

Ethnicity and Racial Change

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Speculation has been made regarding the role of ethnic groups in resisting integration and the movement of minority groups into previously white neighborhoods. This article examines the influence of Italian, Polish, Russian (Jewish), and Irish ethnic groups on the succession of minorities into white neighborhoods. Census tract data for Philadelphia and Baltimore are examined for the 1970 to 1980 period. This analysis found Jewish neighborhoods were the least resistant to succession while Polish neighborhoods were most resistant. The likelihood that this pattern will continue is questioned. It is postulated that upper mobile Jewish households have settled into high-status neighborhoods and are not as likely to have high mobility rates in the future. The Polish work force was found to be employed in industrial, high-skilled jobs that are likely to move out of the city and thus increase the mobility of this ethnic group. The resulting increase in mobility should reduce the resistance of Polish neighborhoods to succession.

As a nation of immigrants, the U.S. has accepted people from many nations. Most immigrants, who are white and from Europe, settled in the poorer central city neighborhoods. Later, they entered the mainstream of American life and moved to better, often suburban, neighborhoods. Minority migration to central cities was also characterized by the movement to poorer central city neighborhoods, but the subsequent movement of these groups to better housing and the suburbs was delayed by the practice of discrimination. With the population of minorities increasing as a percentage of total residents of central cities in most cases, also in terms of absolute numbers, minority members' demand for housing and land has increased faster than that of whites. This article explores the shift in minor-

ity population that took place during the 1970s in two central U.S. cities, and the impact that the ethnic composition of white neighborhoods had on this shift.

Until relatively recently, the literature on neighborhood change assumed that housing was a commodity and that people preferred to trade commuting costs for newer and more spacious housing and land in the suburbs (Burgess, 1925; Kain, 1962). Firey (1945) pointed out that sentimental attachment to one's neighborhood could influence locational decisions. More recent case studies have shown that an attachment to a neighborhood and its institutions can create a focal point for resisting outmigration and maintaining stable neighborhoods (Clay, 1979). A U.S. Department of Urban Development study found that thirty-four percent of those in a national survey felt that being near friends and relatives was an important factor in their locational decision (HUD, 1978).

Geographers and sociologists have used federal census data to portray the expansion patterns of black ghetto areas (Rose, 1970; Taeuber and Taeuber, 1965). These studies have generally ignored the possible tendency for expansion to occur through particular types of ethnic neighborhoods.

Some researchers have speculated that Jewish communities have been particularly susceptible to racial turnover. The large number of case studies of racially-changing Jewish communities seems to support this impression: Russell Woods and Baxter, Detroit (Mayer, 1960; Caplan and Wolf, 1960); Mattapan, Boston (Ginsberg, 1975); South Shore Community, Chicago (Molotch, 1972); Wynnefield, Philadelphia (Varady, 1979); and Chicago, Detroit, Cleveland, St. Louis (White, 1984). There have been a number of explanations for this vulnerability: the high rate of upward social mobility, the tendency for Jewish children, upon marriage, to live in a different neighborhood than their parents, the absence of violent resistance to black entry, and the lack of commitment to physical environment, resulting from a history of migration (Sklare, 1972).

Among other major ethnic groups, Italians have been noted for the stability of their neighborhoods. Many such neighborhoods have remained healthy and solidly Italian even when surrounded by predominantly black ghetto areas, such as the Italian Hill area in St. Louis (Long, 1977; Schoenberg and Rosenbaum, 1980). Gans (1962) attributes the stability of Italian neighborhoods to the strong emphasis that Italians place on familial relations which often led to a desire among children to continue living in the same neighborhood.

Literature on the stability of other white ethnic neighborhoods is more fragmentary and conflicting. Several researchers and journalists have noted the tendency among members of East European groups to resist black entry (Friedman, 1971-Poles; Kneeland, 1977-Lithuanians; White, 1984-

Czechs, Germans, and Poles) to preserve their way of life. Bradburn et. al. (1971) question whether this resistance is effective in ensuring stability, as such efforts often leave a legacy of bitterness that discourages other whites from entering the community. On the other hand, residents of a Slovak neighborhood on the East Side of Cleveland perceived that their neighborhood would have remained stable had they resisted blacks as was done in nearby Italian neighborhoods (Wilkes, 1971).

