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

the characterization of areal unit changes with the choice of aggregation level – demonstrates the importance of the modifiable area unit problem and the need for care in matching the resolution of the geographic data used to the problem or opportunity at hand.