POINT BREEZE

Prepared by the students of
Urban Studies 200—Urban Research Methods
Spring 2014
In a recent essay, Michael Katz noted that we’re in the midst of a paradigmatic shift in our understanding of the history of American cities since World War II. After decades in which the crisis metaphor was are dominant way to understand this history, we have entered a period in which ideas of regeneration, revitalization, and “comeback” cities have gained traction. Katz calls, as well, for a shift from a narrative of the failure of government policy to a more balanced view of public interventions.

The tendency to simplify and flatten urban processes is not confined to the crisis narrative. The regeneration story, as well, has hardened into two competing narratives. One emphasize all of the good news on cities: the “return” of the middle class, the revival of downtowns, and the “creative class” as the key to urban success. The other takes a more gloomy view of these processes. Under the general label of gentrification, it focuses on how the “un-creative class” has been pushed out of steady employment and displaced from its neighborhoods.

Over the past five years, Ira Goldstein and I have taught sections of Penn’s Urban Studies required research course (URBS200—Urban Research Methods) with a focus on understanding rapid urban change—a neutral term we chose to openly question what the costs and benefits of these processes are. We’ve sent our students out to a number of neighborhoods—West Park (including Overbrook and Wynnfield), Chinatown/Callowhill, Fishtown/Northern Liberties, Kensington, South of South/Southwest Center City, and Point Breeze—to use the tools of urban research to better understand how these neighborhoods are changing and the implications of those changes for the city of Philadelphia.

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1 Mark Stern
3 The number of “slash” neighborhoods (e.g. Chinatown North/ C allowhill) is itself an indication of the changes underway. Several of the areas we’ve studies have rebranded themselves as their population profile has changed.
During spring 2014, we decided to raise our ambitions for the course one more step. In the past, the use of neighborhood case studies had been useful to the students taking the course, but there was little carryover from one semester or year to the next. We decided to organize the class around not only conducting research, but completing a single report that summarizes the class’s findings on the neighborhood. This report is the outcome of this first effort.

We decided to focus during the semester on Point Breeze. The Fall 2013 section of the course had begun the investigation of the neighborhood and our previous work in South of South, which lies just north of Point Breeze, convinced us that the neighborhood was indeed experiencing a very rapid process of neighborhood change. It turned out to be an excellent choice. The neighborhood is quite close to Penn, so students could get there easily, but virtually none of them had very much previous experience with the community.

This is how we produced the report. The semester was divided into a set of units that roughly correspond to the chapters of the report. First, we discussed historical sources, including the manuscript censuses and historical print maps (Chapter 2). We then turned to the use of online GIS tools, including Social Explorer and Policymap, to track demographic change (Chapter 3). Next, we used the Public Health Management Corporation’s Community Health Surveys for Philadelphia to examine several aspects of health in the area and compare it to the rest of the city (Chapter 4). Finally, the students did field work in the neighborhood, including developing and carrying out a survey of residents’ involvement in community institutions (Chapter 5) and their perceptions of neighborhood change. (Chapter 6).
Ironically, the perceptual split that I mentioned earlier surfaced in the class during the semester. Many students saw the changes occurring in Point Breeze in a wholly favorable light. New people moving in, rising real estate values, new bars and restaurants were all seen as improving the neighborhood and making it a more hospitable part of the city. Other students saw gentrification—displacement of low-income black residents by middle- and upper-class whites. The chapters that follow sometimes veer into one or the other perspective.

Yet, a close reading of our findings suggest that the reality was a bit more complex. Several long-time African American residents noted that, while they worried about displacement, they had benefited from the increased police presence associated with changing demographics. Some homeowners who a decade ago could not have given their homes away, now anticipated benefiting economically from rising real estate values. Finally, some of the newer residents hoped that the neighborhood could retain its diverse character.

We still have much to learn about the social, economic, and cultural forces that are transforming Philadelphia’s neighborhoods. This report, the product of the collective effort of a group of sophomore and junior Urban Studies majors, is a modest contribution to that understanding.
I. Abstract & Introduction

The neighborhood of Point Breeze is in transition. The history of the neighborhood itself significantly influences the physical and social changes the Point Breeze is experiencing today in Philadelphia. The historical maps and census data analyzed offer a glimpse of changing racial, class, crime, and civil structure of in neighborhood. These trends over time help piece together a larger picture of neighborhood changes in Point Breeze. The historical background of Point Breeze reveals important patterns that affect the current transition of the neighborhood, including major demographic and economic shifts that advanced area change.

An analysis of past documentation of the neighborhood uncovers the impact of historical trends on the area today. A chronological outline of the neighborhood reveals the past transitions of Point Breeze have set the stage for the current demographic changes. Most of the data comes from historical databases, like the US Census date and historical maps. Analysis of these resources provides insight to the accuracy of the collected data and the limitations of the conclusions. The research shows the shifts in the demographic and land use profile of Point Breeze. This provides a thorough examination of the role Point Breeze’s history plays in the current development of the neighborhood.

The first substantial documentations of Point Breeze history date back to the mid 1800s. Originally, in the early 1900s, a racing track drew people into the neighborhood. Developers later transformed the track into an amusement park, drawing more people to the area. These attractions brought attention to the area, but residents were still predominately working class. European Jewish immigrants, then Italian and Irish immigrants populated the neighborhood. After the 1930s, African American residents moved into the neighborhood and added to a vibrant community that would thrive for the next few decades. Post 1960s, white flight shifted the demographics to primarily African American residents. This era marked a rise in crime and led to the decline of parts of the neighborhood. This history set the stage for new developments occurring within Point Breeze.

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4 Authors: Kelly Redler, Jonathan Ostroff, Juan Visser, Erin Hayden, Josh Rad
5 Brinson, “Drawing From the Rich Past in History, Point Breeze Starts a Renaissance of its Own”
Our research was restricted by the physical boundaries of the neighborhood of Point Breeze and the availability of recorded data from previous centuries. Major sources of historical data came from the Greater Philadelphia GeoHistory Network, government census data, Social Explorer, and Policy Map. These sources provided a wealth of geographical and demographic data to begin the analysis of Point Breeze’s rich history. Although some data were limited, the collected sources provided a fairly comprehensive picture of neighborhood change.

Census data and evidence collected from the maps supported the conclusions that Point Breeze was a working-class neighborhood largely populated by immigrants and African Americans. Data also revealed a transition from rural land use in the mid 1800s to more industrial land usage in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Increasingly after this period, commercial land use grew in the neighborhood. Residential areas were always present, but expanded after businesses abandoned industrial land.

Tracing the historical data regarding a neighborhood provides important evidence regarding area transition. Shifting land use and demographic changes outlines Point Breeze’s role and reaction to larger shifts in the economy.

II. Brief History

Point Breeze is an area of South Philadelphia generally bound by 25th Street to the west, Washington Avenue to the north, Broad Street to the east, and Mifflin Street to the south. Although Point Breeze today is seen as an attractive location for both physical and social investment, many overlook the fact that the neighborhood has a rich and colorful history.

The neighborhood is said to be named after an estate owned by Joseph Bonaparte, the brother of Napoleon Bonaparte. Joseph called his estate across the Delaware River “Point Breeze” because it pointed towards the river. Somehow, the name made its way to South Philadelphia and it stuck.7

Back in the mid 1800s, Point Breeze had a prominent reputation for its horseracing track, which sat at 27th Street and Penrose Avenue. The track brought visitors from all over the world such as the Prince of Wales who later became King Edward VII of England. Despite being such an attraction for the area, the track was in operation from 1855 until about 1910. Around 1912, the track was purchased by Thomas J. Ryan who transformed the site into an amusement park. The amusement park operated from 1912 to 1923 and was located on the elevated land along the Schuylkill.8 In addition to the fame generated by this site, Point Breeze was also well known for another renowned landmark, the old Atlantic Richfield Refining Co. at 3144 Passyunk Avenue. The company started out as a storage facility in 1866 but quickly expanded its operations to include refining. By 1882, Atlantic’s refining plant was one

7 Brinson, “Drawing From the Rich Past in History, Point Breeze Starts a Renaissance of its Own”
8 Ibid.
of the largest in the United States as it employed nearly 3,000 workers and produced more than 100 million gallons of refined oil a year. Although neither the racetrack nor the refinery is within the current boundaries of Point Breeze, they are two essential contributors that led to the establishment of Point Breeze as an official neighborhood of South Philadelphia.

Since the time of its beginnings in the late nineteenth century, Point Breeze has been a “no-frills” working class neighborhood. Working-class European Jewish immigrants first settled the area and were soon followed by Italian and Irish immigrants. By the 1930s, these immigrant groups were joined by an influx of African-American residents, some of which were involved in The Great Migration escaping Jim Crow in the south and looking for work in the urban centers of the north. The African American residents gave the neighborhood a bustling social life as many of them established businesses along Point Breeze Avenue and transformed the street into an attractive destination known to residents as, “The Breeze.” Over the next thirty years, Point Breeze was reported to be a safe, clean, relatively integrated and self-sufficient neighborhood. Its residents almost never ventured into Center City, as they had everything they needed and more within just a few blocks of their two-story row homes.

It was not until the race riots of the 1960s – which triggered mass “white flight” – that signaled the decline of Point Breeze. Prior to the race riots, white residents had already chosen to leave the neighborhood however it was at this point in time that countless shopkeepers sold their businesses and moved elsewhere, which ultimately shifted the demographics of the neighborhood to primarily African American. Then, like adjacent Grays Ferry, Point Breeze was hit by the heroin epidemic of the 1970s and shortly thereafter, the crack scourge of the early 1990s. Due to these events, countless residents were victims of excess drug use, which caused many homes to become abandoned or fall into despair. Today, Point Breeze is not the wealthiest area of Philadelphia but it certainly has one of the richest histories. And the combination of its caring residents, helpful public agencies and private developers is beginning the trend to restore Point Breeze as a thriving and self-sustaining area of Philadelphia.

III. Data & Methods

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9 Brinson, “Drawing From the Rich Past in History, Point Breeze Starts a Renaissance of its Own”
11 Ibid.
12 Stern: Note that in 1960, four of the neighborhood’s six tracts were already predominantly black. Although the “riots” are often credited with hastening urban decline, the process was a bit more complicated and protracted.
14 Brinson, “Drawing From the Rich Past in History, Point Breeze Starts a Renaissance of its Own”
Studying the pre-1960 history of Point Breeze, today a rapidly changing neighborhood of Philadelphia, required a review of source material from across the 18th and early 20th centuries.

As with any analysis of an urban area, it was critical that we begin our study with a clear understanding of the parameters of Point Breeze as it is currently defined. Although there is a certain degree of disagreement among historians about the boundaries of the neighborhood, our team settled on the following definition: beginning at the corner of Washington Avenue and South Broad Street, heading southward on Broad Street until Mifflin Street, westward on said thoroughfare to South 25th Street, then in a northerly direction until Washington Avenue, and finally eastward to the point of origin at South Broad Street.