Attachments to institutions and family can be a stabilizing force. It is hypothesized that white ethnic immigrants value these attachments more than native-born whites, whose ties to the national culture are closer than those to the culture of the mother country. It is further hypothesized that neighborhoods with white immigrants will contain a less mobile population and be less likely to change from white to nonwhite.

The literature on racial succession and white ethnic neighborhoods is summarized by Varady (1979) in *Ethnic Minorities in Urban Areas*. The author points out that white migration is often a function of upward social mobility. Whether or not such neighborhoods undergo racial transition often depends on proximity to minority neighborhoods, the age of the white population, and the quality of the existing housing stock. Despite factors that could lead to racial transition, studies show that Italian and Polish neighborhoods often remain stable and resistant to racial succession. This belief is consistent with findings that these ethnic groups had moderate to high levels of residential segregation between themselves and blacks earlier in the century (Darden, 1983).

This article is designed to help clarify the differences among white ethnic neighborhoods in their susceptibility to racial transition.

Methodology

Previous studies (except White's) have examined racial change in one or two neighborhoods and often relied on interviews of the white ethnic population. Instead, this study examines two cities, Philadelphia and Baltimore, to determine whether any relationship exists between racial change and ethnicity. This procedure was chosen to allow a sufficient number of neighborhoods to be examined so patterns could be observed and statistical tests of the importance of ethnicity performed. The two cities were chosen because they include white ethnic neighborhoods and experienced increases in the number of minority neighborhoods during the 1970s. Philadelphia had a higher percentage of "integrated" neighborhoods (between 20 and 80% minority) than did Baltimore. Whether or not this integration was temporary will be discussed later.

The analysis of neighborhood change in a particular city requires com-

promises to be made because the ability to investigate each neighborhood in depth is limited by time and cost. This study uses 1970 and 1980 U.S. Bureau of the Census data. Neighborhood and ethnicity must also be defined. Neighborhoods are defined as census tracts. While this definition is somewhat arbitrary, it allows researchers to use comparable boundaries when investigating racial change. The two cities studied had relatively few census tract boundary changes. Where boundary changes occurred, tracts were combined to form constant boundaries over the decade. To limit sampling error and the impact of a tract with a small population, only tracts with more than 200 people were included in the analysis.

An ethnic group has been defined as a group having members who have a common origin, share a common culture, and participate in shared activities in which the common origin and culture are significant ingredients. The 1970 Census provides data on foreign stock. Foreign stock is defined as the "foreign-born population and the native population of foreign or mixed parentage." This variable is subdivided by country of origin. While country of origin has many of the attributes of the definition of ethnic group, it is not complete, because a country often includes more than one ethnic group: for example, those persons from the U.S.S.R. may include lower-class and upper-class groups, Gypsies, Jews, Ukrainians, and those from other Soviet republics. Despite these drawbacks, country of origin was used in this study.

While it would be interesting to compare the 1970 and 1980 numbers and percentages of the population of a particular ethnic group by census tract, the Census changed the definition of country of origin in 1980, replacing this variable by variable ancestry ("A person's self-identified origin, descent, lineage, nationality group, or country in which the person or the person's parents or ancestors were born before their arrival in the United States (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1982).") Thus, the respondent no longer had to be foreign-born or born to a foreign-born person, thereby resulting in an increase in the number of people defined as members of ethnic groups. While Philadelphia had a decrease in the white population of 295,633, the number of Italians increased by 30,000, and the Irish increased by 95,000.

The number of countries of origin is quite extensive. Based on earlier research, those of Italian and Polish descent were included in the study. Those from the USSR were included, because many Jews are from Russia. The Irish were included due to their large representation in the Philadelphia population.

Two methodologies were employed in analyzing the relationship between ethnicity and racial change. First, the racial change data and ethnic data were mapped to give a visual perspective to the analysis and facilitate

comparison of the rate of racial change by ethnic group. Second, a model was built using regression analysis. The model includes other independent variables as controls to verify the impact of ethnicity on racial change.

