PNCIS in the Classroom

Integrating PNCIS as a Research Tool in the Classroom
Waverly Duck
University of Pittsburgh
Department of Sociology
PNCIS in the Classroom

• Urban sociology is an upper level writing intensive course
  
  – The focus of the course is on the development of metropolitan and social life with regards to the intersections of History, Social Structure and Biography
  
  – An emphasis on the historical development of transportation, manufacturing, urban planning, housing, governance, culture and inequality (with special regards to race, class and gender)
  
  – Mixed Methods Research Projects
PNCIS in the Classroom

• Randomly assigned to a Pittsburgh Neighborhood

  – *1] An examination of the neighborhood demographics in addition to its history
  – *2] An examination of two types of capital (human, social, economic, cultural)
  – *3] Address at least two urban issues: community services, crime, discrimination, education, employment, housing, leisure, pollution, poverty, and/or transportation.
  – *4] Recommendations to community leaders
DATA: PNCIS/Census/Observations

- Census Tract Data
- Using the Longitudinal Employment Dynamic Data
- Pittsburgh Neighborhood and Community Information System (PNCIS)
- Community Blogs
- Neighborhood Observation
- Historical Records
- Creativity
Demographic

• **Demographics:**
  – What is the total population for your study area?
  – What percentage is married?
  – What percentages are male and female?
  – What is the average number of children (under 19)?
  – What are the racial demographics in your community?
  – What percent of your community was born in a different state?
Housing

- What is the total number of households?
- What is the average household size?
- What is the median home value?
- How many units are vacant?
- When was most of the housing built in your neighborhood?
- What is the median family income?
- What percentage of the population lives in poverty?
- What’s the median rent price in your neighborhood?
Employment/Income/Education

- How many people are unemployed?
- What percentage of the population commutes to work?
- What is the most popular means of commuting to work?
- What percentage of the population has a college degree and above?
- What is the median family income?
Example of a Student Project

Point Breeze
Point Breeze

Skyler DeWalt
Randy Gamble
Ryan Gonder
Karen Kaminsky
Kandis Owens
History

• The area has been known at different times as Point Breeze or Homewood

• "Point Breeze" was the name of a tavern that stood from 1800 to 1886 at the intersection of Penn and Fifth Avenues

• "Homewood" was the 650-acre estate of Judge William Wilkins that stood at the corner of what is now Edgerton and Murtland until 1924.
History

• After serving as a banker, judge, a diplomat, a U.S. representative and Senator, the American ambassador to Russia, and secretary of war under John Tyler, William Wilkins became president of the Greensburg Pike (now known as Penn Avenue).

• He moved to Point Breeze in the 1830s, buying up the hundreds of acres that now make up Frick Park and Homewood Cemetery.

• By 1860, Point Breeze was served by two railroad stations.
History

• Point Breeze became the ideal location for Pittsburgh's famous businessmen:
  "It was in Point Breeze that Penn Avenue turned into one of the most opulent millionaire rows of nineteenth-century America. Armstrong, Heinz, Frick, and Westinghouse-the kings of cork, pickles, coke, and electricity-lived in Point Breeze; so did Andrew Carnegie, his mother, his brother, his cousin George Lauder, and a half-dozen of his partners. The entertainer Lillian Russell lived in this neighborhood, and the Thaws and R. B. Mellon resided around the corner..."
The estates, with the notable exception of Frick's house, were cut up in the first half of the 20th century. Present-day reminders of the estates: wrought-iron fences and dozens of cul-de-sacs which were once private driveways.
Getting There
Transportation: Getting In

- Very few Pittsburgh bus routes near Point Breeze except along major roads
- Entered near Frick Museum
- Minimal bus stops
Forms of Transportation

• Bikes and bike signs were prevalent in Point Breeze
• Other forms of transportation:
  - Cars
  - Carpooling
  - Pittsburgh buses
Frick Art and Historical Center
Frick Park

- Some activities we observed:
  - Walking dogs
  - Jogging
  - Family walks
Reynolds Street
Houses off of Reynolds Street
## Demographics of Point Breeze

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Population</td>
<td>3309</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>2867</td>
<td>86.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian and Alaska Native</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some Other Race</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or More Races</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(United States Census Bureau, 2000)
Households and Families

- 1,476 households
- Average household size: 2.23 people
- Average family size: 2.90 people
- 27.3% of households with children under 18
- (United States Census Bureau, 2000)
Economic Characteristics

• Poverty: 7.1%
• Unemployment: 4.4%
• Median family income per year: $69,485
  o Pennsylvania: $49,184
  o National: $50,046
• (United States Census Bureau, 2000)
Education and Employment

- 95.9% graduated high school
- 64.4% had at least a college degree
- Most common jobs in 2009:
  - Health care
  - Education
  - Professional/scientific/technical
  - Finance/Insurance
  - Accommodations/Food Services
Frick Park Market – “Put it on my tab…”

• Collective ownership:
The neighborhood since 1941! Several different owners, currently owned by two Point Breeze residents.

• Approximately 60 families have a running tab at the market that they pay off once a month.
What’s in a street? Penn Ave as the dividing line

- Every statistic differentiates Point Breeze by the Penn Ave boundary.
Neighborhoods of wealth:
  • Point Breeze, North Oakland, Squirrel Hill North & South, parts of Shadyside
Is there a culture of affluence in Point Breeze?

- Culture of poverty: poor people have unique aspirations and values
- **Culture of affluence**
  - Economic Stability
  - Social Isolation
  - Controlled Interactions
Recommendations

• Add public space that brings together residents
• Add businesses that address residents’ needs
  o Example: Farmer’s Market
• Highlight the correlation between high educational success and lack of poverty
• Highlight the correlation between level of home ownership and lack of poverty
The End
• Urban Ethnography prior to coming pitt. New Pittsburgh Learn more about the city
• Urban areas
• Study inequality in poor spaces
• Micheal Glass, Sabina Deitrick, and Robert Graddack projects
• Advances of GIS Geographic information system
• If I were King...or democratically elected president...I wanted students to have basic research tools to make sense of urban spaces
• UCSUR
• Census data, GIS/PNCIS Pittsburgh Neighborhood and Community Information System (PNCIS) / and ethnographic observation Longitudinal Employment Dynamic Data
• The east end is wonderful research space, affluence, gentrification, history, poverty..wowneful workshop