

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF DIVERSE URBAN NEIGHBORHOODS

by

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(Under the direction of Hank Methvin)

ABSTRACT

This is a comparative study of four diverse neighborhoods in Washington D.C., Chicago, Los Angeles, and New York. Diverse census tracts are contrasted with less diverse census tracts in order to find physical similarities among communities that meet social and racial criteria for diversity. Characteristics of the physical environment are examined in order to learn more about the structure and form of these neighborhoods. It is hoped that some of the elements consistent with these communities can be implemented in the design or planning field to encourage diversity.

INDEX WORDS: Diversity, Cities, Urban Design, Urban Planning, Neighborhoods

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DEDICATION

This is for my parents who showed me the world in all its beauty and tragedy, for my siblings and childhood traveling companions, Lloyd, Andrew, and Krista. This is also for Woodstock School in Mussoorie, India for teaching me that diversity can be utopia, and for the friends I made there: Ethel Kawesa, Julia Saini Leaphart, Rajee Aryal, and Moni Banerjee.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The concept of ‘diversity’ has undergone perceptual changes from a time when racial differences were causing riots across the country to the present day when many institutions welcome minorities and embrace diversity. Within one generation the practice of segregation came to a legal end, and although discrimination lingers in blatant and subtle ways, there is an evolving paradigm in the United States that different kinds of people living together can and should be a part of strong and healthy communities. In some parts of the country, these integrated neighborhoods existed long before diversity was in style.

This thesis is a search for an American utopia, a neighborhood that expresses the identity of our *nation*, rather than the identity that has been *historically dominant*. The goal is to explore communities that struggled with issues of race and were enriched by a history of class and race differences. Finding these areas and studying the way they work are a major component of this research.

The springboard for this journey was the question, “Is it possible to design in the urban context in such a way that encourages different walks of life to live in and use an area?” To find this answer, it seemed logical to begin with real-life examples of communities that had already achieved this fragile equilibrium and see what can be learned from them. Analyzing these ‘working neighborhoods’ could provide valuable material for planners and designers who want to design for diversity.

Before these communities were placed under the microscope, it was important to put the issue of race and class diversity into a historical context. Chapter Two explores how cities have treated the presence of different groups of people beginning with early recorded history through the present day. This allows us to find patterns and trends in the changing attitudes toward diversity, and creates a framework to better understand the current circumstances. Chapter Three continues in this vein with an exploration of contemporary issues that affect this research, including discussion of theories and projects. This section hypothesizes about what a diverse community is like, and proposes some specific criteria that can be applied to the analysis of neighborhoods later on in the thesis.

With the theoretical groundwork prepared, Chapter Four begins with the method for identifying some diverse neighborhoods and their homogenous counterparts that will be used as case studies. This process involves illustrating diversity on different levels, explaining the criteria that was used, and narrowing down the candidates for diversity. Once these neighborhoods were identified, a brief history of race and class in their city provides some background for them, followed by a description of their community and statistical information.

Chapter Five consists of analysis of both the diverse and not-so-diverse neighborhoods. These areas are compared in several different ways, from aerial views to a visual survey of photographs, with the idea that patterns and shared characteristics will emerge among the diverse neighborhoods. After examining the composition of these communities on many different levels, the results are summarized and followed by some suggestions for their application.

With this overview in mind, the next chapter will launch the research by telling the story of diversity in the urban setting, beginning with the earliest recorded history.

The stories will continue to be told from historical overviews to tales of small neighborhoods throughout this work. Hopefully a new chapter in which diversity in urban neighborhoods becomes commonplace, lies in store for us long after this thesis is complete.

CHAPTER 2

A HISTORY OF DIVERSITY IN THE URBAN SETTING

Although America is known as a great ‘melting pot’, a survey of the contemporary city reveals space that is segregated by function, social status, and race. Commercial strips and housing subdivisions sprout from highways that circle the central city; African-American ghettos and white gated communities, sometimes existing in close proximity to one another, are worlds apart. Since the 1950s and 1960s it has been widely understood and accepted that the equal treatment of American citizens, regardless of race, culture or background is a legal, moral and ethical necessity, but these ideals have been slow to manifest themselves in the everyday life of the American city.

Diversity, defined here in both racial and social terms, is uncommon at the neighborhood level despite media images that popularly allude to a nation embracing multiculturalism. Although the numbers show that there are large minority groups living within the United States, and increasing every year, for the most part they inhabit homogenous community pockets around the country. There are even greater divisions that separate people along class lines.

Diversity can make a community stronger in many ways, promoting a deeper understanding of the world and instilling tolerance and respect for other cultures. To set a goal of achieving healthy diversity in urban neighborhoods it is important to understand how cities have accommodated diversity through history. An overview of the pre-

industrial city to the present will provide insight into the contemporary urban situation, focusing primarily on how social and racial groups existed in relation to one another.

The Pre-industrial City

Since biblical times tribal elders have addressed the problem of how diverse groups coexist. In the story of the Tower of Babel, God was threatened by the unity of humankind and created barriers to prevent people from accomplishing too much. This tale reveals some common assumptions of its time regarding race and ethnicity, primarily that differences among groups of people are obstacles for humanity:

And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the sons of men had built. And the Lord said, "Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language; and this is only the beginning of what they will do; and nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them. Come, let us go down, and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech."

So the Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of the earth, and they left off building the city. Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of all the earth; and from there the Lord scattered them abroad over the face of the earth. Genesis 11 (5-9).¹

From this early explanation of how different races, cultures and ethnic groups came into being, the Bible emphasizes throughout the Old Testament that these differences exist to separate groups of people. Every reference to intermarriage between tribes is negative, either warning against it or punishing those who have married someone from another tribe. The tribes had to remain separate in order to be pure in the sight of God. It is clear from these stipulations that there was strict ethnic segregation in Biblical times.

¹ The Holy Bible: New International Version. (Zondervan Bible Publishers: Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1978) 12-13.

Pre-industrial cities such as ancient Athens, Rome and Constantinople continued practices of cultural or racial segregation, but also displayed a mixture of activities and social classes on a scale that would be overwhelming to the modern observer. Many merchants and artisans in the pre-industrial city lived and worked in the same place, and while some occupational groups may have clustered in specific quarters through various guilds², most public spaces were non-specialized and contained a huge mix of people including entertainers, beggars, children, and wandering vendors. They were also home to the maimed, lame and feeble-minded. The mixture of activities out in the open included everything from education to elimination of body wastes.³ Inadequate shelter and housing compelled most of the general population to carry out their life processes in the public realm.

The mixture of activities brought together all classes, occupations and ages. Carcopina describing ancient Rome writes,

The fourteen districts of the urbs did not offer that sharp contrast between working-class and wealthy districts which may be seen in modern capitals, and there was the same kind of accidental egalitarianism in the Rome of the Ceasars as there was later in the Rome of the Popes, with wretched apartment houses and magnificent palaces built next door to each other, and millionaires and men of modest means living on different floors under the same roof.⁴

Social class may not have been geographically segregated in the pre-industrial city, but it was made obvious through dress. The fine clothing worn by the upper class contrasted with the rags of lower classes, and in this way a person's attire advertised status and was impossible to ignore anywhere in the city. To enforce this hierarchy there were even edicts issued forbidding lower classes from wearing certain colors or fabrics

² Lyn H Lofland, A World of Strangers. (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1973) 50.

reserved for nobility. Class status was maintained although the mixture of different social classes on a daily basis was tremendous.⁵

Great wealth and incredible poverty existed side by side, but this diversity of class was primarily composed of a genetically similar native population. Different racial and ethnic groups almost never lived in the same areas. Travelers and tradespeople from other lands were a regular feature in the pre-industrial city, but they were looked upon with suspicion. Strangers were easily distinguished by costumes, body markings and language and were often restricted to designated parts of the city.

Segregation of ethnic, nationality, or religious groups appears to have been relatively common in the pre-industrial city. Imposed segregation of Jews in Medieval Europe was a widespread practice,

A Jewish community in an European town during the Middle Ages resembled a colony on an island or on a distant coast. Isolated from the rest of the population, it generally occupied a district or street which was separated from the town or borough. The Jews, like a troop of lepers, were thrust away and huddled together into the most uncomfortable and most unhealthy quarter of the city, as miserable as it was disgusting.

Voluntary ghettos or ethnic colonies also existed. In late 16th and 17th century Seville, traders, brokers, and bankers who came from all over Europe established residential enclaves based on nationality.⁶ Although major cities of the ancient world could display a variety of people from foreign lands in their market places, they were not assimilated as members of the mainstream culture.

³ Ibid. 34.

⁴ Ibid. 43.

⁵ Ibid. 49.

⁶ Ibid. 44.

The Industrial City

Sam Bass Warner Jr. describes the early industrial city in America between 1776 and 1820 in terms that are reminiscent of the lively mix of uses portrayed in the pre-industrial city, “They were districts densely settled by unprepossessing offices and stores and factories of all kinds, and even by sugar refineries and slaughterhouses, side by side with the more genteel firms that dealt in banking, law, insurance or cloth.”⁷ At this period of time America seemed to be moving toward egalitarianism. There was an obvious coexistence of rich and poor, but it was not always obvious who was the owner and who was the hired hand in a business.⁸

Class distinctions were not only blurred in commercial settings, they were also lacking in residential areas. Slums and fashionable neighborhoods existed around a mixed downtown, but the slums were not vast and encompassing. Most poor people rented rooms or apartments all over the city from middle-class families. By 1870 the American metropolis was still far away from “a core of poverty and an outer rim of affluence” that characterizes the modern city.⁹

Like Carcopino’s description of ancient Rome, Warner sees the early industrial city, which he believes early New York City typifies best, as an organic compound of people in a delicate symbiotic balance. The mingled commercial, industrial, and residential neighborhoods coexisted in an order that evolved with each succession of migrants to the city and each generation. This represented a golden age of cities to Warner,

⁷ Sam Bass Jr. Warner, The Urban Wilderness. (New York: Harper & Row, 1972) 82.

⁸ Ibid. 79.

⁹ Ibid. 82.

If the criterion of urbanity is the mixture of classes and ethnic groups, in some cases a mixture of blacks and whites, along with dense living and crowded streets and the omnipresence of all manner of business near the homes in every quarter, then the cities of the United States in the years between 1820 and 1870 marked the zenith of our national urbanity.¹⁰



Hudson Street, New York, ca. 1865¹¹

At the turn of the century, African-Americans and whites were not highly segregated in cities of either the North or the South. Although southern cities had neighborhoods with largely African-American populations, they also lived and worked in white neighborhoods. Most African-Americans living in the North were poor, but the slums they lived in were also inhabited by eastern and southern European immigrants.¹² The living conditions were much more racially mixed than they are in the present day, but the situation began changing quickly in the first half of the century.

¹⁰ Ibid. 84.

¹¹ Ibid. 29.

¹² Farley Reynolds, "Racial Issues: Recent Trends in Residential Patterns and Intermarriage." *Diversity and Its Discontents*. Ed. Neil J. Smelser and Jeffrey C. Alexander. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999) 91.

Beginning in the 1820s, business methods became harsher – the working class lost status, job security and personal control over their work. All big cities suffered riots of some kind, whether over labor, race or religion.¹³ Between 1870 and 1920 exploitation and segregation become dominant trends. As corporations grew larger they became more rigidly divided into classes. Respectability and poverty increasingly segregated workers in corporations, and outside the workplace this class separation was furthered by segregation within the neighborhoods by race, national origin and church affiliation.¹⁴

Warner used Chicago to represent the later industrial city of this time and credits unchecked capitalism with breaking down the tender equilibrium of the early industrial period in America. Land became obviously segregated during this era demonstrated by a pattern of concentric rings made up of an inner ring of poverty, a middle ring of working class homes and an outer ring of better quality residences.¹⁵ Socio-economic segregation was systematic around the industrial fingers of the metropolis and within fifty years there were no more areas with mingled rich and poor, immigrant and native, or African-American and white. The entire city became rigidly compartmentalized, and after 1890 industrial, commercial and residential segregation were standard fare in Chicago.¹⁶

The industrial city saw unprecedented population growth as people migrated from the countryside for jobs. The metropolitan dynamic fundamentally changed the way people lived together in urban settings and the way they saw themselves in relation to other groups of people. It was the beginning of the separation of uses and social

¹³ Warner 79.

¹⁴ Ibid. 98.

¹⁵ Ibid. 101.

¹⁶ Ibid. 104.

structures on a grand scale and of the consumption of vast amounts of land, providing fuel for a cycle of further isolation of race and class.

The Modern City

The modernist movement espoused the idea that cities could be designed using rational methods that would meet human needs on a level of efficiency never before possible. Fritz Lang's 1926 movie, *Metropolis* was a metaphor for modernist planning and portrayed the city as a well-oiled machine.¹⁷ It showcased the class struggles that had erupted during the Industrial age and predicted the widening of this class gap against a backdrop of intricate futuristic skyscrapers.

The modernist planners' treatment of cultural diversity was to de-emphasize differences and to design spaces that did not borrow from any previous style or display cultural allusions. This was typified by buildings in the International Style by architects like Mies van der Rohe and Le Corbusier. In settings like these, all people would meet on equal terms regardless of background or heritage. Cultural variables had no place in design since culture changed continually, and people would adapt to any environment that is fundamentally satisfactory.¹⁸

The ideal of the modernist age for people of diverse backgrounds was assimilation. Cultures were meant to dissolve into a homogenous community.¹⁹ The loss of cultural identities would be replaced by a conglomerate global identity as described by Michael Horton,

¹⁷ Leonie Sandercock, *Towards Cosmopolis: Planning for Multicultural Cities*. (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1998) 206.

¹⁸ Amos Rapoport "Culture and Built Form- A Reconsideration," *Culture- Meaning- Architecture*. ed. Moore, Keith Diaz (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2000) 201.

¹⁹ Sandercock, 197.

... one way of looking at the modern worldview is to picture Rockefeller Center, city projects, and tract homes. Each in its own way reveals the modern spirit. Modern architecture tends to accent order. Driving down some of the major streets in Washington, D. C., one can see these towers of modernity dominating on either side. Modernity created these large business-like buildings with little embellishments for a reason. Unlike an old Victorian town square in the Midwest or a Bavarian village, there is no distinct local style. One could be in New York, Nairobi, Singapore, or Sao Paulo and have to look at one's travel itinerary to remember where one is in the morning at the modern hotel. While many styles throughout history have been primarily regional and distinctive, the modern style is global, and it is part of a culture that is obsessed with doing business, making money, selling things, and engineering the New World. The buildings say that.²⁰

Modernism also marked the efflorescence of the suburban way of life, whose impact on the city and diversity are still being felt. Levittown, one of the first model suburbs, was built with discrimination as its cornerstone. Bill Levitt, its creator, acknowledged that the development was not integrated and explained that this was, “not a matter of prejudice, but one of business.” He went on to explain, “As a Jew I have no room in my mind or heart for racial prejudice. But by various means, I have come to know that if we sell one house to a Negro family, then 90% of our white customers will not buy into the community.”²¹ Discrimination as a business practice was also enforced by the Federal Housing Authority, which did not approve mortgage funds for integrated communities.²² Discriminatory lending, the racial specialization of suburbs, and federally

²⁰ Michael Horton, *Premise*, “The Tower of Babel: Modernity built the tower - now postmodernity must face the challenge of condemning the ‘unsafe structure.’” available from <http://capo.org/premise/95/sep/p950806.html>; Internet; accessed 23 January 2002.