The dependent variable, racial change, is defined as the percent of minority population in 1980 minus the percent of minority population in 1970; this result is displayed on the maps. The minority population consists of the non-white population plus the Spanish population. There is a slight overcounting of the minority population in 1970 because the census counted those who are white with a Spanish name as minority. The Spanish population of Philadelphia was only 2% of the total population. The overcount is much less and should have no impact on the analysis.

The independent variables include the number and percent of each ethnic group in 1970 and 1980, the median family income, and the percent and number of minority tract population members. The percent of the population that is of a minority group is included because the change in the dependent variable is a function of the percent of the minority population. A tract that is all black cannot have a large increase in the percentage of the population that is minority, but it is possible for the tract to have a large negative change, resulting in an increase in the white population. Since gentrification is the reverse of minority succession, this study also contributes to the knowledge of gentrification.

Measures of migration, the number and percent of the 1980 tract population that lived in the same house and central city in 1975, are included in the list of independent variables. The migration variables test whether racial change is a function of migration from within a city and also determine whether migration from outside the city is responsible for minority neighborhoods turning white.

Geographic Analysis

Regression analysis and other statistical techniques are powerful tools for analyzing relationships. However, it is difficult to quantify many variables. While there are measures of proximity, it is far easier and often more meaningful to map variables. The maps included in this study display the percent of minority population in 1970, the change that occurred in the percent of the minority population between 1970 and 1980, and the dominant ethnic population.

Philadelphia's minority population is concentrated in the center of the city and radiates directly north and west of the Central Business District (CBD) (see Figure 1). Figure 2 shows that the minority population moved north during the 1970s, into neighborhoods that had concentrations of people from the U.S.S.R. While most of these neighborhoods are Jewish,