Along with determining the precise location of Point Breeze, it was necessary to narrow the focus of our study to the early 20th century to ensure that a thorough analysis based on data from a variety of sources could be carried out. Primary data from as early as 1808 was utilized to contextualize this period within the history of greater Philadelphia, but we did not rely heavily on this information for our study because it was too scarce for us to identify coherent historical trends.

We began by combing through historical maps digitized by the Greater Philadelphia GeoHistory Network. The oldest maps, from the 1808 “Philadelphia and Vicinity” plan by surveyor John Hills to Samuel Smedley’s 1862 Philadelphia Atlas, provided us with a general idea of early settlement patterns in what would later become a bustling South Philadelphia neighborhood. The 1895 Bromley Philadelphia Atlas was the first map that gave an indication of the shape and density of Point Breeze’s built environment, as well as our earliest indication of area development trends: blocks nearest to the intersection of Broad Street and Washington Avenue.

15 Map of Point Breeze: Google Maps
16 http://www.philageohistory.org/tiles/viewer/
were populated first and development spread towards the south and west, with dense blocks replacing older farms and estates. The 1934 J.M. Brewer Appraisal Map served as the basis for our initial inferences about demographics in the area as it illustrated the perceived racial and ethnic makeup of the neighborhood and shed light on the arguably racist “redlining” policies of property appraisers at the time, which coincided with a mass northward move of Southern African-American residents often called the Great Migration.

Historic maps were supplemented with Census data, as well as secondary maps created using this data, to make better sense of changes in the makeup of Point Breeze’s population throughout the early 20th century. While some of our team members were comfortable working with Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and making such maps ourselves, we found existing GIS tools – namely Social Explorer and PolicyMap – to be rich enough in content that they could be relied upon for our study. Using these sites, we were able to visualize demographic data in an interactive spatial format and toggle through the years to see how radically the area changed over time. Individual Census survey forms, particularly from the year 1940, gave us a more complete picture of the makeup of Point Breeze households – specifically in the midst of Great Depression. 17 News articles and scholarly articles written about the neighborhood were sources of some value to our research, but provided us with few concrete details about its development.

Given the length of the time period we studied and the scarcity of early historical records of Point Breeze, a number of inevitable obstacles hampered our analysis. Changes in the Census questionnaire between the late 19th century and 1960 meant that there were gaps in our data, making it difficult to identify trends. The 1940 Census, for instance, “included questions about employment, unemployment, internal migration and income” to address concerns about Depression-era population changes – questions that it had never asked in such detail before. 18 Variations in the definition and number of census tracts within Point Breeze over the years also posed problems as we attempted to track the neighborhood’s demographic changes on a tract-by-tract basis. The lack of digitized news articles from the early 20th century referencing the area proved frustrating because such sources could have added to the narrative that our study was aimed at developing.

On the whole, the issues that we encountered were manageable, and having to work around them did not detract from the quality of the final product of our analysis. When conducting a historical survey of a neighborhood, as in this project, the most crucial element of data collection is having a diverse group of primary sources spanning a reasonable scope of time. There can be great value in including

17 The Census Bureau cites the 1940 survey as “the first Census that looked deeper into the details of much of American life,” a testament to its usefulness in our analysis.

18 United States Census Bureau, http://www.census.gov/history/www/through_the_decades/overview/1940.html
personal anecdotes from residents, wherever these are relevant and available. While we did not include any interviews in our section because other teams were explicitly assigned to studying them, we likely would have benefited from creating an archive of stories from longtime residents of the neighborhood who remember its pre-1960s history – keeping in mind that the number of potential interview subjects is small and dwindling. There are greater opportunities to do this for later decades, though this would certainly require an extensive interview process lasting several months.

IV. Findings

Land Use:

We drew land use data from a variety of land use maps for a variety of years dating 1808-1962. Beginning with maps from 1808 and 1843, Point Breeze appears to be relatively rural. The 1843 map showed only two intersecting roads. The 1855 map showed a grid street formation with significantly more streets and street names compared to the 1808 map. Moving to the 1862 map, there appeared to be more industrial development. Then the 1888 showed a hotel, retailers, and community centers.

In the 20th century, the 1910 map showed significant industrial land use with large warehouses and factories such as a cotton mill and a shirt factory. In this map, there appeared to be an integrated mix of residential and industrial land use. As a slight contrast, the 1934 map showed a physical dynamic of industrial buildings surrounding residential. The 1942 map indicated that by this year there were no vacant buildings, most of the 140 homes were occupied by families, and 17th street stood out as a commercial hub with businesses such as a plumbing supply store, an auto body shop, a machine shop, and a coal yard. The 1962 map further confirmed the area’s chronological shift from industrial land use to commercial land use. This map showed several abandoned factories converted to community-focused buildings such as churches and schools.

Demographics:

The two resources that provided the most information on demographic data were the 1934 Brewer’s map and the 1940 census. From the 1934, Brewer’s map came the information that Point Breeze was classified as a “D” area, a label indicating that most residents were low-income. The map also showed that parts of Point Breeze were labeled, ‘Complete or substantially complete concentration of colored people.’

Looking at the 1940 Census data, we find that most residents were either black immigrants from the American South (Georgia, North Carolina, and South Carolina) or European immigrants from Italy or Poland. Of the blocks reviewed, all but one were majority black. The block between 21st street and Reed Street, for example, included 35 black residents out of 40 total residents. The one block that was not
majority black, was an even split between black and white households. Most of the white residents were Italian immigrants.

As far as household compositions, most houses reviewed were non-nuclear—meaning, they did not follow the husband, wife, two children composition. Houses that did not follow the nuclear composition typically included lodgers or extended family members. One house was entirely comprised of unrelated renters. Further, when there were nuclear houses they were primarily white households. Black households often included lodgers and/or extended family members. For example, on the 21st block of Wharton Street a black couple from South Carolina was renting out rooms in their house to three lodgers at the time of the census. Then, on 25th and Broad Street, of seven households, four were black non-nuclear compositions. The additional residents included a mother in-law, a woman with three unrelated renters, a widower-lead household, and a widow-lead household.

Examining Social Explorer maps focusing on racial composition for the years 1940 and 1950 showed an increasing dominance of black residents. For the 1940 map, the two dominating Census Tracts, 36C and 36B were 25% and 61% black respectively. Jumping to 1950, those same census tracts were 37% and 70% black.

Housing:

Based off the 1940 Census data, of the blocks reviewed, there was a range of 7-12 households per block. The data favored a trend in renters over owners. The data also showed that most homeowners were white. A Social Explorer map from 1940 shows the majority of blocks in Point Breeze had 7% or fewer black homeowners versus 20%-50% were white homeowners. This is with the exception of Census Tract 36A, which showed more black homeowners than white homeowners. Flipping the data to look at renting percentages, Social Explorer shows that over half of the neighborhood had over 50% black renters versus 11%-30% white renters. Very close to all residents on the census reported having lived in the same house five years prior.

Employment:

Referring back to the 1934 Brewer’s map low-income classification, most employed Point Breeze residents in 1934 and 1940 worked low-income, working class jobs. On the 19th and Dickinson block, 15 out of 19 total workers were wage or salary workers. In the 1940 census data, jobs ranged from the lowest salary of $40 for a house worker to the highest salary of $1800 for a probation officer. Some other sample occupations for the area included: brick layers, janitors, truck drivers, factory operators, maids, cleaners, industrial laborers, shoemakers, and real estate agents. Though most were working class, black workers tended to occupy the lower salary jobs. Black women occupied the lowest salary jobs. It is also notable that in the
reviewed blocks there was not one white woman who worker while there were several black working women.

V. Discussion & Conclusion
The history of Point Breeze is extremely important to consider in examining how the neighborhood undergoes change today. Based on our above analysis, current developments are not the first time the neighborhood has gone through significant social and economic change. By closely observing the shifts in land use and demographic patterns throughout the nineteenth and late eighteenth centuries, we can confirm that the neighborhood is susceptible to change and development. Although the demographic pattern chapter will provide a closer look into shifting demography in the area today, the demographic shifts that occurred throughout earlier years provide a solid foundation for more comprehensive study.

The late-nineteenth century horseracing track turned amusement park and Atlantic Richfield Refining Company testify to Point Breeze’s rich history of development and attraction. It follows clearly that the neighborhood’s diversity peaked in the 1930’s, when European working-class Jews, Italians, Irish, Polish, and African Americans all populated Point Breeze Avenue with small businesses, shops, etc. However, it is important to note that even during this time of prosperity, safety, and integration from the 1930’s until the 1960’s, racial divides persisted.

According to J.M. Brewer’s 1934 Appraisal Map, redlining policies of property appraisers followed racist guidelines, as most African American residents were low-income. In the 1940 Census Map, there existed many more renters than homeowners. However, most homeowners were also white. Nevertheless, Point Breeze was a relatively well-integrated community through the mid-20th century, and commercial activity rose as land use maps show a distinct shift from industrial to commercial from the 1940’s to the 1960’s.

It was not until the 1960’s, when the Civil Rights Movement and consequent racial strife led to white flight and the beginning of the decline of Point Breeze. The heroin epidemic of the 1970’s and crack cocaine issues of the 1990’s resulted in a deteriorated district that had lost most of its diversity and opulence by several decades ago. However, as we saw with the private development of the early 20th century and the sudden decline of the 1960’s, Point Breeze maintains its dynamism in Philadelphia. The neighborhood is undergoing a shift today toward a more diverse population and increased commercial development. Historical trends tell us that development led to prosperity, increased immigration, and integration. The late nineteenth-century horseracing track, the subsequent amusement park, Atlantic Richfield Refining Company, and even the growing number of businesses along Point Breeze Avenue today provide proper examples that substantiate this claim. Therefore, we can reasonably conclude that increased development may be the
primary catalyst to continue Point Breeze on its trajectory toward a more prosperous and diverse community.

The following chapters will divulge more detail on the current flux of race, land use, community involvement, and health in Point Breeze. However, paying heed to historical developments and how the neighborhood took its trajectory paints a broader picture of how the neighborhood will continue to develop in the future.
Works Cited

Brinson, “Drawing From the Rich Past in History, Point Breeze Starts a Renaissance of its Own”


Brewer, J. M. 1934. 1934 Appraisal Map. [online] Available at:

Works Progress Administration. 1962. 1962 Land Use Map. [online] Available at:
Appendix

1940 Census Data:

1940 Census: 20th and Manton
21st and Reed
Land Use Maps:
1934 Brewer’s Map

Land Use Map 1942
Land Use Map 1962

Social Explorer Maps:
CHAPTER 3:
POPULATION CHANGE SINCE 1960

Introduction

Population change depends on a multitude of variables. Often neighborhood population changes in the United States can be attributed to a set of factors surrounding wages and access to jobs. Other factors in neighborhood change can also be non-economic factors, including family history in the neighborhood, local schooling, and overall feel of the neighborhood. By studying population change in a neighborhood over a specific period of time, it is possible to gain insight into how the neighborhood itself changed over that period of time. It is important to note that neighborhood change and population change are distinct concepts. Neighborhood change focuses on the neighborhood as a whole, specifically the social and economic factors that impact the physical makeup of the neighborhood. Conversely, population change focuses on the makeup of the people who inhabit the neighborhood. Point Breeze has seen vast neighborhood change since the 1960s, which can be seen by the way in which the population has changed. This paper aims to show population trends in Point Breeze from the 1960s to present day by examining several important factors: total population, employment, housing, migration, household structure, poverty and income, and educational attainment. By understanding how these aspects of the population have shifted overtime, one is able to gain a better understanding of Point Breeze today.

