Toledo Ohio: A Sector Layout Essay, Research Paper

The city that I am going to examine is Toledo, Ohio. Toledo has gone through a lot of changes since World War II. It flourished with industry and grew out from there. Out of the many city models that the book covered, the model that a Toledo best fit into is the sector model. This essay will go into detail about the physical, economical, social, and political issues and changes that have faced Toledo in the past fifty years.

As stated above, I feel that Toledo best fits the sector city model that was described in the book. There is a lot of evidence to support this statement. One example is that there is (was) a lot of manufacturing/light industrial that was centered in the downtown. With all of the good jobs based downtown, there was a need for mass housing around downtown. Over time, these housing areas became lower class housing and ethnic sectors arose within these areas. If you look at the sector model in figure 9.17 on page 258, this is the exact structure of Toledo. Just off the central business district, there is manufacturing that spreads up and down the Maumee River. Around these two areas, the lower class housing area persists. In Toledo, the lower class sector to the left of the manufacturing grew a large Hispanic population, which is isolated on the east of the river. The other lower class sectors to the right of the CBD refer to a majority Black population, with Whites scattered within the sector. This established the so-called “bad side of town” and higher-class developments moved outwards from the downtown. There is also a major street (Bancroft) that is a major road was in and out of the inner city that leads directly through the low class, through the middle class, and into high class neighborhoods and business districts and communities. Some examples of this include the high-class neighborhood of Ottawa Hills and the suburb of Sylvania. Around Bancroft and other major streets that lead to the high-class sector, is the middle class sector. As you can see, Toledo perfectly fits into the sector city model.

As far as physical landscape, Toledo rests in a slight valley, and the only geographical feature that is a barrier is the Maumee River as mentioned above. The river only effects the East Side, which does no allow is to grow at the same pace as the other parts of the city. There are only four bridges that connect East Toledo to the rest of Toledo and they all are anchored from the downtown area. Since the downtown does not prosper, neither does the East Side, and this fits perfectly into the lopsided model that the sector model presents. This topic also carries us into the transportation factor of Toledo. Innerstate-75 (I-75) passes directly through Toledo, but as of right now, only runs along the edge of downtown, through the lower class sector, which can be one of the reasons that business does not locate in the downtown area. To detour this scenery, I-475 was built and it circles the flourishing middle to higher-class areas of West Toledo, give access to the airport, but also adds to the deterioration of the downtown area. In addition to this, the I-75 strip that runs through Toledo is outdated, and major traffic is a problem, so many people avoid it. Toledo also has a bus line, which does a descent job off covering the city, but the base is downtown, in which there are no jobs, so it really does not serve the purpose of getting people to jobs, but busing kids to school is its main function.

As far the economic structure of Toledo, if this same question were asked 50 years ago, the answer would be the outlook is great and manufacturing was going to carry Toledo into the 21st Century. Toledo was the Glass Capital of the world, Jeep was a company on its was up, light manufacturing was peaking in the inner city, and the downtown was booming with its sea port to Lake Erie, shopping centers and luxurious hotels. Now, since the age of manufacturing has passed in the United States, Toledo is just another city lying in the rust belt, trying to find its place just as Flint, Michigan is. Libbey Glass has lost its dominance in the glass market, Chrysler has taken over Jeep and threatened to move Jeep and its three plants out of Toledo, and many manufactures either left town or cut back on workers. This lead to the reduction in the usage of the sea port, which destroyed the downtown area. All of the business left the downtown area and went west, which lead to the people leaving the downtown area following the business, and the downtown and the immediate area surrounding it gradually moved to the low class structure that was described above in the paper.

As like Flint, Toledo has tried many new things to get the downtown going again. The government has tried a beautification project to liven up the downtown area. As with Flint and its Water Street area, Toledo’s government erected Port Side along the Maumee River. Port Side has had some success in beautifying the downtown and bringing more life to the downtown area. It attracts concerts, festivals, and most recently, a COSI was built inside of Port Side. Also, many old hotels were renovated and reopened to give downtown Toledo the historic look. Other development that are help rebuild Toledo’s economic struggles are the building of the world headquarters of Owens-Corning, the building of a prison, and Chryslers commitment on keeping Jeep in Toledo and building another plant in Toledo.

Toledo has changed one hundred folds in the last fifty years. Although Toledo still constitutes the majority of Lucas County and is still Ohio’s fourth largest city, it’s dominance has plummeted just as many cites that lye in the Rust Belt on the national level. Since most everything besides the city government has left the downtown area, it fits perfectly in to the move to outskirts of town to settle down. There has been no push towards gentrification in Toledo, since one the downtown has no jobs to offer, and two the inner city neighborhoods are just not suited for the gentrification process. So Toledo is just another one of the dying breed of cities in which downtown manufacturing had died and service upper-class suburbia has taken the drivers seat in the expansion of the city.