Figure 1.
Percent Minority in Philadelphia, 1970

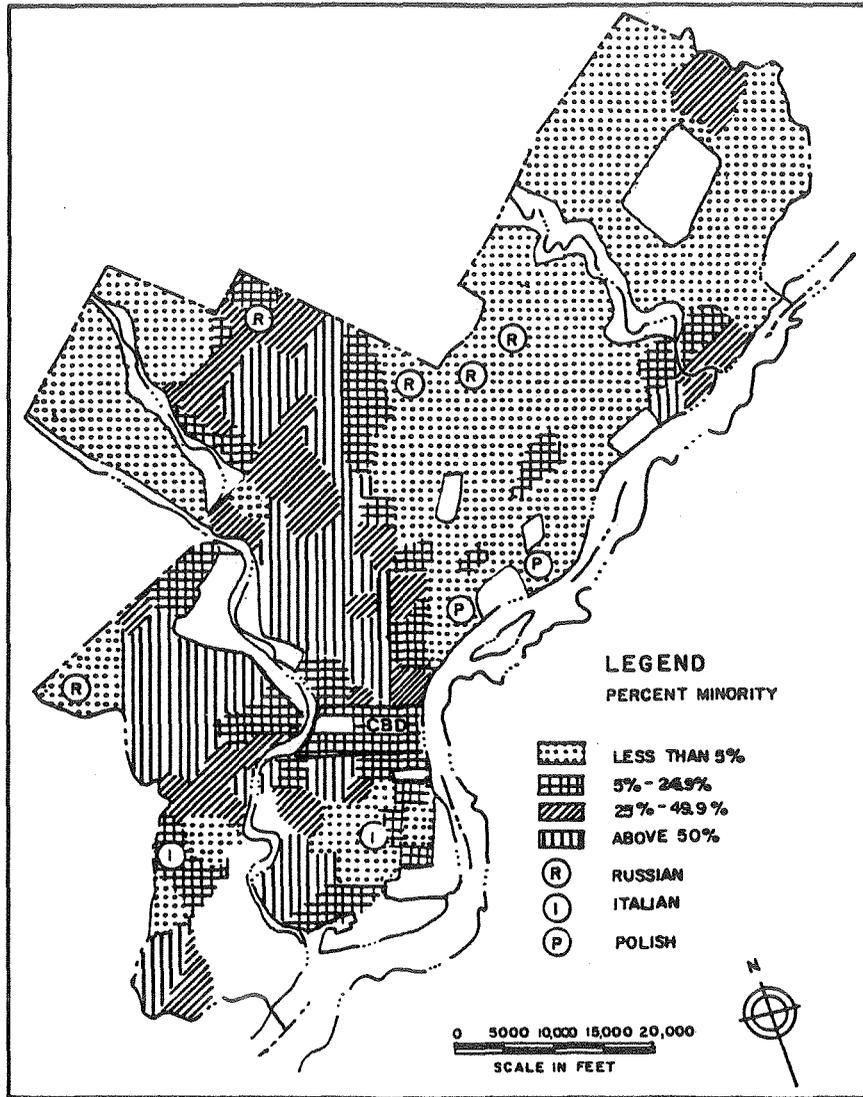


Figure 2.
Change in Percent Minority (1910-80), Philadelphia