Methods

Two main data sets were used for this chapter: quantitative data from Social Explorer and Policymap, and quantitative data from newspaper articles. Social Explorer and Policymap were used to acquire quantitative data on population change. Social Explorer is a GIS platform that provides sets of census data spanning back to the 19th century. Policymap is another GIS data source that provides detailed information on data from more recent years. Since the last chapter focused on point breeze leading up to the 1960s, the data used for this chapter was drawn only from census maps dating from 1960s to the present. The data provided by Social Explorer

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19 Dimitri Antoniou, Jared Levin, Emmi O’Day, Ian Skahill
and Policymap goes beyond just simply giving number of residents in the area at different periods of time. The data also gives other relevant statistics, including ethnic makeup of residents, socioeconomic background, and age. However, for this paper, we will be looking at information beyond statistics about the residents themselves. Even though pieces of data—like those listed above—will allow one to draw conclusions as to the type of residents have lived in the area, it is also important to draw data about the neighborhood itself. Some of this other data includes, but is not limed to, number of schools in area, housing economics, and crime. By comparing and contrasting the data on residents with that of the neighborhood, it is possible to explore how the neighborhood and population interact and respond to changing factors. For example, the current increase in property taxes is tied to the current influx of affluent individuals.

In procuring information on the neighborhood, it is important to draw from not only quantitative sources, but also qualitative sources. Social Explorer does not provide enough qualitative data related to neighborhood change. In order to remedy this, we will draw information from newspapers. Newspapers provide anecdotal insight into the real-life consequences of population change. Thus, examining newspapers allows us to better understand how population change and activities in the neighborhood coincide.

Findings and Discussion

Total Population

First, we observed the “total population” values, simply meaning the number of inhabitants, in Point Breeze for various decades. Using the Censuses for 1960, 1970, 1980, 1990, and 2000 and the ACS five-year estimates for 2008-2012, we were able to determine that the total population was 44,500 in 1960, 38,096 in 1970, was 29,195 in 1980, was 27,760 in 1990, was 25,764 in 2000, and was 21,203 in 2012. Overall, we were able to recognize a decreasing total population trend in Point Breeze over the course of 52 years, meaning that the literal number of Point Breeze inhabitants decreased over the years. Overall, the rate of population decline was rather gradual, but with proportionately larger drops between 1970 and 1980 as well as between 2000 and 2012. The percentages of population decline ranged from roughly 5% to over 24% during the six observed decades.

Housing

Housing changes in Point Breeze largely parallel population changes. Occupancy rates have steadily declined since a peak of 98.6% in 1950, and, in 2006-2011, only 73.1% of homes were occupied. Likewise, vacancy rates have increased, jumping from 4% in 1960, to 16.3% in 1980 and, eventually, 26.9% in 2006-2010. These figures make sense in light of Point Breeze’s overall population decline, and the fact that the median year for house construction is 1940. Despite the amount of vacancies, property values increased dramatically between 2000 and 2010, from an average of around $30,000
to an average of around $150,000.\textsuperscript{20} This can be largely attributed to widespread rehabilitation efforts by developers, many of whom view Point Breeze as the next outgrowth of center city.

Employment

Next, we observed the changes of employment in the Point Breeze population over time. The reported employment status for the total population of 14 years of age or older in Point Breeze was 18,349 in 1960, thus indicating an employment rate of 55.6% within the reported total Point Breeze population of 33,032 over the age of 14. In 1970 the reported employment status for the total population of 16 years of age or older in Point Breeze was 14,693, thus indicating an employment rate of 53.5% within the total Point Breeze population of 27,448 over the age of 16. For the following statistics, all reported employment statuses are relevant only to the population of Point Breeze inhabitants that are over the age of 16. In 1980 the reported employment status for the total population of indicated an employment rate of 46.9% within the total Point Breeze population of 22,797 (over the age of 16). In 1990, the reported employment status provided an approximate employment value of 53.3%. In 2000 the reported employment status indicated an approximate employment value of 47.9%. In 2010 the reported employment figure indicated an approximate employment value of 50.1%. Though the first employment statistics from 1960 included a broader population, being those over the age of 14 rather than 16, the employment values have stayed relatively consistent through the decades, with some ebbs and flows. For the most part the reported employment values hovered around 50% of the reported population, population being not specific to sex, but specific to the populace of working age.

Unfortunately certain statistics pertaining to food stamps, public housing, and public financial assistance were not available prior to the turn of the 21st century. However, within the past decade, similar to employment statistics, such statistics have remained rather consistent. Thus far, the greatest statistically observable change within the Point Breeze population has been of its total population.

Ethnic Change and Migration

Point Breeze is, in many ways, a microcosm of the “white flight” and “great migration” that occurred in numerous cities—including Philadelphia—in the United States during the mid-20th century. In the latter half of the 20th century, Point Breeze experienced a significant proportional increase in African American residents, accompanied by the simultaneous exodus of white residents. The proportional increase in Point Breeze’s black population was greatest between 1960 and 1980—rising from 58.8% of the population to 76.1%—but continued to escalate between

\textsuperscript{20} Briggs, “In Point Breeze, Rising Land Values Revive a Plan to Seize Lots”
1980 and 2000, eventually peaking at a rate of 78.2%. Conversely, the proportion of the Whites fell from 40.8% in 1960 to only 8.1% in 2000. Despite proportional increase in black population between 1960 and 1980, the overall percentage of new residents decreased by nearly half during the same period, and the proportion of residents who had lived in the neighborhood for over 20 years increased dramatically. These figures remained relatively similar through 2000, suggesting a certain level of residential stagnation in the 1980s and 1990s.

The first decade of the 21st century has been somewhat of a turning point for the migratory patterns of Point Breeze. Although net population continued to fall between 2000 and 2010, the neighborhood has seen increases in the proportion of residents who have moved within the last year—rising from 9.6% to 14.7%—as well as a proportional increase in the white population, which has risen to 14.7% as of 2008-2012. Interestingly, the highest rates of migration have occurred with in the white population; examining 2008-2012, a startling 34.8% of white residents had moved within the last year. Although these recent migratory patterns are not of the same scale as those of the mid-20th century, they could provide important clues regarding the future of the neighborhood.

Household Structure

Familial and household structure gives insight into the composition of individuals that have lived in Point Breeze overtime. We were only able to pull out four general trends of note between 1960 and 2010. To begin with, a family household includes married couples and single parents with children. First, there was a drop in the number of married couple families. In 1980, of the 10,773 households, 71.7% of households were composed of two or more persons, close to Philadelphia’s 71.1%. 31.7% of that group constituted married couple families, much lower than Philadelphia’s 44.3%. By 2000 this had dropped to 21.2%, and finally to 19.1% by 2010.

21 It is important to note, however, that the dramatic proportional increase in black residents is partially a function of Point Breeze’s overall population decline; overall population declined from 44,500 in 1960 to 21,203 in 2010.
while in Philadelphia the same variable saw a drop from 32.1% to 28.3%. Conversely, non-family households increased drastically. In 1980, the percentage was at 28.3%. In 2000 it was 36.4%, and by 2010 had risen to 43.5%. At the same time, Philadelphia saw a similar change from 40.3% in 2000 to 43.3% in 2010. Interestingly, the number of single parents decreased. Between 2000 and 2010, it dropped from 27.8% to 22.2%, which was a larger drop than that of married couples over that same time. Lastly, the percentage of population in family households decreased from 84.7% to 76.6% between 1960 and 2010.

In addition to the above statistics, other changes have occurred in family structure over the past five decades. In 1960, 93.6% of married couples had their own household, 48.5% of which had a child under the age of 18. Only .8% of persons lived in group quarters. Of Point Breeze residents 14 years and older, 26.2% were single, 53.4% were listed as married, 7.1% were listed as separated, and 2% were divorced.

In 1980, there were 10,773 households. 28.3% of those were one-person households, and 71.7% contained two or more persons. Of households containing two or more persons, 31.7% were married couples. These married families constituted 39.9% of households with children under the age of 18, while "other family" categories constituted 59%. 84.7% of Point Breeze's population was contained in family households. 11.8% of those were spouses. For population ages 15 and older, 35.7% were single, 32.4% were married, 10.3% were separated, 15.1% widowed, and 6.5% divorced. Similarly to 1960, only .3% of residents lived in group quarters.

Between 2000 and 2010, Point Breeze the total number of households remained constant—9,461 to 9,290 total households. However, the percentage of family households dropped from 63.3% to 56.5%. Conversely, the number of non-family households grew from 36.4% to 43.5%. The proportion of households with children under the age of 18 dropped from 38.9% to 31.5%, and the percentage of single parents dropped to 22.2%. Most notably, non-family households grew from 35.9% to 42.2%. Interestingly, the number of same sex partners grew from 63 to 87, a percentage increase of 36%.

Point Breeze illustrates a departure from the traditional family unit to unconventional family structures. Firstly, between 1950 and 2010, unwed, divorced parents and non-married couples became more common. Between 1980 and 2010, the percentage of households led by a single female was five times higher than that of a single male. This growth is even more significant due to the fact that these categories did not even exist previously. Additionally, recent census reports started to include information about households that are home to same-sex couples. The Point Breeze census tracts in 2000 and 2010 show an increased from 0.3% to 0.6% for same-sex male householders. Although small, this is a significant growth by virtue of its inclusion at all. Lastly, there was a decrease in the percentage of married couples, an increase in single parenting, and a general decline in population. Like population trends and household structure, socio-economic factors have also changed over time.

Poverty and Income
The two socio-economic factors that we focused on were poverty and income. We found several trends over the 50 years following 1960. Between the 1970 and 2000, census reports showed negative trends in terms population below the poverty line in Point Breeze. In 1970, 18.3% of residents were below the poverty line, a number that had risen to 26.2% in 1980. By 1990, that number had reached 28.6%, and finally a high of 31.3% by 2000. There was a distinct difference between white and black families, where in some of the cases, the percentage of black families in poverty was more than double that of white families in the same area. Unfortunately, our research did not include the same statistics for Philadelphia, so we don’t know if this trend was specific to Point Breeze or true of the larger city as well (none of the three students studying this section made further comparisons). However, by 2011 these statistics had improved. The percentage for all residents below the poverty line dropped to 20.5%. Unfortunately, this trend was not true for black families, for which the percentage under the poverty line hit an all time high of 39%.