²¹ Dolores Hayden, *Redesigning the American Dream*. (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1984) 6.

²² Ibid. 7.

sponsored public housing were government policies introduced in the early part of the 20th century that kept segregation levels high.²³



Segregated tract with African-American observer, Los Angeles County, early 1950's. (Southern California Library for Social Studies and Research)²⁴

With foundations in exclusivity and racism, suburban development made it possible for a mass exodus of middle and upper class whites away from cities. The roots for this movement were planted in the late industrial city and became invasive throughout the modern city to the present day. Cities were and still are caught in a cycle in which the more middle-class families leave its center, the more the remaining population wants follow the exodus.²⁵ White population losses exceeded total losses and left an increasing concentration of African-Americans in many cities.²⁶ This was also an economic loss for cities because it was not just a racial migration, but also a class movement. People in the upper classes of income and education fled the metropolis from the 1950s on.²⁷

²³ Farley 93.

²⁴ Ibid. 10.

²⁵ Nelson, Kathryn P. Gentrification and Distressed Cities. (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988) 33.

²⁶ Ibid. 76.

²⁷ 26.

Zoning was another modern concept that separated uses and succeeded in further separating people along class and racial lines. In fact, zoning originated with the intent to segregate racially. The groundwork for zoning regulations were laid in California in the 1880s to move Chinese laundries out of residential areas where Chinese servants lived alongside the white homes they worked in. By 1915 the zoning ordinances of Los Angeles combined with those of other cities were used to create the New York Zoning Law of 1916, which became the prototype for the nation.²⁸

Racial residential segregation began to decline in the 1950s and 1960s due to several factors. Federal housing policies changed to reflect the ideal of equal racial opportunity with the Fair Housing Law of 1968 that outlawed racial discrimination in the sale or rental of housing units and the Home Mortgage Disclosure Act of 1975 along with the Community Reinvestment Act of 1977 stopped the practice of discriminatory lending. In addition to these changes at the federal level, white attitudes began to grow more tolerant towards a minority presence in residential areas, and the black middle class has grown, reducing class differences between races.²⁹

The modern city saw the maturity of some separations of class and race that had begun forming in the industrial city, resulting in the frenetic compartmentalization of city life in all areas. However, the latter half of the modern age showed some advances in an egalitarian perspective of racial diversity and tolerance for integration. A major perceptual shift was underway, changing the way Americans understood their national identity.

²⁸ Warner 28-29.

²⁹ Farley 93-95.

The Postmodern City

Charles Jencks, the architectural critic and historian, announced that the death of modernism took place at 3:32 pm on July 17th when the Pruitt-Igoe Housing Project in St. Louis was demolished. According to Jencks, after the destruction of these Corbusier inspired high-rise, towers, “we entered the split-pedimented portals of the complex and contradictory world of postmodern architecture.”³⁰ Modernism was a continuation of the Enlightenment view that science and reason was a linear progression toward a perfect understanding of the world, but postmodern theory no longer held that humans are rational beings on a rendez-vous with a higher destiny.³¹

The dominant socio-cultural forces of our time consist of the rise of post-colonial and indigenous people, an increase in population migration, and the emergence of repressed minorities.³² Postmodernism explores these issues by opening new dialogues of race and culture particularly non-Eurocentric cultural narratives.³³ This inclusiveness is also evident in architectural styles, which are an eclectic blend of borrowed elements, “Post-modernism accepts diversity; it prefers hybrids to pure forms; it encourages multiple and simultaneous readings in its effort to heighten expressive content.”³⁴ Telling stories that have been marginalized and expressing many layers of meaning are trademarks of postmodernism in a variety of applications.

³⁰ Jonathan Glancey, *The Guardian*, “Reaching for the Sky” available from www.guardian.co.uk/saturday_review/story/0,3605,552020,00.html; Internet; accessed 5 March 2002.

³¹ Tim Woods, Beginning Postmodernism. (Manchester University Press: Manchester, 1999) 10.

³² Sandercock 163.

³³ Woods 42.

³⁴ Ibid. 100

New social movements in the postmodern age demand recognition of social differences and require more participatory democracy.³⁵ The practice of planning is evolving towards making connections between what planners propose and social arrangements that will make them more politically feasible. Compared to the 1950s and the 1960s, the emphasis is less on comprehensive, long-range plans and more involved with individual development projects. Planners are required to be more flexible and find solutions that are tailored to a group's needs. Instead of working in isolation, city and local agencies interact with residents, developers and other stakeholders.³⁶

It is not surprising that the ubiquitous phrase, 'sense of place' has risen from the heart of post-modernity. Strong community involvement is characteristic of its design, along with a concern for expressing identity and meaning in a place. Postmodernism reflects surroundings and context, even embracing popular culture.³⁷ It is an eclectic blend of narratives and styles expressing layers of multiplicity.

The civil-rights movement and the subsequent changes in public policy regarding public housing and home mortgage lending had effects that continue to be seen in the postmodern era. Census data from 1980 and 1990 show that segregation between African-Americans and whites in metropolitan areas have decreased slightly on average.³⁸ It is clear that the pluralistic ideology espoused in the mainstream reflects a real increase, however small, in racial tolerance.

³⁵ Sandercock 197

³⁶ Robert B. Beauregard, "Neither Embedded nor Embodied: Critical Pragmatism and Identity Politics," Urban Planning in a Multicultural Society. Ed. Burayidi, Michael A (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 2000) 54.

³⁷ Woods 110.

³⁸ Farley 96.

The urban condition and its treatment of the variety of people it houses have changed considerably over several millennia. Humanity has moved from xenophobia toward public acceptance and praise of multiculturalism, from ‘mixed-use’ in every open space imaginable toward restrictive zoning. It seems that we have grown more tolerant of racial and ethnic differences, but more segregated along social and class lines. This provides some background to examine some common misconceptions about diversity in America.

The Mythical American Melting Pot

The phrase “melting pot” was first used in a play by Israel Zangwill in 1908:

America is God’s crucible, the great Melting Pot where all the races of Europe are melting and re-forming! Here you stand, good folk, think I, when I see them at Ellis Island, here you stand in your fifty groups, with your fifty languages and histories, and your fifty blood hatreds and rivalries. But you won’t be long like that, brothers, for these are the fires of God you’ve come to – these are the fires of God. A fig for your feuds and vendettas! German and Frenchmen, Irishmen and Englishmen, Jews and Russians – into the crucible with you all! God is making the American.³⁹

Notice that the ingredients in Zangwill’s ‘melting pot’ are different nationalities, but all one race, evidence that the symbol of American diversity originated from a narrow vision of difference. The assimilation that produces an American from several different nationalities from Zangwill’s time to the present day seems to work as long as racial boundaries are not crossed. Instead of a single ‘melting pot’, there are various ‘melting pots’ that take ethnic groups and assimilate them into American racial groups. Europeans

³⁹ John F. Longres, Human Behavior in the Social Environment. (Itasca, Illinois: F. E. Peacock Publishers, Inc., 2000) 116.

become white, and Haitians become African-American after a couple of generations.⁴⁰

Ethnic differences may be lost, but a racial identity remains.

Others go further to say that the American 'melting pot' is a pluralistic ideal that has not resulted in blended ethnic groups. It consists of one dominant culture, not an amalgam of diversity, but a predominantly British culture, transplanted to America imposing cultural values, language and religion on minority cultures.⁴¹ Acknowledging its Eurocentric orientation, the United States has always considered itself to be a country that embraces many different ethnicities and cultures. Historically, however, it has struggled with balancing its ideal picture as a 'melting pot' with the reality of segregated subcultures.⁴²

The 'melting pot' ideal stressed assimilation by presenting inner city life in poor ethnic neighborhoods as a prelude to the American dream in which a well-adjusted immigrant who has worked hard is able to move to a more comfortable area away from the city center.⁴³ This was a process of homogenization where distinctiveness was discouraged, reminiscent of the modernist view of diversity. More recently America is being seen not as a 'melting pot,' but as a salad where differences are valued and diverse cultures make contributions to society as a whole.⁴⁴

Racial minorities in this country are predicted to increase rapidly within the next 50 years, and by 2050, white Americans will no longer be in the majority. One figure

⁴⁰ Ibid. 116.

⁴¹ David Allor and J.T. Spence, "The Higher Duty of Local Planning Commissions in a Multicultural Society," Urban Planning in a Multicultural Society. Ed. Michael A. Burayidi, (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 2000) 194.

⁴² Alvin James, "Demographic Shifts and the Challenge for Planners: Insights from a Practitioner," Urban Planning in a Multicultural Society. Ed. Michael A. Burayidi, (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 2000) 15.

⁴³ Dolores Hayden, The Power of Place. (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1995)

⁴⁴ Allor 196.

projects that the white population will change from 80% in 1980 to 53% in 2050.⁴⁵ Other sources forecast the proportion of whites falling from its current 74% to 50% by 2080 with the rest of the United States population being 23% Hispanic, 15% African-American and 12% Asian.⁴⁶ An unprecedented population shift is going to occur within the span of one generation, and American cities stand on the threshold of a future that could hold more segregation or integration.

⁴⁵ Ibid. 194.

⁴⁶ Roger Sanjek, The Future of Us All. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998) 1.

CHAPTER 3

DIVERSITY IN THE CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN CITY

America is rapidly becoming more racially diverse and slowly growing more integrated. The multicultural ideal, embraced politically and socially, is bearing fruit in statistics showing that neighborhoods are becoming slightly less segregated. It is clear that some areas display more diversity than others, but neighborhoods that are made up of a homogenous group of people are still standard fare for most Americans.

One study compared census tract data for 232 metropolitan areas across the United States and explored the characteristics of the most diverse cities. It found that older cities with established central city neighborhoods and suburbs just after World War II were more likely to be segregated than cities that had grown rapidly in the 1970s and 1980s, perhaps due to a longer history of discriminatory housing practices in older cities. It also showed that areas with a higher proportion of their housing stock built recently were less likely to be segregated.¹

Declines in segregation were more substantial in smaller cities in the West and South, but African-Americans still remain more segregated in residential areas than Hispanics and Asians.² The study also showed that the presence of a third or fourth group, such as Hispanics or Asians, had the effect of reducing the segregation of whites

¹ Farley 102.

² Ibid. 102.

and African-Americans in neighborhoods.³ This indicates that areas can become more integrated if they are more racially diverse.

Cycles of Neighborhood Change

With ‘upper-class’ measured by education and income levels, studies have shown a movement of upper-class residents out of the central city, especially distressed cities, over the past forty years.⁴ This migration was caused by new housing construction, with jobs following new neighborhoods, a trend that became prominent in the 1950s and 1960s.⁵ Cities became caught in a vicious circle whereby the more upper-class whites fled to the suburbs, the more incentive for those remaining to follow suit.⁶

Gentrification and inner city redevelopment are trends that are attracting higher-income residents back to the city center. Eventually vacant areas become sufficiently inexpensive for entrepreneurs to reinvest and low land values attract new residents interested in rehabilitating the area.⁷ Gentrification tends to allow diversity in a transitional way, but it is unclear whether many original inhabitants of the neighborhood withstand the tide of upper-income whites. There are inadequate studies showing the far-reaching effects of integration in gentrified neighborhoods.

Diversity in Cities

In 1961, Jane Jacobs claimed that diversity is natural to big cities.⁸ With her influential book, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, she explored this issue, often referring to economic diversity, as the cornerstone of a healthy and vital city,

³ Ibid. 99.

⁴ Nelson 26.

⁵ Ibid. 34.

⁶ Ibid. 33.

⁷ Nelson 26.

⁸ Jane Jacobs, The Death and Life of Great American Cities. (New York: Modern Library, 1993) 143.

“...big cities are natural generators of diversity and prolific incubators of new enterprises and ideas of all kinds.”⁹ The sheer density of big cities makes it necessary for different kinds of people with different talents and tastes to be near each other for the sake of convenience and survival.

When people with different histories, cultures, and needs arrive in cities, they disrupt normal social life and urban space. This brings about a struggle to redefine the conditions of belonging to society, and demands a new way of planning that goes beyond functioning as a mere ordering tool.¹⁰ Understanding that each member of a community shares a common destiny is vital to the harmonious coexistence of diverse groups of people. Over time, an ingrained flexibility and tolerance for others can become a layer of history that strengthens the community. Jacobs describes how rich this experience can be,

wherever we find a city district with an exuberant variety and plenty in its commerce, we are apt to find that it contains a good many other kinds of diversity also, including variety of cultural opportunities, variety of scenes, and a great variety in its population and other users. This is more than coincidence. The same physical and economic conditions that generate diverse commerce are intimately related to the production, or the presence, of other kinds of city variety.¹¹

Diversity refers to differences, and in communities this refers to social differences rooted in common identifications and shared values. Social classes, genders, ethnic and racial groups represent specific communities that may find common ground in wealth, beliefs, and traditions.¹² The failure to reflect America’s nation-wide diversity on a local and neighborhood scale is the source of widespread problems in the city. The imbalance

⁹ Ibid. 45.

¹⁰ Sandercock 227.

¹¹ Jacobs 148.

of race and class perpetuates itself in an environment that is built by homogeneity and will continue to be a political and social obstacle. While there are weightier issues that determine where and how we live, such as economics, politics and tradition, there may also be a way to encourage diversity through the design of an urban space.

Humans respond to their surroundings by making attachments to places reflecting their well-being or distress.¹³ The relationship between individuals and their physical environment is two-fold, with social life structuring space and space shaping social life.¹⁴ In this way culture creates social variables, which are translated into physical form. Dead spaces and lively spaces are both products of this interaction between the social and physical environment.

A group in France during the 1960s, calling themselves the ‘Situationists’ set out to find ‘unities of ambience’, which they defined as areas of particularly intense urban atmosphere. With many similarities to Jane Jacobs and her search for what makes a city healthy and successful, they were trying to find out what makes an urban space vital and attractive. Their results revealed eclecticism and a sense of the picturesque as key ingredients for a place that displayed a ‘unity of ambience’. They described the ideal town as having humane, pedestrian social spaces, mixed architectural compositions, with no abstract, purely “rational” planning.¹⁵ With their references to eclecticism and mixed architectural compositions, it takes a small conjectural step to suggest that an environment with a variety of styles and architectural features, in addition to a mixture of uses would attract a diverse group of people.

¹² Longres 78.

¹³ Hayden 16.

¹⁴ Ibid. 23.

Across the ocean, at about the same time, Jacobs was formulating her own criteria for generating diversity. She came up with four conditions that are indispensable, insisting emphatically that all four must operate in conjunction with each other.

1. The district, and indeed as many of its internal parts as possible, must serve more than one primary function; preferably more than two. These must insure the presence of people who go outdoors on different schedules and are in the place for different purposes, but who are able to use many facilities in common.
2. Most blocks must be short; that is, streets and opportunities to turn corners must be frequent.
3. The district must mingle buildings that vary in age and condition, including a good proportion of old ones so that they vary in the economic yield they must produce. This mingling must be fairly close-grained.
4. There must be sufficiently dense concentration of people, for whatever purposes there may be there. This includes dense concentration in the case of people who are there because of residence.¹⁶

In short her requirements are: mixed use, short, permeable blocks, varied architecture that is moderate in scale, and density.