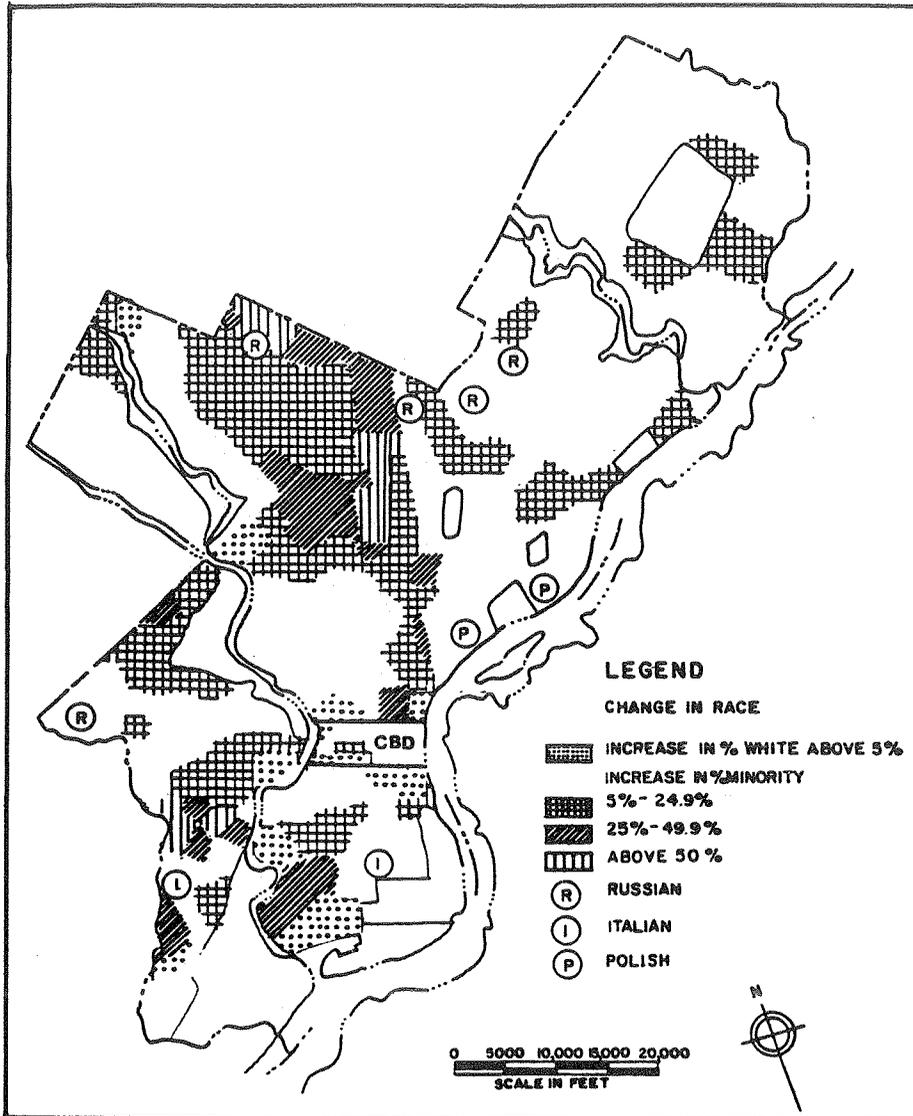


Figure 3.
Percent Minority in Baltimore, 1970

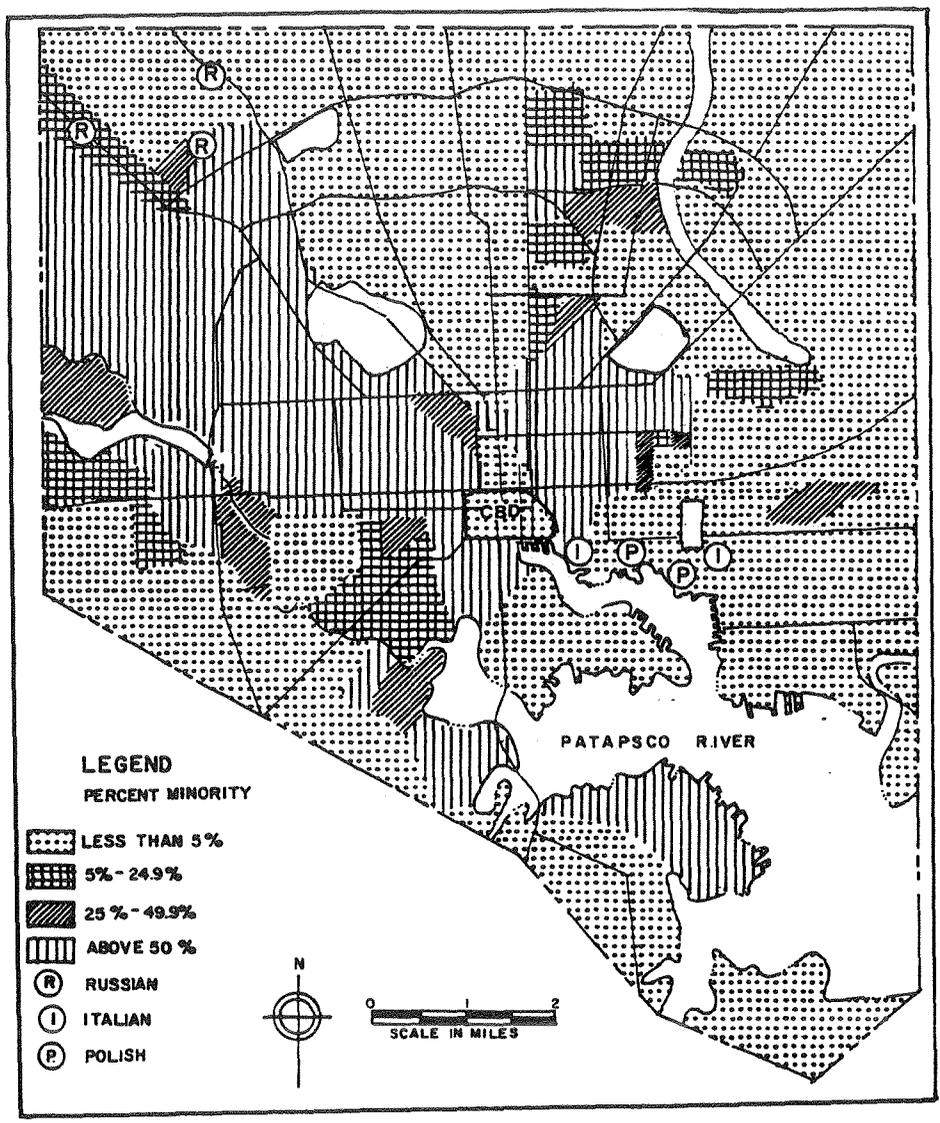
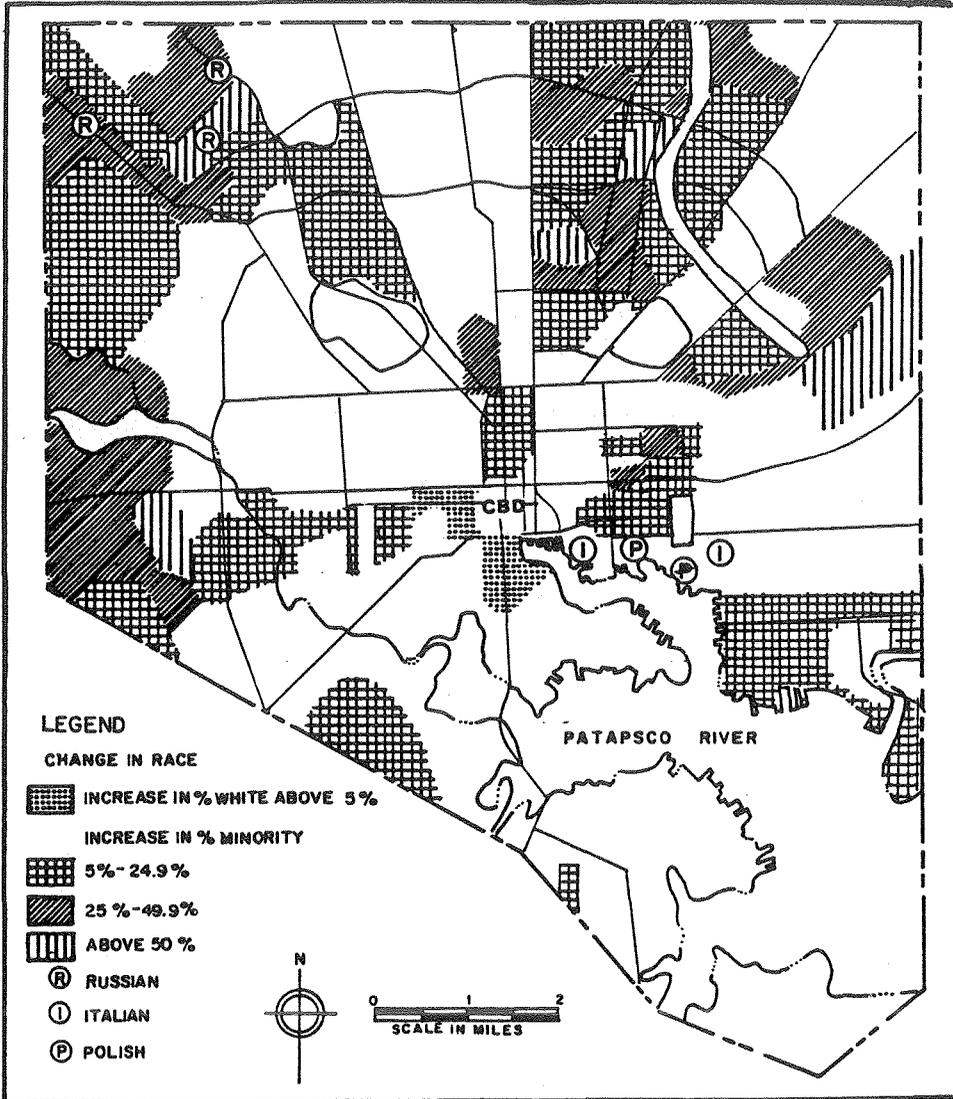