Interestingly, poverty can also be studied through a lens of geographical spread. In 2000, nearly all of Point Breeze had high rates of poverty. However in 2011, patches of lighter poverty appear. This points out a trend of concentrated pockets of wealth, likely the influx of wealthier residents by 2011.

![2000 Map measuring poverty in Point Breeze (L), 2011 Map measuring poverty in Point Breeze (R).](image)

Similar trends held true for the average income of families. Average family incomes were at its highest in 1970. Steadily decreasing through the 1980s, it then jumped back up in 2000. By 2000, there were more than 3 times as many residents collected in the census than in 1980. Thus, the poverty percentages were affected differently than average income. The median income in 2000, for example, was much lower than the average at $26,889. In this case, the median shows that the number of much wealthier families was responsible for the increase in the average. The higher net-worth families at the top of the income bracket enhance statistics on the neighborhood, but in reality, the problems of residents still living in poverty persist.” The 2011 census also showed that the higher income and lower poverty rate is due solely to influx of white families in the neighborhood.

There was also a discrepancy between median income and average income. Consistently, median income was lower than average income. In 1990, the median

27
income in Point Breeze was roughly 25% lower. In 2000 and 2009, the same trend was true. This data shows higher concentrations of people living below the average income. However, there is a possibility that the statistics we analyzed are skewed by outliers that generate artificiality higher incomes.

We also analyzed trends about specific demographics in Point Breeze. In 1990, the average income of blacks was actually higher than that of whites. But by 2000, this trend had reversed to put whites significantly ahead. In 2009, the gap expanded even further, showing an increasing racial stratification in Point Breeze regarding income.

We can point to growing income disparity in Point Breeze. Over the last decade, Point Breeze has seen median income decreasing but average income rising. Accounting for inflation, he notes that between 2005 and 2012, median household income drops from $30,893 to $28,723. Simultaneously, purchasing power rose. A non-economic way to look at the makeup of the population is to look at educational attainment. Analysis of educational attainment can be broken into three categories: attainment, drop out rates, and enrollment. Although different students focus on different variables, these three are common to all analyses.

Educational Attainment

Educational attainment refers to what level of education an individual has completed. It can be broken into two categories. The first is educational attainment for individuals under 25 years of age. In 1960, the enrollment rate for students in high school for residents aged 5-34 was between 23% and 25%. In 1980, 22%-40% of residents over the age of 3 were enrolled in high school, which dropped slightly to between 20% and 32% in 2000. Between 2005 and 2009, there was another decrease to 12%-31%. Between 2007 and 2011, the numbers hold constant. There was a deficit in high school education in Point Breeze between the years 2008 and 2012, with a range of 10%-40% who had completed less than high school, significantly higher than surrounding neighborhoods. The second category in attainment is adults over the age of 25. It is first broken into adults with less than high school education. In 1960, 93-96% of adults had completed “elementary or more,” a slightly different distinction. In 1980, the category shifted to 0-8 years of schooling, dropping that percentage to 26-37%. By 2000, the census had settled on a categorical definition of “less than high school.” At that time, 32-43% of adults qualified, with a mean percentage of 40.3%. Between 2000 and 2011, there was a gradual increase in this category. The second group is adults who have attained education higher than high school. In 1960, it was 40%. By 1970 it reached 40-60%, and by 2000 55-67% of adults in Point Breeze had high school diplomas or more.

Next, these students looked at drop out rates. In 1970, 25% of people ages 16 to 19 were considered high school drop-outs. In 1980, the rate dropped to 20.8%. The rate of students dropping out would continue to decrease for the next 20 years. By the year 2000, the drop out rate in Point Breeze decreased to about 15%. 

28
Unfortunately, by 2011 there was an increase in drop out rates. For example, Census tract 31 in the center of Point Breeze reached 42%.

Lastly, we looked at enrollment, focusing first on private school enrollment. Between 1970 and 1990, enrollment of children ages three and up was consistently around 25%. However, in 2000 almost every tract increased, up to even 34%. Between 2000 and 2012, there was a drop in the lower enrolled tracts. Only a few were below 20% in 2000, but by 2012 those same ones dropped as low as 10%. The quantitative data presented above paints a picture of the neighborhood that is in-line with general trends found in newspaper articles overtime.

Article Findings

Although it is possible to garner a significant amount of information for quantitative sources, such as census data and GIS maps, qualitative sources also provide valuable insight into Point Breeze’s changing landscape. Newspaper articles, in particular, provide anecdotal evidence that helps to illustrate the real-life manifestations of neighborhood change. Articles describing Point Breeze prior to 1980 mention the vibrancy of neighborhood retail, in particular “The Lane.” However, beginning in the 1980s, neighborhood decline is particularly evident in the prolific number of articles dealing with violence. Nonetheless, many articles from the 1980s and 1990s focused on community assets rather than deficits. Percy Fields advocated for neighborhood improvement during the 1980s by establishing the Fernon Community Action Group, the Direct Truth Anti Drug Coalition worked to combat neighborhood drug use, and, in the 1990s, residents helped establish a Performing Arts Center. Moving into the current day, articles predict a bright future for the neighborhood, thanks largely to its proximity to the up-and-coming Graduate Hospital area, as well as its current affordability. Nevertheless, this transition has not been without conflict, as is illustrated by a number of articles dealing with developer battles. Newspaper articles present another portion of the mosaic that is Point Breeze’s history, adding color to the raw data.

Conclusion

It is clear that Point Breeze has experienced massive neighborhood change over the past fifty years. There has been a sharp decline in the overall number of residents, which has been accompanied by changes in ethnic makeup—namely, the proportional increase in black residents between 1960 and 2000, and the recent influx of whites into the neighborhood. Significantly, many of the residents who have moved in during last decade have brought wealth that was not present in decades past. Even though the last decade has seen an influx of white, well educated, and

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23 Cynthia Hanson, “Turning an Eyesore into a Dream Come True,” The Philadelphia Inquirer.
25 Alan Heavens, “Town by Town: In Point Breeze, the key point is price,” The Philadelphia Inquirer.
well off individuals moving into the areas, it does not mean that there is a shared prosperity among all Point Breeze residents.

From the patterns analyzed, it is evident that Point Breeze is in a current state of change in terms of population change and makeup. Even though change is occurring on whole, it is important to note, based on the data we found, significant neighborhood change takes time. The most significant current trends are the decrease in overall population, increase in white individuals in the neighborhood, raised median income, increased number of single-family or individual households, and reduced rate of school drop-outs. However, the interaction between individuals who have lived in this neighborhood for years and those who have moved in within the last ten years still needs to be tested. Because of the latter, it is difficult to make an exact prediction as to what the population will look like in the future. What is certain, however, is that the makeup of the neighborhood today is drastically different from that of the 1960s, and that change is currently occurring.

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I. Introduction

Students used the 2012 PHMC Community Health Survey to analyze seven different topics related to health in Philadelphia and Point Breeze. The topics, outlined in the findings below, are current health status, barriers to health care, chronic conditions, insurance, community engagement, neighborhood perception and nutrition. Each topic analysis contains one or more dependent variables, which were examined in both Philadelphia and Point Breeze. Then, students selected from a variety of independent variables to determine if relationships exist between those and the dependent variables. Relationships between dependent and independent variables were examined in both Philadelphia and Point Breeze. Students paid particular attention to statistical significance and measured the strength of association of any relationships found. While the small sample size for Point Breeze made it difficult to find statistically significant results, trends were still observed for many of the topics and across the entire city of Philadelphia. Specifically, respondents in both Point Breeze and Philadelphia as a whole tend to indicate overall good or excellent current health status, no barriers to health care or health insurance, and an overall positive perception of the neighborhood. Results between Philadelphia and Point Breeze are seen to vary the most for the topics of community engagement and nutrition. It is shown that Point Breeze residents tend to be more engaged in community groups than Philadelphia residents. On the other hand, Point Breeze residents are seen to have a worse quality of nutrition than Philadelphia as a whole.

II. Data & Methods

The data used for this study was from the Community Health Survey gathered by the Philadelphia Health Management Corporation, a nonprofit institute for public health in Philadelphia, PA. The survey was administered in 2008, 2010, and 2012 in the Southeastern Pennsylvania region and combined data from all years was used. The data from each year represents more than 10,000 households and 13,000 adults and children; respondents were selected at random using the “last birthday” method (the person with the most recent birthday in the household is chosen). The data was gathered through landline and cell phone interviews, with cell phone interviews making up 20% of the data in 2012 (Public Health Management Corporation).

To analyze the data, students ran multiple statistical tests using SPSS software. First, they examined the distribution of a dependent variable for the entire city of Philadelphia.

27 Chloe Bower, Dani Cummins, Mark Dignam, and Margaux Richman
Philadelphia. To do this, students used the Frequencies method, which returned the mean, standard error of mean, median, mode, and percentage of each possible response. Next, they used these variables to compare the dependent variable in Point Breeze to the rest of Philadelphia. Students used t-test and chi-square tests to determine whether the differences were statistically significant. Additionally, they created error bar graphs to help visualize the differences. Next, they analyzed the relationship of the dependent variable, using the entire Philadelphia sample, to the two independent variables. Using the crosstabs function, students gathered a summary of the categorical data in a crosstab table, chi-square tests, and symmetric measures (Gamma). Then, using the compare means function they gathered the differences between the means of the dependent and independent variables, along with an ANOVA table, to measure statistical significance, and eta-square to measure association. Then, they used the correlate-bivariate function to measure the ability of each variable to predict the other. Using all of these tests, students were able to determine whether certain groups on the independent variables had distinctive profiles and whether the relationships were statistically significant. Finally, they reran these tests to analyze whether the relationship is similar for Point Breeze residents to that of the entire city of Philadelphia.

III. Findings

1. Current Health Status

Current health status was examined in both Philadelphia and Point Breeze using a survey question, which asked respondents to self-identify as having either poor, fair, good, or excellent health. In both geographic areas, participants on average indicated being in good or excellent health. For Philadelphia, this amounted to 75.4% of the population. There was not a statistically significant difference in these rates for Point Breeze. The mean response in both areas was around a 1.5, with a 1 being “excellent” and 2 being “good” health status according to the coding of the survey.

After looking at overall health status, relationships between this dependent variable and two independent variables were studied. The two independent variables were obesity and regularity of care. In the survey, obesity level was determined for participants based on Body Mass Index (BMI) and was labeled as either underweight, normal, overweight, or obese. Regularity of care was determined by the answer to the yes or no question “Is there one person or place you USUALLY go to when you are sick or want advice about your health?”

