Moving Up and Out?
From Regions to Megaregions in Equity Strategies

by
Chris Benner
Human and Community Development
One Shields Ave, 1309 Hart Hall
University of California, Davis
Davis, CA 95616
ccbenner@ucdavis.edu
530-754-8799

and
Manuel Pastor
Geography and American Studies & Ethnicity
Program on Environmental and Regional Equity
University of Southern California
3620 S. Vermont Ave, KAP-462
Los Angeles, CA 90089-0255
mpastor@usc.edu
213-740-5604

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Abstract

In recent years, coalitions of equity advocates have made major strides in developing solutions to urban poverty and building political power at a metropolitan scale. The evolution of American urban areas into sprawling megaregions, however, raises a concern that equity advocates today may be facing the same dilemma as urban reformers in the 1960s: they are arriving to some degree of regional power just as the scale of the economy is shifting up and out. In trying to assess how the emergence of megaregions affects opportunities for addressing equity, using the Northern and Southern California megaregions as case studies, we argue that: (1) the issues likely to gain traction at a megaregional scale are different than those at a metropolitan level and may not have as immediate an impact on patterns of inequality; (2) there are few immediate opportunities for policy solutions to inequality at a megaregional scale; and (3) for megaregional policy processes to matter for equity advocates, the constituencies for equity must also be mobilized at this scale, and this is difficult. Megaregional organizing may emerge around some issues, but it is likely to complement rather than replace the more comprehensive equity organizing at a regional scale. We conclude by arguing that analysts need to expand from the planning and land-use perspectives that have been the core of research on megaregions to date, and build a more political-economy informed analysis of the social forces shaping these processes.

I. Introduction

When Carl Stokes was elected mayor of Cleveland in 1967, he became the first African American mayor of a major U.S. city. It was an exciting outcome of years of civil rights organizing, and it heralded a new move of African-Americans into political leadership in major cities across the U.S. Indeed, within ten years more than 200 black mayors held office, and by 1993, 67 of the country’s largest urban centers were headed by African Africans (Colburn and Adler 2005). This opening of new political space in the country’s urban governance structures created hope for addressing long-standing patterns of entrenched urban poverty and racial inequality. Yet, as these new African-American mayors discovered, the changing form of U.S. cities was undermining the effectiveness of city government as a tool in addressing poverty and inequality. With growing suburbanization, white flight, and relocation of businesses to the urban periphery, many new mayors found themselves taking office in the context of declining tax bases, growing inner-city poverty, and deteriorating infrastructure. Their ability to have a
significant impact on poverty and inequality was severely hampered by processes of urban change beyond the boundaries of their political influence.

Forty years later, equity advocates are now gaining ground in having political influence at this larger urban scale. A growing “regional equity” movement has been taking root around the country, as coalitions of equity advocates have made major strides in identifying regional causes of poverty, developing regional solutions to urban poverty, and building political power at a regional scale (Pastor et al. 2009a; Pastor et al. 2009b) Unfortunately, just as some advocates have made the adjustment to the regional scale, the continued evolution of American urban areas into sprawling megaregions raises a concern that equity advocates today may be facing the same dilemma as urban reformers in the 1960s: they are arriving to power just as the scale of power and the economy are shifting up and out. Indeed, borrowing from (Rusk 1999), it may be that equity advocates now need to complement the new inside game of organizing within metropolitan regions, with an even further outside game that addresses the continued spread of housing and jobs to more far flung reaches of our megalopolises.

In trying to assess how the emergence of megaregions affects opportunities for addressing equity, we see three underlying questions: (1) Is this the level at which significant problems of inequality are being caused?, (2) Is this the level at which problems of inequality can be effectively addressed via new policy?, and (3) Is this the level at which the politics of coalitions for equity can be organized and sustained?

The burgeoning regional equity movement has emerged partly because the answer to each of these questions, in at least some important ways, is yes at the metropolitan level (Orfield 2002 ; Pastor et al. 2009a; Pastor et al. 2000; Puentes and Warren 2006 ). This paper tries to address the extent to which a “yes” also obtains at a mega-regional scale. Our empirical focus is
on the mega-regions of California, both Northern and Southern, partly because the emergence of regional thinking by social justice advocates has been particularly pronounced in California and partly because these two regions are entirely within one state governmental structure, allowing us to focus more clearly on the underlying processes and not the tangled lines of state governance.¹

In our analysis, we argue the following points. First, while there are some megaregional scale processes that are important forces shaping equity—most prominently those related to infrastructure and environmental health—the issues likely to gain traction at a megaregional scale are different than those at a metropolitan level and may not have as immediate an impact on patterns of inequality as other processes, such as housing, labor markets and transportation processes, that primarily unfold at a regional scale. Second, and perhaps more optimistically, there are emerging megaregional policy opportunities that could potentially shift both the economy and political organizing in the future. The most promising of these centered around equity within the ports and logistics industries in Southern California, and environmental justice in Northern California; some organizations are stepping up to these new arenas, but it is a new and sometimes unnatural fit for base-building groups that are more rooted in their local and regional constituencies. Third, we suggest that to really understand this messy political reality, researchers looking at megaregions will need to consider broader political economy issues, including theories of social movements, regional business collaborative, and growth regimes.

