THE ARTS DIVERSITY INDEX

MEASUREMENT OF AND IMPACTS ON DIVERSITY IN BAY AREA THEATRE

by **CLAYTON LORD**
commissioned by **THEATRE BAY AREA**
with the support of the **CALIFORNIA ARTS COUNCIL** and the **CALIFORNIA CULTURAL DATA PROJECT**
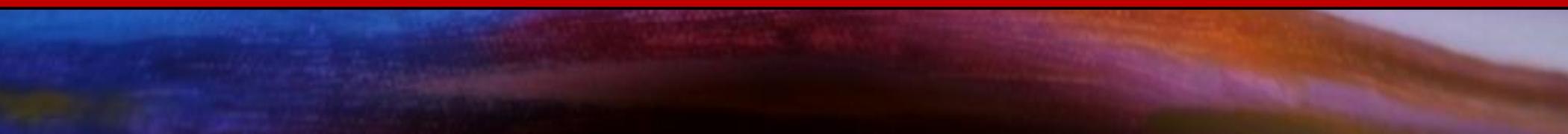
For Cici, who showed me what I didn't see,
and for Seth, who helped me understand it.
- CL

ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report was commissioned by Theatre Bay Area, one of the largest regional arts services organizations in the United States, with funds provided by the California Arts Council and the California Cultural Data Project. It was produced with data support from TRG Arts. Analyses were conducted by the author with assistance from Dr. Seth Miller of the University of California, Davis, utilizing PRIMR, JMP and Microsoft Excel.

The identities of the twenty-five theatre companies examined in this report have been kept anonymous. The author and Theatre Bay Area greatly appreciate their participation in the research.

Cover image: "Abstract Painting" by Amanda Richards from Flickr, used under Creative Commons license.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Diversity is not new as a conversation topic to Bay Area arts institutions; the pressure to diversify has existed for quite a while.

In the Bay Area, this pressure manifests most strongly in the form of foundations, trustees, patrons and employees at Bay Area theatre organizations either implicitly or explicitly letting these organizations know that the diversification is increasingly a requirement, and the lack of it is increasingly untenable.

There are many difficulties in being in that position. Diversity is a tremendously complicated issue, even as tackling it is crucial to the field's continued relevance. In order to make a conversation about diversity meaningful and actionable, the conversation must be:

➢ *Informed by data.*

➢ *Backed by research from both inside and outside the arts field.*

➢ *Bounded by standardized benchmarks and goals.*

➢ *Inclusive of the idiosyncrasies of each organization while also understanding that those idiosyncrasies do not constitute an exit from the conversation.*

➢ *Understanding of the short-, mid- and long-term potential consequences, positive and negative, of an arts organization or an arts community trying to truly expand the diversity of their leadership, staff, art, artists and audiences.*

The Arts Diversity Index is a response to the dual simplicity and complexity of diversification in the arts. Conducted from November 2012 to April 2013, **The Arts**

Diversity Index provides an in-depth analysis of over 500,000 attendance records of theatergoers in the San Francisco Bay Area from 2006 to 2012. These attendance records, drawn from the Bay Area Arts and Culture Census, were appended with a variety of demographic information, and were pulled from 25 theatre companies ranging in size, geography, age, board size, annual budget, etc, and representing, as much as possible, a breadth of diversity in what is admittedly a single narrow part of the larger arts sector. Those 25 companies were also then examined using data provided by the California Cultural Data Project to understand whether certain company characteristics might relate to fluctuations in diversity.

BASIC DIVERSITY PROFILES

All told, this research project examined seven different types of diversity in theatre going audiences, and compared those diversity scores to the same diversities in the general population as drawn from the United States Census data for the five Bay Area counties in which those theatre companies performed. The types of diversity examined were: race/ethnicity, age, household income,

gender, educational attainment, marital status, and political affiliation.

➤ *In aggregate, the "average" theatergoer in this sample had a 9-in-10 chance of being white, a 6-in-10 chance of being male. He was likely a registered Democrat, age 59.3 years and with 65% likelihood of having a college degree. He also had a 1-in-3 likelihood of also having a graduate degree. His household income was $109,167.*

➤ *In comparison, in aggregate, the "average" member of the general population in the five counties sampled had a better chance of being non-white than white, and was equally likely to be male or female. He or she had a 1-in-2 chance of being a registered Democrat, age 48.1 years and with a 60% likelihood of having a college degree. He or she had a 1-in-5 likelihood of also having a graduate degree. His or her household income was $75,080.*

Using the Arts Diversity Index (denoted as A'), a new mathematical equation that takes a particular type of diversity in a population, for example age, and converts it into a score between 0 and 1, index profiles for each company and county were created for all seven types of diversity. In the case of this study, the goal was to understand not how a company might diversify as much as possible

(i.e. total parity), but instead to understand how a company might mirror the larger population in which it existed (i.e. the company's home county). The population profiles from county to county were examined, comparing the general population of the theatre company's home county with the theatre's patron population. The disparities between these populations, while consistent in direction throughout the Bay Area, are markedly different from county to county. Most of that disparity, however, has to do with differences in the *general population* not the theatergoing sample—the theatergoing sample is remarkably consistent in profile regardless of county, while the

county populations themselves are variable.

While certain Arts Diversity Index scores for theatregoers were very far from the similar scores in the general population, others were comparatively close (Fig. 1). In order of disparity, theatregoers were farthest from reflecting the general population in terms of: race/ethnicity, then household income, political affiliation, age, marital status, gender, and, finally, educational attainment.

		Average Household Income	% Attended Graduate School	Average Age (years)	% Married	% Female	% White, Not Hispanic	% Democrat
Alameda	General population	$70,821	32%	46.8	47%	51%	34%	58%
	Theatergoing sample	$105,635	38%	61	65%	40%	89%	71%
	Difference	-$34,814	-6%	-14.2	-18%	11%	-55%	-13%
Contra Costa	General population	$79,135	35%	48.7	52%	51%	47%	50%
	Theatergoing sample	$111,889	34%	56.5	68%	37%	89%	65%
	Difference	-$32,754	1%	-7.8	-16%	14%	-42%	-15%
Marin	General population	$89,605	27%	52	52%	51%	73%	54%
	Theatergoing sample	$107,659	33%	61.9	67%	40%	93%	81%
	Difference	-$18,054	-6%	-9.9	-15%	11%	-20%	-27%
San Francisco	General population	$46,777	26%	46.4	38%	49%	42%	56%
	Theatergoing sample	$105,027	35%	58.5	54%	41%	86%	78%
	Difference	-$58,250	-9%	-12.1	-16%	8%	-44%	-22%
Santa Clara	General population	$89,064	36%	46.8	53%	50%	35%	46%
	Theatergoing sample	$115,625	31%	58.6	74%	36%	87%	72%
	Difference	-$26,561	5%	-11.8	-21%	14%	-52%	-26%

- *In terms of race/ethnicity, theatergoing audiences are nearly 90% white, which is more than double the prevalence of whites in the general population of the Bay Area counties studied.*
- *The average household income for the theatergoers in the sample was $40,000 higher than the average household income for the overall population in the counties studied.*
- *Politically, the majority of both the theatergoing population and the general public in the five counties studied were Democrats, although that majority was much larger within the theatergoing population than in the general population.*
- *The average age for a theatergoing patron is more than 11 years older than the average age of the general population in the five counties studied.*
- *Seventeen percent more of the theatregoing audience was married than the general population in the five counties studied.*
- *Gender diversity of the theatergoing population was almost at parity, on average, with the gender diversity of the general population.*
- *In terms of education, fifteen percent more of the theatregoing audience had a graduate*

degree than the general population in the five counties studied.

In general, given the baseline diversity characteristics of the theatregoing audience, getting theatregoers' Arts Diversity Index scores to more closely align with the scores of the general population meant:

- *Race/ethnicity: an increase in non-white attendees.*
- *Age: an increase in younger attendees.*
- *Household income: an increase in less affluent attendees.*
- *Gender: an increase in female attendees.*
- *Educational attainment: a decrease in attendees with graduate degrees.*
- *Marital status: an increase in single attendees.*
- *Political affiliation: an increase in non-Democrat attendees.*

INTERCONNECTED AND ADJACENT DIVERSITIES

The relationships between theatregoer Arts Diversity Index scores for different types of diversity were examined to understand correlations between types of diversity. Statistically significant correlations of various strengths exist between 15 of the 21 possible combinations of diversity, most of them positive (i.e. an increase in one type of diversity correlates with an increase in the other type). Some significant correlations include:
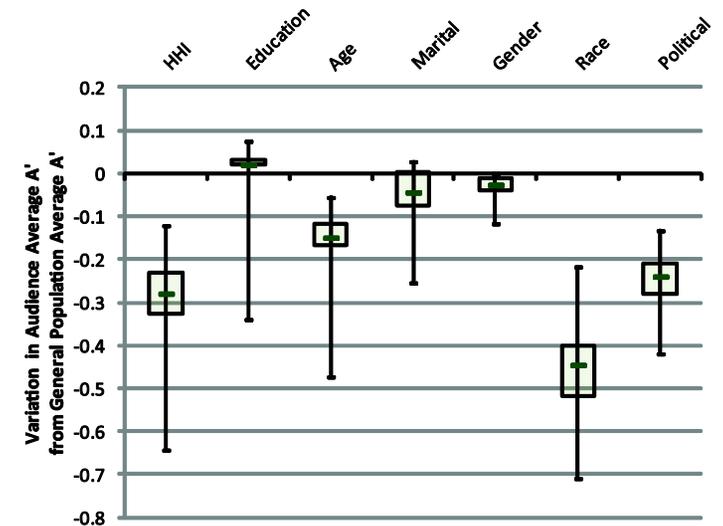

Fig. 1. *Variation in average audience diversity index scores from average diversity index scores of the general population.*
Source: Derived from AC Census and US Census data

> *Increased household income diversity is correlated with increased age, gender, race, educational attainment and marital status diversity (i.e. economically diverse audiences are also likely to be younger, more female, more racially/ethnically diverse, less educated and include more single people).*

> *In addition to being correlated with increased household income diversity, increased racial/ethnic diversity was also correlated with increased age and marital status diversity (i.e. racially/ethnically diverse audiences are also likely to be younger and include more single people).*

> *Increased political affiliation diversity was correlated with decreases in household income, marital status and gender diversity (i.e. less Democratic audiences are also likely to be wealthier, more married and more male).*

These correlated outcomes illustrate a highly interrelated reality of diversification, and point to the possibility of tackling issues of diversity through multiple channels at once. Because some of the Arts Diversity Indices for audiences are farther from the index scores of the general population than others, some issues of diversity might be viewed as more actionable. Index scores provide baselines and benchmarks for such action.

INTERCONNECTED AND ADJACENT COMPANY CHARACTERISTICS

In this study, in order to test out the ability of the Arts Diversity Index scores to be used as guideposts for providing possible strategies forward, California Cultural Data Project from the twenty-five companies was cross-referenced with the diversity data. The purpose was to see if those characteristics were correlated with changes in diversity index scores. Company characteristics examined include: age of company, company home county, total annual budget, total number of board members, percent of revenue that was earned, percent of expense spent on marketing and communications, and average adult ticket price. Statistically significant correlations of various strengths exist between 9 of the 21 possible combinations of company characteristics. Significant correlations include:

> *The age of a company is positively correlated with the total annual budget of the company, the number of board members at that company, and the average adult ticket price.*

> *The season year of the data (i.e. "the 2005/2006 season") was not significantly correlated with any of the other company characteristics (or, incidentally, with any variation in diversity).*

> *Percent spent on marketing and communications was not significantly correlated with any of the other company characteristics.*

CORRELATIONS BETWEEN COMPANY CHARACTERISTICS AND ARTS DIVERSITY INDEX SCORES

In an attempt to understand whether there are particular company characteristics that potentially have impacts on diversity (or at least with which statistically significant differences occur), statistical tests were conducted, and 22 out of 49 possible correlations were determined to be statistically significant. Significant findings include:

> *The age of the company correlated with fluctuations in all types of diversity except for educational attainment. Companies under 10 years of age and companies over 50 years of age were likely to have more men, more wealthy people and more Republicans in their audiences than companies in the middle age range.*

- Very young companies (under 10 years), along with companies in "middle age" (20-50 years), were found to have more age diversity (i.e. more young people) in their audiences than their other counterparts.

- The very oldest companies--which also, given inter-characteristic correlations, means the largest companies--were the ones that demonstrated the most racial/ethnic diversity.

- Companies with larger budgets had more racial and age diversity than their other counterparts.

- Companies that had an average adult ticket price of under $10 or over $60 had higher rates of racial/ethnic diversity than other companies.

- There were a variety of diversities where the home county of the company correlated with differences in diversity. Age, gender, marital status, political affiliation and racial diversity all varied in statistically significant ways based on home county, in some cases mirroring the variations among the general populations of those counties and in some cases not. Audience age diversity, for example, varied based on county, but generally followed the trends of those counties—so the oldest audiences, by and large, were found embedded in the oldest general populations. Similarly, counties with more political diversity in their general populations were the home to the theatre companies whose audiences also had the most political diversity.

- Except in Marin County, which had both the least diverse total population and the least diverse audience population in the study, theatergoing audiences did not mirror the relative diversities of the home counties of the companies. All of the county-level audience numbers were much less racially diverse than the general populations of the counties, but they varied unpredictably. Alameda county, for example, had the most general population diversity (66% non-white) and the second-least audience diversity (11% non-white).

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

This pilot study provides a first step towards a variety of potentially fruitful future conversations. While deeper and more complete data would likely provide a richer picture, the calculation of the Arts Diversity Index and its pairing with various characteristics of arts organizations to see what affects change has the potential to truly augment the difficult conversation around diversification and the arts. The data reveal both a path forward and a set of caution signs along that path. Diversification is as necessary as it is complicated. The nature of our audiences, as homogenized and unrepresentative as they may be, is interwoven deeply into our structures, and such tangles must be taken into account.

By analyzing the relationship between types of diversity, we can begin to understand what manageable, incremental, least-disruptive changes and strategies can be implemented in order to begin to tackle the problem. In so doing, we have the potential to both move from simply "valuing" diversity to actively "managing" it, and to do so with a pragmatism that will allow that management to happen at the expense of short-term stability.

HIGH-LEVEL FINDINGS

FOREWORD

by BRAD ERICKSON   Executive Director, Theatre Bay Area

The San Francisco Bay Area is one of the most ethnically and culturally diverse metropolitan regions on the planet. The Bay Area's theatre community is not.

It is this stark reality that prompted this study. For decades, theatre leaders here and elsewhere have heard about the importance of diversifying their organizations, their programming and their audiences. Most of have voiced agreement. Many have tried. Few have seen much success.

When the arts community, here and across the nation, talks about diversity, the conversation often becomes fraught. Anger, impatience and accusations can erupt on one side prompting a retreat into banalities or outright intransigence on the other. Good intentions are met with suspicion; injustices

and hypocrisies are trivialized; and a sense of frustration, even hopelessness, descends all around leading to paralysis and perpetuating the status quo.

Before coming to Theatre Bay Area, I led a tiny new play development company by night and by weekend; by day I worked at and wound up leading a nonprofit organization--part of a nationwide affiliation--devoted to developing and advancing ethnic minority owned businesses. We were engaged in a kind of commercial affirmative action, promoting minority companies as suppliers of goods and services to Fortune 500 corporations (that good work continues here and around the country). My six years with the Northern California Minority Supplier Development Council were eye-opening for me. For the first time in my life I continually walked into rooms filled with people who did not look like me. As a white, middle-class, gay man I was used to being in the minority in one way, but not in others. What became just as clear was how I was used to thinking

about people and making assumptions in some ways and not in others.

What was also eye-opening was the tremendous effort and expense our nation's largest corporations were spending to bring diversity into their employee ranks and into their supply chains. These enterprises were not as motivated by social justice as they were by business expediency and competitive advantage. If they hoped to reach a rapidly diversifying consumer population and compete in a global economy, these corporations understood the business imperative of employing talent and

Diversifying our theatre organizations and theatre audiences will take effort, it will take time, it will take money, and it will take real data.

vendors who could develop and sell products and services that would appeal to a fantastically polyglot marketplace.