In Philadelphia as a whole, it was found that people tend to identify as having good or excellent health status regardless of their obesity level—therefore it is likely for people to have inflated senses of their health status. 73.8% of underweight people reported good or excellent health and 65.6% of obese people do the same. Finally, it was found that people with obesity levels closer to normal (normal and overweight) have slightly higher mean health status, as is to be expected since they are actually in
better health. The relationship between regularity of care and health status was similar—most people in Philadelphia inflate their health status (reporting good or excellent health) regardless of their regularity of care. Slightly more people without a regular source of care (80.3% versus 74.7%) report good or excellent health, which is interesting considering that, intuitively, we would expect people without a regular source of care to be in worse health. According to this test, using the variable of regularity of care would only help predict health status very slightly. Although a statistically significant relationship was seen between health status and regularity of care, this relationship was not as strong as the one seen with the obesity variable.

In doing a separate analysis for only Point Breeze residents, a relationship similar to the one in the entire city of Philadelphia was observed. Unfortunately, the total number of respondents for Point Breeze was only 169, resulting in some categories not having any representation in the sample. For this reason, the relationship is not nearly as significant in Point Breeze as it is in Philadelphia. For the variable of obesity in Point Breeze, only 1 respondent was underweight, making it difficult to draw any conclusions about this category of people. For the rest of respondents, a similar pattern to the rest of the city was observed—the majority of participants indicated being in good or excellent health, regardless of obesity level. According to the chi-square test, there is a difference between Philadelphia and Point Breeze residents for this relationship between health status and obesity. While the relationship was proven significant in Philadelphia, in Point Breeze it was not. Finally, similar findings were discovered in Point Breeze and Philadelphia when looking at the relationship between regular source of care and health status. Again, people reported good or excellent health status regardless of their regularity of care. For this sample, there was an overwhelming majority of people without a source of care indicating that they were in excellent health. Only 12.5% reported fair or poor health. However, this data was only based on 40 respondents, potentially skewing the results.

All in all, while it was found that obesity and regularity of care were both fairly good predictors of health status in Philadelphia, results for Point Breeze were too inconsistent to be confident about any such conclusions. Nonetheless, in both locations respondents skewed towards reporting good or excellent health status, regardless of obesity level or regular source of care. The resulting assumption is that, in general, when asked to self-report health status, people are reluctant to say that they are not healthy, even if it might be the case.

2. Chronic Conditions
Another issue in Philadelphia that this survey examines is the existence of certain chronic conditions. The conditions examined in Philadelphia were asthma, arthritis, and diabetes. These were also compared with different independent variables including: race, educational attainment, poverty, and gender.

For Philadelphia, the most common of the three chronic conditions was arthritis with 24.7% of residents reporting having it. Asthma was recorded in 17.6% of Philadelphia residents, while diabetes was recorded in 14.1% of residents. When comparing conditions to our other independent variables, one variable that seems to affect asthma for Philadelphia is gender. Overall, females were more likely to have asthma than men. Looking at race, there is a small relationship showing that it is 5% more likely for blacks to have asthma and diabetes compared to whites in Philadelphia. Educational levels in Philadelphia had some correlation with arthritis stating that the less education a person has, the higher likelihood of having arthritis. There also seems to be only a slightly significant impact of a regular source of healthcare on all three of these chronic conditions. Another significant, but weak relationship for chronic illnesses is that poorer residents were more likely to have a chronic condition. Analyzing the independent variables did show that there was no correlation between educational attainment and asthma, race and arthritis, or educational attainment and diabetes.

When looking at the findings taken from Point Breeze, the data showed that more residents in Point Breeze have asthma (23% compared to Philadelphia’s 17.6%), less have diabetes (10% compared to Philadelphia’s 14.1%), and a similar number have arthritis (27% compared to Philadelphia’s 25%). From this data, we are not able to say that Point Breeze is different from the rest of Philadelphia in terms of chronic conditions.

3. Barriers to Health Care

Barriers to health care were examined in both Philadelphia and Point Breeze in order to understand patterns and how they compare to one another. For this analysis, the dependent variable of barriers to health care was defined by two questions: whether people are sick but do not seek health care due to cost and whether people do not buy prescription medicine due to cost. These questions both imply whether barriers to health care exist.

Across Philadelphia, the majority of respondents indicate that they do not experience barriers to health care. Of the sample of 10,898 people, only 14.9% of respondents indicated that when they are sick they do not seek care due to cost, while 85.1% of people indicated that they do not buy prescription medicine due to cost.
respondents indicated that this is not the case, with a mean of 1.85.5 Similarly, for the question regarding whether

4 There is a low standard error of means, but the errors for Point Breeze are much greater than those for Philadelphia. The “sig. (2-tailed)” shows the data having an 8%, 11.4%, 29.2%, and 14.1% likelihood of being found in the general population.

5 The standard error of the mean was .003, meaning that the figure is 15% plus or minus 0.6%. This low value indicates a statistically significant relationship, suggesting that we are fairly confident that this mean can be applied to the general population.

respondents do not buy prescription medicine due to cost, the majority indicated that this is not the case. 18.9% responded “yes” while 81.1% responded “no,” with a mean of 1.81.6 These results indicate that overall, about 80% of Philadelphia respondents do not experience barriers to health care.

When comparing barriers to health care for Point Breeze residents to Philadelphia residents as a whole, a similar pattern is seen. By looking at the tables below, we can see that only 20.8% of Point Breeze respondents are sick but do not seek care due to cost, while 79.2% indicate that this is not the case. Similarly, for the question regarding prescription medicine, 14% of Point Breeze respondents do not buy prescription medicine due to cost, while 86% do.

These results display the similar pattern that is seen in both Point Breeze and Philadelphia regarding barriers to health care.7

Overall, the majority of residents in both Point Breeze and Philadelphia as a whole do not experience barriers to health care. They are not prevented from receiving care or accessing

6 The low standard error of mean (.004) demonstrates that the mean of the sample is fairly accurate for Philadelphia as a whole. It is 19% plus or minus 0.8%.

7 T-tests indicate a 3.6% chance that the Point Breeze results would not reflect the general population for Q36 and 10.4% chance for Q37. Due to the larger confidence interval and small difference of means, we are not confident in saying that Point Breeze is different from Philadelphia.

prescription medicine due to cost. Additionally, race and religious affiliation have little impact on whether residents’ experience these barriers to health care. As the statistical significance tests mentioned in the footnotes suggest, we can be fairly confident that the majority of Philadelphia residents as a whole do not experience economic barriers to health care.

4. Insurance

Our research involving health insurance in Philadelphia and Point Breeze focused on two variables. The first was whether a person has any form of health insurance and the second asked which type of health insurance plan the person has. This data was then compared between Philadelphia and Point Breeze to analyze possible
differences. The study also looks at educational attainment and obesity to see if these independent variables have an effect on health insurance.

Looking at Philadelphia as a whole, the data showed that the vast majority (86.3%) of Philadelphia residents had some kind of insurance and only 5% did not having any. This data is accurate due to both its statistical significance and the large number of respondents (11,085). As for the type of insurance, the most popular type was Health Maintenance Organizations (HMO) with 46.2% of respondents using this type. Preferred Provider Organizations followed in second most popular with 31.8% of the population using it. When comparing these results to Point Breeze, we can see that slightly fewer residents have insurance than for Philadelphia as a whole. In Point Breeze, 76.9% of people have some type of insurance and 9.2% do not having any insurance.

We can also compare these results from the PHMC Community Health Survey to ACS 2008-2012 data, as seen in the table below. The ACS results show a larger percentage of Point Breeze residents having health insurance (85.6%) with 48.4% having “public” and 46.8% having “private” insurance plans.

When looking at these findings in relation to educational attainment, we found that the likelihood of having health insurance increases as a person’s educational level increases. High school graduates were the most common level of education in all the different types of insurance.

For HMO’s, the greatest number of users were a combination of high school graduates and those with some college (772 people). Now, looking at these variables in Point Breeze, we found that the number of people having insurance and the type they have is not much different from those of Philadelphia.

Overall, we can see that health insurance in Philadelphia is very common and that HMO’s are the most common plans. Educational attainment is related to health insurance as insurance appears to increase with a person’s education level. Obesity level is also related to health insurance as insurance increases with obesity levels. This is seen from “overweight” users being the most common in HMO plans. In general, the majority of both Philadelphia and Point Breeze residents indicate having some type of insurance, suggesting that people do not experience barriers to receiving insurance when needed.

5. Community Engagement

For the topic of community engagement, two questions were examined: “How many local groups or organizations in your neighborhood do you currently participate in, such as social, political, religious, school related or athletic organization?” and “Have people in your neighborhood ever worked together to improve the neighborhood?”. For the first question, it was found that over half of the respondents for Philadelphia as a whole do not participate in any groups.
The small number of respondents in Point Breeze makes this data less statistically significant.

Specifically, from the table above, we can see that 54.6% of respondents indicated that they do not participate in any community groups. 23.8% indicated participating in at least one group and 12.2% indicated participating in at least 2 groups. The mean turned out to be .84 and the standard error of the mean was .012, which is less than the .05 confidence interval, suggesting that we can be fairly confident that this mean can be applied to the general population.

Furthermore, for the question regarding whether people work together, we found that the majority of Philadelphia respondents do work with their neighbors. In particular, 68.4% of Philadelphia respondents indicated that people work together, while 31.6% indicated that they do not. Again, the confidence interval was less than .05, implying that these percentages can be applied beyond the sample and to the whole of Philadelphia.

When comparing community engagement for Point Breeze to Philadelphia, we can see that Point Breeze respondents are overall slightly more engaged than Philadelphia respondents. For the question regarding how many groups residents participate in, the mean for the county is lower than the mean for Point Breeze. However, for the question regarding whether neighbors work together, the mean value was higher for Philadelphia than it was for Point Breeze, making us slightly unsure about whether Point Breeze residents are actually more engaged than Philadelphia residents.9

Next, three independent variables of race, income (above or below the 100% poverty line), and whether respondents own or rent their homes were compared to the dependent variable of community engagement. For all of Philadelphia, white respondents are the most likely to participate in local groups, with a mean of .91. Next comes black respondents (mean=.82) and then Asians (mean=.56).

We can see, from the table above, that Point Breeze white respondents have a similar level of engagement (mean=.92) to those in Philadelphia. The Black population is slightly less engaged with a mean of .79 and the Asian population in Point Breeze is a lot less engaged than that of Philadelphia (mean of .21 compared to .56). These statistics conflict with the results above, which suggest that Point Breeze residents are more engaged in the community than Philadelphia residents. Moreover, for both Philadelphia and Point Breeze respondents, non-poor respondents are more likely to participate than poor ones, and owners participate more than renters, indicating a similar pattern in both Point Breeze and Philadelphia regarding the relationship between community engagement and race, income, and own/rent household.

