Planting Roots of Empathy

How Neighbourhoods Influence Prosocial Behavior

Anthony Smith – May 21st 2009

Soil for Success…

"IF YOU HAVEN'T BEEN TAKING YOUR VITAMINS, WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN DOING WITH THEM?"
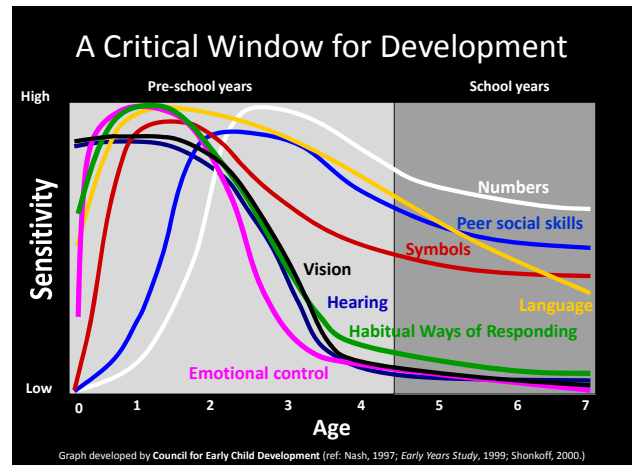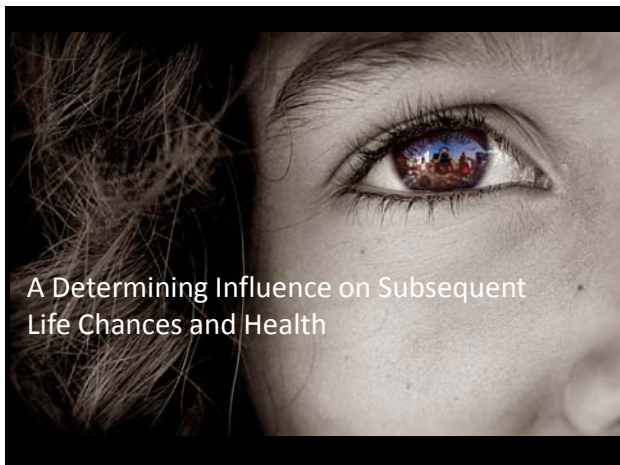