Figure 4.
Change in Percent Minority (1970-80), Baltimore



one area of Russian Orthodox persons also had an increase in the percent of its minority population. Other Jewish neighborhoods in the north-western part of the city did not experience an increase in the percent of minority population, but increases were experienced in the percent minority in adjacent tracts to these Jewish areas.

Philadelphia's Italian community has had some shifts toward increased minority occupancy. Some Italian neighborhoods south of the CBD experienced increases in the minority populations. These changes were not dramatic, however, and were restricted to the outer ring of the neighborhood. The other Italian neighborhoods across the river also had increases in minority population. Discussions with persons who previously lived in these western Italian areas indicated that many had moved across the city line into the suburbs. It should be noted that some neighborhoods in south Philadelphia had a decrease in percent minority.

The Polish neighborhoods appear to be the most stable and resistant to the entry of racial minorities. The Polish neighborhood along the river north of the CBD rarely has an increase in the percent minority and is the home of very few minorities.

As can be seen by the map of Baltimore (see Figure 3), many areas of this city were primarily occupied by minorities in 1970. The subsequent increase in percent minority (see Figure 4) took place in the adjacent tracts with small black populations. This experience is consistent with the negative correlation between percent minority and racial change discussed in the next section.

The northwestern corner of Baltimore includes a large concentration of persons from the U.S.S.R. Discussions with Baltimoreans indicate that these neighborhoods were predominantly Jewish. As the maps indicate, the area has had an increase in percent minority. The neighborhood east of the CBD is Polish. Despite being next to a black neighborhood, the Polish area did not experience an increase in percent minority.