9 The error bar and confidence interval were very large, suggesting that we cannot be confident in applying these values to the larger population.
All in all, the majority of residents in both Point Breeze and Philadelphia do not participate in any local groups but they do work together with their neighbors. However, Point Breeze respondents indicated being more engaged in community groups than Philadelphia respondents as a whole. More engaged residents also tend to own homes and be above the 100% poverty line in both areas. Overall, the data supports our hypothesis that Point Breeze is relatively similar to Philadelphia as a whole in terms of community engagement.

6. Neighborhood Perception

Our research on neighborhood perception has participants rate the extent of their agreement (from 1: Strongly Agree to 5: Strongly Disagree) with the following statements: “I feel like I belong in my neighborhood,” “People in my neighborhood can be trusted,” and “People in my neighborhood are willing to help each other” in order to understand residents’ overall feelings towards their community. The two independent variables compared to neighborhood perception were race and age.

First off, the questions were analyzed to see what the average Philadelphian had to say. In regards to belonging, 28.8% of Philadelphians reported that they “strongly agree”, and 53.95 reported that they “agree”. Therefore, we can conclude that the majority of people in Philadelphia believe that they belong to their neighborhood community. The same seemed to be the case when looking at whether residents felt like they could trust their neighbors, as 14.6% of Philadelphians reported that they “strongly agree” and 51.3% reported that they “agree.” The same tests were done with the question regarding whether or not people in neighborhoods were willing to help each other out. However, this question was coded with how often help was offered. The mean of this data was a 2.5, falling between “always” and “often,” showing that people feel like their neighbors are overall willing to help. With all three of these questions, there were obviously people who did not agree and felt distant from their neighborhoods in Philadelphia. However, when looking at the aggregate data, a majority of people felt some sort of connection to the neighborhoods they belong to.

This data were taken a step further and focused more specifically on the residents of Point Breeze. The findings showed that the answers from Point Breeze were pretty on par with the answers from the general population. In terms of feeling like they belong and whether neighbors help each other, the mean of Point Breeze was slightly higher than that of the overall population of Philadelphia, suggesting that people in Point Breeze agree slightly less overall with the statements. Although we found above that Point Breeze residents are less likely to work together with their neighbors, it was shown that Point Breeze residents have a greater sense of trust among neighbors than Philadelphia residents. This result proved to be statistically significant, allowing us to apply it past the sample and to the general population. There is a statistically significant difference between how much residents in Philadelphia as a whole trust
their neighbors versus how much people in Point Breeze do, suggesting that as a whole, Point Breeze residents have a stronger sense of trust than those of Philadelphia, slightly conflicting with our results determined above.

After cross-examining these results with the independent variable of age, we found that for the entire city of Philadelphia, a relationship between age and neighborhood perception was seen in that older residents seemed to agree more strongly to the questions than their younger counterparts, suggesting that they have a more positive perception of the neighborhood to which they belong. We concluded that on a city-level, as age increased, the degree of positive neighborhood perception increased as well. However, the small sample of Point Breeze residents failed to yield statistically significant results, and thus we could not come to a conclusion on the correlation between neighborhood perception and age, in Point Breeze specifically.

7. Nutrition

Nutrition was the final issue examined, with research focusing on the number of food stamps used, the quality of grocery stores available, and the supplemental nutritional program.

A chi-squared test gave a result of .000, meaning that this correlation can be generalized to the entire population of Philadelphia.

benefits for women, infants and children (WIC). Trends measured in Point Breeze and Philadelphia as a whole suggest that poverty levels, educational attainment and race are all major factors in the nutritional quality of an area.

As seen in the tables below, more Point Breeze residents receive food stamps than Philadelphia residents. 22.2% of Philadelphia respondents indicate that they do receive food stamps while 32.4% of Point Breeze respondents do. By also looking at race, we can see that black residents receive more food stamps than white residents (34.2% compared to 4.3%).

In Philadelphia, roughly 22% of the population requires food stamps and about 21.1% of Philadelphians have less than 100% of the poverty level. In Point Breeze, it was shown that the lower an adult respondent's education was, the higher probability of receiving food stamps. Those who had graduated college were twice as likely to not be using food stamps as those who had not completed high school.

We can then compare these results to the ACS data, above, which indicates that 28.7% of Point Breeze residents received food stamps/snap in the past 12 months, but only 15.6% were below the poverty line. 71.3% did not receive food stamps, and 57.3% of these were above the poverty line, indicating that 14% of residents below the poverty line do not receive food stamps. This data was consistent with the PHMC Community Health Survey data in that more black residents receive food stamps than white residents (33.7% compared to 13%).

Furthermore, for The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) in the Philadelphia sample, 7.3% answered “yes” to receiving WIC,
while 92.7% responded “no.” Therefore, we concluded that WIC status was higher in Point Breeze than in Philadelphia. Then, utilizing crosstab calculations, it was found that 69.2% of those who receive WIC have achieved a high school diploma or less in Philadelphia and 70% in Point Breeze. We concluded that from high school attainment and onward, the amount of adults receiving WIC decreases in Point Breeze. Race also impacted these results, as 78.7% of those who receive WIC in Philadelphia identify as black or latino. In Point Breeze, all of those who responded “yes” to WIC identify as black or latino, although a small sample size and disproportionate amount of each race category in the Point Breeze survey should be considered.

Beyond that, the Community Health Survey asked Point Breeze residents to rank the quality of their grocery stores as “excellent” (1), “good” (2), “fair” (3), “poor” (4), or “no stores in neighborhood” (5). In general, Philadelphia residents rank their grocery stores as “good.” In Philadelphia, those living below the poverty line ranked their grocery store quality as 2.22, whereas those above the poverty line ranked them 1.92. However, social stratification was even more apparent in Point Breeze, as these residents below the poverty line reached a mean ranking of 2.67, closest to the “fair” ranking, whereas those above the poverty line ranked their quality of grocery stores at 1.88, or “good.” We also noticed a correlation between education and quality of grocery stores. The mean ranking of a Philadelphia resident with less than a high school degree was 2.14, a high school graduate was 1.98, a resident with some college was 2.03, a college graduate was 1.93, and a post college resident was 1.81. Overall, the quality of grocery store increased with education, suggesting that the more educated populace had access to better quality nutrition.

Overall, Point Breeze residents have lower quality nutrition than Philadelphia residents as a whole, as indicated by resident rankings. Residents below the poverty line were more likely to rank their grocery stores as lower quality than residents living above the poverty line. Residents living below the poverty line were also were more susceptible to utilizing government programs such as food stamps and women, infant and children’s benefits to supplement their nutritional needs. There exists a correlation between resident education and the number of food stamps used, the quality of grocery stores, and the number of women, infant and children’s benefits supplied, suggesting that residents with higher education have access to higher quality grocery stores. In sum, it can be deduced that residents of Point Breeze are more likely to require food stamps and WIC benefits, and live with a lower quality of grocery stores than the rest of Philadelphia, which implies that nutritional quality is lower for residents of Point Breeze than the rest of the city.

IV. Discussion

Overall, many significant results were found relating to health in both Philadelphia and Point Breeze. Philadelphia and Point Breeze experience similar patterns on the topics of current health status, barriers to health care, insurance, and neighborhood perception in that respondents indicate overall good or excellent health status, no barriers to health care or health insurance, and
an overall positive perception of the neighborhood. Results between Philadelphia and Point Breeze are seen to vary the most for the topics of community engagement and nutrition in that Point Breeze residents tend to be more engaged in community groups and trusting of their neighbors than Philadelphia residents (even though they work together with their neighbors less), and they are seen to have a worse quality of nutrition than Philadelphia as a whole.

However, in all cases, the lack of information and respondents for Point Breeze made the results much less statistically significant than those for Philadelphia. Therefore, while we can generalize many of our findings for Philadelphia to the population as a whole, this is not the case for Point Breeze. Although we can make some significant conclusions for health in Philadelphia as a whole and make generalizations on comparisons to Point Breeze, it is hard to make definitive comparisons for the populations due to the limited sample size in Point Breeze.

Works Cited

CHAPTER 5:
COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Introduction
In order to gain a thorough understanding of Point Breeze, we felt that it was necessary to examine the perspective of the residents themselves. One point of interest for our study was community involvement in the neighborhood. How do the community institutions that exist in the neighborhood reflect the needs and wants of the residents? Do Point Breeze residents consider themselves to be engaged in their neighborhood? What forms of engagement are the most pervasive? After extensive analysis, our team has concluded that the community institutions of Point Breeze have changed significantly over the past several years, reflecting the changes in demographics that have recently touched the neighborhood. Our interviews also suggest that the most prominent sources of community engagement in the neighborhood include block parties, church attendance, and involvement in public parks.

Community Institutions:
While doing our research in Point Breeze, it was important to us to take note of how involved community members were within their communities. In order to begin this examination, each member of our class was assigned several community resource centers or locations and was sent out to validate their existence as well as their condition and appeared activity. Through our community validation assignment, we were able to see which businesses were still present and which were no longer around, whether it be due to damage or the inability for it to continue to succeed in a Point Breeze location. Also of interest to us, regarding the businesses and centers that were no longer there, was whether or not these locations had remained vacant, or if they had been replaced by another business, what type of business had taken its place. While walking around Point Breeze, it was unfamiliar territory to many students and appeared to be an area of poverty and unkemptness. Many students felt that they would not fit in with this neighborhood, with the exception of a few blocks that seemed to be occupied by younger and higher socioeconomic status residents.

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28 Alin Hannessian, Christina Romero, Julia Rossi, Erick Silva
## Community institutions—Point Breeze, 2014

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Primary SIC Description</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
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Many of the locations that had been assigned to students in the class were churches or other types of religious centers. With the exception of a few locations, almost all of the churches and religious centers were still present and seemed to draw an active community, whether it be on a daily or weekly basis. Those that were not still present within the community seemed to suffer either from structural damage or had been converted to a center for a different religious organization than had originally been there. Within Point Breeze, there are many opportunities for its residents to become involved in religious life and, within that, many different religious sects available to choose from. Also plentiful within Point Breeze, were different ethnic organizations and
specialty food markets, representing the cultural and ethnic diversity of Point Breeze residents.

Another type of location that students had been assigned to validate, was various small businesses throughout the streets of Point Breeze. Of these businesses, some were still standing and seemed to be active within the community while others seemed to have gone out of business or had been replaced by a new business in the area. This could be a sign of a weak economy within Point Breeze because local businesses may have a hard time remaining in the neighborhood. However, still present and participating in the neighborhood, was the Point Breeze Business Association that claims control over certain streets in the neighborhood and the businesses that reside on those streets. The Point Breeze Business Association has been around for many decades and works with business owners on how to create the best business spaces for residents of Point Breeze and to help the owners of the businesses keep from going under. Although it is not 100% successful in its aims, it is still a resource that is available to business owners in the area if they choose to seek its help.