Theatres in the San Francisco Bay Area must reach a fantastically polyglot audience if they are to truly serve the people of our region. Many in the field will be energized by very real issues of social justice. Perhaps we should be equally moved by the imperative that has so motivated corporate America: survival. Theatre here must reach and speak to all the people of the Bay Area -- not just one shrinking sliver -- if the art form we love and have devoted our lives to is to have a future in this most diverse region and state.

As it has for corporate America, diversifying our theatre organizations and theatre audiences will take effort, it will take time, it will take money, and it will take real data.

We hope this study will offer important insights for theatremakers and funders alike. Even more, we hope that the findings of this research will point to actionable next steps that the theatres of our region can take to bring fuller, even radical inclusion to their boards, their staffs, their artists, their programming, their audiences and their communities.

This research has been generously funded by the California Arts Council, and was developed with the support of the California Cultural Data Project and the tremendous effort and cooperation of the participating theatres. We gratefully thank them all.

Brad Erickson

Executive Director
Theatre Bay Area

INTRODUCTION

The "Why" and "How" of Diversification

The difficulty of diversity is that it is one of those problems that seems intractable and supremely large, unwieldy to the point of being unmanageable.

It is like a slippery something, wriggling about, many-legged and tangled into an impossible knot, splaying outwards and difficult to simply hold onto let alone make sense of, inarticulate, unwilling to tell you where to begin, what order to take, how to make progress without losing hope.

Questions of diversity, or parity, or equity, are un-divorceable from questions of the state of our country, from three hundred years of history, from remarkable and humiliating injustices for which we have no words. Questions of diversity are malleable, and can be twisted up into hulking things too complicated to feel solvable or pushed down into such a diminished state that we feel like having a single conversation about it allows us to check it off the list.

This makes simple conversations instantaneously and infinitely complex, weighed down by baggage first packed by our many-times-great-grandparents, ported down through time: injustices of race, of gender, of age, of class—once-artificial divides that, we have been convinced, are permanent and now must mean something. We are all more alike than we are different—all young once and most destined to get old, all shimmering with strands of DNA for which we are massively identical and infinitesimally divergent—and yet we carry within ourselves fears and pains that periodically require that we consciously and unconsciously partition ourselves, make ourselves our enemies, and carry forward with the premise that we cannot, in fact, all just get along.

And perhaps, so it goes, we have pried ourselves apart from each other so hard that we have made ourselves irrevocably different—informed by our varied histories, oppressed and oppressor, powerful and powerless, stuck amidst dichotomies that reinforce themselves and are reinforced by structures we have made. Our day-to-day is ingrained with the uneven rhythms of centuries, which turn so many interactions into complex negotiations, accidental malapropisms and distressing implications that almost inevitably sneak up on us and are suddenly sitting there in the room, reinforcing our reinforcements, locking us into the inertia of the stream, pulling incessantly forward, surrounding us for so long that we stop seeing it there.

When your view of the world closely mirrors the dominant view of the world, it can become nearly impossible to see how narrow your view of the world is. In the United States, that dominant viewpoint can be consolidated into what is often referred to as

"whiteness" or "white privilege"—a term that exists around, but extends beyond, skin color to issues of class, political affiliation, lifestyle and age. It is difficult to know how monocultural a worldview is until it confronts you.

This monoculture, of course, holds no malice– it is powerful enough that there need be no malicious attempt to quash the other (though that often does occur); the simple belief that in representing white experience one is "representing everyone" creates a particular gravity that the arts field now finds itself pulling against clumsily.

This effort, this pull against the general status quo, is a disruptive and uncomfortable enterprise that runs counter to the general searching for placidity. The indelicate intentionality of our efforts at diversification, the blunt-force nature of it, the fake-it-till-you-make-it-ness of it, pushes against comfort. It feels obvious and pandering and clumsy, but we must do it because that's how we learn to walk, clumsily.

In his essay "Notes from a Native Son," James Baldwin talks about discovering "the weight of white people in the world." The pervasive weight of our views, the weight that goes

beyond color, that also extends to politics, to income, to education, to social status, becomes apparently only when we attempt to pull against it, the inertia that such weight engenders unclear until we attempt to change direction. We carry forward in a mighty, invisible tide, so cozy as to only be apparent when you try to turn to shore.

It is at this moment that the arts field finds itself now.

"Should an arts organization that finds itself located in a more diverse community be expected to serve a more diverse audience?" When I asked that question of the digital world, three times it was called overly simplistic or disingenuous. When pressed on the nature of the question and why it was problematic, those I was corresponding with stretched back to questions of mission, of the particular idiosyncratic nature of each organization, and of the danger of proscriptions like what I was proposing without taking into account the particulars.

But I asked the question because data—the data in this report, actually—reveals an excruciating homogeneity in our audiences. On average, the twenty-five companies whose audiences were examined in this

The pervasive weight of our views, the weight that goes beyond color, that also extends to politics, to income, to education, to social status, becomes apparently only when we attempt to pull against it, the inertia that such weight engenders unclear until we attempt to change direction.

research serve patrons that are over 88% white in one of the most diverse regions in the country. They average 11 years older, over $40,000 richer, more male, more educated, more liberal. They are a narrow slice of a large pie, this group we serve, and they are dwindling.

As one marketing director at a company in this study said to me, "Why is it useful to tell us what we already know? Do you think we don't know we aren't diverse?"

No. We know we serve a whole lot of white people, just like we know we serve a whole lot of older people, a whole lot of very educated people, a whole lot of wealthy people. We all know that. And we value the diversity of the world because we are, by and large, socially liberal, egalitarian, bright-eyed and believing in the promise of our common bonds. But knowing and repairing are different things.

In 1999, two researchers named Doherty and Chelladurai published a paper in which they used the frame of sports to take on some very fundamental questions about what diversification can do (positively and negatively) in general.

In examining the bulk of the research, they note, in the positive:

"In comparison to homogeneous groups, racially and ethnically diverse groups make more cooperative choices, are more creative, and produce higher quality ideas when faced with a brainstorming task…In addition, although racially and ethnically diverse groups were less effective than homogeneous groups at the outset of a complex problem-solving task, they eventually interacted as effectively and performed better with regard to the range of perspectives and alternatives offered. Shaw (1981) reported similar findings from a review of research on gender-mixed groups…As work groups become more tolerant of different points of view, their organizations become more open to new ideas in general and generate more and better ideas." (284)

On the negative side:

"The organization is at risk of increased ambiguity, complexity, and confusion caused by different perceptions and miscommunications resulting from cultural diversity…Diversity in age was negatively associated with frequency of communication…[and] individuals in the racial and ethnic minority experience more stress in an organization and are less satisfied with their careers than their nonminority counterparts…Research indicates that group diversity in age, race or gender is associated with reduced commitment, increased absenteeism, and increased turnover for all members." (285)

Perhaps not surprisingly, most of the benefits of diversification are long-term, whereas most of the downsides are short-term. As humans, generally, we yearn for what the article calls "parsimony, consistency and meaning" (286)—things which are disrupted, at least temporarily, by diversification.

The article posits that this tension between the short-term issues and long-term benefits of diversity place the success or failure of such efforts squarely in the hands of the management at the organization. The authors posit two dichotomous organizational cultures, an "organizational culture of diversity" and an "organizational culture of similarity," laying them out as a set of competing values and assumptions including "culture of similarity" vs. "culture of diversity," "rigidity" vs. "flexibility," "risk avoidance" vs. "risk acceptance," "conflict avoidance" vs. "conflict acceptance," and "present orientation" vs. "future orientation."

Overlaying the "typical" arts institution (perhaps giving the caveat of "of a certain size and stability") with these values and assumptions, the comparison is unfavorable.

Is that institution relatively rigid in structure, or relatively flexible? Is that organization inclined to (and/or in a financial position to) accept risk, or is it more likely to avoid risk where possible? Is conflict accepted as part of the process, or avoided where possible? Does that organization generally find itself oriented towards the present or near-future, or more towards long-term trends and needs?

The authors set up the difference between "valuing diversity" and "managing diversity." Valuing diversity is what you might expect—caring that diversity exists. The authors describe it as "an attitudinal construct encompassing a mind-set of openness to diversity among people." As (mostly liberal, mostly open-minded) artists, we most likely "value diversity." Where the distinction comes is in this concept of "managing diversity," which is "a behavioral construct encompassing actual strategies that a group or organization can undertake to capitalize on the diversity of its members" (289). This means not just caring about the idea of diversity but setting up structures and systems that allow for diversity and the various types of disruption it can create.

This brings up two crucial points to understand as a conversation about diversification in the arts moves forward:

➢ *We can both value diversity and resist it at the same time within our organizations, and that resistance can be entirely subconscious.*

➢ *In the end, that resistance often emerges as a need to avoid potentially damaging short-term disruptions in the face of more abstracted long-term gain.*

This article forces reflection on the strange relationship that arts organizations have to various groups to which they are beholden, that perhaps reinforce the more myopic and present-facing view that may stand in the way of diversification. The fear of losing those most loyal patrons—a fear which is not something to be taken lightly—is only one aspect. The dichotomy of a funding community and governance structure that, in many cases, simultaneously encourages innovative risk and rewards stability, longevity and size can leave an organization unsure of which path forward will lead to the most fruitful conclusion.

Most arts organizations do not maintain cultures of similarity out of an innate desire to hold back diversification. Instead, the leaders

of those organizations either consciously or subconsciously understand the ramifications of moving from "valuing diversity" to "managing diversity," and that those ramifications are scary, even up against the possibility of losing funding for particular initiatives.

Dougherty and Chelladurai end their article discussing "environmental pressures" like, in the arts field, subscribers and foundation funding. They say:

"Environmental pressures can also provoke the transformation of organizational culture as members are forced to adapt to external changes…It might be expected that these environmental forces will challenge how diversity is managed in the organization…[but] organizational culture is not quickly or easily manipulated and changed. Just as individuals do not easily give up the elements of their identity…so groups do not easily give up some of their basic underlying assumptions simply because they have been challenged." (293)

To this one might add, "Especially when the challenge is to something so fundamental, and the assumptions, wrong or right, have been carrying the organization for decades."

When I asked that question about whether companies in more diverse areas should be expected to have more diversity in their audiences, the answer was almost universally, "Yes." We value diversity almost universally.

We get it, abstractly. But it is not enough to simply understand the existence of disparity, we have to be willing to actually do something. We have to understand the reasons why we can say "Yes" to my question and yet still make no functional movement forward on changing that.

The inertia of whiteness is strong and pervasive, which makes the problem relatively easy to identify and very difficult to consider tackling. The monoliths that are our older, white, wealthy (married, liberal) subscribers, many of which directly prop up our organizations and without which we would (we fear) horribly destabilize, make thinking about the people on the other side of that monolith difficult. The conscious effort required to attempt diversification—a prospect that can feel artificial and utilitarian,

and at the same time deeply confrontational—is tiring, even moreso for the fact that the benefits, if there are any, won't be reaped for a decade or more while the discomfort begins as soon as you take the first step.

But let us start here: when we are asked the question, "Should an arts organization that finds itself located in a more diverse community be expected to serve a more diverse audience?" we should not immediately push back with a discussion of mission. We should not immediately pull out culturally-specific arts organizations and how it would be unfair to ask them to dilute their missions. We should not be indelicate, but we should equally not suddenly concern ourselves with the welfare of the few organizations in our ecosystem that are functionally trying to get the art we love to people other than us, and that are given less attention (undeservedly) in almost all circumstances than their mainstream (white-serving) counterparts.

A mission is a driving principle, not a shield. Unless your mission is "we make art for white, old, rich people," the worry you feel at the thought of diversification isn't mission-based, it's bottom-line based. We must recognize

A mission should not allow a company to opt out of serving a wide array of people unless that mission is to only serve a narrow range of people.

both the legitimacy of that concern and the requirement that we deal with it rather than avoid it. A mission should not allow a company to opt out of serving a wide array of people unless the mission is to only serve a narrow range of people–which is a totally legitimate mission to have, as long as it is consciously forged and followed.

The art we make is local. It is place-based, which means it is community-based, whether we want it to be or not. Each organization's definition of its "community" can be—should be—vastly different, but ultimately it must be defined, and we must ensure that our field overall is serving the population in aggregate, even if we each are not. Fundamentally, findings like those in this study, which reveal our Bay Area theatre culture as a large white smear across a canvas of many different

varying shades of beige, indicate deeply rooted problems of our field.

We are now past the time of "not my problem." We must put our backs into finding the solution, all of us. But we need to do so understanding the motives of our reticence, the legitimate fears inherent in thinking about what must be done, the legitimate destabilization that might occur, the discomfort we are going to feel.

The arts, in their finest moments, heal the welts of difference. They are the expression of our experience translated through the lens of our most human impulses, played out for others to consume and grapple with and take home, to be reminded in a day or a year or a decade about that moment when something became suddenly and momentarily clear. They reflect, offend and woo, sing and scream, and we tell ourselves that some art can speak to people, if only we can put it in front of their eyes.

In the case of theatre, we are only as impactful as the people who we can convince to watch our traffic upon the stage. Theatre without an audience is just a crazy person walking down the street, impotent and

misunderstood, or a person talking in their room, not noticed at all.

What drives the existence of a theatre organization more than anything else is the continued loyalty and participation of an audience in that theatre organization's work. Loyalty and attendance, in the end, are primarily driven by (or informed by) questions of the art's relevance to the personal experience of the patron. It is in this area of relevance that the conversation around diversity often rears its head.

Since 1982, national attendance of theatre has declined from 30.5% of the total population to 26.1% of the population according to the Survey of Public Participation in the Arts. This trend has not been theatre's alone; attendance at what the SPPA researchers term the "benchmark activities" (jazz, classical music, opera, musical plays, non-musical plays, ballet, art museums, and galleries) fell 4.4% between 1982 and 2008 to 34.6% of the total population. Among those benchmark activities, theatre rates below museums and galleries but above the music and dance subgenres in terms of number of attendees.

We must carry forward anyway, despite the difficulties, because the demographic reality is not opaque, and the demographic destiny of our country is charted and clear.

In that same approximate time period (1980 to 2010), both the general United States population and the particular populations of the San Francisco Bay Area and its counties, with which this study is mostly concerned, have shifted dramatically. Bay Area populations have gone from being 70% white to 42% white and the Bay Area, as the rest of the state of California, has become a "majority-minority" community. The Bay Area population has trended older over the past thirty years, but depending on the county that trending has either been essentially flat or dramatically more aggressive than the national average.

The average household income in the Bay Area has increased by nearly $20,000 and is over $25,000 higher than the average household income for the country, but

revenue earning has also diverged substantially, with a few counties exponentially increasing household incomes and other counties experiencing little or no increase. Overall, the Bay Area has become more colorful, more economically stratified and more age stratified—all at a rate faster than most of the rest of the nation.

This means that the pressure to diversify has existed for quite a while. In the Bay Area, this pressure manifests most strongly in the form of foundations, trustees, patrons and, in some cases, employees at Bay Area theatre organizations either implicitly or explicitly letting these organizations know that the diversification of their board, their staff, their audiences is increasingly a requirement, and the lack of it is increasingly untenable.

The mantra, which is often more of a directive, is simple and non-specific: "Become more diverse." It, generally speaking, is narrowly about race and ethnicity, almost never about age, gender or class. It assumes a blanket solution, *prêt a porter* for every organization regardless of particulars of mission, size or geography, and is spoken without regard for some of the more practical outcomes of following the directive.

This is understandable, in a way, because it's very hard to wrap your head around diversification in a way that is specific and actionable without seeming random. Unfortunately, that ends up being a very heavy rock to roll up an interminable hill—and sets up both a reality and an excuse that diversification is difficult and arbitrary, and each company too specific and unique, for the conversation to get very far and for companies that do make the effort to feel like they have gotten anywhere.

Diversity is a problem that seems daunting and abstract, without anything close to what might be called "champagne popping moments." Moreover, if companies are feeling reticent to wade into this particular issue, it is relatively easy to fall back on the idiosyncratic nature of the organization, the peculiarities of the artistic vision, etc. and say, simply, "Not for us."

