Class Project – First Handout

Each student selects a neighborhood and writes a description of the neighborhood and its residents. What are their incomes, their educations, their ethnicities, and races? How do they commute to work, and where do their children go to school? These are just examples of the questions you might want to answer. You’ll surely find other questions you want to explore.

Your descriptions should compare the residents of your neighborhood with the residents of the urban area in which the neighborhood is located. Are the residents of the neighborhood you selected better educated than residents of the urban area as a whole? Are they more likely to use public transit than average residents of the urban area?

Your primary source of information is the 2000 Census. The second page of this handout describes how you can get census data about your neighborhood and the urban area in which it is located. For that purpose, the definition of your neighborhood will be the census tract containing an address you specify.

You can also bring other data into your description. For example, you might want to describe the performance of the public schools serving your neighborhood. You can find the Academic Performance Index of your school (and other information about it) from the website of the California Department of Education. Just go to www.cde.ca.gov. Then select the link “Accountability Progress Reporting.”

Your own personal observations about the neighborhood should also be part of your description. What does it look like? Are their major sources of employment in the areas? How about retail establishments? Where do people in the neighborhood go for shopping and entertainment? How would you characterize the neighborhood you selected relative to its urban area? Is it a bedroom suburb from which residents commute to other locations for work? Is it a business center or sub-center to which residents of other neighborhoods commute?

Your description should not exceed 15 pages, double-spaced. A hard copy of your paper is due in class on Friday, March 9. You must also email me an electronic version of the paper (Word or PDF format) by that date.

Before you begin to write your description, each of you must meet with me to tell me about your neighborhood. Please bring the following items to that appointment.

1. A map of your census tract. You get this map from the Census web site as described below.
2. A map of the metropolitan statistical area containing your census tract with the location of your tract clearly identified. You can also get this map from the Census web site. If you census tract is not in a metropolitan statistical area, bring a map of the county it is in.
3. A map of the urbanized area containing your census tract. If your census tract is not in an urbanized area, the county of metropolitan statistical area will suffice.
4. A copy of Table DP-3 (Profile of Selected Economic Characteristics: 2000) for your census tract, your urbanized area and your the metropolitan statistical area. The next page describes how to get these two tables.
Finding Census Data for Your Neighborhood and City

Step 1: Go to the Census Bureau website at http://www.census.gov/

Step 2: From the list of links on the left of the page (in blue), select American FactFinder

Step 3: The FactFinder page will pop up. Now look at the list of links on the left of the page. The links have a blue background except one towards the bottom which has a white background and reads “Address Search…” Select this link.

Step 4: You’ll now see a dialogue box that asks for a street address. Type in your address and select Go.

Step 5: Just under the dialogue box in which you typed your address, another box will appear with the title of “Geographies containing ……” In the box are all the census geographical areas containing your address. One of those is the census tract. Select that item and then select “Map It.” This will produce a map of the census tract containing your address. Does that look right? Can you find your address on the map? If so, print off the map. Please bring it with you when you come to visit me.

Step 6: Close the map and go back to the page for entering your address. Now highlight the census tract in the box “Geographies containing…..” and select “OK.”

Step 7: You will now see a list of all the maps and data tables you can get for that census tract. A long list, right? To get started, scroll down to “Quick Tables and Demographic Profiles.” The third link from the top will be DP-3. Profile of Selected Economic Characteristics: 2000. Select the link and print the page that pops up. Please bring this table with you when you visit me.

Step 8. Now using the back button on your browser, return to the page that had the address of your census tract and the list of geographies containing your address. Go down the list until you find the “Metropolitan Statistical Area” containing your address. Select that item and then select “Map It.” Print this map off. Also, repeat Step 7 to print Table DP-3 for the metropolitan area. If there is both a “Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Area” and a “Primary Metropolitan Statistical Area” for your address, select the latter. If you census tract is not in a metropolitan statistical area, bring Table DP-3 for its county. When you visit me, please bring in the map and Table DP-3 for your metropolitan statistical area (or county).

Step 9. If your census tract is in an urbanized area, repeat Step 8 for the urbanized area.