PART ONE:
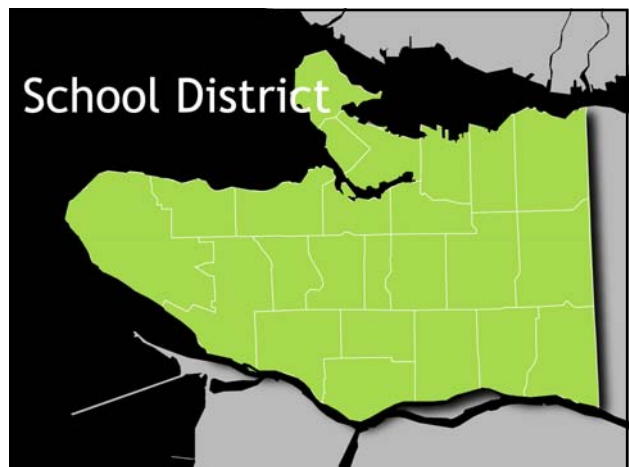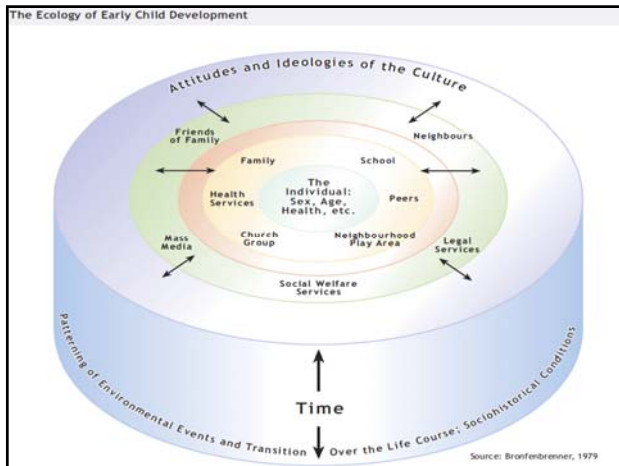
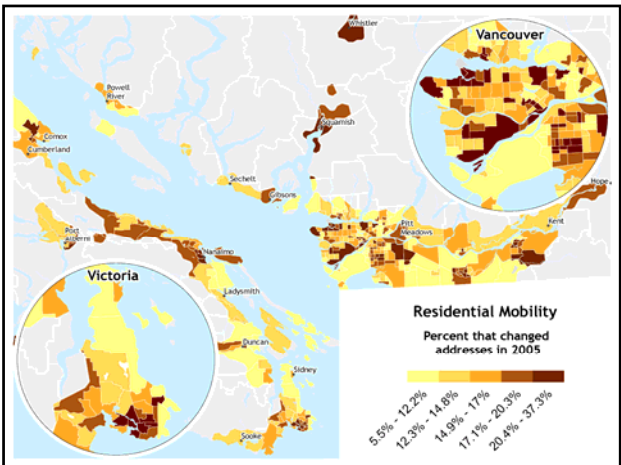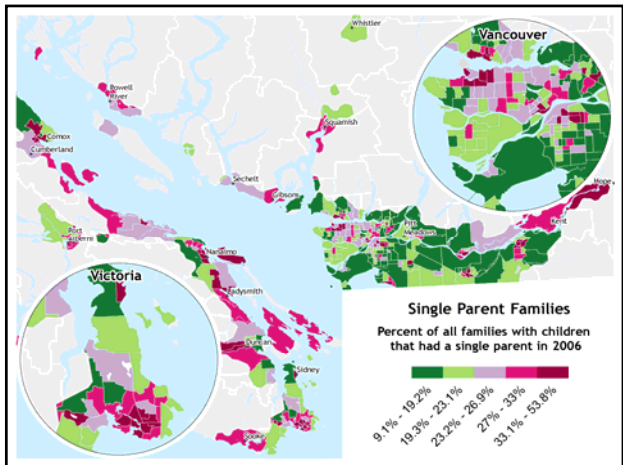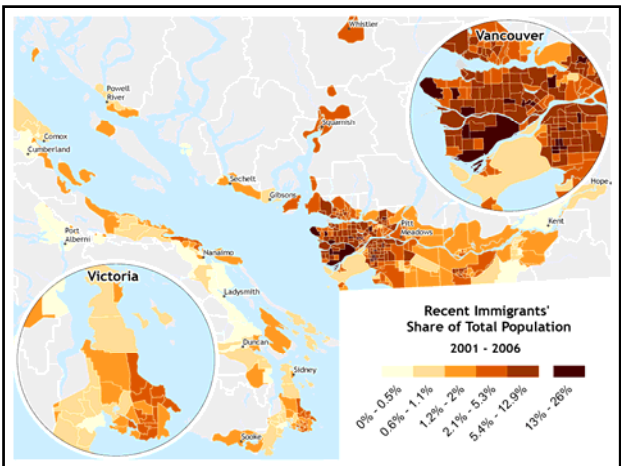Introduction to the HELP and the Provincial ECD Mapping Unit

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Why is Early Child Development Important?

A Determining Influence on Subsequent Life Chances and Health

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A Critical Window for Development

Graph developed by **Council for Early Child Development** (ref: Nash, 1997; *Early Years Study*, 1999; Shonkoff, 2000.)