In order to make a conversation about diversity meaningful and actionable, we must, as a field, engage in a conversation that is:

- ➢ *Informed by data.*

- ➢ *Backed by research from both inside and outside the arts field.*

- ➢ *Bounded by standardized benchmarks and goals.*

- ➢ *Inclusive of the idiosyncrasies of each organization while also understanding that those idiosyncrasies do not constitute an exit from the conversation.*

- ➢ *Understanding of the short-, mid- and long-term potential consequences, positive and negative, of an arts organization or an arts community trying to truly expand the diversity of their leadership, staff, art, artists and audiences.*

This report is not the full groundwork needed to allow that conversation to take place. It is, however, a start, a stab, a first effort to manage the unruly monster that is diversity into something that we might all be able to meaningfully act upon.

What follows is an in-depth analysis of over half a million attendance records of theatergoers in the San Francisco Bay Area from 2006 to 2012. These attendance records cover 25 theatre companies ranging in size,

geography, age, board size, annual budget, etc, and representing, as much as possible, a breadth of diversity in what is admittedly a single narrow part of the larger arts sector.

This research is a pilot much more than it is a definitive answer, but it is a pilot with a single clear goal: to set forth a concept of how we might encapsulate the current state of a certain organization's diversities into a standardized set of scores, comparable to both other organizations and the localized population that that organization should arguably be serving, as a method of both giving shape to the unshaped issue we face and providing benchmarking, strategic guidance, and future-looking goals that a company might use to make headway against the heavy wind, to change even slowly, and to in so doing offer a small step towards our continued viability as a field.

FINDINGS

Interconnections and Impacts around Diversity

The Basic "Meanings" of Increases in Different Diversities

Discussing increases and decreases in types of diversity can become difficult without the context to know what those increases and decreases mean practically for the demographics of the sample. In general, the demographic profile of this sample matches with both other research and generally-held common sense about the "standard American theatergoer" today. A basic profile, based on prevalent general demographics, would be of an older, white, married, wealthy, highly-educated Democratic male. Variations from that standard, by-and-large, generate higher diversity index scores, indicating more diversity in the sample.

In the case of this study:

➤ *Most reported patrons were older, so an increase in age diversity indicates there were more younger people in the sample.*

➤ *Most reported patrons were married, so an increase in marital status diversity indicates there were more single people in the sample.*

➤ *The theatergoing sample's educational attainment percentages were generally about evenly distributed between high school, college and graduate school. As such, increases in educational attainment diversity, while minor, were also due to slight shifts in any of those numbers. Educational attainment diversity is the only category where there was a solid trend of more parity in theatergoing audiences over the general population, due to the overrepresentation of people with graduate degrees.*

➤ *While disparities in gender were relatively small, where they existed, more reported patrons were male, so an increase in gender diversity indicates there were more females in the sample.*

➤ *Most reported patrons were wealthy, so an increase in household income diversity indicates there were more people with relatively lower incomes in the sample.*

➤ *Most reported patrons were Democrats, so an increase in political affiliation diversity indicates there were more Republicans or unaffiliated people in the sample. In most cases, the Republican percentage of respondents tends to be small and stable, meaning that the fluctuation comes from an increase in people who did not declare a political affiliation, but there are exceptions.*

➤ *Most reported patrons were white, so an increase in race/ethnicity diversity indicates there were more non-white people in the sample. Depending on the organization, those fluctuations could have been an increase in Hispanic, black or Asian audiences, or a combination.*

The "Average" Patron vs. the "Average" Community Resident

While the arts diversity index is surely useful in many contexts, for the purpose of this research we have used it primarily to create

common metrics for which to measure the comparison of an arts organization's audience's demographics against the demographics of the community immediately surrounding that arts organization. In our definition, we have identified that "community" as the home county of the company.

This, we understand, is a rudimentary way to draw a line around a "community," but it also allowed a fairly easy way to test the tool, and enough of an accurate measurement as to at least be useful enough to discuss implications.

In aggregate, the "average" theatergoer in this sample had a 9-in-10 chance of being white, a 6-in-10 chance of being male. He was likely a registered Democrat, age 59.3 years and with 65% likelihood of having a college degree. He also had a 1-in-3 likelihood of also having a graduate degree. His household income was $109,167.

In comparison, in aggregate, the "average" member of the general population in the five counties sampled had a better chance of being non-white than white, and was equally likely to be male or female. He or she had a 1-in-2 chance of being a registered Democrat, age 48.1 years and with a 60% likelihood of

having a college degree. He or she had a 1-in-5 likelihood of also having a graduate degree. His or her household income was $75,080.

The county-by-county comparison data of theatergoers versus the general community demonstrates that the disparities, while consistent in direction throughout the Bay Area, are markedly different from county to county. Most of that disparity, it's important to note, has to do with differences in the *general population* not the theatergoing sample—the theatergoing sample is remarkably consistent in profile regardless of county, while the county populations themselves are variable.

Educational attainment was the only type of diversity where the theatergoing population exhibited more diversity than the general population. While about the same

amount of people (around two-thirds) were likely to have a college degree in both the general population and the theatergoing sample, theatergoers were substantially more likely to have a graduate degree or higher as well.

While this isn't surprising, and theatremakers

		Average Household Income	% Attended Graduate School	Average Age (years)	% Married	% Female	% White, Not Hispanic	% Democrat
Alameda	**General population**	$70,821	32%	46.8	47%	51%	34%	58%
	Theatergoing sample	$105,635	38%	61	65%	40%	89%	71%
	Difference	-$34,814	-6%	-14.2	-18%	11%	-55%	-13%
Contra Costa	**General population**	$79,135	35%	48.7	52%	51%	47%	50%
	Theatergoing sample	$111,889	34%	56.5	68%	37%	89%	65%
	Difference	-$32,754	1%	-7.8	-16%	14%	-42%	-15%
Marin	**General population**	$89,605	27%	52	52%	51%	73%	54%
	Theatergoing sample	$107,659	33%	61.9	67%	40%	93%	81%
	Difference	-$18,054	-6%	-9.9	-15%	11%	-20%	-27%
San Francisco	**General population**	$46,777	26%	46.4	38%	49%	42%	56%
	Theatergoing sample	$105,027	35%	58.5	54%	41%	86%	78%
	Difference	-$58,250	-9%	-12.1	-16%	8%	-44%	-22%
Santa Clara	**General population**	$89,064	36%	46.8	53%	50%	35%	46%
	Theatergoing sample	$115,625	31%	58.6	74%	36%	87%	72%
	Difference	-$26,561	5%	-11.8	-21%	14%	-52%	-26%

Fig 6.1. Demographic characteristics of both general populations of study counties and theatergoing populations of study organizations in each county.

Source: Derived from AC Census and US Census data

often take it as a given that their audiences are highly educated, this is the only example in the study of an instance where increased diversity may not be the goal, since increased diversity actually means further preferencing the existing elites over the less-educated general population.

While political affiliation diversity isn't a concept that gets a lot of play, it turns out it may deserve more attention. In the general population of the five counties examined, 53% of the population was identified as Democrats, 16% as Republicans, and the remaining 31% as either Independents of "No Party." In the theatergoing population, 75% of the sample was identified as Democrats, 2% as Republicans and the remaining 23% as either Independents or "No Party." Democrats are highly overrepresented in our audiences. This is an identified problem, of course, and certain theatres across the country, notably the Oregon Shakespeare Festival and its artistic director Bill Rausch, have attempted to tackle it by commissioning plays that emerge out of more conservative themes, but most often there seems to be, especially in the Bay Area, a feeling that since the majority of artists are liberal, the work

should be liberal too, and audiences can take or leave that.

Where this becomes problematic, of course, is when an entire political party pushes back against institutionalized art as a tool of the liberal agenda, as something that is not of value to them for the fact that it doesn't really reflect them, and most damagingly as something that does not deserve public funding for the fact that it doesn't speak to the whole spectrum.

On the other side of the political diversity coin, however, increasing the representation of Republicans and other more conservative groups actually works counter to other potential efforts to diversify. Political affiliation is negatively correlated with household income diversity, marital status diversity and gender diversity, meaning, in simple terms, that increased numbers of Republicans in an audience sample are correlated with decreased numbers of lower-income people, single people and women. There is always, it seems, a trade-off.

Before moving on to a discussion of how the various types of diversity are interconnected, it seems important to touch on the most obvious elephant in the room: the terrifically

large disparities in terms of race and ethnicity that exist between the general Bay Area population and the theatergoing sample. Of those sampled for this research, approximately 89% of the theatergoers were white. This is a staggering number by itself, and speaks to a homogeneity that may be even larger than had previously been assumed, but it is even more staggering when placed next to the fact that the general population of the five counties in the study averages about 45% white.[1]

Interconnected and Adjacent Diversities

One clear conclusion of this research is that for arts audiences, as for everyone in the general population, various diversities and

---

[1] As a personal aside amidst this discussion, this finding brings on, in me, a real sadness and a feeling of true despair. To love an artform so much and to see both that that love is shared by such a narrow slice of the world and that the slice of the world that loves the artform with me is dwindling so quickly as to very much imperil the form itself is heartbreaking, and should give any person who cares about the future of theatre pause. I wish I felt like this was hyperbolic on my part, but I don't.

	Household Income	Educational Attainment	Age	Marital Status	Gender	Race/ Ethnicity
Educational Attainment	▲					
Age	▲	▲				
Marital Status	▲	▲	▲			
Gender	▲			▲		
Race/ Ethnicity	▲		▲	▲		
Political Affiliation	▼			▼	▼	

Fig 6.2. An illustration of correlations between different arts diversity index scores for theatergoers studied, across types of diversity. Arrows indicate statistically significant positive or negative correlations (p≤.05).

Source: Derived from AC Census and US Census data

disparities occur simultaneously, and must be understood in that more complex light. Statistically significant correlations of various strengths exist between 15 of the 21 possible combinations of diversity, most of them positive (i.e. an increase in one type of diversity correlates with an increase in the other type).

Figure 6.2 shows where statistically significant correlations exist between types of diversity for the theatergoers studied. Green upward arrows indicate positive correlations (when one type of diversity increases, so does the other), red downward arrows indicate negative correlations (when one type of diversity increases, the other decreases) and yellow lines indicate no statistically significant correlation.

While this type of simple statistical analysis cannot indicate which of the diversities drives the other, it is, in some cases, possible to make real-world assumptions about why some of the relationships exist.

There is, for example, a correlation between age and race/ethnicity: the more diversity in one area, the more diversity in the other. This bears out larger societal trends, which indicate that younger generations are increasingly diverse due to interracial births, migration of non-white populations into the United States, higher birth rates among non-white groups, etc. The US Census, for example, indicates that nationally, the average age of the white general population is 37 years versus a black average age of 29 years and a Hispanic average age of 27 years.

Similarly, race/ethnicity diversity has a positive correlation with household income diversity. This, again, mirrors well-known national trends: according to data from the U.S. Census Bureau, the average annual household income for a white family is about 158% that of a black family and about 135% that of a Latino family. Household income, unsurprisingly, is also correlated with age—the more younger people in an audience sample, the more variation in household income within that sample—which indicates, as might be obvious, that younger people generally earn less, have fewer financially contributing members to a household, etc.

This type of correlation indicates, among other things, that diversification efforts that focused on age or on income diversity, which are often viewed as a possibly slightly more attainable diversification goal, would likely lead to a corresponding diversification in race/ethnicity.

The data on the varying levels of disparity between those types of correlated diversity in theatergoers and the same diversities in the overall population bear out the possibility that incremental change in an area where the field is already closer (not to say close) to reflecting the full community would allow a company to manageably approach a harder issue like, say, racial disparity. To see this, we
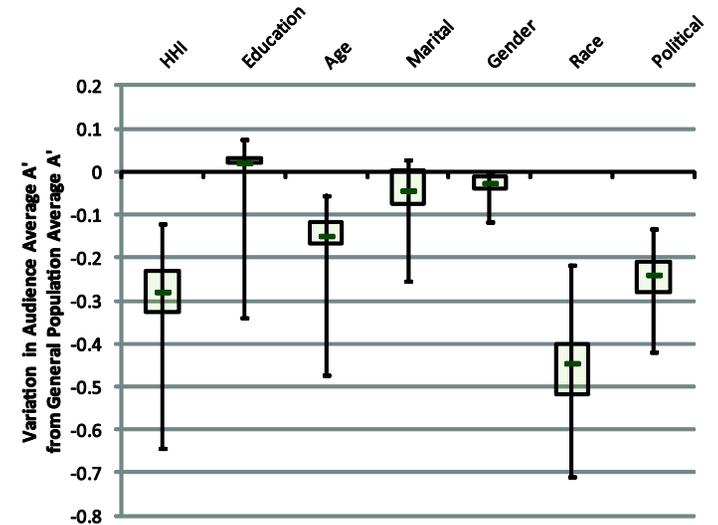

Fig 6.3. *Variation in average audience diversity index scores from average diversity index scores of the general population.*

Source: Derived from AC Census and US Census data

only need look at Fig 6.3, which shows the relative distance from audience-community parity in the sample for each type of diversity. Race/ethnicity is by far the most distant, which is to say that of all the ways that theatre audiences in the sample diverged from the general population, they diverged most in terms of racial/ethnic profile. Compared to that great distance, the distance to go to reflect the general population's household income diversity or its age diversity seems more tackle-able, and by understanding the interconnection between the three types of diversity, we as a field may be able to create more manageable methods for ensuring progress. If tackling the issue head-on is scary, then perhaps coming at it from the side will ease the fear sufficiently to unfreeze the actor.

The other thing that graphs like Fig 6.3 show is, in a way, where the alarms really need to go off and where they, perhaps, don't. This can be a touchy issue, but recognizing the limited time, energy and finances that can be driven into a problem even as important as audience diversification, it seems prudent to at least broach the possibility that not all diversification problems are of the same

severity, and that not all need be handled with the same attention.

Gender diversity is an interesting example here. Since 1980, the general population's gender diversity has remained extremely stable, even in the face of various other types of demographic change, at practically 50/50. Theatre audiences in this sample, by and large, reflected that same reality, so that in Fig 6.3 one can see that audience gender diversity already has almost no variation from the county standards.

This, of course, does not address questions of artist or administrator parity, which were not within the scope of this study but which anecdotal evidence seems to indicate *do* have disparity issues, but in terms of audiences (and especially if one were to conduct arts diversity indexing work on one's own audience and were to confirm this finding), gender doesn't seem to be where we need to spend as much time, except insofar as it has a statistically significant correlation with household diversity income (i.e., in the context of this survey, audiences with more women represented also had more diversity in household incomes represented). As such, tackling gender parity in audiences becomes a

tool towards tackling other larger disparities in those audiences.

What this type of information, in terms of both the diversity indices themselves and their correlations between themselves, does is it turns a conversation that can often seem inactionable into a conversation with myriad possible actions. It takes something messy and attempts to lay out possible knobs and levers that, when moved, affect other aspects. A company or arts community working from such a blueprint could, it seems, carry forward, for a while at least, by working inside more comfortable boundaries, making triage-style decisions, and having a better understanding of the interconnections inherent in those decisions.

Interconnected and Adjacent Company Characteristics

In this study, in order to test out the ability of the A' scores to be used as guideposts for providing possible strategies forward, we partnered with the California Cultural Data Project in order to incorporate CCDP data from the twenty-five companies studied into the sample.

Fig 6.4. *An illustration of correlations between different company characteristics. Arrows indicate statistically significant positive or negative correlations (p≤.05).*

Source: Derived from the California Cultural Data Project

The purpose was to see if we could tell what of certain of those characteristics were correlated with changes in diversity index scores.

As with the various types of diversity, the characteristics of the companies were in some cases correlated with each other. Figure 6.4 shows those correlations, where they existed, among some of the company characteristics we looked at. These correlations, especially for certain pairings, were extremely strong and clear; in those cases they also were almost always intuitive. One result of examining those correlations is to understand that, while we looked at six company characteristics and their relationship to the diversities, we are ultimately looking at the driving power of a smaller number of characteristics, which in turn yields variations in other characteristics.

To get specific: the age of a company is highly correlated with a variety of other characteristics, including both the total annual budget of the company, the number of board members at that company. This intuitively makes sense; most (though not all) arts organizations grow over time, and as they grow their boards, staffs and revenues grow

as well. It also intuitively makes sense that increases all of those factors (age, size, number of board members) are also correlated with increases in average adult ticket price. While this data can't prove the direction (or directions) of the causality in these relationships, based on the standard temporal relationship between them (a company grows over time, so both its resources and support structure must grow over time) one could assume a sort of driving order that carries back to how long the company has been around.