In particular, one of the businesses that was no longer in business in Point Breeze was the Point Breeze Republican Center. When walking down the streets of Point Breeze, it is not a place where one would expect there to be many supporters of the GOP. The change of demographic in Point Breeze over the past years can be reflected in the closing down of the Republican Center, as there is probably no longer great
need for such an organization in that neighborhood. In its place, there is now a Halal specialty foods store that was filled with customers on a Tuesday afternoon. This new business in this location most likely serves the needs and desires of the current population of the Point Breeze community in a better way than a Republican Center would.

By examining what resources are available within Point Breeze, we can begin to have an understanding of how the residents of Point Breeze are involved within their community. The resources and organizations that are plentiful in the neighborhood could be a sign that there is greater need for such types of businesses because there is greater involvement with them. In areas where there is low levels of involvement or interest, there is likely to be few, if any, businesses or organizations that cater to this area.

Methods:
It is important to note that our interview template may not have been the most effective when it comes to drawing conclusions about community involvement in Point Breeze. For instance, the first question of the community involvement section in our survey was: “Have you ever attended a block party in the neighborhood?” While our results do suggest that block parties are important elements of the neighborhood social fabric, the fact that this was our first question might have set residents into a particular train of thought regarding the definition of “community involvement.” Perhaps, if we had left this first question a bit more open-ended or had offered more diverse examples of community involvement, the interview subjects would have been more inclined to consider community involvement from a broader perspective.

Despite this potential shortcoming, our survey did consider other aspects of community involvement, including questions about the residents’ use of parks and gardens. However, notably, all of our questions that directly invoked particular forms of community involvement were focused on outdoor community activities. In hindsight, our class recognizes that this may have contributed to an underrepresentation of other forms of community engagement. Thus, it is highly possible that our results are more heavily skewed toward a certain type of community involvement, while activities like volunteering and social services could be underrepresented.

Moreover, our methods did not include a concerted effort at demographic representativeness. Although each student in our class conducted four interviews,
which yielded a significant amount of data, we did not attempt to speak with representative populations based on factors like race, gender, age, or length of time in the neighborhood. We chose this method purely for practical reasons; it would have been fairly difficult to collectively interview a population that accurately reflects the population of Point Breeze. Our survey does include a “personal information” section, in which the respondents were asked to give their race or ethnicity, length of time in the neighborhood, the number of adults and children in their household, and whether or not they own or rent their property.

We structured our interview template so that it reflected both current levels of community involvement and the ways that community involvement has changed in recent years. The section on involvement began with more straightforward questions about which community activities the respondents generally participate in. For instance, we asked residents: “Do you ever go to parks and gardens in the neighborhood?” If the resident responded positively, we then asked for details about which parks he or she generally frequents. At the end of the community involvement section, we shifted the focus of the discussion to a more trend-based analysis, asking: “If you think about the community activities you’ve mentioned, have you noticed your involvement changing at all because of other changes in the neighborhood? Could you give me an example?” This final question is extremely important, because it allows us to place our data on community involvement into the larger context of neighborhood change that our course seeks to understand. However, we do recognize that the effectiveness of this question may have been limited, because residents tended to reiterate their previous statements rather than draw new connections.

Findings:

Overall, the interviews point to the idea of a segregated community and sense of involvement in Point Breeze.

Residents feel like there is a lack of groups and organizations to get involved with in the neighborhood. The two main things people brought up when asked about their involvement in Point Breeze were bars like “The American Sardine Bar” (Cummings #3) and churches. People from all over the neighborhood use the local bars as forms of nightlife and entertainment. In contrast, some use churches as anchors for their religion and for their community involvement. Aside from these, there are very few other options. No one really mentioned being involved with schools. In fact, some people criticized the schools for being sub-par. There is one community garden, but, based on the dried up plants and the piles of trash, no one seems to use it.

A key component to community involvement in Point Breeze seems to be the idea of block parties. A resident that was interviewed mention that "in the summertime, you can throw a stick and you'll find a block party" (Bower#1). A large majority of residents had either attended or heard about block parties. A block party,
Residents have noticed that “there are a lot more people and families hanging out in being that there is not a big sense of activities for children to be involved in. Some residents use parks as forms of entertainment for their children, neighborhood-wide events hosted at parks. Though residents mention a presence of interactions. A possible way to increase community involvement is to create more neighborhood-wide events hosted at parks. Though residents mention a presence of events, not many of them mentioned attending these events.

As is sounds, is a party in which neighbors from the same block come together to enjoy food and music. These block parties don’t merely provide people with the opportunity to interact with one another, but they also create some sense of authority or leadership in the community. Block parties are usually organized by a block leader or by a group of people on the block. This individual or group is sometimes also in charge of organizing block clean up days. One such block leader was interviewed and said, "People get together at house parties and dinners. I’m block captain so I help with block cleaning and community cleaning" (Bower#4). Interestingly, while some reported these block parties were still prominent, others, mainly the older residents, noted that they were becoming less popular and frequent. One explanation for this might be the fact that some of these block parties are exclusive and invite-only. While block parties are a great way to create a community, they have a few shortcomings. Most of them “are big during the warmer months” (Rad #4) leaving no such connections between residents during the winter (Richman #3). Though block parties seem to be prevalent, they cannot be the only way for the community to interact and foster a sense of cohesion.

Out of everything mentioned by residents interviewed, parks seemed to be the biggest way people interact with Point Breeze. Though a lot of interviews were conducted at parks, even people interviewed in other areas in the neighborhood mentioned utilizing the parks in Point Breeze like Wharton Square where “there is always something going on” (Hannessian#3). It is possible that parks are so commonly used because they are the few public spaces in the community. With a lack of community centers, plazas, or gardens, parks become the standard places for people to go. Some residents use parks as forms of entertainment for their children, being that there is not a big sense of activities for children to be involved in. Residents have noticed that “there are a lot more people and families hanging out in the parks” (Reinsberg#3). Others use parks for their pets. There are also those who simply “go to parks plenty” (Rad #3) “to sit and relax” (Romero#2). Because of the number of people who frequent parks, they can really be fundamental in creating a sense of community and community involvement. Parks are advantageous to the development of community because they attract people from all over the neighborhood instead of just certain blocks and facilitates interactions. A possible way to increase community involvement is to create more neighborhood-wide events hosted at parks. Though residents mention a presence of events, not many of them mentioned attending these events.

Aside from formally organized events in the neighborhood, residents of Point Breeze recognize an informal yet well-established familiarity among those who live in the area. Some interviewees stated that residents who don’t frequent block parties or parks still manage to stay engaged with the community simply by interacting with neighbors. As such, this engagement is not limited to locals such as the parks or bars. One of the residents interviewed mentioned that he and his friends “chill on the stoops and have drinks all of the time” (Rad #3), and another mentioned that his
main form of community involvement is “hanging out with friends on the street” (Kelechi #1).

Other individuals noted that the area has seen an increase in community involvement as crime rates in the neighborhood have come down (Reinsberg #3). If this correlation is true, then more residents may become involved as they perceive a growing trend of safety in Point Breeze. Some suspect these changes in safety to be linked to an increase in political activity in the neighborhood. Some residents point to their positive role in promoting activities and in helping to create a sense of community amongst residents of Point Breeze. Others, however, questioned motives of politicians and alluded to a distrust in the motives of the local politicians as a means to simply garner more votes (Ostroff #5). According to data collected, Point Breeze experience a slight increase in voting outcome amongst those eligible to vote.

Map of voting results in 2007, ranging from Under 19 percent in brown, to over 40 percent in blue.
Map of voting results in 2008, ranging from Under 19 percent in brown, to over 40 percent in blue. Point Breeze experienced a small increase, especially along broad street.

Conclusions:
Ultimately, the interviews conducted in Point Breeze taught us much about the level of community involvement both in perception and in actuality. Upon speaking with the residents it became evident that religious institutions, specifically the churches in the area, heavily influence involvement in the area by organizing events for the community. These institutions seem to have become more influential in recent years as other businesses where residents could potentially congregate have closed down. With fewer and fewer resources through which to assemble, grassroots efforts have become a popular solution. Designated block captains in the neighborhood are charged with organizing parties and clean-ups. These events strive to bring individuals in the neighborhood together in order to complete a utilitarian cause. But despite these attempts at increasing community involvement, many residents of Point Breeze are quick to identify that there is still more work to be done.
CHAPTER 6
PERCEPTIONS OF NEIGHBORHOOD CHANGE

Introduction

“Cities have the capability of providing something for everyone, only because, and only when, they are created by everyone,” Jane Jacobs once noted in her influential work The Death and Life of Great American Cities. Cities, both physical and living structures, evidence authorship of the people that use them—the individuals and factions and groups that inscribe themselves into the physical space of a city. Shaping the city, then, is not an individual right but an exercise of collective power. In the context of capitalist society, however, not all collective efforts harbor the political, financial, and, even, numerical weight to stake claim in the urban environment, especially in competition with other collective groups.

In the case of Point Breeze, a Philadelphia neighborhood just south of the South Street Bridge and a close neighbor to bustling residential communities sprouting from Center City, a similar process is currently under way. That is, the collective locus of power currently shaping the physical and social realm of the neighborhood finds itself shifting. Rising controversy, evident both within the community and publicly to the city, at large, raises the question: who has the right to the community? While long-time residents find a natural right in their many years of residence, new residents with financial resources forge their own right to the neighborhood. While these new residents attract changes that, generally, improve the quality of life of the community, it is not equally shared by all current residents.

According to the findings of the following analysis of interviews, it is apparent that this relationship could be symbiotic. Yet, access to Point Breeze as a physical, demographic, and social space, could also be parasitic between these seemingly competing groups.

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The following analysis utilizes a series of interviews held by University of Pennsylvania students with current residents of the Point Breeze neighborhood. One of the main objectives of these interviews was to identify perceived changes and visions of the future expressed by residents themselves, and synthesize certain patterns from these responses. For organizational purposes, observations relevant to perceived changes and visions of the future were divided into the following categories: 1) physical changes, 2) demographic changes, and 3) changes in social

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29 Justin Reinsberg, Camden Copeland, Marlie Winslow, Kelechi Akusobi
responsibility.

The first category, physical changes, focuses on perceived changes regarding property, taxes, and rental increases as potential evidence of a larger physical transformation occurring within the neighborhood. The second, demographic changes, focuses on perceived changes in the age and racial composition of the Point Breeze community. Lastly, on a more abstract level, changes in social responsibility include perceived changes in safety and block cleanliness, both of which may hint towards a larger transformation in a sense of community identity.

Understanding residents’ vision of the future, however, proved to be a more complicated process. Despite deliberately asking for an illustration of this “future”, it was almost impossible to synthesize one collective vision, given the competing interests within the Point Breeze neighborhood.

This analysis, then, attempts to synthesize a vision of the future that emerges from a paired analysis of responses regarding the future and perceived changes, utilizing the same three categories above.