**What Influences
Early Child Development?**

**Environments Where
Children Grow:**

The Ecology of Early Child Development

family

Neighbourhood

School District

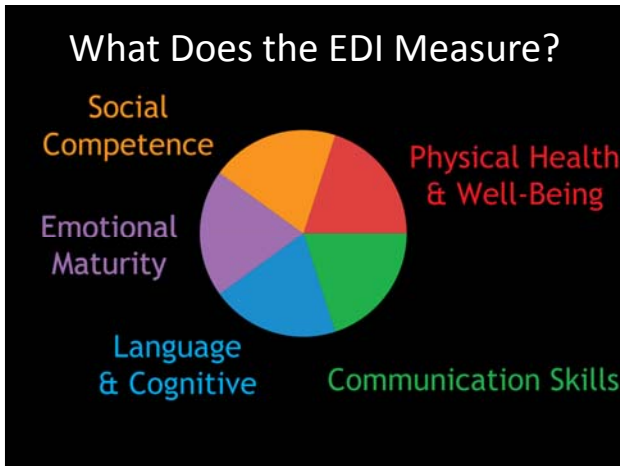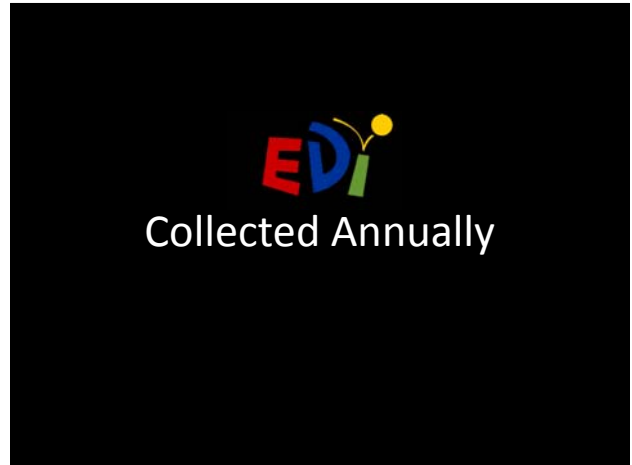Province

Socio-Economic Status:

Median Income in 2006

$15,445 - $43,435
$43,435 - $51,868
$51,868 - $58,645
$58,645 - $68,740
$68,740 - $105,898

Recent Immigrants'
Share of Total Population
2001 - 2006

0% - 0.5%
0.6% - 1.1%
1.2% - 2%
2.1% - 5.3%
5.4% - 12.9%
13% - 26%

Single Parent Families

Percent of all families with children
that had a single parent in 2006

9.1% - 19.2%
19.3% - 23.1%
23.2% - 26.9%
27% - 33%
33.1% - 53.8%

Residential Mobility

Percent that changed
addresses in 2005

5.5% - 12.2%
12.3% - 14.8%
14.9% - 17%
17.1% - 20.3%
20.4% - 37.3%

Demographic Changes Over Time:

Child Population Change

How can we Measure Early Child Development?

The Early Development Instrument

A Population Based Measure

All BC Kindergarten Children Included

Introduced in 2000

Collected Annually

What Does the EDI Measure?

- Social Competence
- Physical Health & Well-Being
- Emotional Maturity
- Language & Cognitive
- Communication Skills

Section C - Social and Emotional Development

How are EDI data geocoded and aggregated?

Individual → Postal code → Neighbourhood

Percent Vulnerable on
One or More Scales of the EDI
Wave One

Percent Vulnerable on
One or More Scales of the EDI
Wave Two

PART TWO:

The 'Prosocial and Helping Behavior'
Subscale of the EDI

Applied Development:

The Theory and Practice Behind
Caring Children and Caring Schools

Research Goals:

1. Explore how EDI Subscale results can be used at the
    neighborhood level to evaluate spatial patterns.
    Relevant scales include:

    o Overall Social Competence
    o Responsibility and Respect
    o Prosocial and Helping Behavior

2. Compare Subscale findings with the 'Roots of Empathy'
    program implementation:

    o Does ROE program result in higher subscale scores?
    o What other factors explain early development of
       prosocial behavior?

THOUGHT ←→ FEELING
The
Divide

Kohlberg studied the
development of moral thought; found
evidence for six stages of reasoning

Hoffman studied the
development of empathy; found
evidence for five levels of empathy
(linked to perspective-taking)

Modern Period – Enlightenment
(HUME & KANT)

Classical Period
(ARISTOTLE & AQUINAS)

"Meeting ones duty"

"Human Flourishing"

Growing Empathy

'Social and Emotional Learning' (SEL) is sometimes called "the missing piece"
because it represents a part of education that is inextricably linked to school success...