We begin below by providing a brief discussion of previous research on the role of equity in the context of megaregions. We then offer a quantitative analysis of megaregional patterns of urbanization and inequality in California, starting by comparing California’s megaregions to

¹ The America 2050 definition of the California megaregions gives Northern California the Reno, Nevada area and Southern California Las Vegas, Nevada. We are not convinced this is accurate and, in any case, drop these two areas in our empirical considerations below to keep matters simpler.
other megaregions in the U.S., then comparing the Northern and Southern California megaregions to each other, and finally looking at urban growth and equity dynamics of three distinct areas within each megaregion: the core, periphery, and a more remote sphere of influence. Following this, we provide an analysis of political and social forces shaping equity dynamics and organizing, first in Northern California and then in Southern California. We conclude by returning to a more detailed discussion of the opportunities and challenges of incorporating equity into the megaregion framework both in terms of policy and in terms of research.

II. Achieving Equity: Moving from Regions to Megaregions

Equity has been given relatively short shrift in the literature on megaregions.\(^2\) Given the relative youth of megaregions as an analytical framework, the somewhat scattered coverage of issues of social inequality is understandable. After all, there is still a significant debate simply on how to define megaregions as well as whether the ten U.S. megaregions usually cited in the literature are in fact the right ones (Florida et al. 2008; Goldfeld 2007). Still, the relative lack of attention to equity does raise questions about whether this is simply the state of a field in development or whether it says something about the relationship between social equity and the megaregional scale itself. Dewar and Epstein, for example, suggest that: “One major problem of the megaregion scale for policy making and planning is that it veils inequities within the region that need to be addressed for social justice reasons” (Dewar and Epstein 2007:121).

Can equity issues be effectively raised at the megaregional level? In what little has been written on equity and megaregions, it is possible to identify three broad perspectives: one

\(^2\) Another issue given somewhat short shrift is sustainability (see Wheeler 2009); thus far, most of the attention seems focused on economic issues.
centered on economic structures, one on growth politics, and one on policy applications and reform. On the economic structure side, one equity issue centers on how the geographic distribution of industry creates (or fails to create) opportunities for people with a range of incomes within a megaregion. Saskia Sassen suggests that a megaregion may be large enough to contain the entire value chain for an industry (something which is perhaps more difficult within a single metropolitan region (Sassen 2007), and Feser and Hewings provide evidence that industry value-chains may be dispersing across mega-regions as well, and becoming less dependent on internal *regional* sources for the supply of inputs (Feser and Hewings 2007). Lang and Knox’s (2009) also argue that multiple new types of linkages are being built *across* U.S. megalopolises, including goods movement, rail transport, extended commuting, and institutional connections (Lang and Knox 2009). Few analysts explicitly consider the workforce implications of these spatial trends, particularly with regard to how key megaregional industries might play a prominent role in providing a broader set of employment opportunities.

In terms of growth politics, one question revolves around the compatibility of equity and growth. Some research suggest that keeping equity among the foremost concerns can actually promote *metropolitan* economic growth, partly because sharp disparities seem to be associated with an erosion of the social capital that ties regions together and underinvestment in basic human capital. A study by economists at the Cleveland Federal Reserve Board of nearly 120 mid-size metropolitan areas found that a skilled workforce, high levels of racial inclusion and income equality do, in fact, correlate strongly and positively with economic growth, even controlling for other factors including a number of more traditional business and quality of life variables (Eberts et al. 2006). A more recent study by Pastor and Benner demonstrates that this
positive effect of equity on growth holds across U.S. metro areas more generally and is as strong in “weak market” regions as in strong market areas (Pastor and Benner 2008).³

But this evidence has been generated at a metropolitan scale, and while the theoretical arguments still hold at a megaregional scale, there is reason to suspect that the relationship may be weaker, partly because the megaregion may be too large to capture the benefits of social or human capital. Finding an empirical answer is difficult: with only ten megaregions in the United States, it is hard to run the sort of regressions that have preoccupied researchers exploring the relationship between equity and growth at the metropolitan level. In the data analysis below, we do show a positive equity-growth relationship but issues of causality cannot be settled.

On the policy side, Jones (2007) provides the most complete picture, shifting focus from analyzing megaregions per se to analyzing equitable policy at the megaregional level. He rightly reminds us that equity must be put at the forefront or it will be forgotten (Jones 2007); his analysis largely adopts an earlier framework developed by Blackwell and Fox (Blackwell and Fox 2004), which is focused primarily on regional equity. He argues that megaregional strategies would seem to be better at addressing inter-metro disparities – such as that between the core and periphery or a megaregion – than at addressing the city-suburb metro differences that have been at the heart of the regional equity movement.⁴ As Jones (2007:8) notes:

Unlike transportation or landscape preservation, where there are clearly reasons to plan on a scale that extends beyond metropolitan boundaries, it is more difficult to identify distribution issues that need to be addressed through interventions at this level of aggregation. National policies and metropolitan development patterns clearly affect income distribution, but the effects of policies at the intermediate scale of megaregions