We examined the percent of total budget spent on marketing and communications (including staffing) on the hypothesis that certain diversities might be affected by the loudness of the voice telling them to go. A side finding, but an interesting one, is that the percent spent on marketing and communications is not significantly correlated with any of the other company characteristics we examined. Total percentages ranged from 4% to over 25% of total budget spent on marketing and communications, with no clear pattern on why some companies spent more and some less.

In Figure 6.4, there is one red downward arrow, indicating a negative correlation between the total annual budget of an organization and its number of board members. This correlation, while statistically significant, was a relatively weak on, and it is unclear what the causality might be.

Correlations Between Company Characteristics and Diversity Indices

Figure 6.5 tabulates all of the areas in which there was a statistically significant relationship between variations in a company characteristic and variations in a type of diversity. The green boxes indicate that there was a variation, while the red boxes indicate that there wasn't.

The age of the company correlated with fluctuations in all but one of the diversities examined in this study. In three cases (decreased gender parity (more men), decreased household income diversity (more wealthier people) and more political diversity (more Republicans)) companies under 10 years of age and companies over 50 years of age were significantly different than those between, and were significantly similar to each other. While this isn't a surprising finding in terms of older companies, who are

often assumed to be attracting more wealthy and conservative audience members, the similar correlation with young companies is interesting. One could hypothesize that wealth and Republicanism go somewhat hand-in-hand, and that those younger companies are attracting young-but-wealthy patrons interesting in trying something new.

This tracks with another finding, which is that these very young companies (under 10 years), along with companies in "middle age" (20-50 years), were found to have more age diversity (i.e. more young people) in their audiences than their other counterparts.

The most interesting finding in terms of the age of the company, however, may be that the very oldest companies were the ones that demonstrated the most racial/ethnic diversity. Likely this has less to do with the age of the company by itself, and more to do with the interrelationship of age with company size and reach: the oldest companies in the study were also the largest companies in the study, and therefore were reaching the most aggregate number of people. It follows, perhaps, that at a certain size of audience, some racial diversity will occur by default. In addition, while we didn't

specifically look at race-based outreach at organizations, the oldest and largest organizations are the most likely to have resources to do race-based niche marketing,

and the (relatively small, but statistically significant) increase in racial/ethnic diversity may be the result.

	AGE DIVERSITY	EDUCATION DIVERSITY	GENDER DIVERSITY	HOUSEHOLD INCOME DIVERSITY	MARITAL STATUS DIVERSITY	POLITICAL DIVERSITY	RACE/ ETHNICITY DIVERSITY
HOME COUNTY	green	red	green	red	green	green	green
THEATRICAL SEASON (YEAR)	red	red	red	red	red	red	red
AGE OF COMPANY	green	red	green	green	green	green	green
TOTAL ANNUAL BUDGET	green	red	red	green	green	red	green
# OF BOARD MEMBERS	green	green	green	green	green	green	green
% REVENUE EARNED	red	red	red	red	red	red	green
AVG. ADULT TICKET PRICE	red	red	red	red	red	red	green
% SPENT ON MARCOMM	red	red	green	red	red	red	red

Fig 6.5. *Table of statistically significant correlations between company characteristics and diversity index scores for various types of diversity. Green boxes indicate statistically significant correlations (p≤.05), red boxes indicate no statistically significant correlation.*

Source: Derived from Bay Area Arts & Culture Census data

This tracks with the findings related to the budget size of the company (which makes sense given the correlation between those two company characteristics that was discussed earlier). Generally speaking, companies with larger budgets had more racial and age diversity than their other counterparts. This again seems likely to do with a size-of-pool factor, which is not meant to say that those companies are not also more financially equipped to be making concerted efforts to draw in those audiences as well.

Companies that had an average adult ticket price of under $10 or over $60 had higher rates of racial/ethnic diversity than other companies. This was the only area where there was a correlation with ticket price and a type of diversity, and it's an interesting one. One hypothesis is that the bump at the lowest prices is about lowering a barrier to access, while the bump at the highest prices is about an attraction to a special event.

The access conversation has been had in many venues, but it's interesting to see evidence that there may indeed be a barrier to certain groups at what is, honestly, a relatively unsustainable pricepoint for most

theatres. The other side of the conversation, the "special event" concept, also makes sense: much novice audience traffic (first-time or infrequent attendees) comes in the form of people gathering groups to attend marquee shows—shows that cost a lot of money, and in costing that money come with the imprimatur a special event, for which people often dress up, go out to dinner, etc.

The counties in the study, while adjacent to each other, hold tremendously different populations, and there were a variety of diversities where the home county of the company correlated with differences in diversity. Age, gender, marital status, political affiliation and racial diversity all varied in statistically significant ways based on home county, in some cases mirroring the variations among the general populations of those counties and in some cases not. Audience age diversity, for example, varied based on county, but generally followed the trends of those counties. Similarly, counties with more political diversity in their general populations (i.e. counties with higher rates of Republicans) were the home to the theatre companies whose audiences also had the most political diversity.

The largest exception to this type of pairing was in terms of race/ethnicity. Except in Marin County, which had both the least diverse total population and the least diverse audience population in the study, theatergoing audiences did not mirror the relative diversities of the home counties of the companies. All of the county-level audience numbers were much less racially diverse than the general populations of the counties, of course, but they varied unpredictably. Alameda county, for example, had the most general population diversity (66% non-white) and the second-least audience diversity (11% non-white). Likely this has to do with influxes of populations from other parts of the Bay Area into Alameda-based arts organizations, which is to say the consumption of Alameda-based art by non-Alameda residents. This both reveals a shortcoming of the study, which views "community" narrowly as "home county" in a way that is artificial to how audiences consume art, and poses the question of whether a company based in a certain area should more directly attempt to mirror that area, in particular in the case of theatre, which is a place-based and localized medium.

CONCLUSIONS

Looking Forward and Outward

This study provides a first step towards a variety of potentially fruitful future conversations. While the sample size and certain data limitations earn this study the true title of "pilot," and deeper and more complete data would likely provide a richer picture, the calculation of the Arts Diversity Index and its pairing with various characteristics of arts organizations to see what affects change has the potential to truly augment the difficult conversation around diversification and the arts.

While this study focused particularly on audience diversity, it is easy to envision a study that instead looked at staff diversity, artist diversity, board diversity, etc, in order to understand both what organizational constructs might affect those diversities *and* what each of those diversities did to each other. Is it true, as is sometimes hypothesized, that board diversity and staff diversity have a direct impact on audience diversity? If so, why? By moving to a

standardized measurement and working with statistical analysis, we may be able to take some of the guesswork out of those questions.

One other crucial takeaway from this work, we hope, is an understanding that "diversification" is not just about one thing, like race or age, and is instead a holistic expansion of who is in our audiences in all directions. By analyzing the relationship between types of diversity, we can begin to understand what manageable, incremental, least-disruptive changes and strategies can be implemented in order to begin to tackle the problem. In so doing, we have the potential to both move from simply "valuing" diversity to actively "managing" it, and to do so with a pragmatism that will allow that management to happen at the expense of short-term stability.

This data reveals both a path forward and a set of caution signs along that path. Even as diversification is necessary, and active effort

on the part of the theatre field to encourage that diversity is necessary, it is also complicated. The nature of our audiences, as homogenized and unrepresentative of the whole as they may be, is interwoven deeply into everything from the art we present to the model with which we finance our continued existence.

Even as these things must change, those pressing most for that change need to heed the reality that very few people are willing to move towards a cliff without a plan for a bridge, or at least the promise of a parachute. Peeling arts leaders away from the relatively sound belief that the stability of their organization relies on the continued stability and happiness of their most loyal stakeholders—a myopic view that nonetheless fits with a field where short-term stability is always a battle, and long-term thoughts on stability is a difficult luxury to afford—requires an active and accurate understanding of the interrelations of the field and the communities we serve, a

willingness to listen to, and believe in, the idiosyncrasies of an organization and its mission, and the ability to offer concrete, constructive and actionable steps that an organization might take to get closer to what is needed to survive tomorrow.

As frustrating as it might be to consider, if you are fervently on board with diversification already, diversification is a disruptive innovation in many arts organizations and needs to be treated as such.

In a for-profit organization, innovations are incubated for years, tested and retested, and then set loose in a beta environment where they are expected to have issues, need continued subsidy, and perfected. Following the beta phase, they often are given "runway" space—a few years floating on general operating funds before they clear a profit and/or have demonstrable positive outcomes.

In non-profits, of course, that runway is truncated almost to nonexistence. We must, by virtue of working so close to the bone financially, have relatively quick assurances of (1) positive outcome and, more importantly,

(2) little or no negative outcome in order for something to be worth it and to become integrated long-term in the organization.

Trying to force change quickly and without providing roadmaps for how it might successfully be done—whether that means a foundation trying to coerce change among grantees or an individual organization trying to get existing patrons to go along with a major shift in focus—is problematic and, more often than not, unsuccessful. Without a runway, data and the right tools, long-term integration of the change is difficult, and the short-term disruption is, well, disruptive. If it is to be permanent, it cannot be done on a whim, and it cannot be done on the surface.

Funding priorities change with relative frequency, leaving organizations with vestigial programs built off of no-longer-existing funding and conflicting priorities—and that's just when it something that doesn't necessarily harm the core business (like, say, educational programming). Diversity is bigger than that—it requires more care, more time, and the very real possibility that bringing on one group means off-boarding another group. When it comes down to it, diversification

isn't, I don't think, about convincing people of the good of doing it—it's about allowing them the room and security to try without the fear that such effort might destabilize the organization.

Ultimately, of course, any true shift towards a more diversified audience will have to mean more than simply aligning with particular company characteristics of size or budget, etc. It will mean a shift in the work, in the voices, in the faces people see. And in that, too, we think that data can help, not as a stick prodding a hesitant organization down a path, but as a guidepost, a map providing some order to the wilderness, some sun to burn off the fog.

This movement forward may seem, at first, clumsy and perhaps even disingenuous. Like the old technique of pulling out of depression by forcing yourself to smile, eventually clumsy, well-intentioned actions, with enough guidance, will re-tone the muscles, re-spark the brain, and reignite the dialogue that our field, it seems, once had with so many and can again.

DETAILED FINDINGS

1. DERIVING THE ARTS DIVERSITY INDEX (A')

The Arts Diversity Index (expressed as *A'*) is primarily based on the Shannon-Wiener Diversity Index (expressed as *H'*), a formula developed initially to quantify entropy in a set of text and now used primarily to determine diversity within populations in the life sciences. In this case, "diversity" is meant in its purest form, which is to say that absolutely equal distribution (i.e. 50% male, 50% female) is considered maximally diverse, and absolutely unequal distribution (i.e. 100% male, 0% female) is considered maximally homogeneous.

Mathematically, *H'* is expressed as:

$$H' = -\sum p_i \ln(p_i)$$

where p_i is the proportion of individuals belonging to the *i*th category in a specific diversity dataset.

The nature of *H'* is that maximal homogeneity derives a value of 0. Depending on the number of different categories in a dataset, maximal diversity derives values that increase up to a variable point. In order to make comparisons among various diversities, populations and affecting characteristics more easily, the author then derived *A'*:

$$A' = 1 - \frac{H'_c}{H'_d - H'_h}$$

where H'_c is the diversity index of the category within a specific dataset, H'_d is the diversity index for maximal diversity within that dataset (i.e. equal distribution across all categories) and H'_h is the diversity index for maximal homogeneity within that dataset.

The effect of this is to make, in all datasets, a score of 1.0 maximally diverse and a score of 0.0 maximally homogeneous. As with much else in life, the "aim" (at least in terms of pure diverse distribution within the population) is to get the highest *A'* possible.

➢ *The **Arts Diversity Index**, which is indicated as A', is calculated as a score between 0 and 1, in which 0 is as un-diverse as possible within the population, and 1 is as diverse as possible within the population.*

The goal of this study is to better understand seven types of diversity in relation to the audiences, staffs and artists of a group of San Francisco Bay Area theatre companies. Further, this study hopes to provide an easy shorthand to understand how diverse a particular organization's audience, staff and/or artists are. *A'* provides that, allowing an organization to quickly see where they sit on a spectrum of diversity.

Without a baseline or goal, *A'* is less useful than it could be. For example, without context, an organization with a Gender *A'* of .45 would not know whether it was doing well or poorly in terms of diversity. Whereas in the life sciences, absolute parity (all populations within a dataset being equal) might be a useful measurement, when dealing with human beings, natural imbalances in populations mean that the goal for any individual company should be different if it is to be representative of the reality of the community from which that company draws an audience. To put it another way, if an organization primarily draws from a community that has a large representation of older people, then the community itself is not at parity, and so the

idea that the theatre's audience should be at parity seems flawed.

To address this issue, the author created companion *A'* values pulled from US Census data gathered on a county level. This is an imperfect solution, as a theatre company may draw audiences from multiple counties or may alternately draw from only a small portion of a county, depending on company size, but for the purposes of this pilot study, it was determined that a county-level measurement would provide sufficient variation to relatively accurately represent the "community outside the doors" of each theatre company.

At the core of this study are 25 theatre companies in the Bay Area of varying sizes, missions, work types and geographies.

These 25 organizations were not selected randomly, but were rather selected because they met two main criteria: (1) they had provided audience attendance data into the AC Census spanning at least 4 of the 7 years being studied (2006 to 2012) and (2) they had audited CCDP profiles for at least 3 of the 7 years being studied.

These 25 organizations were distributed across five Bay Area counties (San Francisco, Marin, Alameda, Contra Costa and Santa Clara). They ranged in budget size from $75,335 to $75,405,044.

2. ABOUT THE SAMPLE

This report draws on a variety of different databases to compile as complete a picture of each organization's basic information and audience demographics as possible. In addition, three theatre companies provided exhaustive data on their boards, staffs and artists from 2006 to 2012, which were then also analyzed for diversity trends and, where possible, compared to audience data from those same years.

The datasets utilized in this study were as follows:

California Cultural Data Project (CCDP). Operated by The Pew Charitable Trusts, the Cultural Data Project is a powerful online management tool designed to strengthen arts and cultural organizations, gathering reliable, longitudinal data on the sector. It enables participating organizations to track trends and benchmark their progress through

sophisticated reporting tools, empowers researchers and advocates with information to make the case for arts and culture, and equips funders with data to plan and evaluate grantmaking activities more effectively.

Bay Area Arts & Culture Census (AC Census). The Bay Area Arts & Culture Census (AC Census) is one of the largest and most comprehensive collaborative mailing list and research programs in the country. The

database is managed and maintained by TRG Arts, with demographic data appended from the Acxiom database, one of the largest such databases in the world. The AC Census currently holds over 1.6 million patron records covering over 3 million attendance transactions. Patron records are cross-referenced among organizations, de-duplicated and appended with demographic information. In the case of this research project, 1,354 different attendee lists from 25 organizations were examined. In total, those lists contained 1,418,012 patron household transaction records, of which between 341,531 and 522,783 records were appended with demographic information, depending on the demographic. Percentages were derived from only those records that had information in that demographic category, and were extrapolated to the whole.

United States Census (US Census). The United States Census is a decennial census mandated by the United States Constitution. The population and its various demographic characteristics are enumerated every 10 years and the results are used to allocate Congressional seats (congressional apportionment), electoral votes, and government program funding. The US Census

information used in this report is derived on a county-level from the 2010 US Census figures.

California Secretary of State. The political affiliation data for the general populations of the five counties in the study was drawn from a database housed with the California Secretary of State, and reflects percentages from 2010.

ISSUES AND LIMITATIONS

This research is a first attempt at studying the issues of diversity in the arts using an indexing system. It is a research project that is a "pilot" in every sense, and it is saddled with certain inherent issues related to the sample and the various data sources that are feeding it:

Non-Random Selection, Small Sample Size. The theatre companies in this study were not randomly selected, nor are they representative of the whole population of theatre organizations in the Bay Area. Limitations in available data from the CCDP and the AC Census, coupled with needing to only work with organizations that existed in the thin shared space between the CCDP and the AC Census, limited both the size and nature of the sample. While the sample,

given that, is rather diverse in terms of work product, size and geography, it is also in some cases too small to be parsed and remain statistically stable, and more work needs to be done on a larger scale to confirm trends. Outlier organizations also have a higher potential of skewing overall results given the sample size, and further research is recommended at a larger scale to confirm findings. As a proof of concept, however, this work is viable.