Some of these criteria have been used in recent city revitalization efforts. A project in San Francisco's South of Market area attempted to renew the area and encourage diversity. The mix of building types fit Jacobs' prescription for architectural diversity and the street grid with alleys and land divided into small parcels to create short blocks was already in place. The designers also found that this layout, "encourages safe, hidden pocket communities to form, allows for incremental development at a range of scales, preserves affordable opportunities for owning or renting residential or commercial

¹⁵ Simon Sadler, The Situationist City. (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1998) 73.

¹⁶ Jacobs 150.

space and contributes to a very human street scale and rhythm.”¹⁷ These pocket communities are described as residential clusters, one block long, offering a sense of definition and collective ownership.

In designing for diversity, the planners also encouraged a mixture of housing, small business and light industry suitable for a range of work situations and lifestyles. They stressed that a low-income population should not be concentrated in one area, but dispersed in separate smaller communities, distinct from one another. According to the planners in this San Francisco project, a sense of belonging was vital to community, “Perhaps diverse groups can co-exist peacefully if each has a sense of ownership of an area and neither desires part of the other’s turf.”¹⁸

The planners for the South of Market area incorporated elements suggested by Jacobs to encourage diversity, including mixed use, small blocks and a variety of architectural types. Other revitalization projects are also expanding their focus to include and encourage different groups of people to invest in an area, and sometimes this is done out of necessity rather than a pluralistic ideal. The inner city revitalization in Oakland, California is one example of how a project became successful after welcoming the participation of the minority business community.

Downtown developers initially envisioned an upscale development for Old Oakland and made neighboring Chinatown feel unwelcome. However, as the downtown continued to languish, Chinatown was flourishing and expanding, but developers refused to see the potential strength that diversity could provide. Old Oakland was faced with continuing failure, so they changed their vision for downtown by opening up to

¹⁷ Cheryl Parker. “Making a Twenty-First Century Neighborhood.” *Places* 1995. 42.

¹⁸ Ibid. 38.

Chinatown businesses. Now the area is 60% leased compared to 0% in 1993. Geoffrey Sears, vice president and senior asset manager of Oakland Victorians Real Estate claimed that, “Flexibility is the key to implementing a strategy for the remainder of the space. Whatever the solution, it requires thinking outside of the boundaries, be those racial boundaries, types of tenant uses, etc.”¹⁹

Thinking outside racial boundaries and uses finally allowed the Oakland developers to find willing investors for the area. The developers were originally frightened of what would happen if the flavor of that area changed dramatically, but for economic viability, there was no other option but to welcome Chinese-American investors. There will be a new layer of culture in a historic area, which will add life and vitality to the city.

Multiculturalism and diversity are popular concepts to many, but when projects market themselves as designs that encourage diversity, it is impossible to know if a diverse community will be flourishing there in five or ten years. If multi-ethnic and multiracial neighborhoods are a goal, planners and designers must develop stronger evidence about the existence and maintenance of diverse places. It is important to locate areas that are diverse and stable without the massive infusions of energy and resources typified in case studies. Can ‘ordinary’ places construct and maintain diversity and stability? Identifying them will provide critical models for planners wishing to pursue these outcomes.²⁰

Taking cues from diverse urban neighborhoods that have stood the test of time seems likely to result in a genuinely diverse community. An examination of what works

¹⁹Jane Bower. “The Payoffs of Inclusion.” Urban Land 54 (1995) 64.

could point to some elements, like Jacobs' criteria for urban diversity, that could be included in large-scale planning and design to allow for different races and classes of people to coexist. A comparison of diverse urban neighborhoods in different cities across the United States would create a framework for cross-reference to find similarities among neighborhoods with a similar demographic. This would provide some insight into the relationship between people and how they influence their surroundings.

The Policy Research and Action Group, a network of four universities, conducted a study of fourteen neighborhoods to identify characteristics that account for neighborhood diversity by race and class. They found that diversity can promote neighborhood stability and prosperity. Focusing on urban areas, they categorized diverse communities in two ways, as "self-conscious," which are usually biracial, economically better off and have a tradition of civil rights activism; or "laissez-faire," which tend to be multi-ethnic and more economically diverse. The common characteristics they uncovered were,

attractive physical features, internal diversity as well as pockets of segregation, "social seams" (places where groups come together), resident awareness of community diversity, strong social and community-based institutions with dynamic leadership, and a "value" orientation to community organization.²¹

By looking at working examples of successfully diverse communities PRAG isolated some of the qualities that established neighborhoods have in common. Where Jacobs focused on the physical ingredients that encourage diversity, PRAG looked at the social networks that are involved. The PRAG study, by looking at both race and class in

²⁰ Richard A. Smith, "Measuring the Stability of Multi-Racial, Multicultural Neighborhoods." Urban Planning in a Multicultural Society. Ed. Michael A. Burayidi, (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 2000) 236.

fourteen neighborhoods takes an analytical and comparative approach that is similar to the kind of analysis conducted in the following chapters.

A more comprehensive look at some neighborhoods will provide more detail and a greater understanding of how these communities live and thrive on their differences. The next step is to isolate the areas to be studied and get some background information and context for each one. Chapter Four will begin by explaining the method used to find the neighborhoods that will be the focus of this research.

²¹ John Lukeheart, "Diversity: An Asset to Community Development." 29 December 1999. accessed 10 March 2002 <http://www.lcmoc.org/news/fall96/diversit.htm>.

CHAPTER 4

CASE STUDY OF FOUR DIVERSE URBAN NEIGHBORHOODS

Rather than looking at one diverse neighborhood in isolation, I chose to look at areas in four major cities. If communities that differed geographically still shared similarities, it would add more credibility to the proposition that diverse neighborhoods shared some innate qualities. The most diverse neighborhood was selected from information available from census tract data that was measured against several criteria. Neighborhoods in New York City, Los Angeles, Chicago and Washington D.C. were compared.

The Method

Census tracts were ideal units of measurement for this project because they group people in roughly the size of an urban neighborhood. (The average census tract in Chicago, for example, includes about 4,000 people.) Another crucial factor is the availability of census tract data for every county in the United States on the *American Factfinder* website. Thousands of census tracts can be downloaded in a spreadsheet that converts the numbers into quantitative data. 1990 census data was used to analyze census tracts for each city in both the racial and social categories rather than 2000 census numbers because information on education levels was not available at the time of this study.

The next question directed this research was the criteria for diversity. Many levels of difference, from ethnic background to religion and so on, could have been examined. However, time and resource limitations forced the scope to narrow to what was practical and manageable for one person. It resulted in two criteria for race, two criteria for socio-economic class and a criteria that measured the rate of demographic change over time.

The four largest racial groups were used, consisting of white, African-American, Hispanic and Asian. (Note that the United States Census Bureau does not consider 'Hispanic' to be a race; it is counted separately as 'Hispanic origin'.) Race was then measured in two different ways. Following the methods of other statistical demographic studies, the 'comparative approach' was used.¹ This involved finding census tracts that most closely reflected the demographic composition of the city as a whole. For example, Washington D.C. is made up of 31% white, 60% African-American, 8% Hispanic and 3% Asian. The census tracts that came closest to reflecting these numbers would rank highest in this category.

The second method of measurement proposed an ideal number that would represent a more equal distribution of race.² Each racial group was assigned 25%, and the census tract that came closest to representing a demographic made up of 25% white, 25% African-American, 25% Hispanic, and 25% Asian came closest to meeting this criteria. These two methods in combination represented a conservative measurement through the 'comparative approach' and a more radical method by assigning 'ideal' numbers. A census tract that fit either of these criteria would qualify as diverse.

¹ Smith 237.

² Ibid.

Socio-economic class was measured in two categories consisting of education and income levels. The ideal for each of these was a spread with an even distribution at each level, for example in education, an equal number of high school drop-outs to people with advanced degrees, and every level in between. The seven categories listed below were assigned an 'ideal' percentage of 14%, creating an even spread.

Less than 9th grade	9th to 12th grade, no diploma	High school graduate	Some college, no degree	Associate degree	Bachelor's degree	Graduate or professional degree
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Similarly, income levels were divided into five brackets and assigned an 'ideal' percentage of 20%. A census tract that came close to an equal population in each income group would meet the requirement for economic diversity. The income brackets are listed below.

\$18,000 and under	\$18,000 to \$29,999	\$30,000 to \$42,499	\$42,500 to \$59,999	\$60,000 and over
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Once the census tracts had been measured against these criteria, the two race categories along with the education and income categories, they were listed in order of how closely they reflected the required numbers. So, for Washington D.C. there were four lists that contained the 20 census tracts that most closely met a particular criteria. As the cities grew in size, the list also grew, so Chicago had a 'top 40' list for each category, Los Angeles had a 'top 60' list, and New York had a 'top 80' list. Each of these lists were then cross-matched to see if they met criteria for more than one category. To

qualify as a diverse neighborhood, the census tract had to meet at least one racial category and one class category.

These are the results of the initial study from 1990 census data for each city:

Table 1. Washington D.C.

Tract	Race 'comparison'	Race 'ideal'	Education	Income
27.01		•	•	
27.02		•	•	
42.01		•		•
43	•	•	•	
44	•	•	•	•
50	•	•	•	
53.01		•		•
60.01	•	•		•
80.02	•		•	•
84.02	•		•	
93.01	•		•	

Table 2. Chicago

Tract	Race 'comparison'	Race 'ideal'	Education	Income
101	•	•	•	
102	•		•	
106	•	•	•	
107	•	•	•	
305		•	•	
311		•	•	
315	•	•	•	
316	•	•	•	
2412		•	•	
2829	•	•	•	
2831	•	•	•	
6609	•		•	
8097	•			•

Table 3. Los Angeles

Tract	Race 'comparison'	Race 'ideal'	Education	Income
1233.01		•		•
2033	•		•	
2118.02		•	•	
2121		•	•	
2127		•	•	
2131		•	•	
4623		•	•	
4808.01		•	•	
4809		•	•	
4810		•	•	
4819.02		•	•	

Table 4. New York City

Tract & County	Race 'comparison'	Race 'ideal'	Education	Income
26.02 New York	•		•	
99 New York	•		•	
115 New York	•	•	•	
193 New York		•	•	
238 New York	•		•	
31 Kings			•	•
39 Kings	•	•	•	
131 Kings	•		•	
133 Kings	•		•	
137 Kings	•		•	
139 Kings	•		•	
149 Kings	•		•	
161 Kings	•		•	
526 Kings	•		•	
104 Queens	•			•
106 Queens	•	•		•
166 Queens		•		•
214 Queens		•	•	
232 Queens		•	•	
459 Queens		•		•
468 Queens		•		•
471 Queens		•	•	
473 Queens		•	•	•
484 Queens		•		•
552 Queens		•		•
863 Queens		•	•	
1257 Queens		•		•
421 Bronx		•	•	

It is noticeable at this stage that the diverse income requirement is not met as often as diverse education levels. In Los Angeles and Chicago, only once did a census tract that met necessary income levels overlap with a category in racial diversity. This is consistent with the historical movement in American cities towards class segregation.

In addition to race and class requirements, this study also wanted to avoid areas that looked diverse statistically, but were actually in transition from one racially homogenous neighborhood to another. Whether it is due to gentrification or ‘white flight’, a place that is rapidly changing does not represent a truly diverse community. Once the neighborhoods that met the criteria based on the 1990 census were uncovered, they were measured against the racial information from 1970, 1980, and 2000 to reveal how much they had changed over a period of 30 years. This stipulation brought the dimension of *sustainable* diversity to the project by introducing a rate of change as added criteria.

Both the 1990 and the 2000 census data are available from the *American Factfinder* website, so the ‘rate of change’ comparison began with the racial data from this 10-year span. The census tracts shown in Tables 1-4 were thinned out by restricting them to tracts that had changed less than 20% between 1990 and 2000. These were compared to the 1980 census, available on CD ROM, and thinned out again by limiting the criteria to those that had changed less than 30% in 20 years.

The 1970 census information was only available on paper, and more importantly, what the census measured changed considerably in 30 years. In 1970 the US Census only counted two races: black and white. At this point it seemed possible that either other minorities had been lumped into these categories, or they had simply not been counted. It became evident that the latter was the case because the sum of African-Americans and whites did not match the total population figures. This meant that an incomplete data set would be available for 1970. The comparison was limited to white and African-American but still provide the desired 30-year percentage change.

The rate of change over a 30-year period left only two census tracts in Chicago and Washington D.C. that had changed less than 40%, four in New York that had changed less than 40%, and two in Los Angeles that had changed less than 60%. The race, class and stability requirements resulted in a small handful of finalists vying for the title of most diverse urban neighborhood for their city.

In addition to finding the most diverse neighborhood, it became apparent that finding the *least* diverse neighborhood in each city would be another necessary component. My premise that diverse neighborhoods in different cities share certain qualities could be effectively tested through a comparison with homogenous areas in the same city. If these areas were similar to the diverse areas, then my theory would be disproven.

Finding the least diverse census tracts was done using the same method to find the diverse tracts, only in reverse. From the lists that ranked social and class diversity, the lowest contenders were selected, especially those that fit more than one category. Since homogenous neighborhoods are more common, the fine-tuning that was used to select the diverse neighborhoods was not necessary. The goal was to locate some areas that were less diverse in order to contrast them with the most diverse neighborhoods.

In the next half of this chapter, the process of weeding out the census tracts will bear its fruit. Beginning with the smallest city, the following sections will start with some racial and social context for the city as a whole and then focus on the census tracts that resulted from the method described previously.

Washington D.C.

The Piscataway Tribe occupied the land along the Potomac River that would become the nation's capitol. At the time that Pierre L'Enfant was commissioned to design and lay out the city in the late 1700s, a small population of African-Americans was already living in the area, and by 1840 there were four freedmen for every slave. The city remained very segregated despite a growing Africa-American population that today outnumbers the white population.³

Although the metropolitan area of Washington D.C. extends far beyond the district boundaries, this study only looked at census tracts within the district. Tract number 93 was the top candidate for diversity, meeting education levels and the comparative criteria for race. Its 30-year rate of change was 23%. The least diverse was census tract 9.01.

Tract 93 mirrors the demographic of Washington D.C., whereas Tract 9.01 is mostly white. Although Tract 93 is mostly African-American, it reflects the population of the entire city, and becomes a sort of microcosm for D.C., and as will be seen later, is made up of residents who describe their neighborhood as diverse. Tract 93 also shows more even distribution of income and education levels than Tract 9.01. Even though Tract 93 has a higher percentage of people in the '\$60,000 and over' bracket, it also features a good representation of lower income groups. This mixture of economic groups was an important factor for consideration in this study because it was an indicator of diversity on a social scale.

³ David L. Lewis, District of Columbia. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1976) 40.

Table 5. Tracts 93 and 9.01 demographics compared to Washington D.C.