⁴ Jones (2007) points to megaregional tax-sharing as one way to address both inter- and intra-metro differences. This makes sense in theory but very few places have actually gone with that remedy, despite the cogent arguments of Orfield (2002), Rusk (1999) and others. It is even less likely to happen in California, a place where local control has been important and where even a pilot attempt to introduce limited tax-sharing in the Sacramento region was staunchly opposed by virtually every city in the state and collapsed in the California legislature.
are less apparent. Also, the issues at stake—access to jobs and affordable housing, school quality and funding, the delivery of government services—usually resonate most strongly at the local level. Mobilizing political constituencies to address equity at a multi-state scale without a government entity to target is a stretch.

In short, as with the growth-equity relationship, one cannot simply assume that what is operative at a metropolitan scale will work or be applicable at a megaregional scale.

Some planning bodies, such as the Southern California Association of Government (SCAG) and San Francisco Planning and Urban Research (SPUR), have considered equity within their own approach to megaregions. In a report developed by three Councils of Government in the Southern California megaregion, for example, one-fourth of their strategies evoke equity (alongside sustainability, prosperity, and financing) – but the actual equity policy recommendations are quite vague, centering on maintaining a balanced housing supply and ensuring equity in all plans and actions (KERNCOG et al. 2005). Meanwhile, SPUR has argued that linking “cold” and “hot” cores through improved transit connections in a mega-region could open the job market to more workers (Metcalf and Terplan 2007).

But while there is the beginning of some thinking about policy for equity in megaregions, there has been very little consideration of the politics of equity in megaregions. What, for example, should be the key issues? SPUR suggests transportation and environment (Metcalf and Terplan 2007) while Glaeser suggests housing (Glaeser 2007; KERNCOG et al. 2005). Should workforce development be included? Education? And once the best issues are chosen, who takes action? John et al (2005) seem to suggest that megaregions could best be administered in a top-down fashion, while Metcalf and Terplan (2007) encourages a more networked approach to developing initiatives, campaigns, and projects (John et al. 2005; Metcalf and Terplan 2007).

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5 Such attention is likely to be furthered with the implementation of Senate Bill 375, a 2008 bill that seeks to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by mandating better coordination between transportation and housing plans.
But who will carry out the organizing campaigns for equity? How will minority voices remain un-diluted among the large numbers of people living in a megaregion? And to whom will the advocates speak?

This is a particular challenge because it is unlikely that we will see megaregional government and hence most scholars are calling for improving megaregional governance (Dewar and Epstein 2007; Teitz and Barbour 2007). How should equity be raised in this amorphous context advocates – and who will do it? We examine the experiences with raising equity issues in California’s megaregions below but first we offer a data profile to contextualize the discussion.

III. Patterns of Equity and Growth in California’s Megaregions

To examine patterns of equity in the California two megaregions (Southern and Northern California), we decided to both compare them to other megaregions and to each other in more detail. To do this, we utilized a multi-region comparative database that contains a wide variety of information from Census and other sources, all summarized up to Core Base Statistical Areas (CBSAs) and to the principal cities and suburbs within them. To adapt this data to the megaregion boundaries, we first used the county definitions of megaregions developed by the America 2050 project of the Regional Plan Association (RPA), matched these counties to CBSAs, and then finally defined our megaregions by CBSAs. We further refine the definitions

6 The underlying data was assembled as part of two related collaborative research projects: Building Resilient Regions, funded by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation (http://www-iurd.ced.berkeley.edu/brr) and Just Growth: Linking Regional Equity and Regional Economic Development with funding from the Ford Foundation.

7 Because our database is rooted in CBSAs, this process does omit a small number of rural counties that are in megaregions that do not fall into CBSAs. Still, depending on the CBSA, we are still able to account for at least 92 percent of the megaregion’s total population in all megaregions as defined by America 2050, and 98.8 percent and 100 percent (respectively) of the Northern California and Southern California megaregion’s population. In
of the two California-based megaregions by allocating their CBSAs to sub-megaregional levels of core, periphery, or sphere of influence, a point to which we return below.

**Northern and Southern California in the Context of U.S. Megaregions**

The Southern and Northern California megaregions differ from other megaregions in the United States in their demographic, social, and economic characteristics (see Table 1). Southern California particularly stands out among the megaregions as the most diverse. It is the only megaregion where the majority of its residents are people of color (58.2 percent), 38.5 percent of whom are Latino. Of all the megaregions, Northern California has the largest share of Asian/Pacific Islander residents (14 percent). In addition to Northern and Southern California being among the most racially diverse of the megaregions, they also have the largest foreign born populations: 29 percent of the Southern California and 24 percent of the Northern California megaregion populations were foreign born in 2000.

<insert Table 1>

While most megaregions experienced declining segregation between 1990 and 2000, Southern California actually became more segregated over the decade, at least as measured by the Non-Hispanic White Dissimilarity Index. Southern California’s Non-Hispanic White population became slightly more segregated (from 50.0 to 50.1) and Northern California only experienced a slight decline (from 40.5 to 40.2) between 1990 and 2000.