Incomplete Patron Information. The patron information drawn from the AC Census is not comprehensive, as the information (and the completeness of the patron records submitted) is voluntarily submitted by the organization. This means that some of the organizations submitted only a portion of their total patron database in any given year, which in turn indicates the possibility of skewed demographic profiles. In addition, the demographic appending of those AC Census names is, in some ways, flawed. In cases where multiple confirmed members of a household have made purchases, they are aggregated under the single demographic profile of the "head of household," defined by Acxiom as the main purchaser. This generally skews the data to over-represent males in the

category of purchasers, and can also over-represent older patrons who purchase for younger attendees.

"Patron" vs. "Purchaser." The theatre "patron" data is more correctly called the theatre "purchaser" data, as it is impossible to know with real accuracy how closely the patron sample in this study, which relies on purchaser information gathered by the theatre companies that is then appended with further information through the AC

Census, reflects the overall patron profiles of the companies. If, for example, a theatre company had a large portion of minors or young adults in the audience whose tickets were purchased by an adult, then what would be a younger demographic will likely end up looking older in this work because of the purchaser profile.

Incomplete CCDP Information. The CCDP data that was available was, as should be expected, extremely complete and fully

audited. Unfortunately, the relative youth of the CCDP and the fact that it is only slowly being taken up by more foundations (which, in turn, will engender the participation of more theatre companies more fully), means that the year-over-year data available was somewhat scattershot. In this case, of the 137 seasons we looked at in the study, CCDP data was available for 100 of them.

3. DIVERSITY VARIABLES AND GENERAL TRENDS

This report concerns itself with seven different types of diversity, looking at both theatergoers and the larger general population. These variables are gathered from the AC Census (which holds demographic data of theatergoers appended by TRG Arts with demographic data provided by Acxiom) and the US Census. Those types, and their permutations, were:

- **Age**
  - 18-25
  - 26-35
  - 36-45
  - 46-55
  - 56-65
  - 66-75
  - 76-85
  - 86 or older

- **Educational Attainment[i]**
  - Completed High School (% ppl over 25)
  - Completed College (% ppl over 25)
  - Completed Graduate School (% ppl over 25)

- **Gender[ii]**
  - Male
  - Female

- **Household Income[iii]**
  - < $15,000
  - $15,000 - $19,999
  - $20,000 - $29,999
  - $30,000 - $39,999
  - $40,000 - $49,999
  - $50,000 - $59,999
  - $60,000 - $74,999
  - $75,000 - $99,999
  - $100,000 - $124,999
  - $125,000 - $149,999
  - > $149,999

- **Marital Status**
  - Married or Inferred Married
  - Single or Inferred Single

- **Political Affiliation**
  - Democrat
  - Republican
  - Independent
  - No Party

- **Race/Ethnicity**[iv]
  - White, non-Hispanic
  - Black/African
  - Asian
  - Hispanic/Latino
  - Other

Figure 3.1 shows how far off from parity (as indicated here by how far off from the diversity score of the home county of the company) the 25 theatres in the study were in

Fig 3.1. Variation in average audience diversity index scores from average diversity index scores of the general population.
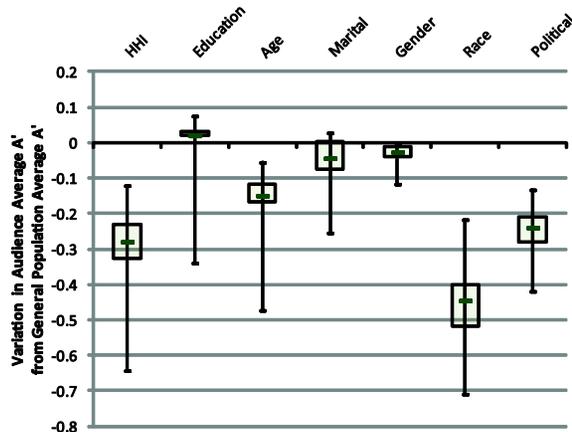
aggregate for each type of diversity. The "goal," at least in context with this work, is to have the green bar land as close to 0.0 as possible, which would indicate parity between audiences and the general population. Negative numbers mean that the audience is less diverse than the general population; positive numbers mean that the audience is more diverse than the general population.

The particulars of each type of diversity will be discussed in separate sections that follow, but seeing them side-by-side it is easy to see what aspects of general population diversity the field is relatively close to replicating within audiences (the types that have scores that are closer to zero), and what aspects of general population diversity we have more work to do to solve (the types that have scores that are highly negative, such as household income and diversity).

Figure 3.2 shows the variation among counties for each type of diversity, and the difference between the diversity indices of the general populations of the counties (the various black icons) and the diversity indices of the theatergoing population of organizations in those counties (the various red icons). The black boxes around each

Fig 3.2. Variation in diversity indices by county, comparison of general population to theatergoing population.
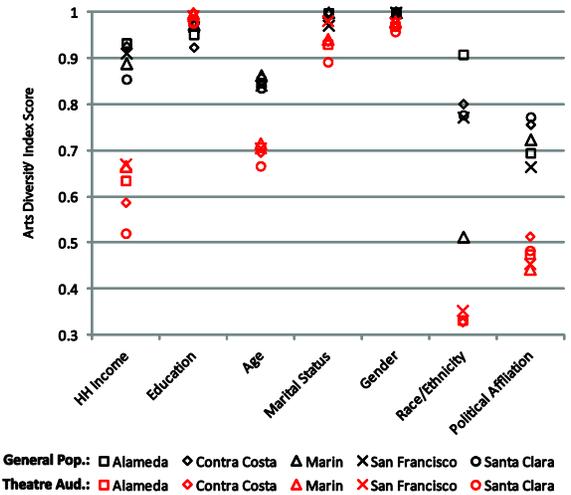
Source: Derived from US Census and AC Census data.

green bar indicate the first and third quartiles—so encompassed within the black box are the middle 50% of the responses. The lines extending upward and downward show the full breadth of the response, basically showing outliers. To give some context for the ensuing data analysis and discussion, we examined general population statistics for four of the seven types of diversity studied, comparing US Census results from 1980 and 2010.

Figure 3.3 shows, in the top graph, the percentage of the overall population that was identified in the US Census as white. The bold black line shows the US general population, of

which the white population decreased from just over 78% to around 63%. The narrower black line indicates the San Francisco Bay Area general population, which experienced a much more precipitous decline in the white population, dropping nearly 30 percentage points in 30 years from 70% white to 42% white. The county-by-county numbers (indicated in the various red lines), show the varied segregation of the five Bay Area counties studied here—notably the high red line, which shows the white population of the affluent suburb county Marin, and on the other end of the scale, the long-short-long line of Alameda county, where about 2 out of 3 people are not white as of 2010.

The bottom graph in Figure 3.3 shows the average age of the general population in the same categories. While the overall US population's average age has increased by 6.2 years in the last 30 years (from 30 to 36.2), the Bay Area continues to have a slightly older population on average (38.9 years as of 2010), largely driven by a drastically older age profile in Marin County (average age 44.5 years as of 2010).

In the 30 years between these censuses, all of the counties have approximately trended with the national average except for San Francisco,

which has seen only a marginal increase in average age.

Figure 3.4, in the top graph, shows the percentage of the population that was identified as female in 1980 and in 2010. This graph is most notable for its stability. The marginal decrease in the proportion of the population that is female in all categories is very, very minimal (.40% in the Bay Area).

The bottom graph in Figure 3.4 shows fluctuations in average household income nationally, in the Bay Area, and in the five counties in the study between 1980 and 2010. The 1980 values have been adjusted to account for inflation, so all numbers are in 2010 dollars. While the national household income average has increased over the last 30 years, Bay Area average household income has increased substantially more, largely driven by increased income for families living in Marin County (where most of the businesspeople who work in San Francisco live) and Santa Clara County (home to Silicon Valley). The city and county of San


Source: Derived from US Census data

Francisco, in large part because most of the wealthiest people who work there live in a different county, has experienced only a marginal increase in household income since 1980.

Fig 3.4. *General population demographic trends for the United States, the total Bay Area and each of the five counties in the study—percent female, average household income adjusted for inflation, 1980 versus 2010.*

Overall, these graphs paint a picture of an increasingly affluent and increasingly segregated community. County-by-county differences are stark, and in many cases patron differences do mirror county differences (see, for example, Fig 3.2). This is part of the reason that, for the purposes of this research, we have chosen in part to peg diversification goals to the home county of the organization—for better or worse, theatre companies in Marin County, with its older, whiter, and more affluent population, more accurately reflect that general population in their seats than theatre companies in Alameda County. While this may still be too blunt a method of measuring success, it seems clear given the high disparity between counties that something more finely-tuned than just "the Bay Area" is necessary to give theatres anything close to an attainable and useful goal.

Source: Derived from US Census data

4. COMPANY CHARACTERISTICS

This study also looks at the effects of seven different "company characteristics" drawn out of the California Cultural Data Project. Those characteristics, and their permutations, are:

- **Age of the Company**
  - Under 10 Years
  - 10-19 Years
  - 20-29 Years
  - 30-49 Years
  - 50 Years or Older

- **Total Annual Budget Size**
  - Under $150,000
  - $150,000-249,999
  - $250,000-$499,999
  - $500,000-$999,999
  - $1,000,000-$2,999,999
  - $3,000,000-$4,999,999
  - $5,000,000-$7,499,999
  - $7,500,000-$9,999,999
  - $10,000,000-$19,999,999
  - $20,000,000-$34,999,999
  - Over $35,000,000

- **Size of the Company's Board of Directors**
  - Fewer than 10
  - 10-19 Board Members
  - 20-29 Board Members
  - 30-49 Board Members
  - 50 or more Board Members

- **% Total Revenue Earned**
  - 0-9% Earned
  - 10-19% Earned
  - 20-29% Earned
  - 30-39% Earned
  - 40-49% Earned
  - 50-59% Earned
  - 60-69% Earned
  - 70-79% Earned

- **% Total Budget Spent on Marketing**
  - 0-4.99%
  - 5-9.99%
  - 10-14.99%
  - 15-19.99%
  - 20%-26%

- **Average Adult Ticket Price**
  - Under $20
  - $20-$24.99
  - $25-$29.99
  - $30-$34.99
  - $35-$39.99
  - $40-$44.99
  - $45-$49.99
  - $50-$59.99
  - Over $60

- **Company's Home County**
  - Alameda
  - Contra Costa
  - Marin
  - San Francisco
  - Santa Clara

- **Company Season[v]**
  - Ending in 2006
  - Ending in 2007
  - Ending in 2008
  - Ending in 2009
  - Ending in 2010
  - Ending in 2011
  - Ending in 2012

5. RESULTS

5.1 AGE DIVERSITY

Fig 5.1.1. *Variation in audience age diversity index from general population diversity index*
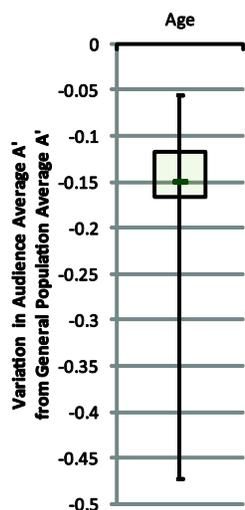
Source: Derived from AC Census and US Census data

Among the 137 seasons (from 25 theatre companies) examined for this study, the average patron age was 58.92 years. The average age of the general population in the five counties included in this study was 47.30 years.

➤ *The average age for a theatergoing patron is more than 11 years older than the average age of the general population in the five counties studied.*

On average, company age diversity index scores were .149 points lower than the age diversity scores of the general population in the five counties studied (Fig. 5.1.1). Among the various types of diversity studied, age scores varied from the general population more than education, marital status and gender parity scores, but less than

household income, political affiliation and race/ethnicity scores.[vi]

Age diversity has a significant positive correlation with household income diversity (r^2=.1988, p<.0001), educational attainment diversity (r^2=.2101, p<.0001), marital status diversity (r^2=.0772, p=.0001) and racial/ethnic diversity (r^2=.0345, p=.0297).

➤ *The age diversity of an audience increases as the household income diversity, educational attainment diversity, marital status diversity and racial/ethnic diversity of that audience increase.*

Audience age diversity varied in statistically significant ways depending on company age, total annual budget, company home county, and number of board members at an organization.

Company age (Fig. 5.1.2). Companies that were under 10 years old and between 20 and 49 years old were more diverse in terms of age than companies that were 10-19 years old and companies that were 50 years or older (*A'*=.691-.712 versus .661-.679, p=.0006).

➤ *Very young companies (under 10 years of age) and middle-aged companies (between 20 and 50 years of age) had more age diversity than companies in other age brackets.*

Company budget size (Fig. 5.1.3). Companies with budgets under $150,000 had significantly *less* age diversity than companies in larger budget categories (*A'*=.648 versus .681-.738, p=.007). Generally, age diversity increases as budget size increases, although that trend is not entirely linear.

➤ *Generally speaking, larger-budget companies have more age diversity than smaller-budget companies.*

Company home county (Fig. 5.1.4). Audiences for companies in Alameda, Contra Costa and Santa Clara Counties were significantly less diverse than audiences for companies in San Francisco and Marin Counties (*A'*=.670-.695 versus .71, p=.0176). In four out of 5 cases (except San Francisco County), audience age diversity variation occurred in the same order as the county age diversity (i.e., both Marin County and Marin-based theatres were the most age

diverse, both Santa Clara
County and Santa Clara-based
theatres were the least age
diverse).

➢ *Age diversity varies based*
on county, but (with the
exception of San Francisco
County) also seems to trend
with the home county, with
less age-diverse counties the
home of less age-diverse
companies.

**Number of board members
(Fig. 5.1.5).** Organizations
with under 20 board members
and over 50 board members
had a statistically significantly
less diverse set of board
members than organizations
with between 20 and 49
board members (*A'*=.658-.677
versus .713-.720, p=.0079).

➢ *Organizations with 20-50*
board members had less age
diversity than organizations
with fewer or more board
members.