	White	African-American	Asian	Hispanic
Tract 9.01	84%	4%	5%	6%
Tract 93	21%	72%	2%	3%
Washington D.C.	31%	60%	3%	8%

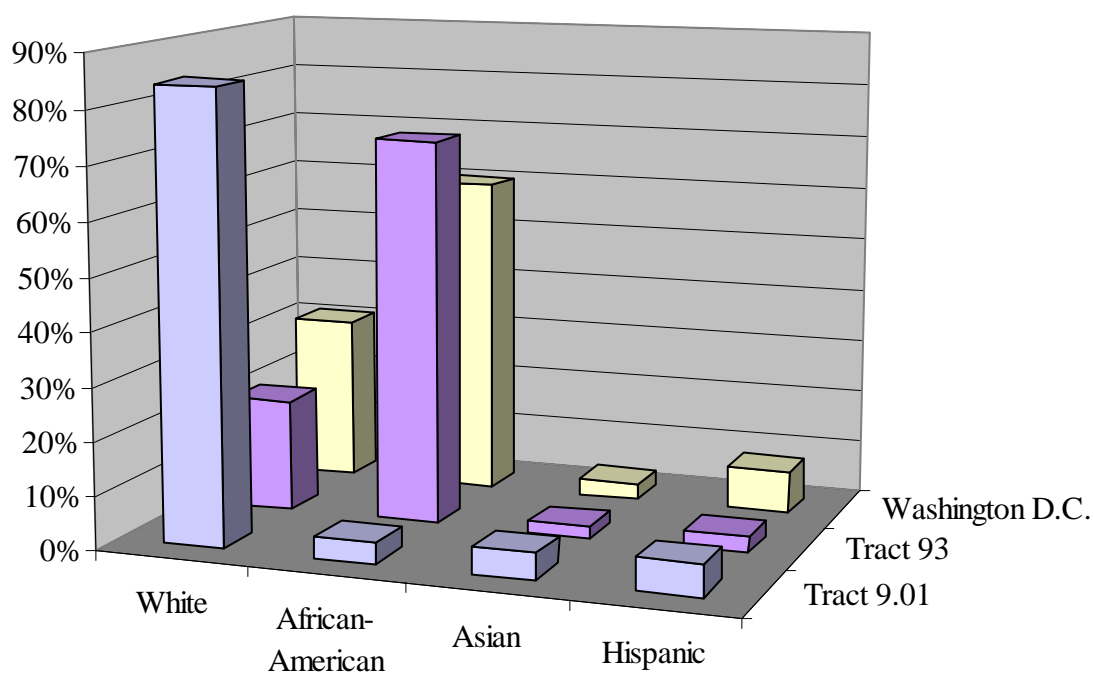


Table 6. Education levels for census tracts 93 (diverse) and 9.01 (least diverse).

	Less than 9th grade	9th to 12th grade, no diploma	High school graduate	Some college, no degree	Associate degree	Bachelor's degree	Graduate or professional degree
Tract 9.01	4%	2%	7%	9%	2%	30%	46%
Tract 93	8%	13%	19%	17%	4%	21%	17% ⁴

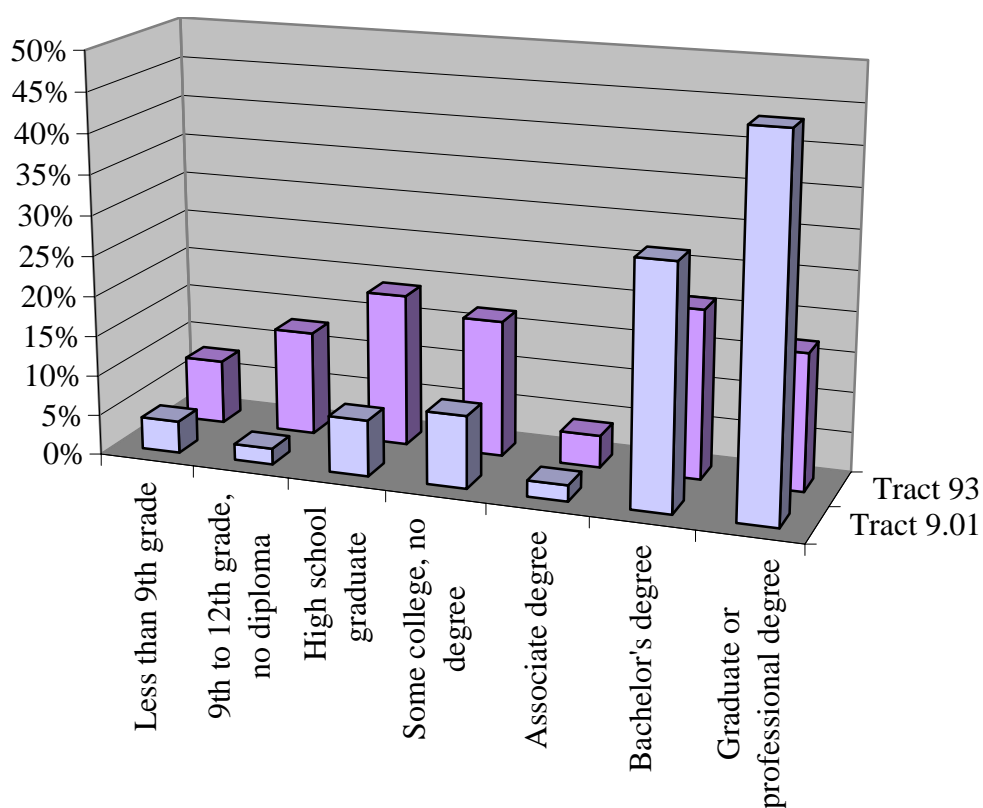
⁴ Ibid.

Table 7. Income levels for census tracts 93 and 9.01.⁵

	\$18,000 and under	\$18,000 to \$29,999	\$30,000 to \$42,499	\$42,500 to \$59,999	\$60,000 and over
Tract 9.01	3%	8%	4%	8%	76%
Tract 93	11%	16%	14%	22%	38%

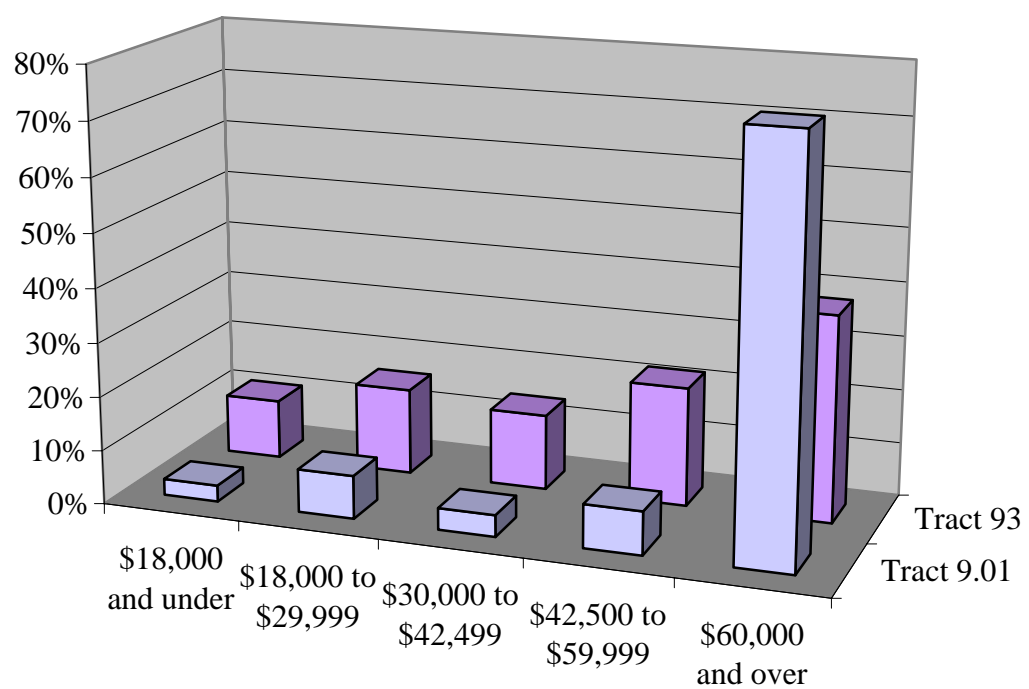
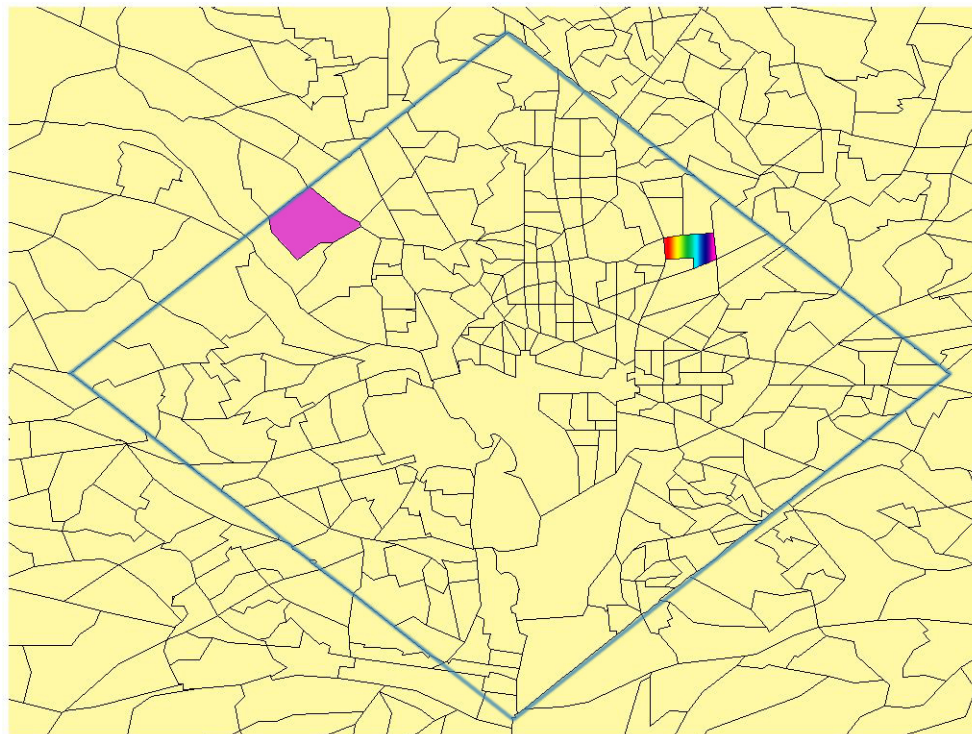
⁵ Ibid.

Figure 1. Census tract map of Washington D.C.



Most diverse, census tract 93



Least diverse, census tract 9.01



C.S. 93, Brookland Lavinia Wolfarth



C.S. 9.01, Spring Valley



C.S. 93, Brookland Lavinia Wolfarth



C.S. 9.01, Spring Valley

The pictures on the right show some of the wealthy suburban character of census tract 9.01. The area shown as census tract 93, with pictures on the left, is a neighborhood known as Brookland. Some of the characteristics of Brookland that are immediately apparent include its tradition of diversity, strong community, and a history of civic activism. It is known for its racial mix and its continuity.

In 1840, Ann and Jeheil Brooks built a Greek-Revival farmhouse on their 246-acre parcel of land. From 1850 onwards, slaves were given parts of this land to settle on as free people. Another prominent family of the area, the Queens, were themselves racially mixed. Brookland's African-American population was well-established by the end of the 19th century, and by the early 20th century there was a strong pattern of home ownership by African-American middle and working class residents. As the area urbanized, Italian and Irish American families were attracted to the area by the strong presence of the Catholic Church. Brookland had evolved from farmland to a middle class suburb by the 1900s. It grew as a trolley-car suburb with the growth of the Catholic

University of America and Howard University. These two institutions ensured the long-term stability of the area, its middle class character and racial diversity.⁶

Although some white families moved away during integration, many stayed resulting in one of the first integrated neighborhoods in Washington. Hundreds of families of African-American and European-American heritage have lived side by side for generations.⁷ One long-time resident of Brookland described her childhood as an idyllic period,

I guess I lived in 'Mayberry.' It was Brookland, which was a small university community with woods and a university. I was very attached to the university, but not everyone was. I went to school downtown. The black girl and the white girl on the 80 bus. She likes Dylan and I like Motown. This comes across as the multicultural dream.⁸

Although the area is weighted much more heavily towards African-Americans, there is certainly enough racial and social variety to distinguish Brookland as a model for diverse urban life in America. It has maintained its character over time and cultivated a rich mosaic of long-time residents. It will be interesting to see how tracts in other cities compare.

⁶ The Brookland CDC. From Farmland to Trolley Car Suburb: An Investigation of Brookland's History. The Brookland Cultural Resources Survey, 2001.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Mary Teresa Barrick Stilwell. "Neighborhood Memories – Brookland." accessed 25 February 2002 from http://hswdc.org/Learn_About_DC/Neighborhoods/

Chicago

Until 1835, Chicago had been primarily a Native American town existing for the exchange of goods with white traders. They were dispossessed of their land and forced to move west of the Mississippi.⁹ As the city grew to commercial success, segregation of race and class also increased. In the 1940s the Chicago Housing Authority was taking steps towards integration, but the city council was opposed it. Public housing began to be used as a tool of segregation by locating housing projects in all African-American areas. More than 20,000 apartment units built between 1955 and 1965 were in completely African-American census tracts.¹⁰ That attitude has been hard to overcome and Chicago remains a very segregated city to the present day.

Most of the metropolitan Chicago area lies within Cook County, which creates the boundary for this study. It is worth noting some of the statistical problems that arose during the course of this survey. The front runner of all census tracts in Chicago turned out to be a neighborhood in a primarily African-American neighborhood known as Douglas. On closer inspection it turned out this was actually a university campus, the Illinois Institute of Technology, and an optometry school. So this candidate was thrown out as an anomaly.

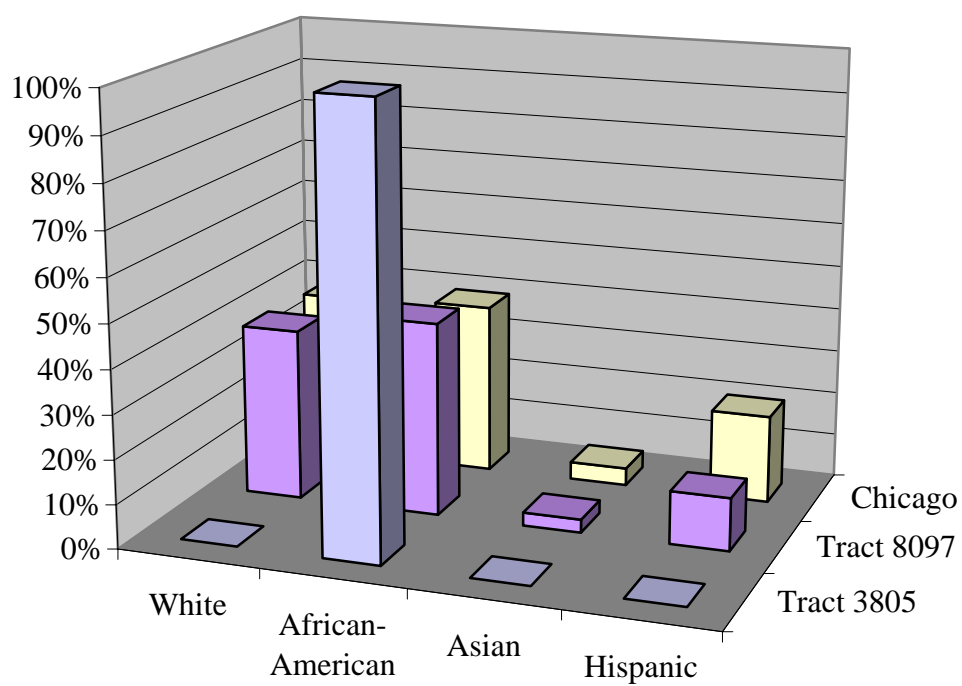
The second runner up was census tract 8097. It met the 'comparative' criteria for race and mixed income requirement. Its rate of change over 30 years was 38%. The least diverse census tract was 3805.