Southern and Northern California, along with the Northeast and Midwest, were the regions with the most stagnant employment increases during the 1990s; all four had employment

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Northern California, our megaregion definition leaves out the rural counties of Alpine, Amador, Calaveras, Colusa, Glenn, Mariposa and Sierra. Combined these counties had a population of 142,804 people in 2000, or 1.2% of the total megaregion population as defined by RPA.

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8 Which measures the relative segregation of the white population in these megaregions
growth ranging from 1.3 to 10.8 percent. Despite these regions’ low employment growth, Northern California and the Northeast had the highest per capita incomes ($25,609 and $25,656, respectively). While all megaregions experienced growth in median household income over the 1990s, Southern and Northern California, along with the Northeast, had the highest increases in the ratio of income at the 80th and 20th percentile, indicating a rise in inequality over the decade (See Figure 1). Note the regression line running through the observations: it suggests that improvements in growth and equity go hand-in-hand but, as noted earlier, the sample size is too small to test for the direction of causality.

<Insert Figure 1>

Though poverty rates in California are not as high as in the Gulf Coast, poverty in both California megaregions has been steadily increasing since the 1980s. By 2000, Southern California had the second highest poverty rate of all megaregions, at 15.4 percent, up from 11.8 percent in 1980. Part of the problem in Southern California has been a high level of working poverty. The poor are also highly concentrated residentially in Southern California, almost as much as in the Gulf Coast; the poor are more disbursed in Northern California, a point we take up again below.

The Northern and Southern California Megaregions

While megaregion comparisons set the stage, equity analyses tend to focus on the distribution of opportunities within a geographic unit, in this case, the megaregion. Thus, following the emerging practice in this field, we break the two California regions into core,

9 Defined as a household living below 150 percent of the poverty level in which the total hours worked by household members exceed that associated with a full-time, year-round job. For an explanation of this definition and a comparison to alternatives, see (Pastor and Scoggins 2007).
periphery and sphere of influence, with the results shown in Figure 1 (county-level definitions of these sub-megaregional levels are offered in the Appendix).

<Insert Figure 2 about here>

While 48 percent of Northern California population is in the core and 39 percent is in the periphery (with the remaining 13 percent in the sphere), Southern California is more centered, with 61 percent in the core and 21 percent in the periphery (with 18 percent in the sphere). In Northern California, both the core and sphere of influence have a larger share of non-white populations than the periphery. Moreover, nearly three-fourths of the Asian/Pacific Islander and over half of the Black population live in the core of the megaregion; approximately 80 percent of the megaregion’s Latino population is evenly distributed between the core and the periphery, with the remainder in the sphere. In Southern California, the non-White population comprises 64.3 percent of the Southern California megaregion’s core population. The Latino population is the largest non-white demographic group throughout the entire megaregion; and Asian/Pacific Islanders and Blacks are more likely to be found in the core than in the periphery and sphere of influence. Both the core in the Northern and Southern California megaregions have the largest percentages of immigrant populations; 29 and 35 percent respectively; in Northern California, the periphery is only 18 percent immigrant and in Southern California, the periphery is 19 percent immigrant (with the figures slightly higher for the sphere areas which are largely rural).

<insert Figure 3 about here>

While both Northern and Southern California had overall low levels of employment growth, a closer examination of where employment growth occurred in the megaregions shows some interesting differences. Southern California experienced a decline in employment during the 1990s in the core (-3.7 percent) while the greatest increase in employment took place in the
megaregion’s periphery, with 12.3 percent growth in the 1990s. In Northern California, the core’s employment growth was also the lowest, at 7.3 percent, relative to the periphery and sphere of influence (15.2 percent and 14.4 percent, respectively). It was, however, still positive and this stands in sharp contrast to the hollowing out of employment in Southern California.

There is much greater variation in per capita income between the core, periphery, and sphere of influence in the Northern California megaregion than in the Southern California megaregion. Per capita income in Northern California’s core is twice as high ($31,967) as it is in the region’s sphere of influence ($15,614) in 2000. Between 1990 and 2000, inflation-adjusted per capita income in Northern California’s sphere of influence slightly declined from $15,656 to $15,614. Southern California’s per capita income more consistently ranged between a low of $19,384 in the megaregion’s periphery to a high of $21,867 in the megaregion’s core. The Southern California core’s per capita income only slightly increased 2.2 percent from $21,401 in 1990 to $21,867 in 2000.

To examine poverty in the megaregions, we explore a further geographic breakdown: we split each of the subregions into their principal cities and suburbs. As can be seen in Figure 4, poverty is higher in Northern California’s principal cities as compared to its suburbs, and was highest (23.1 percent) in the sphere of influence’s principal cities; poverty was also quite high in the suburbs of the sphere. Poverty in Southern California is also higher in the principal cities than it is in the suburbs, but it is highest in the core’s principal cities (18.9 percent); meanwhile, the poverty rates are virtually the same for suburbs regardless of whether they are in core, periphery, or sphere. But an examination of both the charted data and a map showing poverty suggests a striking difference between the megaregions: Northern California has a wealthier core
with income falling off as one radiates out while Southern California has a poor core with the situation not improving much as one moves further away.