Fig 5.1.2. Variations in audience age diversity index scores by age of company.
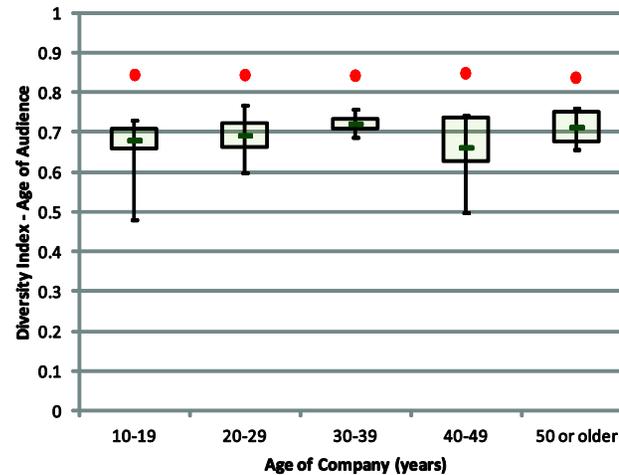
- *audience A'*   • *general population A'*
Source: Derived from AC Census and US Census data

Fig 5.1.3. Variations in audience age diversity index scores by company annual budget size.
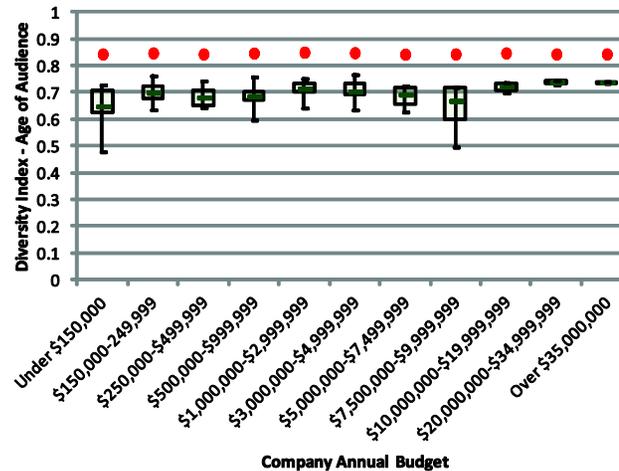
- *audience A'*   • *general population A'*
Source: Derived from AC Census and US Census data

Fig 5.1.4. Variations in audience age diversity index scores by company home county.
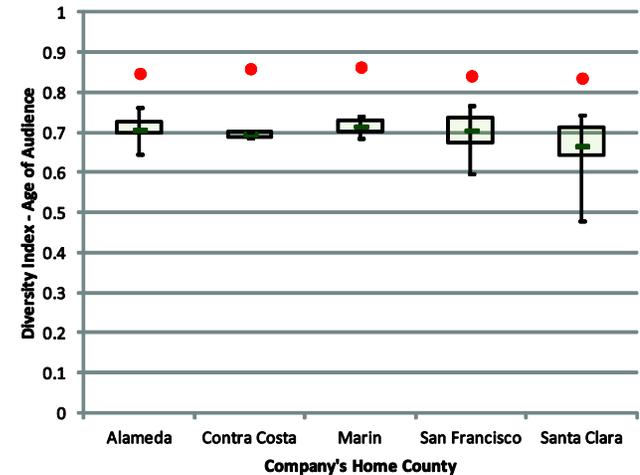
- *audience A'*   • *general population A'*
Source: Derived from AC Census and US Census data

Fig 5.1.5. Variations in audience age diversity index scores by number of board members.
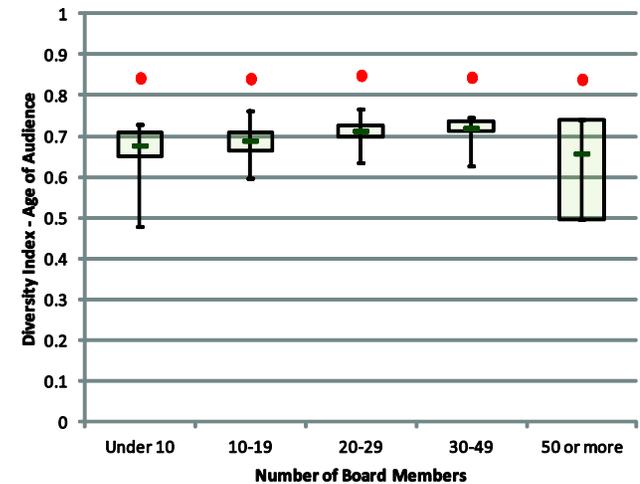
- *audience A'*   • *general population A'*
Source: Derived from AC Census and US Census data

Non-significant characteristics. The theatrical season, the percentage of total company revenue that was earned, the percentage of the company's budget devoted to marketing and communications and the average adult ticket price were not found to significantly affect the age of the audience.

5.2   EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT DIVERSITY

Fig 5.2.1. Variation in audience education attainment diversity index from general population educational attainment diversity index.
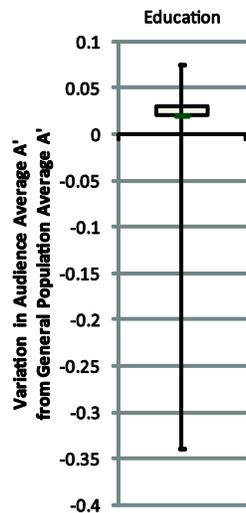
Source: Derived from AC Census and US Census data

On average, high school was the highest degree attained for 34% of audience members over the age of 25, compared to 38% of the 5-county population. Thirty-one percent of audience members had completed college and 37% had earned a graduate degree, as compared to 39% of the general population having completed college and 22% having earned a graduate degree.

On average, company *A'* scores for educational attainment were .021 points higher than the *A'* scores for educational attainment of the general population in the five counties studied. This indicates that theatre audiences are actually slightly *more* diverse in terms of educational attainment than the general population. This is true only because theatergoing audiences have more graduate degrees than the general population (Fig. 5.2.2), which pushes the overall audience population closer to parity, although it also means that theatres have a substantially more educated audience than the general population, and have an underrepresentation of patrons whose education terminated with high school (-4.1%) or college (-8.34%) and an overrepresentation of patrons whose education terminated with a graduate degree (+12.37%).

Among the various types of diversity studied, educational attainment scores varied from the general population less than all other types of diversity scores.

➢   *Educational attainment was the only type of diversity where the theatergoing population exhibited more diversity than the general population. This is due to an overrepresentation of advanced degrees in the theatergoing population.*

Educational attainment diversity has a significant positive correlation with household income diversity (r^2=.2145, p<.0001), age diversity (r^2=.2101, p<.0001) and marital status diversity (r^2=.0544, p<.0061).

Fig 5.2.2. Percentage of adults over age 25 who have completed various levels of education—theatergoing audience versus the general population in the five Bay Area counties studied.

		% Completed	
Completed High School	Audience	33.87%	
	General Population	37.97%	
Completed College	Audience	31.45%	
	General Population	39.79%	
Completed Graduate School	Audience	34.61%	
	General Population	22.24%	

Source: Derived from AC Census and US Census data

> *The educational attainment diversity of an audience increases as the household income diversity, age diversity and marital status diversity of that audience increase.*

Non-significant characteristics. None of the company characteristics (theatrical season, company age, company annual budget, home county, number of board members, percentage of revenue earned, percentage of budget spent on marketing and communications and average adult ticket price) were found to significantly correlate to changes in audience diversity in terms of educational attainment.

> *Diversity in audience educational attainment is not significantly affected by variations in company characteristics.*

Fig 5.3.1. *Variation in audience gender diversity index from general population gender diversity index.*

Gender

(Y-axis: Variation in Audience Average A' from General Population Average A', ranging from 0.02 to -0.14)

5.3 GENDER DIVERSITY

Overall, an average of 40% of audience members were identified as female, compared to the 5-county population average of 50%. It is important to note here that the Arts & Culture Census data from which the audience gender numbers were derived primarily take into account *ticket buyers*, who are often men, as opposed to *decision makers*, who are more often women (Brown 2012). Non-purchasers who attend a performance are substantially underrepresented in the AC Census data, and so it is possible that this disparity in audience gender statistics is a function of that shortcoming of the database.

On average, audience *A'* scores for gender were .026 points lower than the *A'* score of the general population in the five counties studied. Among the various types of diversity studied, gender scores varied from the general population more than education, but less than all other types of diversity scores.

> *Gender diversity of the theatergoing population was almost at parity, on average, with the gender diversity of the general population.*

Gender diversity has a significant positive correlation with household income diversity (r^2=.1761, p<.0001) and marital status diversity (r^2=.2526, p<.0001). Gender diversity has a significant negative correlation with political affiliation diversity (r^2=.1093, p<.0001).

> *The gender diversity of an audience increases as the household income diversity and marital status diversity of that audience increase.*

> *The gender diversity of an audience decreases as the political affiliation diversity of that audience increases.*

Audience gender diversity varied in statistically significant ways depending on company age, percent spent on marketing and communications and company home county.

While these correlations are all statistically significant, gender diversity was practically at parity across the board, so the fluctuations are relatively small.

Company age (Fig. 5.3.2). Very young and very old companies (under 10 years and 50 years or older) had significantly less gender diversity than those between the ages of 10 and 49 years of age (*A'*=.950-.956 versus .971-.977, p=.003).

> *Very young and very old companies are slightly farther from gender parity in their audiences than their counterparts in between.*

Percent spent on marketing and communications (Fig. 5.3.3). Gender diversity of audiences was the only type of diversity that was significantly correlated to the percent of budget spent on marketing and communications. This correlation was inverted—the lower the percentage spent on marketing and communications, the higher the company's gender diversity *A'* score was (.961-.968 for the highest percentages spent on marketing versus .996 for the lowest, p=.0093).

➢ *The less companies in this study reported spending on marketing and communications, the more gender diversity was found in their audiences.*

Company home county (Fig. 5.3.4). Companies in Santa Clara County had significantly less gender diversity than companies in the other counties (*A'*=.958 versus .968-.980, p=.0002). Santa Clara County's general population had the highest *A'* score for gender diversity of all the counties, a .999992

out of 1.0, indicating almost complete gender parity in the general population of the county.

➢ *Companies in Santa Clara County had less gender diversity of audiences than companies in other counties, while the general population of Santa Clara County was actually the closest to gender parity of any county.*

Non-significant characteristics. The theatrical season, company budget, number of board members,

Fig 5.3.3. Variations in audience age diversity index scores by company annual budget size.

- *audience A'*   ● *general population A'*

Source: Derived from AC Census and US Census data

Fig 5.3.2. Variations in audience gender diversity index scores by age of company.

- *audience A'*   ● *general population A'*

Source: Derived from AC Census and US Census data

Fig 5.3.4. Variations in audience gender diversity index scores by company home county.

- *audience A'*   ● *general population A'*

Source: Derived from AC Census and US Census data
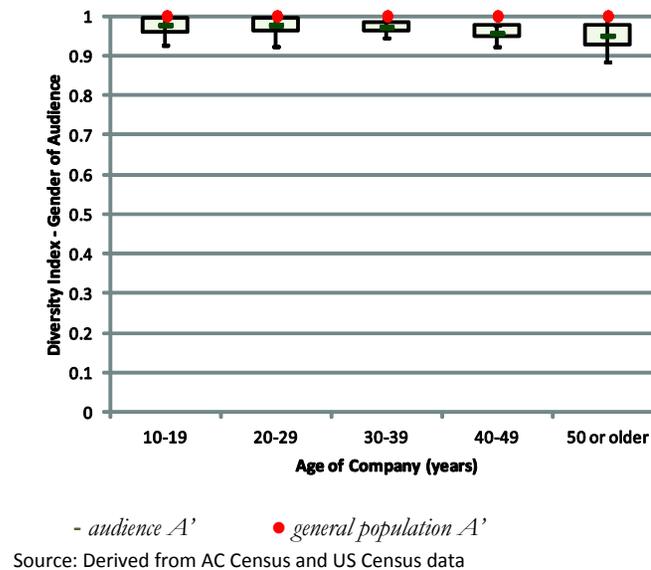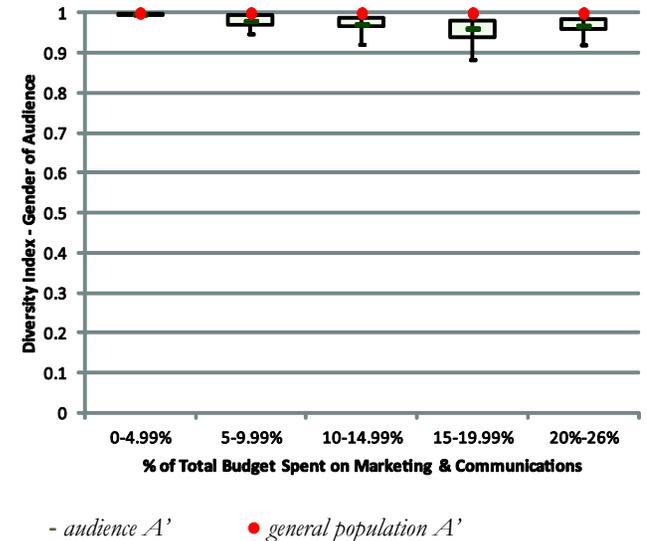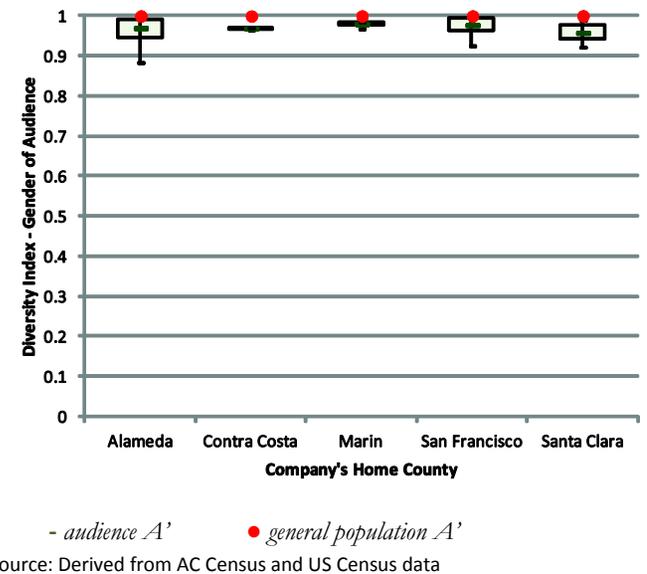
percentage of revenue earned and average adult ticket price were not found to significantly correlate to changes in audience diversity in terms of gender.

5.4   HOUSEHOLD INCOME DIVERSITY

Fig 5.4.1. Variation in audience household income diversity index from general population household income diversity index
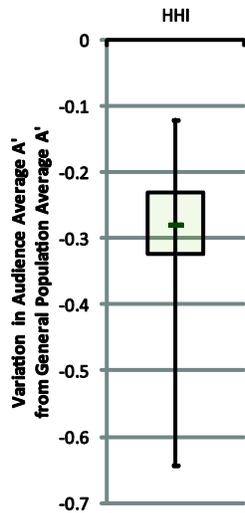
The average household income for audience members of companies in this study was $107,966.79. The average household income for the general population in the five counties included in this study was $66,409.84. Across the 137 seasons examined for this research, not a single one had an average household income that approached the general population average. The lowest household income average was $93,166.67.

➢   *The average household income for the theatergoers in the sample was $40,000*

higher than the average household income for the overall population in the counties studied.

Theatergoing audiences were underrepresented by percentage in all but one category under $100,000, but then were drastically overrepresented by percentage in categories above $100,000 (Fig. 5.4.2).

On average, audience *A'* scores for household income were .279 points lower than the average household income *A'* score for the five counties studied. Among the various types of diversity studied, household

income scores varied from the general population more than education, marital status, gender, age and political affiliation scores, but less than race/ethnicity scores.

Household income diversity has a significant positive correlation with educational attainment diversity (r^2=.2145, p<.0001), age diversity (r^2=.1988, p<.0001), marital status diversity (r^2=.5155, p<.0001), gender diversity (r^2=.1761, p<.0001) and racial/ethnic diversity (r^2=.086, p=.0005). Household income diversity has a significant

Fig 5.4.2. Percentage of household with different amounts of household income—theatergoing audience versus general population.
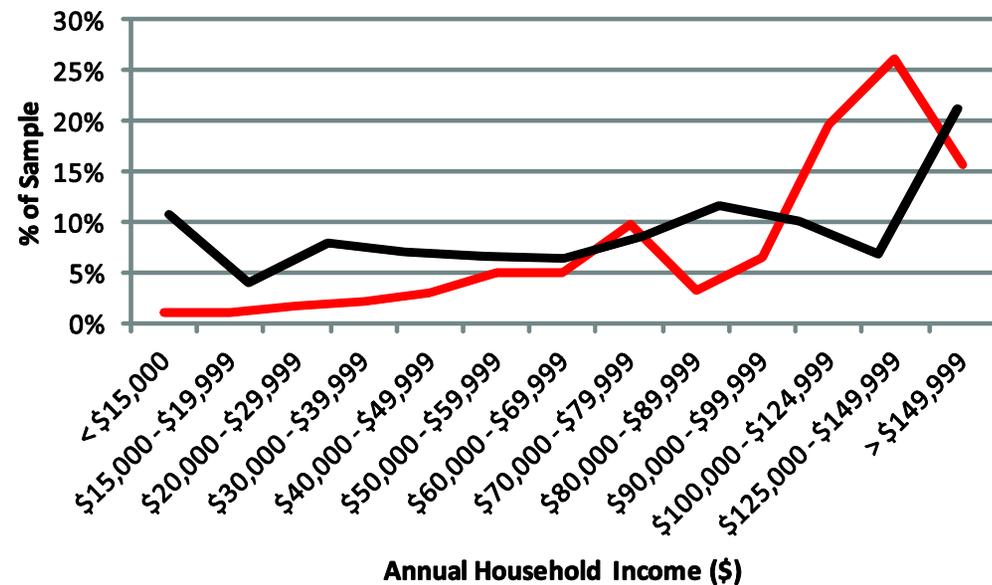
negative correlation with political affiliation diversity ($r^2=.126$, $p<.0001$).

➢ *The household income diversity of an audience increases as the educational attainment diversity, the age diversity, the marital status diversity, the gender diversity and the racial/ethnic diversity of that audience increase.*

➢ *The household income diversity of an audience decreases as the political affiliation diversity of that audience increases.*

Household income diversity of audiences varied in statistically significant ways in relation to the age of the company and the total annual budget of the company.

