**Megan Bland**

**Observation #2**

Haleigh and I went to Decatur today and it was so diverse and welcoming. While on the MARTA, Haleigh said a bunch of rappers grew up in Decatur so we were expecting it to be a bit run down, however, it definitely was not. When we exited the MARTA station there were a few homeless people but once we made it into the town it was completely different. There were lots of business people and parents out and about with their small children. This gave us the impression that there were probably a lot of businesses and homes throughout the neighborhood. I really tried to look at the access to healthcare while we were out today since I had kind of put it on the back burner the other days. Haleigh and I came across The Task Force for Global Health while walking through downtown Decatur so we decided to go inside and see what it was really about. The man at the front desk was really helpful. He told us all about the initiatives the nonprofit was pursing and how they were partnered with and funded through Emory University. I thought this was cool since Emory is such a big hospital and that they’re not only helping Atlanta but also helping other countries. He also said that Atlanta was becoming a mecca for new health advances so anyone trying to advance their career was coming to Atlanta. He even told us his company was hiring and that people in his field were becoming in high demand because every large company and hospital wants to get involved in this global health movement. This made me really excited because I could see myself doing that type of work in the future.

The man that helped us was just so welcoming and he made us feel like we were at home in the neighborhood. We also talked to him about his personal life. He told us how he had moved here from DC and that he actually liked Atlanta more than DC. He said that even though he didn’t live there, he knew Decatur was rapidly growing and everything was becoming more expensive. This really brought gentrification full circle for us. It was interesting to see how the apartments and stores near the MARTA station were really new and modern and as you got further from the city the homes were more historic and colonial style. It sucks that the people who live farther out are probably forced to since they can’t afford the newer homes closer to the city center. Overall, the houses reminded me a lot of Grant Park. Many of the homes were the same style and there was a lot of green space in each place. It seemed like there was more history in Decatur, though. I think Decatur probably preserved it more since they are farther away from the city of Atlanta. They probably wanted people to have an excuse to come out to their town.

Decatur was much like the city in that it had a couple really tall buildings. In the city they were more businesses or banks, but in Decatur they were apartments or businesses. The architectural styles were pretty different in either place. Decatur had a lot of modern buildings that were colorful and artsy. Downtown Atlanta had bland brick or white buildings that were historic looking. You would think that downtown would be more friendly since people frequent it more often, but I guess Decatur wanted to cater to their residents and make it seem more of a friendly place for them. Decatur also had a lot more businesses than Grant Park. There were many small businesses instead of chain restaurants which I thought was really cool.

The green space in each of my locations definitely seemed underused. Today, Haleigh and I went to Adair Park which is in Decatur and there wasn’t a single person there. They even had a dog park and there wasn’t anyone there either. This surprised me because I thought people would be using it but maybe there wasn’t anyone there since it was a weekday. Grant Park also seemed underused. If it weren’t for the Farmer’s Market, I don’t think there would have been many people there because there wasn’t anyone on the opposite side of the park. There were a couple of green spaces in Downtown but there also weren’t very many people there so it was just kind of odd to me. I feel like if I were to live in a city then I would have to get some type of outside time occasionally but it didn’t seem like anyone used the space. The people I did see, however, were mainly white in every location so I wonder if there are just specific parks that black people frequent or if they just don’t like to go to any. I also wonder if there just isn’t enough access to these parks for other ethnicities. If I didn’t live near those areas and had to rely on public transportation I probably wouldn’t go there either. It actually took Haleigh and I a decently long time to get to the park today so I can understand if someone didn’t want to go there if it took a while.

The racial diversity was also quite different in each of the places I went to. In Decatur and Downtown, there was a good mixture of black and white people. I was surprised at this because I was expecting mainly black people in both locations. Grant Park had mostly white people. Overall, I feel like Atlanta was pretty diverse, however, there were certain spots that were predominantly white or predominantly black. I have a feeling that this is due to the gentrification that is happening around the city. In Decatur, there were black and white people, however, it did seem like most of the black people were there for work and the white people were there for leisure.

Overall, I think Atlanta has a good ways to go to become extremely diverse and have no racism. Segregation can still be seen when there a neighborhood of just white or just black people. I’m not sure of the real cause of this problem, however, I have feeling it has to do with gentrification. People are getting stuck in these poor neighborhoods with terrible schools just because they can’t afford to live anywhere else and it’s really sad. There’s so much potential in some of these neighborhoods, however, it’s just becoming so expensive to live in all of them people are being forced to stay or move to bad neighborhoods.