<Insert Figures 4 and 5>

This pattern in also reflected in data on the percent of the poor living in high poverty tracts (that is, tracts where more than twenty percent of the population falls below the poverty level). In Northern California, the poor living in high poverty tracts in the sphere of influence is 72 percent versus 26 percent in the core. In Southern California, the similar figures for poverty concentration are 60 percent in the core, 44 percent in the periphery, and 49 percent in the sphere of influence. For Northern California, a key equity issue is improving the opportunities for those further out – some of whom may have been forced there by high housing prices – but the very spatial differences in opportunity could make finding common ground difficult. In Southern California, there may be more commonality across geography and organizing around a common economic issue that touches multiple parts of the megaregion might have more salience.

IV. Politics of Megaregional Equity in Northern and Southern California

A megaregion is not an easy scale for engagement for any political force, much less for equity advocates. With no formal government structures, and large distances making face-to-face contact difficult, megaregions have been almost invisible in most analyses of political dynamics in the U.S. Still, there are “political” (in the broad sense) processes that take place and we analyze these dynamics for both the Northern and Southern California megaregions.
Northern California Megaregion

Northern California has historically been rooted in the San Francisco Bay Area. San Francisco itself was also previously the heart of the region, being the largest employment center and home to many of the financial service firms and corporate headquarters that were important in the early development of the northern part of the state. The 1990s, however, brought a dramatic realignment of power and prestige: propelled by the internet boom, the South Bay / Silicon Valley became the Northern California megaregion’s economic engine. Moreover, as ‘high-tech’ industries spread out from their early origins around Stanford University, they not only spread throughout the Bay Area, but began to have a dramatic influence in the Sacramento region and Central Valley as well. A range of high-tech businesses, including Apple Computers, Hewlett-Packard, Intel, NEC, and a host of smaller firms, began opening operations in the Sacramento region in the 1990s. Sky-rocketing housing prices in the Bay Area led to dramatic growth in housing developments in the peripheral areas of the Bay, such as Vallejo, and the Tri-Valley area of Livermore/Pleasanton/Dublin, but also sprawling into Central Valley towns as far flung as Tracy and Stockton, as many Bay Area workers endured multi-hour commutes in exchange for more affordable living circumstances. Such new residential developments, of course, led to a growth in attendant locally serving employment as well, with shopping centers, auto malls, and entertainment centers springing up where agricultural crops used to grow.

As for equity, both the Bay Area and the Central Valley have experienced significant and growing levels of inequality. In the Bay Area, this seems to be driven by an ‘hour-glass’ employment structure, in which highly-paid engineers, programmers, technicians and

10 See (Brechin 1999) for a compelling account of San Francisco’s role in shaping development throughout Northern California from pre-Gold Rush days.
professional staff co-exist with relatively low-paid workers in the service industries, including clerical staff, building services (janitorial, landscaping), cafeteria, laundry, and security guards, who are key to keeping the economic machine running. In the Central Valley, poverty and inequality are driven by the high percentage of employment in low-paying agricultural industries, as well as a significant percentage of immigrant workers. Indeed, as of 2000, Fresno, in the heart of the Central Valley, not only ranked 4th in poverty levels of all metropolitan regions in the country, with 26.2 percent of the population living below the poverty line, but it ranked 1st in concentrated poverty, with 43.5 percent of poor individuals living in census tracts where at least 40 percent of the population had income below the poverty level {Berube, 2005 #1224;Berube, 2006 #1225}.

**Networked regionalism and civic entrepreneurialism**

In the Bay Area megaregion, business interests have taken the lead in shaping political dynamics, starting first from a base in metropolitan regions, and building towards a “networked-regionalism” at the megaregional scale. Indeed, the San Francisco Bay Area has been one of the strongest sites of business regionalism in the country. By the early 1990s, organizations like the Bay Area Council,\(^\text{11}\) the Silicon Valley Manufacturing Group,\(^\text{12}\) and Joint Venture: Silicon Valley Network\(^\text{13}\) were all on the rise, providing models for public-private ventures throughout the country.

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\(^{11}\) [http://www.bayareacouncil.org](http://www.bayareacouncil.org)

\(^{12}\) Renamed the Silicon Valley Leadership Group in 2005: [http://www.svlg.net](http://www.svlg.net)

\(^{13}\) [http://www.jointventure.org](http://www.jointventure.org)
Prominent regional organizations in Northern California outside the Bay Area itself include the Sierra Business Council,\textsuperscript{14} established in 1994 and one of the early leaders in the new regionalism of the 1990s, and Valley Vision,\textsuperscript{15} also established in 1994, which has played a prominent role in the Sacramento area. In the Fresno area, there have been a series of regionalist organizations that have been formed, starting with the Fresno Business Council\textsuperscript{16} (established in 1993), which is a traditional private-sector led organization, but has also played a leading role in promoting regional public-private collaborations, such as the Fresno Area Collaborative Regional Initiative that was launched in 2001, and has subsequently evolved into a Regional Jobs Initiative\textsuperscript{17} that has focused on cluster promotion and job creation in a number of key industries in the region. In 2005, Governor Schwarzenegger signed an executive order creating the California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley,\textsuperscript{18} a public private partnership covering an 8-county region, with over $5 million in additional earmarked funds to improve the region’s economic vitality and quality of life.