⁹ Dedmon, Emmett. Fabulous Chicago. (New York: Atheneum, 1981)

¹⁰ Kaplan, David H. and Steven R. Holloway. Segregation in Cities. (Association of American Geographers: Washington DC, 1998) 60.

Table 8. Tracts 8097 and 3805 demographics compared to the city of Chicago.¹¹

	White	African-American	Asian	Hispanic
Tract 3805	0%	100%	0%	0%
Tract 8097	39%	44%	3%	12%
Chicago	38%	39%	4%	20%



¹¹ <http://factfinder.census.gov>

Table 9. Education levels for census tracts 8097 and 3805.¹²

	Less than 9th grade	9th to 12th grade, no diploma	High school graduate	Some college, no degree	Associate degree	Bachelor's degree	Graduate or professional degree
Tract 3805	15%	51%	28%	5%	0%	1%	0%
Tract 8097	11%	8%	25%	19%	4%	19%	15%

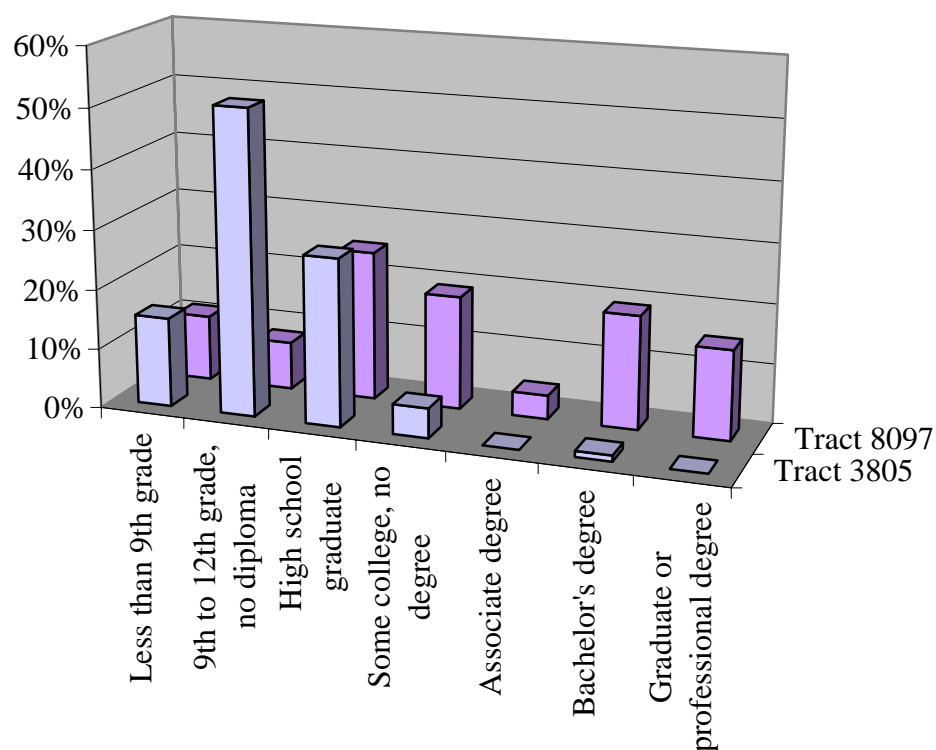
¹² Ibid.

Table 10. Income levels for census tract 8097.¹³

	\$18,000 and under	\$18,000 to \$29,999	\$30,000 to \$42,499	\$42,500 to \$59,999	\$60,000 and over
Tract 3805	90%	7%	1%	0%	1%
Tract 8097	18%	19%	20%	21%	22%

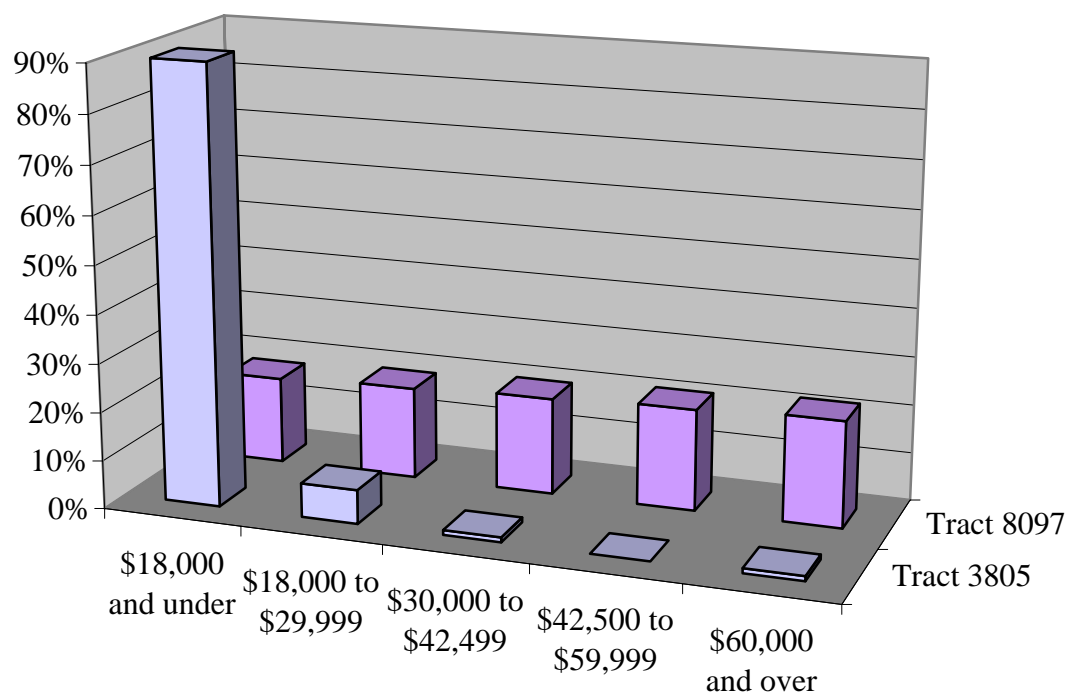
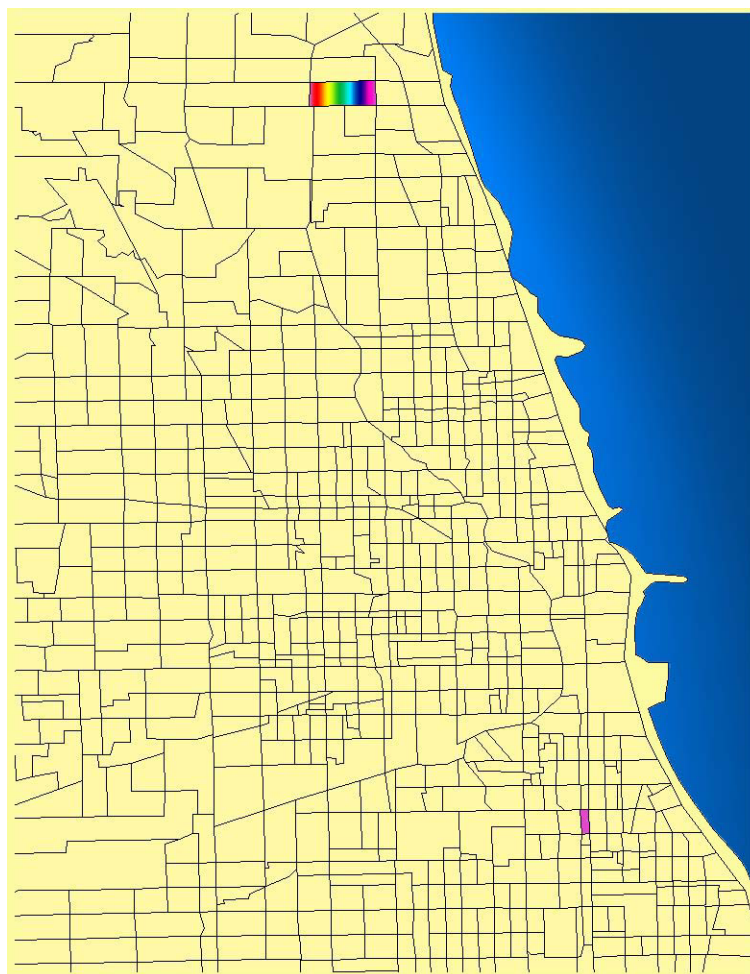


¹³ Ibid.

Figure 2. Context map of Evanston and Chicago.



 Most diverse, census tract 3805

 Least diverse, census tract 8097



C.S. 3805, Evanston Lauren Brandes

C.S. 8097, South Side Lauren Brandes

The least diverse census tract was a bleak housing project on the South Side of Chicago, shown in the photos on the right. These Corbusier –inspired towers illustrate the failure of modernism mentioned in Chapter One. The tenants of these high-rise projects are overwhelmingly poor and African-American.

The most diverse census tract was located in an affluent northern suburb of Chicago called Evanston. Some of the features of the area are lakefront parks, shopping districts, nightlife, a symphony and Northwestern University. It is described as a blend of city and suburb with a mixture of ethnicities, incomes and tastes that celebrate diversity. Consisting of whites, African-Americans, eastern Europeans, Latinos, and Asians, Evanston does not consider itself homogenous. It also has an activist tradition that

continues to the present day. An article from the Chicago Tribune described the town by writing, "Some people think that there's nothing more warming than being surrounded by people exactly like themselves. Evanston isn't for that group. There is no point in joining a symphony, after all, if the only sound you can tolerate is that of your own clarinet."¹⁴

The area was first populated by immigrants from England, Ireland, Germany and Luxembourg who became farmers there. The university came later and continued to attract a mixture of people. John Evans, who the town was named after, was one of the founders of Northwestern, chartered in 1851.¹⁵ Census records show that African-Americans resided in Evanston since the 1850s and increased steadily, along with other minority groups, with each passing decade. However, for most of Evanston's history, the city was deeply divided and diversity was something to endure rather than embrace.

In the last twenty years this has changed significantly as Nicole Sangster, daughter of Jamaican immigrants, describes, "When I was growing up here, black people were on one side and white people were on the other. But times change. The neighborhoods are more integrated, and the neighbors care for one another."¹⁶

Los Angeles

The Los Angeles population has always been diverse, from the original 44 settlers of mixed Spanish, Native American and African heritage who found a new pueblo near Gabrieleno village of the Yang-na tribe in 1781. Between 1850 and 1930, Los Angeles

¹⁴ Charles M Madigan, "Archival Snapshot." 20 August 1994, accessed 15 March 2002 from <http://yacgi.chicagotribune.com/homes/>

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Tracy Dell'Angela, "Archival Snapshot." 27 October 1996, accessed 15 March 2002 from <http://yacgi.chicagotribune.com/homes/>

became very fragmented; with more diversity than any other city on the West Coast, it also became the most segregated.¹⁷

Until a connection was built to the transcontinental railroad in 1876, L.A. was still predominantly a Mexican town. Then whites started arriving by the trainload and the original Spanish speakers were almost completely absorbed. By 1900 another minority was rising to prominence. At that time 3,000 African Americans were in the metropolitan area making it the 'largest black settlement on the Pacific coast.' Asians were also a visible minority by 1900.¹⁸

With a history of diversity and separation, Los Angeles is unique among the cities in this study. A neighborhood that accommodates differences here is sure to tell an interesting story. The most diverse census tract for Los Angeles County according to the criteria provided in this thesis was tract 2131. It is also important to note that the census tract neighboring this to the west was the second runner up, and displays similar characteristics. Tract 2131 met the 'ideal' criteria for race and the mixed education requirement. Its rate of change over 30 years was 55%. The least diverse census tract was 1373.02.

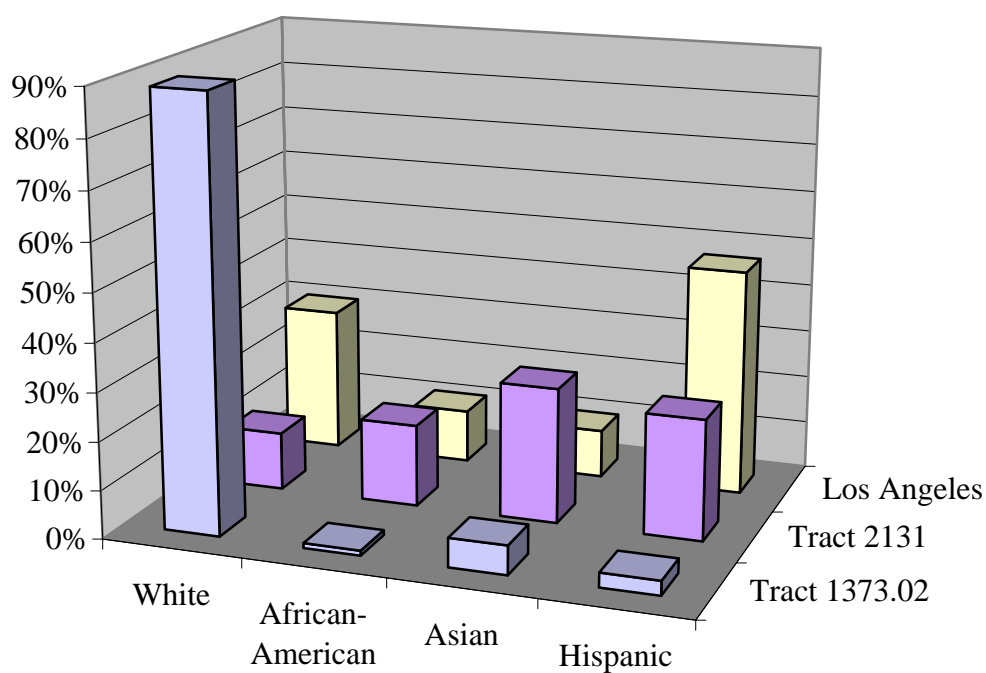
Los Angeles was the only city in this study that had a diverse census tract that portrayed a racial demographic that went beyond the overall city demographic and contained a high percentage of Asians. Tract 2131 also averages out with some of the lowest income groups compared with other cities, with the highest category being in the '\$18,000 and under' group.

¹⁷ Dolores Hayden, The Power of Place. (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1995) 85-88.

¹⁸ Ibid. 91, 92.