Company age (Fig. 5.4.3). Very young and very old companies (under 10 years and 50 years or older) had significantly less household income diversity than those between the ages of 10 and 49 years of age ($A'=.536-.598$ versus $.619-.668$, $p=.0006$). Companies aged 10 to 19 years actually demonstrated a level of household income diversity that was significantly higher than any other category ($A'=.668$).

Companies aged 10 to 19 years also had the lowest average household income.

➢ *Very young and very old companies have less diversity in terms of household income of audiences than companies in between.*

➢ *Companies aged 10-19 years have the most diversity of household income represented in their audiences. Their audiences also have the lowest average household income of those studied.*

Company Annual Budget Size (Fig. 5.4.4). The smallest companies (under $150,000) and large midsize companies ($3,000,000 to $9,999,999) had significantly less household income diversity than other budget cohorts ($A'=.527-.584$ versus $.625-.696$, $p=.0001$).

➢ *Companies with very small annual budgets and large midsize companies have less household income diversity than companies in other budget cohorts.*

Non-significant characteristics. The theatrical season, home county, number of board members, percentage of revenue earned, percentage of budget spent on marketing and communications and

Fig 5.4.3. *Variations in audience household income diversity index scores by age of company.*
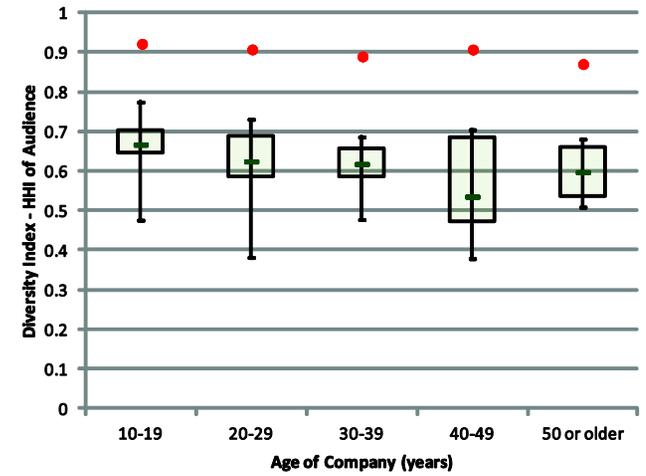
- *audience A'*   ● *general population A'*

Source: Derived from AC Census and US Census data

Fig 5.4.4. *Variations in audience household income diversity index scores by company annual budget size.*
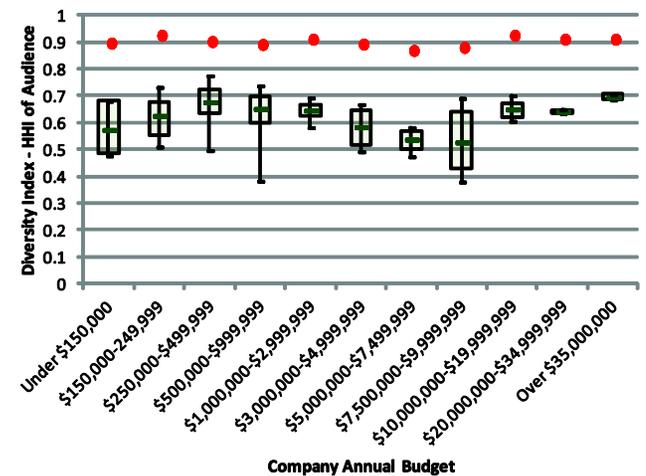
- *audience A'*   ● *general population A'*

Source: Derived from AC Census and US Census data

average adult ticket price were not found to significantly correlate to changes in audience diversity in terms of household income.

5.5   MARITAL STATUS DIVERSITY

Fig 5.5.1. Variation in audience A' for marital status from general population A' for marital status

Source: Derived from AC Census and US Census data
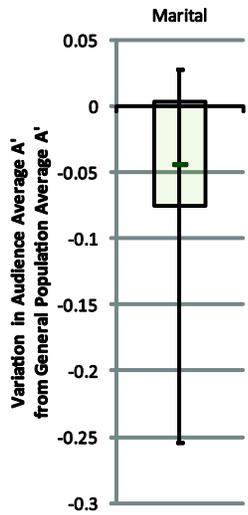
On average, 62.34% of audiences in the sample were either married or "inferred married," a status that has to do with being in a stable two-person relationship but without a known marriage certificate. The remaining population was coded as either single or "inferred single." Both groups of confirmed and "inferred" were grouped together for the purposes of this study.

The average percentage of married people in the general population of the five counties in this study was 45.08%, with high variability among the counties (fluctuating between 38.10% and 52.70% depending on the county).

On average, audience A' scores for marital status diversity were .044 points lower than the average marital status A' score for the five counties studied. Among the various types of diversity studied, marital status scores varied from the general population more than education and gender, but less than age, political affiliation, household income and race/ethnicity scores.

Marital status diversity has a significant positive correlation with household income diversity (r^2=.5155, p<.0001), educational attainment diversity (r^2=.0544, p=.0061), age diversity (r^2=.0772, p=.0001), gender diversity (r^2=.2526, p<.0001), and racial/ethnic diversity (r^2=.063, p=.0031). Marital status diversity has a significant negative correlation with political affiliation diversity (r^2=.224, p<.0001).

➢   *The marital status diversity of an audience increases as the household income diversity, the educational attainment diversity, the age diversity, the gender diversity, and the racial/ethnic diversity of that audience increase.*

➢   *The marital status diversity of an audience decreases as the political affiliation diversity of that audience increases, which is to say as the audience's percentage of married people increases, the percentage of non-Democrats decreases.*

Marital status diversity varied in statistically significant ways in relation to the age of the company, the overall annual budget of the company, the number of board members the company had and the home county of the company.

Company age (Fig 5.5.2). Marital status diversity variation in terms of company age was very clear-cut, as companies between the ages of 10 and 19 years had significantly more marital status diversity than all other categories (A'=.972 versus .908 to .945, p=.003). This indicates that those companies with the higher A' score have more single people in their audiences.

➢   *Companies that are between 10 and 19 years old have more marital status diversity in their audiences, meaning, in this case, that they have more single attendees than other groups.*

Company annual budget size (Fig 5.5.5). Companies under $250,000 annual budget and between $5,000,000 and $9,999,999 annual budget had significantly less marital diversity (which, again, is to say more married attendees) than other budget groups (*A'*=.883-.926 versus .944-.994, p=.0024).

The largest budgeted organizations (over $35,000,000) achieved nearly perfect parity between married and single attendees, with an *A'* score of .994 out of 1.0.

➢ *Companies with small and large-midsize annual budgets had less marital status diversity than other budget categories.*

Number of board members (Fig 5.5.4). Marital status variations in terms of number of board members primarily concerned the smallest and largest categories, as

Fig 5.5.2. *Variations in audience marital status diversity index scores by number of board members.*
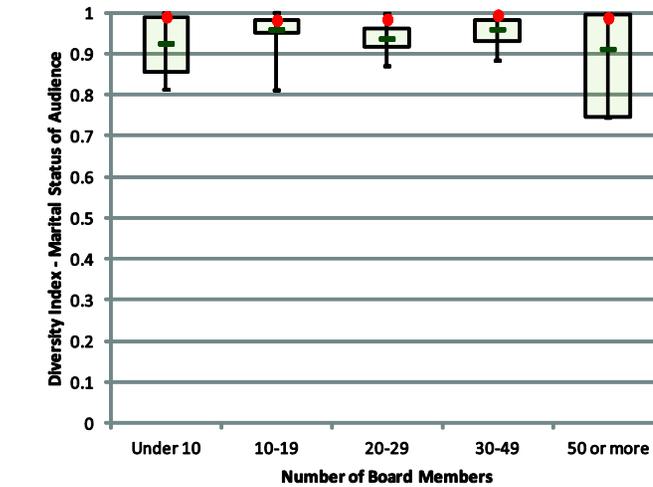
- audience A' ● *general population A'*
Source: Derived from AC Census and US Census data

Fig 5.5.3. *Variations in audience marital status diversity index scores by company's home county.*
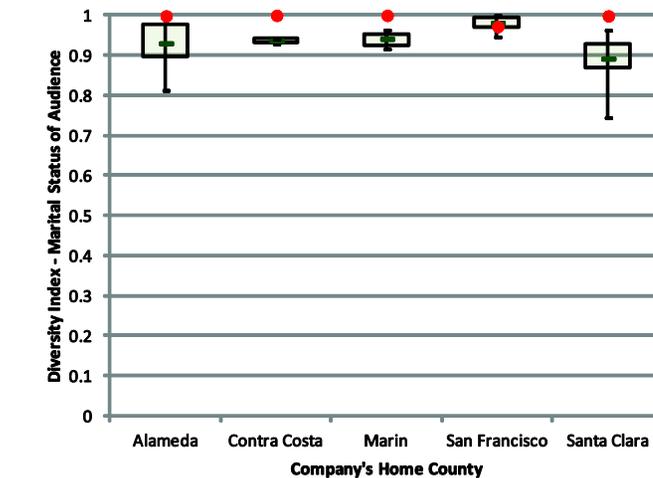

- audience A' ● *general population A'*
Source: Derived from AC Census and US Census data

Fig 5.5.4. *Variations in audience marital status diversity index scores by age of company.*
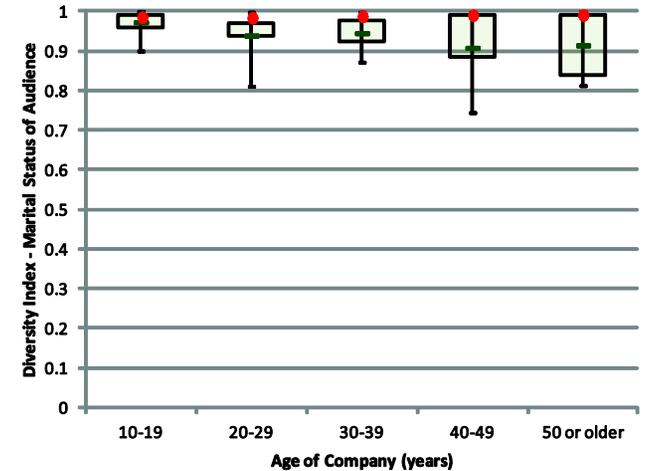
- audience A' ● *general population A'*
Source: Derived from AC Census and US Census data

Fig 5.5.5. *Variations in audience marital status diversity index scores by company annual budget size.*
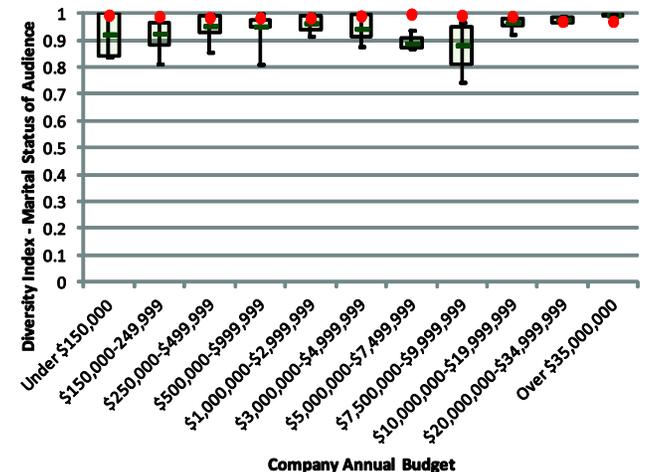

- audience A' ● *general population A'*
Source: Derived from AC Census and US Census data

companies with under 10 board members and 50 or more board members had significantly less marital status diversity than those companies in the intervening categories (*A'*=.911-.924 versus .936-.959, p=.062). For practical purposes, "less marital status diversity" translates to "more married people" given the nature of this sample.

➢ *Companies with very small and very large boards have less marital status diversity than other companies, meaning, in this case, that they have more married attendees than other groups.*

Fig 5.6.1. Variation in audience political affiliation diversity index from general population political affiliation diversity index
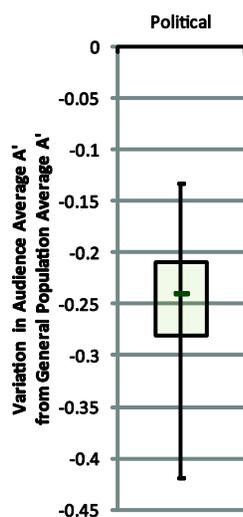
Company home county (Fig 5.5.5). Marital status diversity varied in statistically significant ways in relation to the home county of the company. The counties divided into three separate groups, with companies in Santa Clara County having the least marital diversity (*A'*=.883), companies in San Francisco County having the most marital

diversity (*A'*=.978), and companies in the remaining three counties clustering in the middle (*A'*=.937-.939, p<.0001).

➢ *Audiences in Santa Clara County are less maritally diverse (more married attendees), and audiences in San Francisco County are more maritally diverse (more single attendees), with the other three counties clustered in between.*

Non-significant characteristics. Theatrical season, percentage of revenue earned, percentage of budget spent on marketing and communications and average adult ticket price were not found to significantly correlate to changes in audience diversity in terms of marital status.

5.6   POLITICAL AFFILIATION DIVERSITY

Political affiliation, as defined in this study, encompassed four options: Democrat, Republican, Independent and No Party. As one might imagine, given the liberal-leaning nature of the San Francisco Bay Area, the majority of people in both theatergoing audiences and the general population studied identified as Democrats. In the theatergoing population, 74.98% of audiences were identified as Democrats and 2.17% as Republicans. In the general

population, 54.12% were identified as Democrats and 15.53% as Republicans.

➢ *The majority of both the theatergoing population and the general public in the five counties studied were Democrats, although that majority was much larger within the theatergoing population than in the general population.*

On average, the political affiliation *A'* scores for theatergoing audiences were .24 points below the average political affiliation *A'* scores for the general population of the five counties in the study. Among the various types of diversity studied, political affiliation scores varied from the population more than educational attainment, gender, marital status and age, but less than household income and race/ethnicity.

Political affiliation diversity has no statistically significant positive correlations with the other types of diversity.

Political affiliation diversity has a significant negative correlation with household income diversity (r^2=.126, p<.0001), marital status diversity (r^2=.224, p<.0001), and gender diversity (r^2=.1093, p<.0001).

> *The political affiliation diversity of an audience decreases as the household income diversity, the marital status diversity, and the gender diversity of that audience increase.*

Political affiliation diversity varied in statistically significant ways in relation to the age of the company, the number of board members at the organization and the company's home county.

Age of company. Political affiliation diversity varied in statistically significant ways in relation to the age of the company. Very young (under 10 years) and very old (50 years or older) companies had significantly more political diversity than those companies in between (A'=.492-.519 versus .450-.464, p=.0001).

> *Very young and very old companies had more political diversity than those in between.*

Number of board members. The primary differentiation here occurred between companies with the largest boards (50 or more board

members) and companies with fewer; companies with the largest boards were more diverse than the others (A'=.547 versus .455-.478, p=.0005). An increase in the diversity index score for political affiliation in this sample translated mostly to a decrease in Democratic-identifying patrons, usually with an increase in Republican-identifying patrons.