Within these regionalist structures, there is some attention to issues of social equity and expanding economic opportunities for disadvantaged sectors of society. The approach to addressing equity, however, is rooted in a belief in the power of good policy and enlightened civic leaders, and a sense that addressing these issues is critical to quality of life, itself necessary for economic promotion (Henton 1997; Henton 2003). There is little attention to building a specific base of political or social support for achieving equity, and the collaborative approach tends to marginalize the more difficult political decisions where real conflicts of interest exist.

\textsuperscript{14} http://www.sbcouncil.org  
\textsuperscript{15} http://www.valleyvision.org  
\textsuperscript{16} http://www.fresnobc.org  
\textsuperscript{17} http://www.fresnojri.org  
\textsuperscript{18} http://www.sjvpartnership.org
Without an attention to building a strong constituency for equity, the ability and even interest of such business-led collaborations to effectively address equity issues is limited. It is also the case that these business-based efforts are not really at a megaregional scale. Instead, civic leaders in the Bay Area have reached to their counterparts in the Central Valley through prominent networking organizations, creating a sort of overlapping network of parallel regionalist groups that share information, perspectives, and strategies. They do not, however, seem focused on developing a megaregional vision or set of planning processes, let alone one which would incorporate equity concerns.

**Equity Organizing in Northern California**

Metropolitan-level equity organizing does have a significant independent presence in Northern California. In Silicon Valley, for instance, the Central Labor Council and its affiliated non-profit Working Partnerships have led labor and community groups throughout the region to come together to become a powerful political force, and they have achieved important equity victories ranging from a living wage, to universal health insurance for children in the region, to community benefits for local residents out of publicly subsidized development projects (Brownstein 2000; Dean and Reynolds 2009; Pastor et al. 2009a). Similarly, the Urban Habitat Program, now based in Oakland, has built a Bay Area wide, multi-sector and multi-county Social Equity Caucus¹⁹ that has played a role as the social justice voice in a range of business-oriented regionalist efforts as well as launched some independent initiatives around land use and transit-oriented development. Smart Growth organizations in the Bay Area have also embraced social equity organizing.

¹⁹ [http://urbanhabitat.org/sec](http://urbanhabitat.org/sec)
justice, with the Transportation and Land Use Coalition\textsuperscript{20} emerging from its roots in the late 1990s to an effective region-wide advocacy organization representing over 90 groups advocating policies that place social equity as a central component of transportation and land use decisions.

Regional equity organizing has also found important footholds in the Central Valley. In the Sacramento Region, ACORN led a nearly successful effort by a range of community groups to promote regional tax-base sharing (PolicyLink 2002), Legal Services of Northern California has led community-driven efforts to enforce fair-share affordable housing provisions (McCarthy 2002), and the Sacramento Housing Alliance is now heading up a growing Coalition on Regional Equity,\textsuperscript{21} with the goal of building a multi-issue, multi-jurisdiction, multi-constituency political force for equity within the six-county Sacramento metropolitan region. Further south in the San Joaquin Valley, the original hotbed of organizing for the United Farm Workers, region wide organizing around immigrants’ rights and other critical regional issues continues through such networks as the Central Valley Partnership,\textsuperscript{22} a range of faith-based initiatives affiliated with PICO California,\textsuperscript{23} and other more decentralized peace and justice networks.\textsuperscript{24}

While organizing at a regional scale has been powerful in the Bay Area, and increasing in the Central Valley, few base-building social justice organizations have focused on building organizational strength at a megaregional scale. Within the labor movement, for example, Central Labor Councils have been strong in San Jose, San Francisco, the East Bay and to a certain extent in Sacramento as well, but even within the Bay Area itself, they have operated

\textsuperscript{20} \url{http://www.transcoalition.org}
\textsuperscript{21} \url{http://www.equitycoalition.org/}
\textsuperscript{22} \url{http://www.citizenship.net/index.shtml}
\textsuperscript{23} \url{http://www.picocalifornia.org/}
\textsuperscript{24} \url{http://www.fresnoalliance.com/}
largely autonomously, collaborating where needed on state-wide policy issues, but not engaged on megaregional scale organizing, or even on organizing within the broader Bay Area together. Within faith-based organizing networks, PICO has the strongest presence in California, with seven affiliates in the Bay Area and another eight in the Central Valley. The focus within the network, however, has been on building strong local organizations rooted in issues and political struggles that are possible with regular face-to-face communication. These local groups then come together, not at a megaregional scale but state-wide, together with the six southern California affiliates, on policy issues such as health care and improved school programs.