Table 11. Census tracts 2131 and 1373.02 demographics compared to the city of Los Angeles.¹⁹

	White	African-American	Asian	Hispanic
Tract 1373.02	89%	1%	6%	3%
Tract 2131	12%	17%	28%	25%
Los Angeles	30%	11%	10%	47%



¹⁹ <http://factfinder.census.gov>

Table 12. Education levels for census tracts 2131 and 1372.03.²⁰

	Less than 9th grade	9th to 12th grade, no diploma	High school graduate	Some college, no degree	Associate degree	Bachelor's degree	Graduate or professional degree
Tract 1372.03	2%	5%	18%	27%	6%	27%	15%
Tract 2131	17%	14%	25%	15%	8%	15%	6%

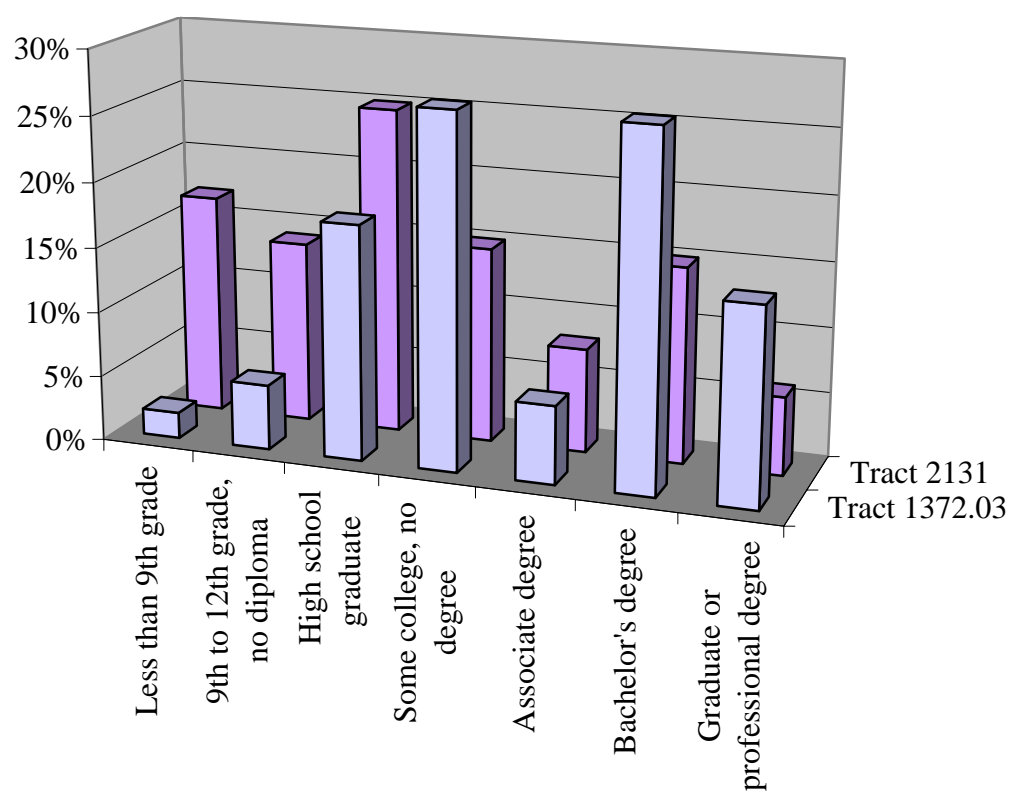
²⁰ Ibid.

Table 13. Income levels for census tracts 2131 and 1373.02.²¹

	\$18,000 and under	\$18,000 to \$29,999	\$30,000 to \$42,499	\$42,500 to \$59,999	\$60,000 and over
Tract 1373.02	5%	4%	10%	11%	70%
Tract 2131	34%	20%	16%	13%	17%

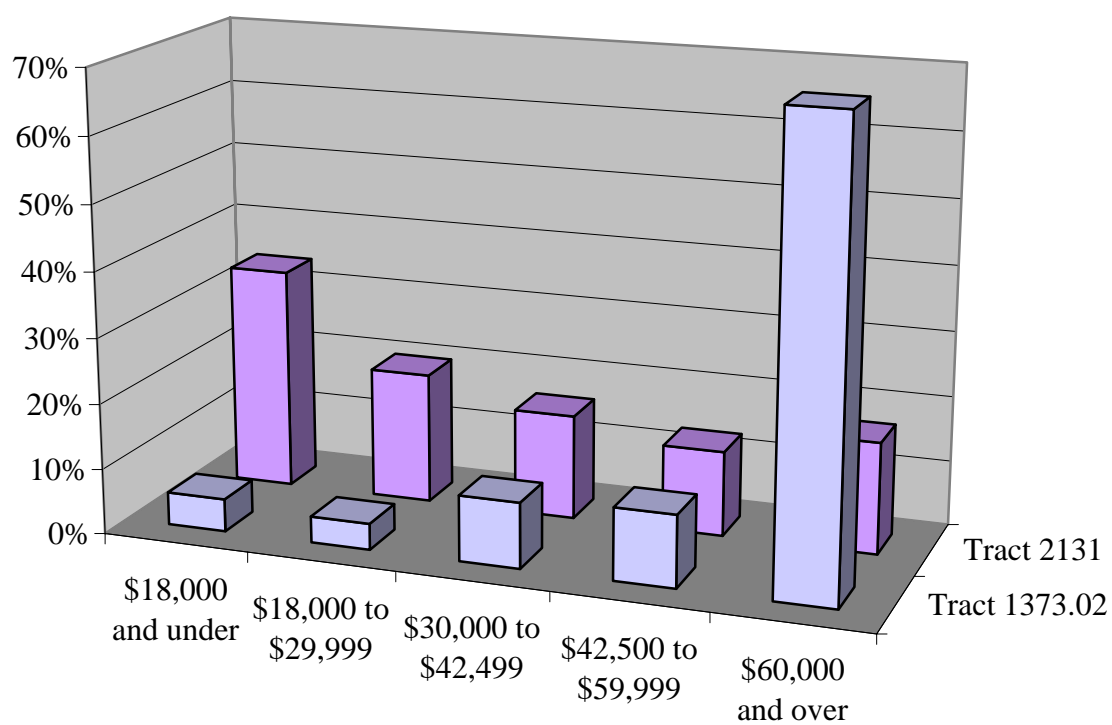
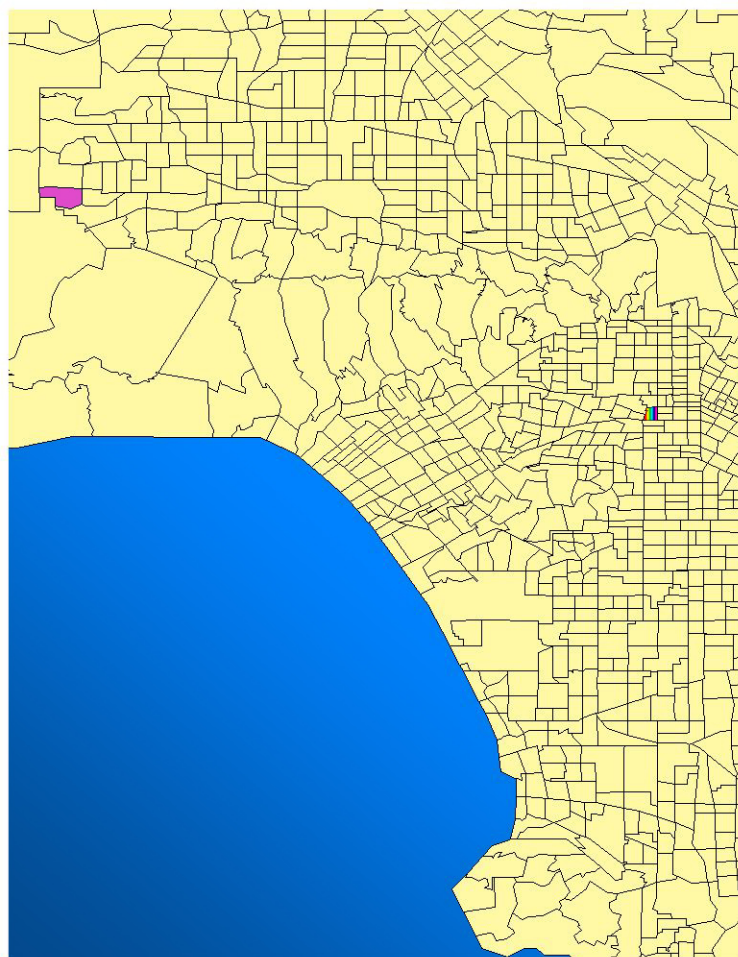
²¹ Ibid.

Figure 3. Census tract map of Los Angeles.



Most diverse, census tract 2131



Least diverse, census tract 1372.02



C.S. 2131, Wilshire

Leaf Baimbridge

C.S. 1372 Canoga Park Leaf Baimbridge

The homogenous pink block represents Canoga Park, a suburban development, but the rainbow block that we will focus on is located in the Wilshire area of Los Angeles near downtown and considered one of the most diverse areas of the city. Demographics change dramatically from block to block, and many neighborhoods have a history of ethnic and racial integration. There is also a high degree of class integration with first generation immigrant neighborhoods abutting established high-end residences. Census tract 2131 is also at the edge of Koreatown, which is centered around Olympic Boulevard and bordered by Western Avenue. Wilshire was the second densest area in Los Angeles in 1990. There is also a strong tradition of architectural preservation in this part of the city, containing more landmarks than any other area. Community is a strong presence

here, but usually manifesting itself in smaller groups. A block of the neighborhood may get together to meet a common goals and challenges.

New York

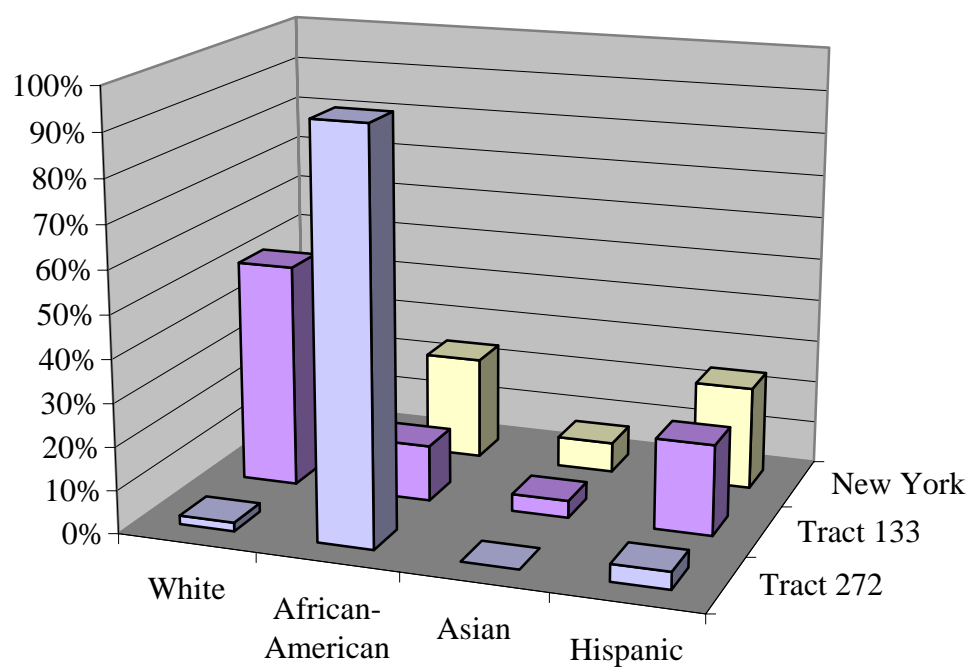
New York has the reputation of being the most diverse city in the United States, the classic ‘melting pot.’ Immigrants from all over have contributed to the cultural mosaic since its earliest inception. Settled by the Dutch, the island of Manna-hatin was purchased from the Canarsie tribe in 1626 for \$23.70. A peaceful takeover in 1664 brought British rule and changed the name of New Amsterdam to New York. By the time of the American Revolution, the city had already become a destination for immigrants. New York was undoubtedly the greatest city in the nation in the 1850s and was home to diverse economic, ethnic and racial groups. In 1900 over half of New York’s residents had been born in another country.²²

New York City is made up of five boroughs, Staten Island, Brooklyn, Queens, The Bronx, and Manhattan. In a situation even more unusual than the anomaly that occurred in Chicago with the university campus, the first choice for most diverse census tract in New York City turned out to be Roosevelt Island. Located in the Hudson River between Manhattan and Queens, Roosevelt Island was a planned community that had virtually no residents before 1970. The second-runner up was census tract 133 in Kings County, which is Brooklyn. It met the ‘comparative’ criteria for race and the mixed education requirement. Its rate of change over 30 years was 32%. The least diverse tract was 272 in Queens County.

²² Lankevich, George J. and Howard B. Furer. A Brief History of New York City. (New York: National University Publications, 1984) 1-310

Table 14. Tract 133, Kings County and 272 Queens County demographics compared to the city of New York.²³

	White	African-American	Asian	Hispanic
Tract 272	2%	94%	0%	4%
Tract 133	52%	13%	4%	21%
New York	43%	24%	7%	24%



²³ <http://factfinder.census.gov>

Table 15. Education levels for census tracts 133, Kings County and 272 Queens County.²⁴

	Less than 9th grade	9th to 12th grade, no diploma	High school graduate	Some college, no degree	Associate degree	Bachelor's degree	Graduate or professional degree
Tract 272	7%	31%	43%	11%	3%	0%	5%
Tract 133	12%	14%	16%	11%	5%	22%	20%

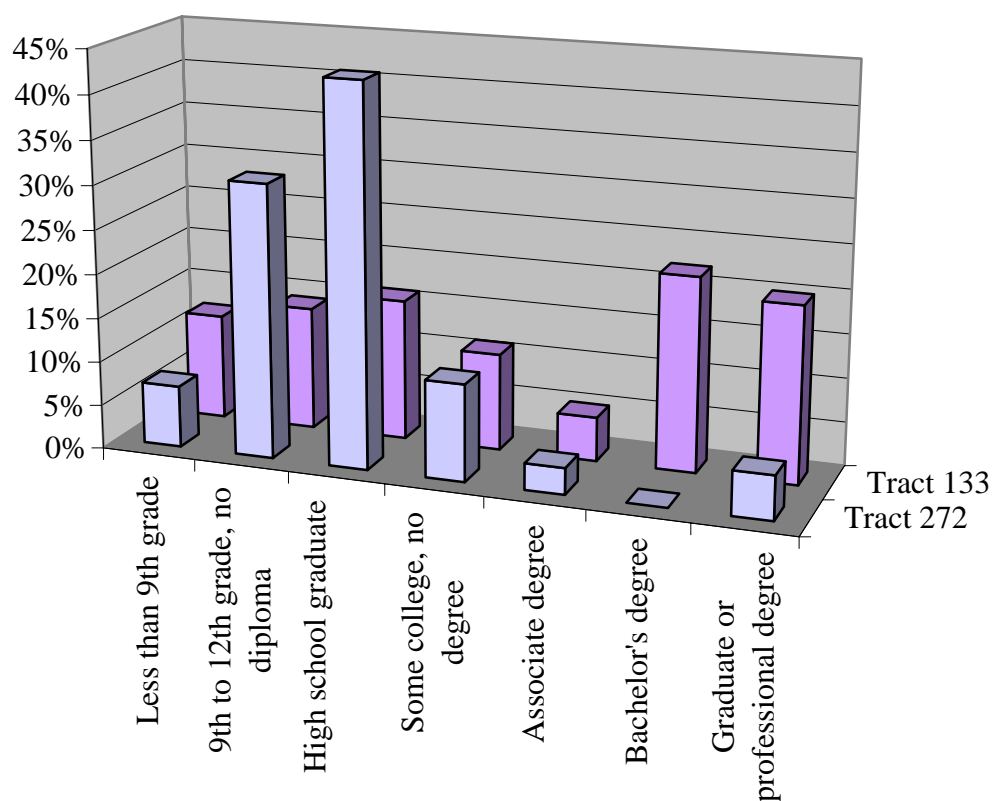
²⁴ Ibid.