Kimberly A Schonert-Reichl and Shelly Hymell - Canadian Education Association

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"Which children are most likely to assist, share, and comfort others?"
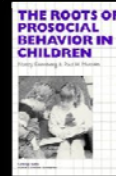
Eisenberg N and Mussen PH.
The Roots of Prosocial Behavior in Children.
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.

She characterized a group of 'Prosocial' children as:

- Relatively Active
- Sociable
- Competent
- Assertive
- Advanced in role taking and Moral judgment
- Sympathetic

The 'Prosocial and Helping Behaviour' Subscale:

1. Will try to **help** someone who has been **hurt**
2. Volunteers to **help** Clear up a mess someone else has made
3. If there is a quarrel or dispute will try to **stop** it.
4. Offers to **help** other children who have difficulty with a task
5. **Comforts** a child who is crying or upset
6. Spontaneously **helps** to pick up objects which another child dropped.
7. Will **invite** bystanders to **join** in a game.
8. **Helps** other children who are feeling sick.

Percent 'Ready for School' on EDI Prosocial Subscale

Quintiles
0% - 24.1%
24.2% - 27.7%
27.8% - 31.5%
31.6% - 38.5%
38.6% - 57.4%

Source: HELP - A. Smith - July 2008

Percent 'Not Ready for School' on EDI Prosocial Subscale

Quintiles
0.00 - 27.40
27.41 - 33.80
33.81 - 38.70
38.71 - 43.50
43.51 - 68.80

Source: HELP - A. Smith - July 2008
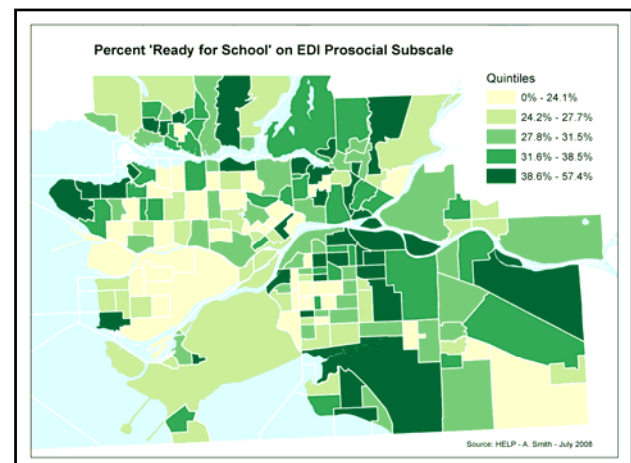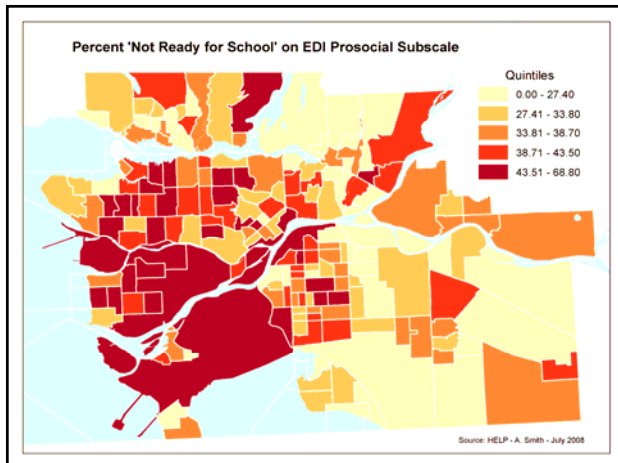
PART THREE:

Evaluating the Spatial Impact of ROE Programs

Cluster Analysis of Prosocial Neighborhoods using Local Indicator of Spatial Autocorrelation (LISA)

High near High
Low near Low
Low Outlier
High Outlier
Not Significant
• ROE Program