Some of this may reflect the variegated economic landscape we noted above – there are large geographic disparities between the major subparts of the megaregion and so “bread and butter” organizing is more geographically focused. Environmental issues often have a broader scale, however, and there have been several megaregional coalitions within the environmental justice community. The most prominent examples of this are the Environmental Justice Coalition for Water, and the Central Valley Air Quality Coalition.25

The EJCW, for example, is a coalition of more than 50 community based and intermediary organizations with the goal of educating, empowering, and nurturing a community-based coalition that will serve as a public voice and be an effective advocate for environmental justice issues in California water policy.26 Its scope is currently state-wide, but it was founded in 1999 to address the lack of community influence in the CALFED Bay-Delta Program, a collaborative effort to manage water provision in the entire San Francisco Bay/Sacramento Delta

25 Other prominent EJ organizations that operate across the megaregion include Californians for Pesticide Reform, a state-wide coalition of 182 groups focused on changing pesticide policies and practices; and GreenAction, a coalition launched by California Communities Against Toxics. These organizations, however, operate primarily at a state or multi-state level.

26 http://www.ejcw.org/
watershed (Innes et al. 2006a; Innes et al. 2006b). Unfortunately, while the EJCW was successful in getting CALFED to create a formal subcommittee on environmental justice, an analysis of the resulting process concluded that there have been few discernible impacts on water policy to date, and a rise in suspicion and lack of trust:

The emergence of environmental justice within CALFED offered the opportunity for a new, more democratic and collaborative way to manage water in California….Because such access to decision-making had previously been lacking, even cynics within the environmental justice groups considered this a possible opportunity to influence the disposition of water as a public trust resource….Within 3 years however, the golden opportunity had dissolved, leaving in its wake even greater cynicism about the state agencies’ interest in sharing control over what was increasingly a privatized resource and one managed under privileged decision making processes. The reduction of trust that accompanied the treatment of environmental justice by CALFED makes it even harder to reconcile differences between agencies and community groups representing low-income communities and communities of color (Shilling et al. 2009).

The Central Valley Air Quality Coalition is another megaregional partnership of more than 70 organizations, formally established in 2004. Though it is primarily focused on improving health and air quality within the San Joaquin Valley, its members come from across the megaregion, and even the Los Angeles basin. Despite the megaregional character of its membership, and focus on the broad San Joaquin Valley, much of the work of the coalition has been focused on state legislative actions. The coalition in fact emerged out of a 2003 legislative battle over emissions in dairy farms in the valley, which had certain exemptions from air quality regulations that were subsequently removed. Other legislative battles have related to: expanding the scope and structure of the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District to address pesticide use in the valley; efforts to establish a network of air monitoring stations throughout the valley, and prohibiting the use of experimental pesticides in schools (Kirsch Foundation 2006).

27 http://www.calcleanair.org/
In short, there are few megaregional scale equity organizing initiatives in Northern California. Those that do are mostly limited to the environmental justice field, and success has been mixed. This is not the track record likely to attract more organizers to the terrain, particularly those focused on traditional economic justice issues – but the situation has been dramatically different in Southern California.

**Southern California and the Equity Challenge**

Southern California has long been viewed as a land of opportunity: the region was a beacon for migrants of all ethnicities and origins, ranging from whites escaping the Oklahoma Dust Bowl to African Americans fleeing Southern Jim Crow to Latin Americans and Asians leaving behind economic despair and political repression in their home countries. Unfortunately, the historic role of Southern California as a launchpad to success was weakened by the shrinkage of regional manufacturing in the 1980s and 1990s. The 1992 civil unrest in Los Angeles and its environs, occurring in the midst of a sharp regional recession, exposed the scars of spatial inequality, with a neighborhood’s median income serving as a better predictor of riot damage than its residents ethnicity (Pastor 1995). Meanwhile, tense political battles over Affirmative Action and immigration – occurring on a statewide level but often previewed first in Southern California – erupted in ways that reflected increasing unease with the changing demographics of the megaregion.

As the 2000 census results emerged, three things became clear. First, while the rest of the country had generally seen a decrease in concentrated poverty over the 1990s, poverty concentration actually rose in the various metros that comprise the Southern California megaregion. Second, the area, particularly Los Angeles County, saw a sharp increase in “working poverty,” suggesting that the issue lay only partly with employment levels and was
instead related to the shifting composition of the economy and slipping wages for available employment {Pastor, 2007 #1815}. Third, the changing demography that marked central Los Angeles had spread across the entire region, with enhanced immigration creating issues of social dislocation and challenges for assimilation and mobility.

But even if there is a “commonality of disparity” at the regional scale, as reflected in the more even distribution of poverty in Southern California as compared to Northern California, it is not entirely clear that the megaregion is the right level at which to respond. After all, there are very few policy levers at the megaregional level; while the region does have a rather large Council of Governments (the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) covers six major counties), large parts of what is considered to be in the megaregion are not included in this governance structure. The question is why equity proponents in, say, Bakersfield, the Inland Empire and Los Angeles would link up, rather than just join their Northern California allies to, say, raise the state minimum wage or push for federal health insurance reform.