Table 16. Income levels for census tracts 133, Kings County and 272 Queens County.²⁵

	\$18,000 and under	\$18,000 to \$29,999	\$30,000 to \$42,499	\$42,500 to \$59,999	\$60,000 and over
Tract 272	27%	15%	14%	20%	24%
Tract 133	27%	18%	18%	20%	17%

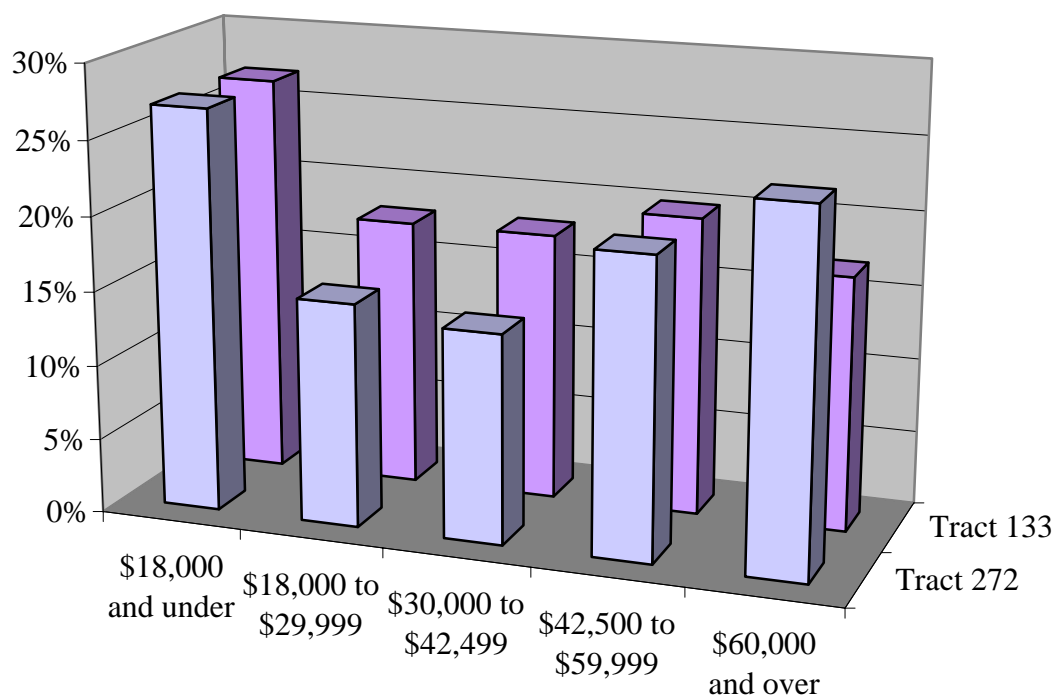
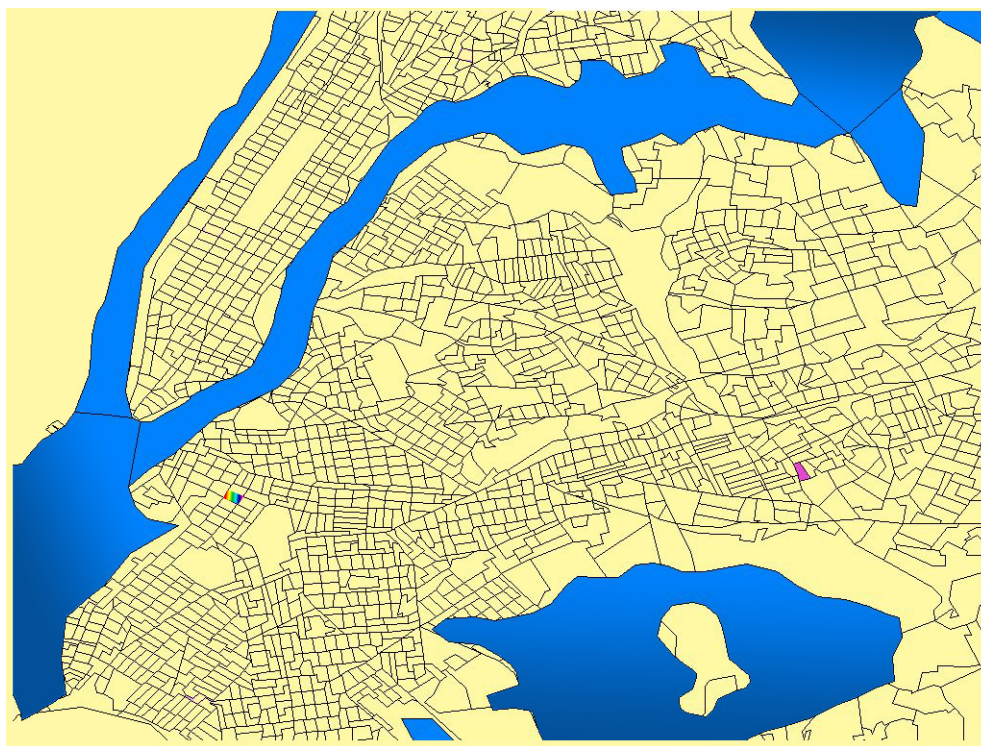
²⁵ Ibid.

Figure 4. Census tract map of New York.



Most diverse, census tract 133, Kings County



Least diverse, census tract 272, Queens County



C.S. 133, Park Slope Jonlyn Freeman



C.S. 272, South Jamaica Jonlyn Freeman



C.S. 133, Park Slope Jonlyn Freeman



C.S. 272, South Jamaica, Jonlyn Freeman

The least diverse area is in South Jamaica, Queens. The most diverse area, known as Park Slope, was confirmed by a New York City demographer as having a strong history of diversity. Like the other neighborhoods in this study, Park Slope is known for its diversity, its strong community and also shares a tradition of civic activism. Its beautiful brownstones are home to an ever-changing community named for its proximity to Prospect Park, designed by Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux. It is inhabited by a large number of writers, editors, academics and lawyers. Few residents grew up within Brooklyn; most of them are transplants from Manhattan's Upper West Side, who moved there in search of cheaper real estate.²⁶

From the time of Dutch colonization in the 1600s until the 1850s, this area was used for farming. Development began with rowhouses in the 1870s when Prospect Park was completed. A cable railway began crossing the Brooklyn Bridge in 1883, making the area convenient to Manhattan. Many wealthy Brooklynners were attracted to Park Slope in the late 1800s and for this reason the area became known as the 'Gold Coast of Brooklyn.'²⁷

²⁶ Kenneth T. Jackson, The Neighborhoods of Brooklyn. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998) 165-171.

²⁷ Ibid.

At the turn of the century less expensive housing was built for working class residents near Gowanus Canal. After World War II wealthier residents moved to the suburbs and the area became a blue-collar neighborhood. Some of the brownstones were converted to rooming houses while others were demolished and replaced with apartment buildings. By the 1960s and 70s the neighborhood was recovering and by the 1980s and 90s had grown considerably wealthier. The area was rather divided with the North Slope having higher income groups and the South Slope being home to more new immigrants from Puerto Rico, Latin America, and the Dominican Republic. Presently that distinction is almost nonexistent.²⁸

Summary

Each of these diverse neighborhoods share intangible similarities. They have a long history of racial and ethnic diversity, civic activism and strong community. The people that make up these communities and their influence in maintaining the diversity in their neighborhoods cannot be measured, however it is possible to learn something from the surroundings that these strong communities are home to. In the next chapter we will look at the physical similarities between these places and begin applying some of the criteria that was discussed in Chapter Three. Through analysis elements can be distilled into concrete correlations between these areas, and although these elements represent only some of the factors that must be considered, they are critical in helping us understand the nature of diverse communities.

²⁸ Ibid.

CHAPTER FIVE

ANALYSIS

Now that the neighborhoods in this study have been clearly identified, we can put the ideas that were discussed in Chapter Three to the test. The hypothesis that an urban neighborhood will reflect a diverse population can be evaluated in several ways. In this chapter we will look at the physical environment as the by-product of diversity and find out how different cities manifest their mixed communities.

Comparison of Neighborhoods

These four census tracts, Brookland in Washington D.C., Evanston in Chicago, Wilshire in Los Angeles and Park Slope in Brooklyn, already share some similar background traits. While societal factors have been fundamental in maintaining, encouraging or allowing the mixture of people in these areas, there is also a reciprocal relationship between a community and its surroundings that is worth exploring.

Testing the extent of the relationship between people and place will begin with a comparison of various features between the diverse and more homogenous areas in the study. This will reveal patterns that demonstrate some clear tendencies of diverse neighborhoods. We will begin this comparison search with some aerial views of the census tracts. On the following page are views of the most diverse census tracts, followed by the most homogenous tracts.

Figure 1. Aerial views of diverse census tracts.



Brookland, Washington DC

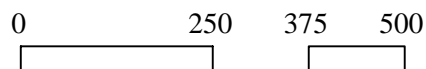
DC City Planning Office



Tract in Evanston, IL.

Mapquest.

Scale: 1" = 250'





Tract in Wilshire, Los Angeles.
Mapquest



Tract in Park Slope,
Brooklyn. Mapquest

Scale: 1" = 250' 0 250 375 500

A graphical scale bar consisting of a horizontal line with vertical tick marks at the 0, 250, 375, and 500-foot positions. The text "Scale: 1" = 250'" is positioned to the left of the 0 mark.

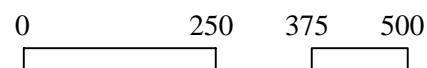
Figure 2. Aerial views of homogenous census tracts.



Tract in Spring Valley, Washington DC

DC Planning Office

Scale: 1" = 250'





Tract in South Side Chicago. Mapquest.



Tract in Canoga Park, Los Angeles

Mapquest.

Scale: 1" = 250' 0 250 375 500



Tract in South Jamaica,
Queens Mapquest.

Scale: 1" = 250' 0 250 375 500

Looking at the diverse areas as a group in Figure 1, it is clear that they share some common characteristics. They are all continuations of the urban fabric of the city and seem to relate in scale with their surroundings. The un-diverse areas in Figure 2, however, are a hodgepodge of different types of development. There are two cases of suburban sprawl, one super-block housing project, and an urban city block. Ironically, the homogenous portions of the city display a wider spectrum of development types.

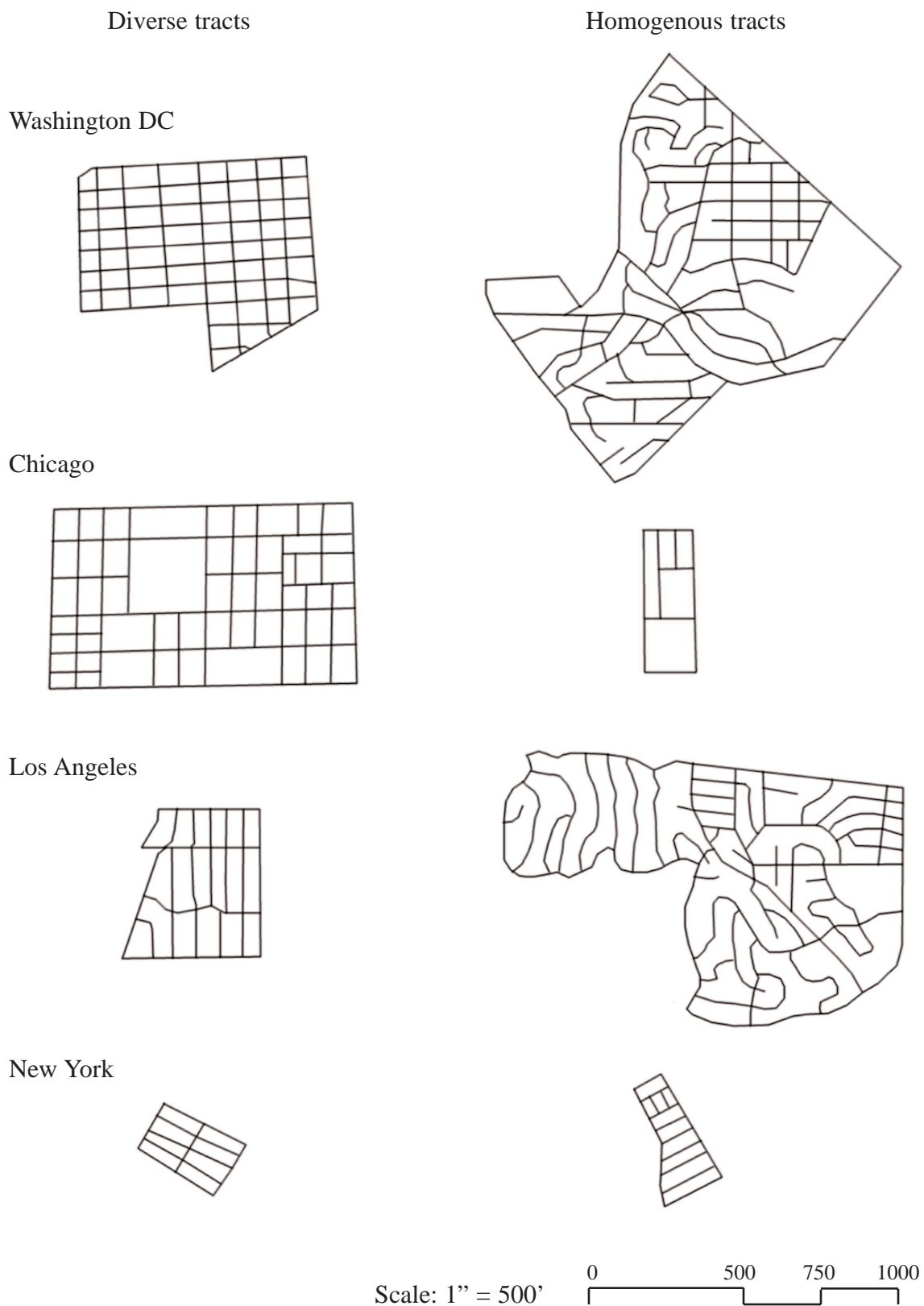
The aerial in Evanston stands out among the diverse neighborhoods for including some greenspace and an intrusion of industry into the residential grid. Although these forms break up some of the repetition of the blocks, at most of the edges the urban fabric is intact. The Evanston tract is bordered to the east by a canal with a greenway park.

The diverse tracts also display a clear progression towards density from the smallest cities to the largest. The houses appear to be more spread out in Washington DC and become more tightly knit in Evanston. Even in Los Angeles, notorious for sprawl, the tract is denser than Evanston. In Brooklyn, with the most density, there is no detached housing, only brownstones and rowhouses.

The homogenous neighborhoods display no such rational progression. The DC suburb and the Chicago housing project do not relate to each other at all. Even the New York tract is distinctly different from the others. Only the Los Angeles and DC tracts share the tell-tale curves of a suburban residential area.

The layout of the city will be explored more on the following page in Table 5.1. This chart illustrates roads and blocks in a simplified form for easy comparison. The diverse tracts are listed on the left and the homogenous tracts are on the right.

Table 5.1. Road and Block Layouts.



The diagram in Table 5.1 illustrates that diversity loves a grid, or at least it shows that a grid-like network of city blocks is conducive for the establishment of different groups of people in an area. As mentioned in Chapter Two, Jacobs points out that short blocks are an essential component for social and economic diversity. This seems to be confirmed by the diagrams in the left column.

The homogenous tract in Queens, New York is the only area that seems to have more in common structurally with the diverse areas. This is an important reminder of the relatively minor role that design plays in building communities. There are many examples of neighborhoods that match the diagrams on the left, which are dominated by a population that is primarily one race and socio-economic class. So it is fair to say that ‘sameness’ loves a grid too, although, perhaps not as much as it loves a cul-de-sac.