Source: HELP - A. Smith - July 2008
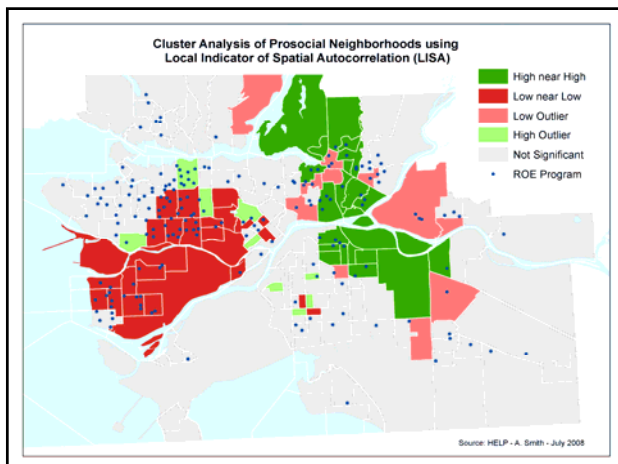
ROE = Prosocial Behaviour?

		Prosoc. %
Pearson Correlation	Prosoc. %	1.000
	ROE	-.191
Sig. (1-tailed)	Prosoc. %	.
	ROE	.058

WHY?

- Targeted implementation in 'at risk' areas?

- Scale of Analysis?

- ROE Program completed after EDI reporting?

- SEL programs have greatest impact later in life?

PART FOUR:

Spatial-Statistics

Explaining Empathy?