> *Theatre companies with larger boards have audiences with more political diversity than theatre companies with smaller boards. Practically speaking,*

Fig 5.5.3. *Variations in audience political affiliation diversity index scores by number of board members.*
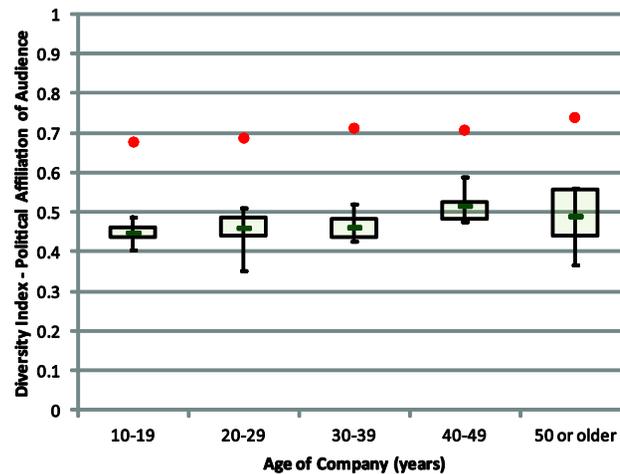
- *audience A'*   ● *general population A'*
Source: Derived from AC Census and US Census data

Fig 5.6.2. *Variations in audience political affiliation diversity index scores by age of company.*
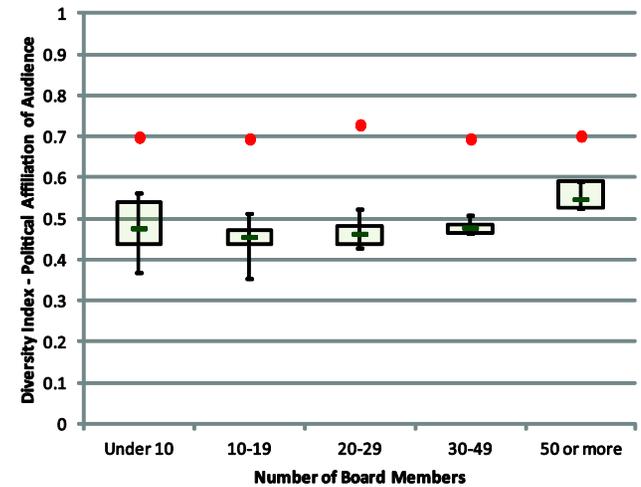
- *audience A'*   ● *general population A'*
Source: Derived from AC Census and US Census data

Fig 5.6.4. *Variations in audience political affiliation diversity index scores by company's home county.*
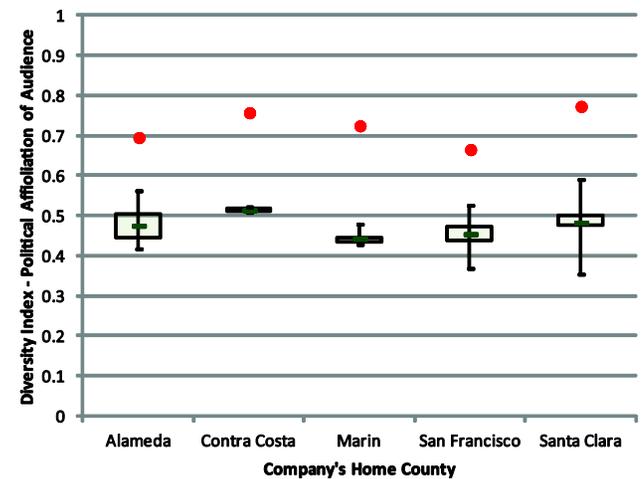
- *audience A'*   ● *general population A'*
Source: Derived from AC Census and US Census data

this means they have more Republicans than those smaller companies.

Company's home county. Political affiliation diversity varied in statistically significant ways in relation to the county in which the company was based. Marin and San Francisco Counties demonstrated the least political diversity, while Contra Costa and Santa Clara Counties demonstrated the most (A'=.441-454 versus .485-.513, p<.0001). While the general population of all counties was markedly more diverse than that of the theatergoing audience, the trends were the same, with the same counties having the most political diversity and the least political diversity as the theatergoing sample.

➢ *Counties with more political diversity in their general populations also were home to theatergoing audiences with more political*

diversity, although the rates of political diversity among theatergoers were consistently much lower than the general population.

Non-significant characteristics. Theatrical season, total annual budget, percentage of revenue earned, percentage of budget spent on marketing and communications and average adult ticket price were not found to significantly correlate to changes in audience diversity in terms of political affiliation.

5.7 RACIAL/ETHNIC DIVERSITY

California is one of a handful of states that has a "majority-minority" population, which means that more than half of the total population was made up of people who

were not white. In the Bay Area (and in California in general), our reality of racial diversity is not binary (white/black), as it can be in other parts of the country. In fact, black percentages of the general population, while they fluctuate widely among the counties in the study, average together to 7% of the total population in the five counties. Together, the Hispanic and Asian general populations of the Bay Area make up nearly half (49%) of the total population.

Among the 137 seasons (from 25 theatre companies) examined in this study, the average percentage of audience that was white was 87.57%. The average percentage of the general population in the five counties

Fig 5.7.1. Variation in audience racial/ethnic diversity index from general population racial/ethnic diversity index.

Fig 5.7.2. Percentage of population who were identified as certain races/ethnicities—theatergoing audience versus the general population in the five Bay Area counties studied.

		% of Sample	
White, Not Hispanic	Audience	87.58%	
	General Population	41.39%	
Black	Audience	2.20%	
	General Population	6.93%	
Hispanic	Audience	3.79%	
	General Population	20.03%	
Asian	Audience	4.87%	
	General Population	28.98%	
Other	Audience	1.56%	
	General Population	5.92%	

included in this study that was white was 41.39%.

➤ *Theatergoing audiences are nearly 90% white, which is more than double the prevalence of whites in the general population of the Bay Area counties studied.*

On average, the race/ethnicity *A'* scores for theatergoing audiences were .457 points below the average race/ethnicity *A'* scores for the general population of the five counties in the study. The differentials fluctuated widely among counties, but almost all of this fluctuation was due *not* to variation in the diversity of various theatre companies' audiences, but to different inherent racial profiles for each of the counties.

Racial/ethnic diversity varied from the general population more than all other types of diversity studied.

Racial/ethnic diversity has a significant positive correlation with household income diversity (r^2=.086, p<.0005), age diversity (r^2=.0345, p<.0297), and marital status diversity (r^2=.063, p<.0031).

➤ *The racial/ethnic diversity of an audience increases as the household income diversity,*

the age diversity and the marital status diversity of that audience increase.

Racial/ethnic diversity varied in statistically significant ways based on the company's age, the company's annual budget, the percentage of total revenue earned, the average ticket price, the size of the company's board and the company's home county.

Age of company (Fig 5.7.3). Companies that were 50 years or older had audiences that were significantly more diverse than companies younger than 50 years (*A'*=.407 versus .319-.343, p<.0001).

➤ *Very old companies had more racial/ethnic diversity than younger companies.*

Company's annual budget (Fig 5.7.4). Companies with very large annual budgets (over $35 million) had significantly more racial diversity than companies smaller than that (*A'*=.430 versus .310-.369, p=.0002).

Fig 5.7.3. *Variations in audience race/ethnicity diversity index scores by age of company.*
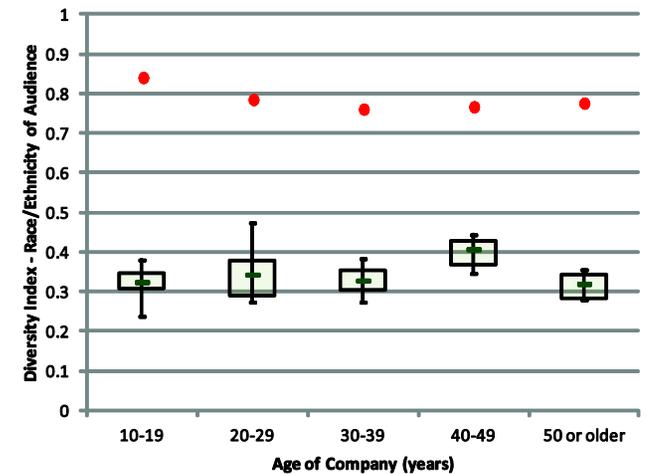
- *audience A'*   ● *general population A'*

Source: Derived from AC Census and US Census data

Fig 5.7.4. *Variations in audience race/ethnicity diversity index scores by company annual budget size.*

- *audience A'*   ● *general population A'*

Source: Derived from AC Census and US Census data

Percentage of total revenue earned (Fig 5.7.5). This variation, while significant, was fairly narrow, but did show a trend towards increased diversity on the ends of the spectrum; companies that earned less than 30% of their total revenue and companies that earned more than 60% of their revenue had significantly more racial diverse audiences than companies in between (.345-.399 versus .327-.329, p=.0484).

➤ *Companies that earned less than a third of their total revenue or more than two-thirds of their total revenue*

Fig 5.7.5. Variations in audience race/ethnicity diversity index scores by percentage of total revenue earned by the company.
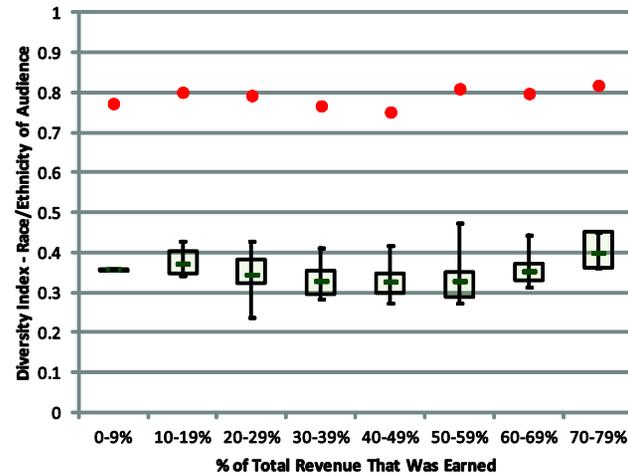

- audience A'   • general population A'

Source: Derived from AC Census and US Census data

*Fig 5.7.6. Variations in audience race/ethnicity diversity index scores by average adult ticket price.*
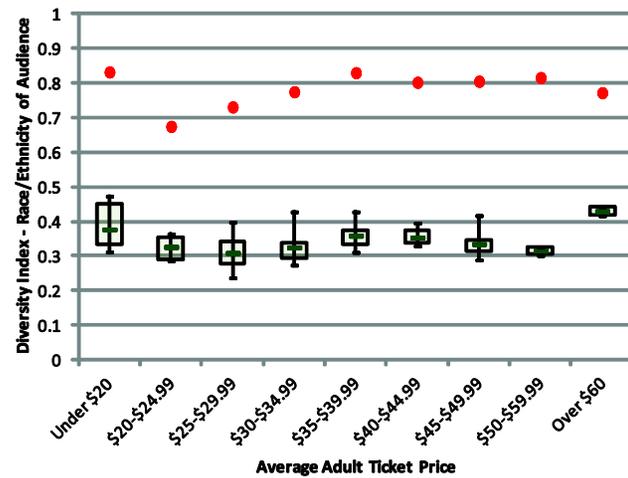
- audience A'   • general population A'

Source: Derived from AC Census and US Census data

Fig 5.7.7. Variations in audience race/ethnicity diversity index scores by number of board members.
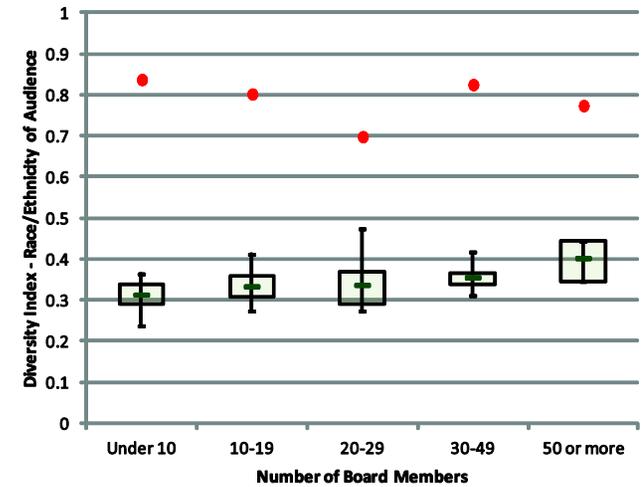
- audience A'   • general population A'

Source: Derived from AC Census and US Census data

Fig 5.7.8. Variations in audience race/ethnicity diversity index scores by company's home county.
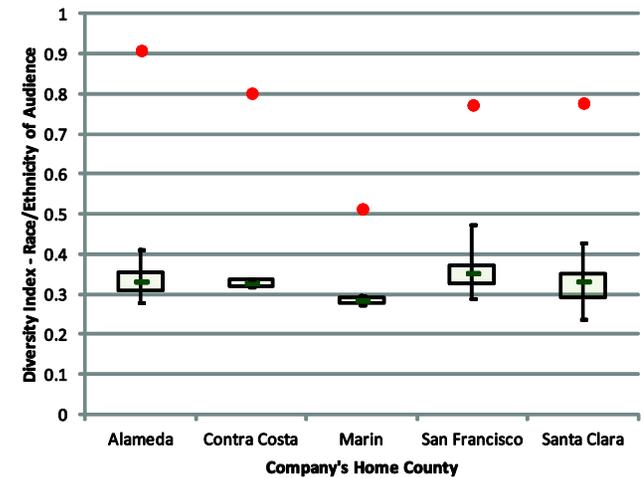
- audience A'   • general population A'

Source: Derived from AC Census and US Census data

had more racial/ethnic diversity than those companies in between.

Average adult ticket price (Fig 5.7.6). Companies with an average adult ticket price under $20 or over $60 had significantly more race/ethnicity diversity than companies in between (*A'*=.377-.430 versus .309-.359, p<.0001).

➢ *Companies with very low or very high ticket prices had more racial/ethnic diversity than companies in between.*

Number of board members (Fig 5.7.7). There was a strong progression of increased racial/ethnic diversity as the number of board members increased, with companies with the largest boards (50 or more) significantly more diverse in terms of race/ethnicity (*A'*=.402) and companies with fewer than 10 board members significantly less diverse (*A'*=.313). The remaining

companies ranged between those extremes (*A'*=.334-.356, p<.0001).

➢ *There is a significant positive correlation between the size of a board and the amount of racial/ethnic diversity of the company, which is to say that the larger the board, the higher that company's diversity index.*

Company's home county (Fig 5.7.8). Racial/ethnic diversity varied in statistically significant ways based on the home county of the organization. Companies in San Francisco County had significantly more racial/ethnic diversity than companies in other counties (*A'*=.358), while companies in Marin County had significantly less racial/ethnic diversity than companies in other counties (*A'*=.283). The other counties ranged in between (*A'*=.328-.332, p<.0001). In all cases, the general population race/ethnicity diversity indices are much

higher (more diverse) than the theatergoing population's.

➢ *Companies in San Francisco County had the most racial/ethnic diversity while companies in Marin County had the least racial/ethnic diversity.*

➢ *Except in the case of Marin County, whose general population is also the least diverse in the sample, theatergoing population diversity by county did not vary in the same order as overall population diversity by county did, in particular with regard to Alameda County, which has the most general population diversity but the second-least theatergoing diversity.*

Non-significant characteristics. Theatrical season and percentage of budget spent on marketing and communications were not found to significantly correlate to changes in audience diversity in terms of race/ethnicity.

WORKS CITED

Biss, E. (2009). Notes from No Man's Land: American Essays. Minneapolis, Graywolf Press.

Brown, A. S. (2012). Understanding the Intrinsic Impact of Live Theatre: Patterns of Audience Feedback across 18 Theatres and 58 Productions. Counting New Beans: Intrinsic Impact and the Value of Art. C. Lord. San Francisco, Theatre Bay Area: 67-164.

Doherty, A. J. and P. Chelladurai (1999). "Managing Cultural Diversity in Sport Organizations: A Theoretical Perspective." Journal of Sport Management **13**(4): 280.

---

[i] The Acxiom data appended to the theatergoer records did not provide data on the percentage of people who did not complete high school. As such, both the AC Census and the US Census data were standardized to represent only these three categories.

[ii] Due to restricted options from both US Census data and the Acxiom data, gender options included in this research were binary: male and female.

[iii] There are two household income scales that differ slightly, one drawn from the Acxiom database and one drawn from the US Census. The diversity indices, because of the normalization process, are still comparable. US Census categories are given.

[iv] In order to standardize the data for audience versus general population comparison, this study takes a somewhat basic view of racial/ethnic categories; the categories for this research were White/Not Hispanic, Black, Asian, Hispanic and Other.

[v] Company season was not found to affect any of the variables in statistically significant ways. As such, for much of the study, the 137 seasons are treated as an overall sample of 137, and are not differentiated by year. Also as such, no further discussion of season-to-season variability will occur in this report. A second report to follow, which will examine inter-season variability among staff, board and audiences, will go into more depth on that question.

[vi] By examining the difference between the audience diversity score and the general population diversity score, one can begin to understand how far off our audiences' diversities are from the "people outside our doors," and from there, understand how far from representing our communities in our seats one really is. Rather than aiming for complete diversity, which is unrealistic, one might instead consider aiming to narrow the difference between the audience's *A'* and the general populations *A'* as much as possible, thereby reaching not absolute parity, but parity in relation to the larger community in which the organization exists.