top-down efforts can develop the data needed to incorporate cultural assets into community policy and planning.
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