ABSTRACT

California is known as the “golden state” and “the best coast” to the modern generation. Therefore, it is not surprising that in 2014, the U.S. Census Bureau reported that California was the most populous state in the country. California is also filled with tremendous diversity that blends and molds various demographic groups, cultures and lifestyles, which makes the state more vibrant and appealing. Known for its warm climate and being “always sunny” seems to outweigh the negative environmental factors (i.e. landslides, earthquakes, tsunami, air quality problems, and water shortages) that may persuade people not to move to California. This diversity varies across counties and cities within the state. Aside from history and political factors, this diversity has also created significant variation in wealth and the standard of living across the region. Each county and city independently strives to increase its economic wealth and standard of living. This can be seen more dramatically in California compared to other states.

There are many factors that measure and indicate the level of overall prosperity. Understanding this can decipher why certain types of people are living in or are inclined to reside in specific locations. This study used two products – the Tapestry Segmentation Product produced by Esri and the American Community Survey produced by the U.S. Census Bureau – to look at demographic and socio-economic attributes in three neighborhoods: Venice Beach, the City of Manhattan Beach, and the City of Santa Monica. Spatially visualizing these neighborhoods will easily and effectively identify the lifestyle attributes that draw current and potential residents, and show how sensitive these outcomes are to the choice of source data aggregation level and the geographic granularity that is thereby embedded in these data products. The results show how the aggregation of median household, median age and population at the ZIP code scale hides considerable variation across the three study communities. This outcome – the realization that