Baltimore's north-central neighborhoods did not experience minority migration and did not have a large number of ethnic immigrants. This resistance to migration may be explained by the presence of John Hopkins University on the southern border of the neighborhoods and a major expressway on their western border. The university not only forms a barrier to the movement of the minority population, but serves as an attraction to those who work and study at the university. The housing in these neighborhoods is also attractive and well-built, making it very desirable.

While not the major focus of this research, both cities had a few tracts that had decreases in the percentage of minority population. In most cases these tracts were located near the CBD. Most of the exceptions to this were in Philadelphia and the tracts were generally near the University of Penn-

Table 2.
Racial Change For Census Tracts
(% Minority 1980-1970)

Independent Variables	Coefficients Model III	
	Philadelphia	Baltimore
U.S.S.R. #	.006 (.001)*	
Spanish #	.007 (.002)	
Polish #	-.006 (.098)	
Polish %		-.557 (.074)
Owner-Occ. d.u.	.022 (.000)	
Live Same House #	-.022 (.000)	
Live Same House %		-.646 (.000)
Live Same City #	.013 (.000)	
Live Same City %		.756 (.000)
White #	-.002 (.000)	
Minority %		-.212 (.000)
Constant	3.586 (.010)	-9.055 (.349)
R-Square	.24	.25

*Level of significance.

model describes approximately 25% of the variance in the change in percent minority.

The number of people from the U.S.S.R. is positively associated with racial change in Philadelphia. As discussed above, the Soviet population is highly related to presence of a Jewish population. The positive sign for this variable, then, is consistent with the literature.

The number of Polish persons is negatively correlated with racial change for Philadelphia and the percent of the tract population that is Polish is negatively correlated with racial change for Baltimore. This also supports the existing theory. The coefficients for the mobility variables are also consistent with expectations. The relationship between the number and percent of the population that lived in the same houses both in 1975 and in 1980 is negatively related to the increase in the percentage of the tract that is minority. Naturally, if no one moved, there would be little racial change.

The number of people who lived in the same city in 1975 and in 1980 had a positive coefficient in the Philadelphia model. The percent of the population that lived in the same city in 1975 was significantly positively related to the dependent variable for the Baltimore tracts. Those results indicate that the growth in minority population in a census tract is fueled, at least in part, by those who have lived in the city for some time. Such figures may also indicate that those tracts with a decrease in the percent

minority are receiving whites from outside the city. The size of the white population is negatively related to racial change in Philadelphia, while the percent of the minority population is negatively related to racial change in Baltimore.

The Philadelphia model has two additional variables, the number of Spanish persons and the number of owner-occupied dwelling units in 1970. It would appear that minority populations are moving into neighborhoods that were previously occupied by Latin immigrants and into neighborhoods with a large number of owner-occupants.

Summary and Conclusions

The hypothesis that the ethnicity of a neighborhood is related to the degree of racial change has been partially supported by this research. It appears that in some cases Jewish neighborhoods are more susceptible to change, and Polish neighborhoods less susceptible, in the two cities studied.

The presence of Italians and Irish is statistically unrelated to racial change in the two cities studied. The lack of a large Irish enclave in either city limits the strength of this last conclusion.

Whether the relationships discovered will continue to hold true in the future is open to debate. Many religious organizations are beginning to make a larger commitment to staying in one place. The investment made in religious schools and churches makes the congregation less willing to move. The early Jewish immigrants were upwardly mobile. What happens after the group has purchased larger homes on larger lots? Will such individuals become less mobile?

A look at the demographics of Polish neighborhoods indicates that a high percentage of the male work force is engaged in blue collar and skilled-trade jobs. If these jobs move to suburban locations or disappear entirely, will the Poles become more mobile and their neighborhoods begin to change character? If the Polish-Americans lose their jobs and do not move, will they be able to maintain their housing or prevent speculators from purchasing it?

While the theory of ethnicity and racial change has some merit in describing the past, it will be dangerous to apply it to the future. No more than 10% of the variance in racial change has been explained by ethnicity. Adding other ethnic groups to the analysis is not likely to increase the R-Square, because the other variables are likely to be correlated with the ethnic groups already in the model. Other variables, such as interregional migration and the economic base of the community, may provide additional explanation. Nonetheless, ethnicity has been found to be a contributing factor.

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