Findings

In terms of frequency, physical changes were the most commented type of change within the responses analyzed. Across almost all interview questionnaires, Point Breeze residents made reference to new construction and new housing. These developments were mostly described as “bigger” (Kelechi #1) and “better” (Antoniou/Hannessian #2), despite commentary of rising property values and property taxes that these new developments bring (Kelechi #3). Another respondent added that these new developments, despite being supposedly bigger and better, do not change the “decline in existing homes and [amount of] vacancies” (Antoniou/Hannessian #3), hinting towards the persistence of physical decay. Other negative commentary attributed to these developments touched on the resulting affordability of the community. One respondent even noted that Point Breeze had once been one of the most affordable areas in the city and, now, it is increasingly more difficult and expensive to live there.

Newer and younger residents were both more aware and, generally, more positive of the impacts of these new developments, noting that low property values, taxes, and rent are what drew them to the neighborhood. Although both long-term and newly-arrived residents commented on the growth of commercial venues, there were differences on the perception of this new retail. One twenty-eight year old Caucasian male said, “It seems slightly out of place for the neighborhood and I’m not sure how the locals feel about it. It doesn’t bother me though because the food is amazing and the beer is even better” (Ostroff). New establishments, like American Sardine Bar (the respondent’s reference), appear to be enjoyed differentially according to the socioeconomic bracket to which it appeals. While both newer and older residents commented on increased construction, their opinions differed on how these developments could affect the neighborhood’s future.
Overall, residents perceived new construction as positive within the future vision of the neighborhood. Despite this opinion, residents varied in their thoughts on whether the change was positive for themselves, their neighbors, or both, hinting again towards competing groups discussed by Harvey. There was a feeling among the longer-tenured residents of being pushed out of the neighborhood by white people and the rising cost of housing and increased development that came along with this demographic. Many residents commented that the elderly owners won’t be able to afford Point Breeze, and in general they were not sure if they would be able to live in Point Breeze in the next couple of years. In response to the redevelopment, one black resident stated, “the property taxes are going to go up so they’re not going to be able to afford it. What it’s going to do is it’s going to force them out of their homes.” (Hayden-Erin) Another resident shared this feeling more bluntly, saying, “older people will go first.” (Levine 20-30 year old male)

Although many residents felt that they wouldn’t be able to afford their houses, there were only two cases where people actually had moved. In one case, an older man who couldn't afford a home in Point Breeze was forced to buy a house in West Philadelphia after the owner of the house he lived in sold the property. In another instance, a couple planned to leave Point Breeze and sell their house to make profit (Copeland and Skahill #5). Aside from these two cases, it seemed that, as of now, property taxes have not risen past the point of affordability. Instead, Point Breeze seems to be transitioning. One resident’s comments shed light on the current state of change in the neighborhood. He states, “the neighborhood is trying to be brought up with new buildings, but there are still many of the same people—old faces, so the buildings might not have an effect on improving the neighborhood.” (Cummins #1)

The older residents who had this sentiment felt that Point Breeze was still their neighborhood, drawing a distinction between the development above Washington Avenue and the development in Point Breeze.

Still, there were some residents who felt that in 5 years Point Breeze will look like Center City and the area above Washington Avenue. A young African-American male and lifelong resident of the neighborhood did not like that Point Breeze was being marketed as an extension of Center City (Copeland and Skahill #7). Some of the newer residents associated the increasing retail with neighborhood improvement. A young man at the OCF coffee house, one of the new cafes, stated, “the neighborhood will become a better place—there’s good coffee, restaurants, and only more to come in the future” (Cummins #2). One person commented that the retail is giving people a reason to spend more time and money in the neighborhood and the new developments are a sign that residents should stay longer. These residents noted that as long as the rent and property taxes are low enough, they will continue to live in Point Breeze. Residents associated the new residential and commercial developments with a brighter future while others saw the physical changes as a trigger for an uncertain future.

Apart from physical changes, Point Breeze residents’ comments repeatedly alluded to demographic changes within the neighborhood that eventually led to a synthesis
of patterns. Overall, there exists a significant social and demographic divide between the ‘old’ and the ‘new’ residents of the Point Breeze area (Bower). Upon further inquiry, respondents provided more specific descriptions of these “new residents”: “hipsters” (Kelechi #3), “next tax bracket” (Antoniou and Hannessian #5), “white people [that] have much more money” (Ostroff #1), “young people” (Rad #4), “Mexicans” (Kelechi #1), “young post-grads” (Rad #3), and “Hispanics” (Antoniou and Hannessian #5).

Although levels of specificity varied, respondents universally referred either to race, age, or income level to identify these “new people” whom began to fall into the following categories: 1) Caucasian, 2) Hispanic, 3) young, and 4) wealthier than current residents.

These categories, however, are not mutually exclusive. While several African-American respondents attributed the influx of wealthier residents to a new white population, a young white male noted, “[It’s] not necessarily gentrification because they're not necessarily white” (Rad #3). This same respondent had recently opened a café nearby. Another young white male, describing age within the neighborhood, seemed positive about a “pushback from older residents calling the new younger people wild kids and whippersnappers” (Visser #1). Relatively new to the neighborhood, these respondents could be considered actors in demographic changes described by long-time residents. One respondent, a middle-aged African American male, provided an exterior perspective:

“South Philly used to be all white. Then all the white people went to the suburbs because they could build big houses with a lot of land. But then they realized that the commute from the suburbs to the city is difficult so now they all want to move back into the area. This is forcing residents like myself out because these white people have much more money. It just seems like they’re trying to make South Philly the new Center City.” (Ostroff #1)

Not all long-time residents, however, shared the same negativity towards these new residents. Two, middle-aged African American males agreed, “”There's a new influx of Caucasian people, which I think is a good thing. People are being more responsible” (Winslow #2 and #3).

Reported observations of a new Hispanic population provided less detail. While one respondent noted their presence in the local workforce behind new construction (Kelechi #3), another only provided Hispanics as an example of the new sense of diversity within the neighborhood beyond African-American residents (Antoniou and Hannessian #3). Although few were recorded, interviews did capture the voices of a few Hispanic residents, confirming their presence in the neighborhood (Silva #3 and #4). Further analysis of census data could supplement these relatively vague references.

In terms of changes in social and community responsibility in Point Breeze, many residents that were interviewed mentioned the neighborhood’s gentrification by
focusing on safety and cleanliness in the area. While the findings differed in residents’ views on whether they were seeing improvements or setbacks, the majority of residents mentioned the same factors that they deemed important.

Many of the long-term elderly present in the neighborhood regarded negative change occurring in the area. One older man who was interviewed stated, "This place keeps getting worse. They used to have the city trucks down here to clean the streets. Now the trash keeps piling up. Drugs are also out of control." (Rad #2) While many residents agree the streets have definitely gotten safer, they are not cleaner. Another resident asserted that there have been more trashcans implemented throughout the neighborhood, but it has not helped to clean up the streets physically. With such a large emphasis on physical changes in infrastructure and buildings, other aspects that are less prioritized seem to be overlooked. A young resident said, "They keep building, building, building. I wouldn't necessarily say it has gotten cleaner though. Overall, I still think the place is becoming more livable for young people."

(Rad #4) Within Point Breeze, I witnessed what Robert Sampson classifies as “perceived disorder.”

There were extremely few streetlights, trash on the ground, abandoned houses, empty lots, and broken windows. In *Great American City*, Sampson argues that the loss of control in an urban environment can aid the acceleration of individuals’ negative views of a neighborhood, regardless of whether or not the physical attributes reflect reality. He discusses the Broken Window Theory, which is the belief that physical attributes such as broken windows or graffiti enable passersby to think that residents do not care about what goes on in their communities, fostering further perceived disorder in these areas, although it is often incorrect (Robert Sampson, *Great American City*). Even if the streets remain dirty, it doesn’t seem to affect a number of the residents. Based on the interviews, it seems like individual definitions of livability are centered around new construction, retail, and a greater police presence, three factors that seem to have a greater effect on Point Breeze’s desirability.

While it may be perceived as “pleasant” to have clean streets, it does not play the primary role in Point Breeze residents’ happiness. A middle-aged man said, “In the early 90’s, there was probably 1 police car that came down the street every hour. Now, there is a police car that comes down the street every 20 minutes. They are really trying to patrol the area.” (Ostroff #2) This increase in police presence has helped to monitor and curb crime rates, however it is also responsible for increased intervention in the neighborhood, a factor objectionable to certain residents. One individual said there used to be many block parties, but recently, there are barely any as the streets are all monitored frequently.

**Discussion:**

The collective groups shaping the neighborhood of Point Breeze has changed
dramatically in recent years. In terms of social responsibility, the neighborhood has evolved from one where mostly grassroots efforts, often fueled by local churches, work to improve the community, to one where community and environmental changes are made from the top-down, often fueled by outside groups. Though years ago the police rarely entered the area, residents would help each other avoid dangerous situations, themselves. This became evident through several warnings to interviewers about “staying safe” in the neighborhood. Now, as a result of new residents and the increased economic value of the neighborhood, police cars frequently patrol the area. Residents attribute physical and economic changes in Point Breeze to the changing demographic of the neighborhood. The new residents are also the primary beneficiaries of the retail and business-related perks of these changes. Overall, it seems that these changes in the neighborhood are meant to improve the lives of new residents. The future of the neighborhood hinges on this fact as well.

Whether new or long-time residents, several respondents described a vision of the future in regards to this apparent demographic shift. A few respondents were decidedly negative, noting things like, “Point Breeze is getting worse for African Americans. The whole Northeast is. It has become a rat race” (Romero #1). The majority of responses, however, leaned less towards racial observations and more towards socioeconomic observations as the determinant of a future Point Breeze. While some described these with positive connotations, like “better resources” (Winslow #2), even “better coffee” (Cummins #2), others emphasized “higher taxes” (Silva #3) targeting a Point Breeze that was becoming “too expensive” for long-time residents (Rad #2). One respondent, an older African-American resident, described this dichotomy:

"[Whether the neighborhood will get better or worse] is a two-sided coin. Depends on how you look at it. There may continue to be a lack of communication which makes it hard to get people to accept change...people will lose their homes..." (Bower #2)

The future, in the eyes of residents, will only benefit those whom are able to remain in Point Breeze. “Able” residents, according to respondents, are those who will be able to weather higher taxes and more expensive services entering the neighborhood—often the newer and younger Caucasian residents. A few long-time residents, however, still expressed a sense of pride in the influence of these socioeconomic changes on the existing neighborhood. These respondents often tied observed demographic changes to greater safety and, even more abstractly, greater responsibility within the neighborhood. One middle-aged African-American resident illustrated this future vision, “A lot of people think it’s all bad, but I think it could be a good thing. It will bring in new people who care about where they live” (Winslow #2).

Works Cited