The relatively intact grids in the column of diverse tracts are strongest in Washington DC and New York. Chicago is broken up by different uses, as seen in the aerial on page 66, and Los Angeles is distinguished by two intersecting grids. They all still show most of the streets connecting with each other, in contrast with most of the street layouts in the homogenous column.

A mixture of uses is another component of a diverse area. It follows that economic diversity would enhance other kinds of diversity like social and racial differences. It is just another aspect that compliments diversity on other levels. On the following page we will see how the mixture of uses in the diverse census tracts match up to the homogenous tracts.

Table 5.2. Land Uses.



In Table 5.2 it is evident that the images on the left are more colorful and intricate than their counterparts on the right side of the page. Each of the census tracts display more than one use, however the more diverse tracts have a greater variety of uses, a higher proportion of other uses besides residential, and more integration of other uses throughout the tract. This seems to support the premise that a mixture of uses correlates to a mixture of people.

Once again the homogenous census tract in Queens, New York seems to rival its counterpart on the other side of the page. It is the only tract in the right-hand column that has an industrial component. However, the other tracts in that group are definitely more monochrome than those in the diverse group. The suburban neighborhoods in DC and Los Angeles are primarily residential, with small commercial islands. This differs from the pattern in all of the diverse neighborhoods, which show long bands of commercial development stretching throughout the tract.

A mixture of uses clearly plays a role in building a diverse neighborhood, but another area to explore is the variety of transportation available. In most metropolitan areas cars and buses are extensively used, but places that also have train and subway service experience more freedom of choice. The next two pages will show the census tracts that are convenient to rapid transit and the proximity of these areas to the downtown or central city.

Figure 5. Rapid transit lines.



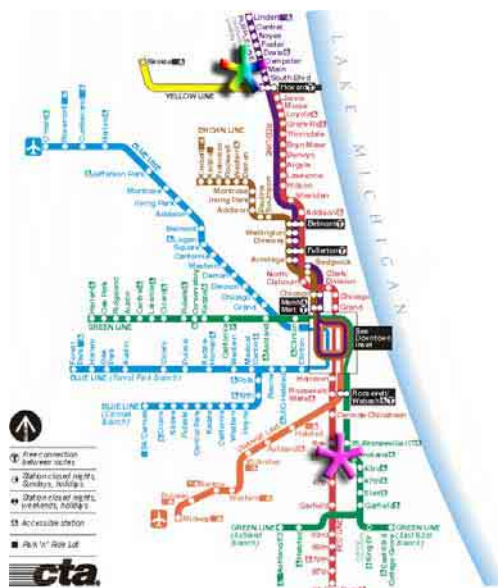
Diverse census tract



Homogenous census tract



Washington DC



Chicago



Los Angeles



New York City

Figure 5 shows that all the diverse census tracts had convenient access to a subway or commuter train while only one homogenous tract did so (in Chicago). Access to efficient public transportation appeals to a variety of income groups from those who cannot afford cars, to wealthy people who chose not to drive. This is a key component in enabling residents of mixed incomes to live together in an area.

All of the diverse tracts, except in Chicago, were also significantly closer to the center of the city. This explains the adherence to the grid as seen in Figure 3. Being closer to the city core means being an older part of the city and most of these tracts were in or near historic districts. Brookland has applied for historic status, part of Evanston that is four blocks away from the census tract in this study is in the process of becoming a historic district, and the tract in Park Slope almost touches the corner of the Park Slope Historic District, established in 1973.

Being an older part of the city allows a rich mix of old and new buildings to stand together. This was another of Jacob's ingredients for a diverse area, a mixture of building uses and ages. Next we will take a closer look at the structures in these areas through a photographic comparison of the diverse and homogenous tracts. Beginning with Washington DC, we will explore the architecture and the character and see how they differ between different demographic compositions.

Figure 6. Photographic survey of Brookland and Spring Valley communities.

Brookland



Spring Valley





Based on a visual survey of these two very different communities, it is clear that Brookland follows the pattern of a traditional downtown development consisting of a main street commercial area with residential areas radiating out from it. The commercial street contains serviceable businesses that still cater to the daily needs of residents. The storefronts display their individuality through different colors, styles and awnings.

Several different types of housing can be seen in Brookland ranging from apartment buildings to townhouses to single family homes. Spring Valley, on the other hand, consists of suburban homes with sweeping lawns. Although photographs were unavailable, some real estate listings showed housing that did not offer much variety in style or price range. The aerial on page 68 shows that the neighborhood is composed entirely of single-family detached housing. The few shops in the area seem to appeal to a high-end clientele.

Street trees are another feature that appear in every picture of Brookland, whether it is a residential street or a commercial thoroughfare. They reinforce the traditional form of this older urban neighborhood and define sidewalks with a civic function as social gathering places. This theme will continue throughout the diverse neighborhoods.

Figure 7. Photographic survey of study areas in Evanston and South Side Chicago.

Tract in Evanston



Tract in South Side



Tract in Evanston



Tract in South Side



These pictures show a dramatic difference between the diverse area in Evanston and the homogenous area in the South Side of Chicago. In Evanston there are a variety of different kinds of housing in different income brackets. Even among houses in the same income level there is a range of architectural styles. This variety also extends to commerce. There are a few restored main-street style businesses, but not far away there are also contemporary chain stores in strip malls. The South Side housing project, on the other hand, is a monolithic landscape of loss. Housing choices ranging from detached single-family, townhouses and apartments are not available.

The South Side is a tragic illustration of the difference that can exist between a homogenous minority neighborhood and a mostly white neighborhood. The suburb in Washington DC is a landscape of choice with a high investment of financial and social capital, whereas the South Side of Chicago has a barren atmosphere of entrapment and hopelessness. Federal and local government have both aided in the creation of these landscapes through subsidy and discrimination. These two contrasting neighborhoods demonstrate that there is no 'typical' landscape of sameness and that these places change drastically depending on the racial, and more importantly, the socio-economic group that is dominant.

The suburban roots of the diverse tract for Chicago set it apart from the other examples of diverse urban neighborhoods and point out that central city areas do not have a monopoly on difference. Shaped by an urban grid, the area functions as a suburb of Chicago and illustrates the possibility of a community away from the heart of the city that can sustain diversity. It surpasses most of the other neighborhoods in that category with its mixture of uses and even distribution of income.

Figure 8. Photographic survey of study areas in Wilshire and Canoga Park in Los Angeles.

Tract in Wilshire



Tract in Canoga Park



Tract in Wilshire



Tract in Canoga Park



The pictures of Wilshire/Koreatown show a variety of housing conditions and types of shopping and businesses. In contrast, the Canoga Park suburb consists primarily of housing in a style that does not vary widely from lot to lot. They appear to be middle-class residences built in the 1970s. Although it consists of a lower socio-economic group than the suburb in Washington DC, the Los Angeles suburb shares the basic form and consistent style and age of buildings.

The diverse tract displays some of the widest range of spaces and building types of any tract in that category. From old to new, strip malls to offices, high-end to low-end housing, even advertising in different languages, this area where Wilshire and Koreatown overlap is a medley of forms and functions. It is also one of the most heavily populated areas of the city with a base of residents that help sustain the variety of local businesses.

The last picture in the diverse column shows a gated street with signs that read 'end'. These block the streets that run off of the census tract at the south edge, bordered by West Pico Boulevard. This illustrates some of the negative perceptions about diversity that are common among some more homogenous communities that want to maintain the status quo; the blocked street is there to keep diversity out.

Los Angeles, despite its history of racial and socio-economic separation, still presents a neighborhood with a rich mosaic of culture and community. The Wilshire/Koreatown area has a higher percentage of Asians and Hispanics than any other tract, making it the most racially diverse area in this study. Although it contains some of the lowest income groups of all the diverse tracts, the area seems to be prosperous and lively.

Figure 9. Photographic survey of study areas in Park Slope and South Jamaica, New York.

Park Slope



South Jamaica



Park Slope



South Jamaica



Of all the cities in this study, New York has the longest history of diversity because it has been a destination for immigrants from its earliest days. Having formed as a city under Old World influence to a higher degree than other American cities, it also has more integrated mixed-uses throughout the metropolitan area. Both the area in Park Slope and South Jamaica share some similarities which they inherited from the diverse legacy of New York to varying degrees, but on closer examination it is clear that there are more places that incubate differences in the Park Slope area.

The first image in the Park Slope column looks more representative of homogeneity than diversity. The repeating form, though beautiful, looks more monotonous than the attached housing next to it in the South Jamaica column. This is another nebulous facet of the diverse neighborhood – an entire block can be completely uniform as long as the uniformity is restricted to a few blocks. Half of the Park Slope tract is composed entirely of brownstones, but a block away is a dramatic increase in apartments and infill townhouses built in the 1970s and 1980s. These are fringed by an industrial and commercial area at each end.

The blocks seemed to become less tight and cohesive architecturally as they neared the industrial edge of the tract. This infusion of new development could easily be considered disruptive of the strong urban fabric that is dominated by brownstones, but it is actually essential to maintaining diversity. A grid can encourage sameness as much as it encourages diversity, but breaking up the monotony occasionally can create cracks where diversity can seep in and flourish.

As is the case with the tracts in Los Angeles, Chicago and Washington DC, the diverse tracts are characterized by an economic gradient with one end of the tract being

wealthier than the other end. The wealthy sections are unique in these cases due to their proximity to an area that is poorer, and this proximity enables them to become somewhat more integrated among different income levels throughout the tract. An availability of housing in different price ranges is necessary to make this proximity possible, even if the difference is between the blocks rather than within the block.

Summary

The analysis and comparison in this chapter reveals some patterns that diverse communities follow. The neighborhoods representing diversity continue the urban fabric of the city and are laid out on a traditional grid. They are located in older parts of the city with three out of four being in or near a historic district. They are characterized by a high degree of mixed uses that are integrated throughout the area with convenient proximity to rapid transportation and located generally close to the center of the city. Architecturally, these tracts consist of a mixture of old and new with a variety of styles, and economically they include high and low-end housing and commercial in a variety of forms from strip malls to rehabilitated storefronts.

All of these areas display the characteristics that Jacobs considered necessary for a diverse area. To reiterate, they consist of a mixture of use and functions, short blocks, a fine-grained mix of buildings that vary in age and condition, and a dense concentration of residents.¹ The neighborhoods in this study demonstrated these elements and also confirmed the results of the PRAG study mentioned in Chapter Three, which found a relationship between an attractive physical environment and diversity.²

¹ Jacobs 150.

² Lukeheart.

These neighborhoods demonstrate a high quality of life through pedestrian friendly streets, walkable shops and amenities, and community involvement. Although design is not the most influential factor in creating and maintaining diverse communities, the characteristics that typify these areas can be identified and incorporated. Cultivating the kind of diversity that makes these neighborhoods successful can be a desirable goal in community planning and urban design.

Possible Applications

The results of this research point to some ramifications in urban planning. The fact that the diverse neighborhoods were all located on established city grids is incentive to rebuild the urban fabric in metropolitan areas that have become blighted or were removed under urban renewal. There are still plenty of underutilized areas in most cities that could have real potential as incubators of diverse communities. Using established parts of the city that already have some layers of history will also make it possible to have the mix of old and new structures with changing functions that are essential.

The importance of incorporating a mixture of uses is another concept that receives reinforcement from this study. Currently the emphasis on mixed-use is popular among groups who favor alternatives to automobile-dominated landscapes and want a better quality of life, but attracting a mixture of different groups of people would also enhance community. These elements can all work together to create atmospheres of tolerance, mutual respect, and an awareness of environmental issues.

Housing for a wide range of income groups is another necessary element illustrated in this study. The idea of an 'economic gradient' is something that needs to be developed further by private developers and planners. Essentially this mean that small

pockets of economic segregation can exist in a neighborhood, as long as there is a close proximity between high-end residential or retail and low-end. Diversity can tolerate a few blocks that cater to one income group, but the gradient of high to low within a small area must be there. This has been characteristic of each diverse neighborhood to some extent and it seems to be a vital element in allowing diversity to flourish in an area.

Successful communities like the ones featured in this study can serve as models for neighborhoods that want to encourage diversity. Park Slope in Brooklyn, Wilshire, in Los Angeles, Evanston in Chicago, and Brookland in Washington D.C. all contain blueprints for healthy, strong and diverse communities. Recognizing that racial and social diversity are assets to a community is a step towards a new design and planning paradigm.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

This thesis set out to describe some diverse urban neighborhoods in order to prove the hypothesis that they share common characteristics. Comparisons on several different levels show that these areas display similarities among a number of criteria. Some of Jacob's ideas about navigable city blocks, a mixture of building types and ages, and a mixture of uses are exhibited in these neighborhoods. The report by the Policy Research and Action Group is also illustrated by these communities, which contain small 'pockets of segregation' and demonstrate attractive physical features.

In addition to these criteria, some patterns in transportation are also evident. All of these neighborhoods are within convenient proximity to rapid transit in the form of subways or commuter rail, and three out of four are closer to the center of the city than their homogenous counterparts. This highlights the importance of accessibility for different groups of people coexisting in the same area. The option of walking, riding or driving is a necessity for those who cannot afford cars, but is also a desirable quality for those who own cars but value choice of transportation. It seems logical that this would appeal to a wide range of incomes and contribute to diversity on this level.

While I have focused on the positive aspects of the neighborhoods in this study, it is also important to point out that these places, in a way, contradict mainstream

aesthetics. The mixture of uses and income levels inevitably creates awkward transitions that can be perceived as chaotic. These ‘messy seams’ where auto salvage shops and laundromats stand side by side with residences defy the contemporary ideal of neighborhoods, which seem to consist of monocultures of housing at the edge of cities. This does not allow for the unstructured medley of uses and incomes that provides fertile ground for diversity. A new aesthetic that embraces the richness of a community structure that is allowed to loosen and even dissolve in some areas needs to be explored.

Another implication that this thesis points to is the potential of census tract information as a valuable tool that can reveal demographic patterns. In the last five years the amount of information on the internet has increased dramatically and is available in forms that can be managed and manipulated easily. This access to a high volume of information will open doors to similar studies and make it possible to produce works that address a wider range of issues in diverse neighborhoods, even broadening the focus to include suburban and rural areas.

This study lays the groundwork for further research in diversity, but more importantly it explores the advantages of a community made up of a spectrum of people. New Urbanism is a contemporary movement that espouses these ideals, but despite good intentions, these designs have resulted in planned communities that are largely homogenous. This illustrates the importance of researching places that have evolved from a tradition of diversity to achieve a deeper understanding of the issues involved. The diverse neighborhoods that were uncovered during this research can teach us how to design for stronger and richer communities.

With a more thorough study of these different neighborhoods and a comparison of a more extensive group of diverse urban neighborhoods, we can learn in greater detail about the physical framework that houses diverse groups of people. This could eventually be distilled into design guidelines or methods of multi-stage design and planning that can encourage diversity and strong communities over time. Hopefully socio-economic and racial differences will become recognized as an authentic and desired community form in the future and will be encouraged by the designers and planners.

This thesis began with a journey in search of communities that reflect the diverse populations of this country. It ends with some neighborhoods that provide a real glimpse of what is possible. These places are unique in maintaining a tradition that includes different groups of people with different backgrounds, sharing a common destiny. The idea that people of different races and socio-economic levels can live together happily and create beautiful communities is illustrated by these places and provides hope for existing neighborhoods to embrace diversity and create a new definition of the ‘American dream.’

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