Percent Vulnerable on One or More Scales of the EDI

Early Development Instrument

Child Density and Gender

"Youth Bulges"

Neighborhood Landuse Composition

Income

Employment and Education
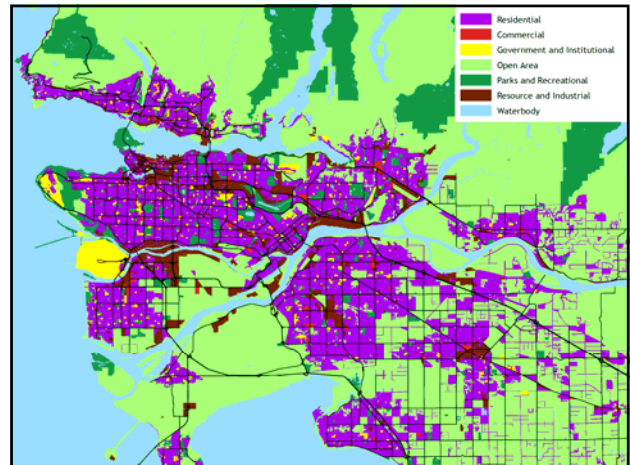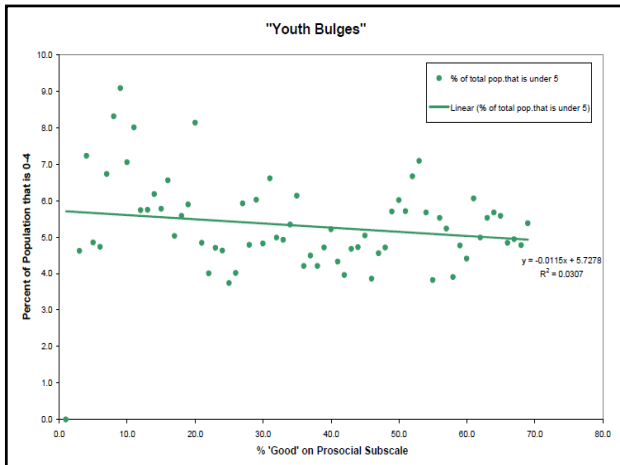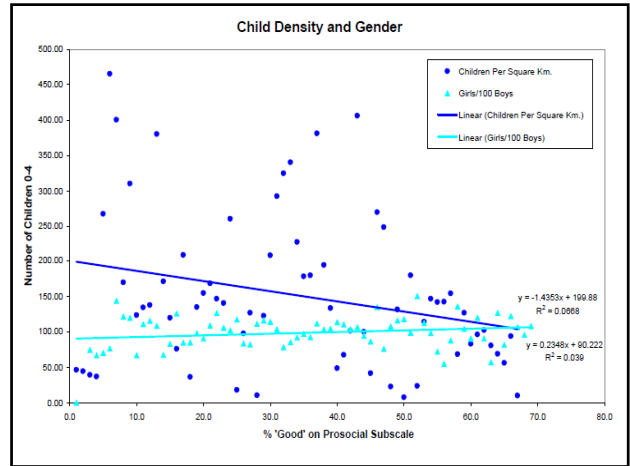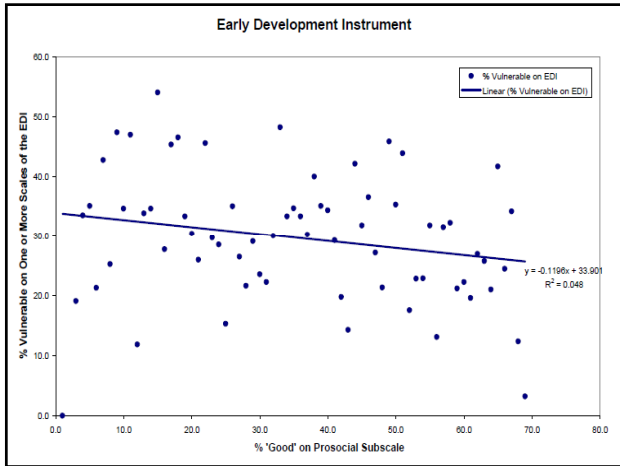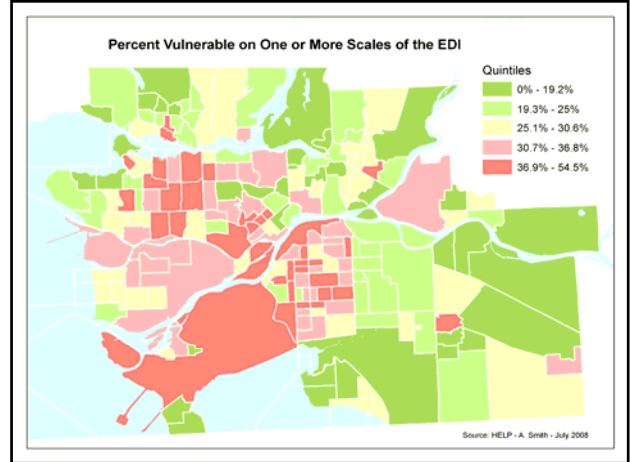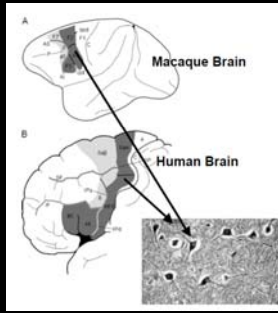
DEMOGRAPHICS

		Prosoc. %
Pearson Correlation	Prosoc. %	1.000
	Girls/100 Boys	.091
	% below 5	-.276
	Child_Density	-.270
Sig. (1-tailed)	Prosoc. %	.
	Girls/100 Boys	.229
	% below 5	.011
	Child Density	.012

R	R Square
.367ᵃ	.135

ECONOMY

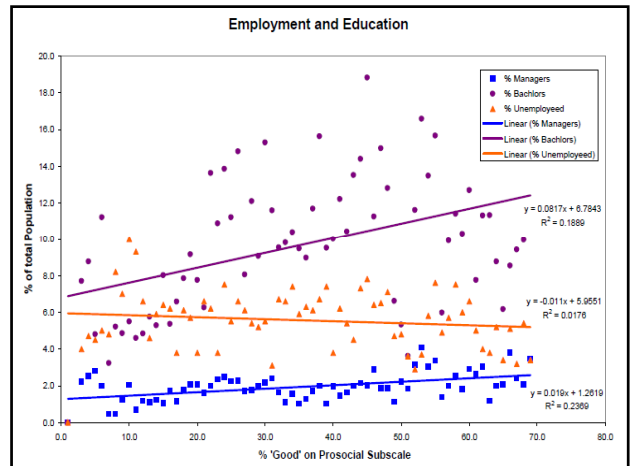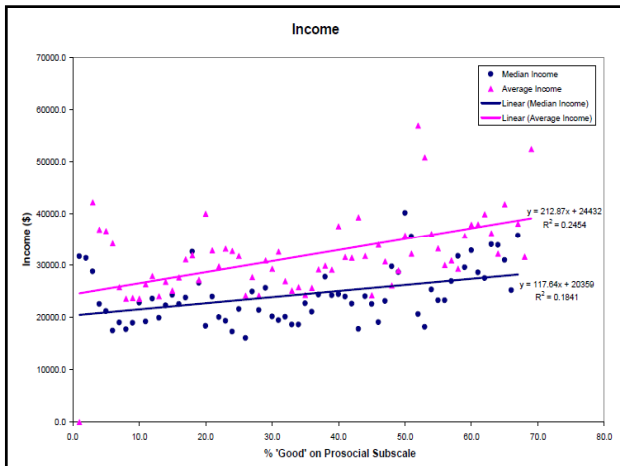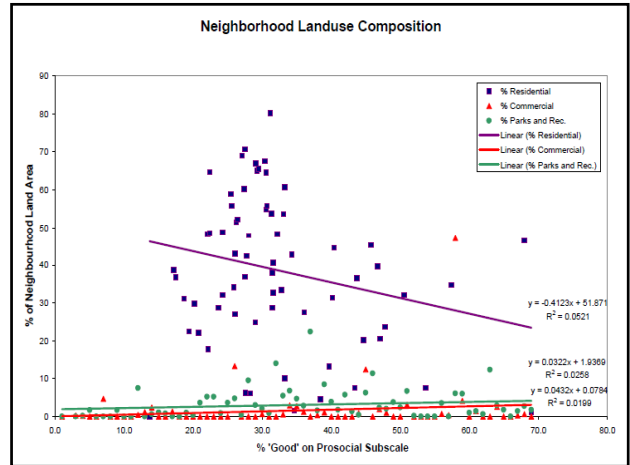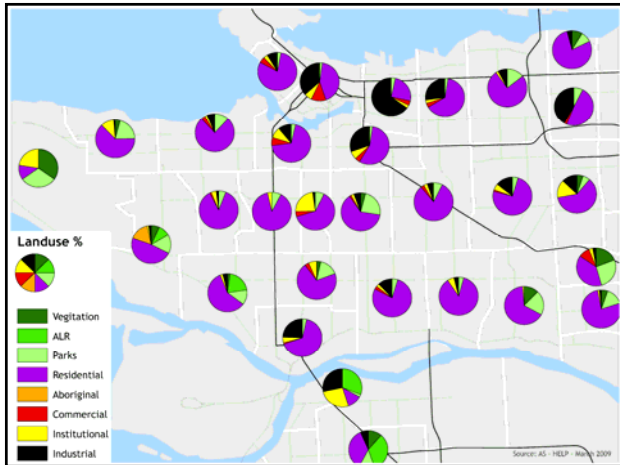|		Prosoc. %
Pearson Correlation	Prosoc. %	1.000
	Unemployed %	-.271
	Managent %	.420
	Bachlors %	.306
	Average inc.	.461
Sig. (1-tailed)	Prosoc. %	.
	Unemployed %	.012
	Managent %	.000
	Bachlors %	.005
	Average inc.	.000

R	R Square
.513ᵃ	.264

LANDUSE

		Prosoc. %
Pearson Correlation	Prosoc. %	1.000
	% Parks	.089
	% Commercial	.109
	% Residential	-.263
Sig. (1-tailed)	Prosoc. %	.
	% Parks	.234
	% Commercial	.186
	% Residential	.014

R	R Square
.330ᵃ	.109

CULTURE

		Prosoc. %
Pearson Correlation	Prosoc. %	1.000
	% ESL	-.363
	% Immigrant	-.279
	% New Imm.	-.324
Sig. (1-tailed)	Prosoc. %	.
	% ESL	.001
	% Immigrant	.010
	% New Imm.	.003

R	R Square
.527ᵃ	.278

10

"The neighborhood context is like soil quality, more fertile places will have better outcomes, while areas with more risk factors require special cultivation."

Questions?

THANK YOU