This lack of a political rationale for the megaregion is not just a problem for equity; Tietz and Barbour (2007) also point to the relative lack of megaregion authority over issues like growth management and suggest that the only real traction to be gained is around infrastructure investments. Interestingly, this is exactly the entry point that equity proponent tiptoeing around the megaregion have taken up in Southern California: ports, logistics, and the future of the megaregional economy.

Los Angeles and Regional Equity

The origin of this approach is actually from the core of the region: the city and county of Los Angeles. L.A. would seem to be an unlikely place for new formulations about urban form and social equity: it has long been regarding as a poster child for sprawl and urban despair. But
several of the innovations that Jones (2007) mentions as possible remedies for social disparities at the megaregional level – community benefits agreements, a fairer distribution of transportation resources, and the creation of urban parklands – emerged early in the city of Los Angeles. While a full consideration of the reasons why are beyond the scope of this paper (see Pastor et al. 2009, chapter 4), we would point to three important factors: the relative fragmentation of the business class, the emergence of new labor organizing, and the adoption of a regional lens by a wide array of community organizations.

The underlying or structural reasons for business fragmentation are complex, ranging from the collapse of the region’s major manufacturing industries to the simultaneously global and atomistic nature of one of the region’s main sectors, entertainment. But it is reflected and refracted in the departure of corporate headquarters from the city, the ownership of the major news daily by out-of-towners (until recently the Chicago Tribune syndicate and now real estate developer Sam Zell), and the growing presence of smaller, often immigrant-owned, companies who often have little time for civic leadership. The result is that while the Bay Area has seen the emergence of a series of business-led organizations competing to be the main regional voice on public policy and economic growth, Los Angeles firms and business leaders have been almost entirely absent in the ranks of California’s “civic entrepreneurs.”

This has created an opening for other voices, particularly those of labor. In her remarkable book, *L.A. Story*, sociologist Ruth Milkman (2006) accounts for the recent rise of unions in the city and the region through a focus of the intersection of four industries and

28 The fragmentation has not gone unrecognized by business voices, particularly in light of the ability of labor and other equity voices to coalesce. In early 2008, leaders finally responded by unveiling the Los Angeles County Business Federation, a collection of 44 different chambers and other groups hoping to mirror the political success of the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor. See Ronald D. White, “L.A. businesses to form new federation,” Los Angeles Times, January 28, 2008, p. C3.
immigrant labor, and an emphasis on the role of professional organizers (Milkman 2006). Where her story could be more complete is in its geographic aspect: the famous Justice for Janitors campaign was explicitly regional in its scope, labor’s political activities were likewise about securing city and county power, and the labor-affiliated think tank, the Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy (LAANE), has been overtly regional in its analysis of problems and its strategy for solutions. LAANE, for example, has targeted regional attractions, such as the Staple Center and the Los Angeles Airport, for securing community benefits, it has pursued a series of living wage campaigns across multiple jurisdictions, and its latest efforts have involved forming coalitions with environmentalist and environmental justice proponents to reconfigure operations at L.A.’s ports in a way that will both reduce pollution and improve job quality.

This regional emphasis by labor has been accompanied by a new regional stance on the part of many community-based groups. When the cities of Los Angeles and Long Beach came together (with their respective ports and the regional transportation agency) to support the building of a high-speed rail line to transport imported goods through South L.A., community groups forged an Alameda Corridor Jobs Coalition and secured the largest local hiring program in U.S. history. When the regional transportation authority decided to address traffic congestion by supporting the development of light rail that could serve outlying suburbs, organizers formed a Bus Riders Union that sued in court to protect and enhance the bus system that was the transit backbone for many inner-city residents. And when one leader in the region’s entertainment industry, DreamWorks, sought a subsidy to locate in Los Angeles, it found itself negotiating for a job training program (that has eventually morphed in a broader effort called Workplace Hollywood) with a South Central-based group that had formed a “Metro Alliance” with components from all over the city (Pastor et al. 2009a).
The regionalist epiphany for these community groups – and to a lesser extent, labor – seems to have been deeply connected to the 1992 Los Angeles civil unrest. While this, along with the contemporaneous recession, gave a final push to several companies already seeking to abandon the region, more rooted organizations found themselves grappling with the need for a new approach to organizing and social justice. They soon began to think regionally; in the words of one activist, “If you want to help South L.A. you can’t talk about South L.A. apart from the region.”29 And they have had their influence on the city’s mayor, Antonio Villaraigosa, who campaigned in 2005 on a promise to help the city "grow smarter, grow greener, grow together, and grow more civic-minded."30 Many of his first moves as mayor, including resolving a labor dispute to protect the regional tourist industry and taking a leadership position in the regional transportation agency, one eschewed by the former mayor, signaled his understanding and commitment to a regional equity and regional growth agenda.

What About the Megaregion?

The same community and labor forces that pushed regional equity seem to be offering a new megaregional approach – and in keeping with the admonitions of Tietz and Barbour (2007), the issues set is not housing or tax-sharing but infrastructure and employment.31 The particular focus: investments in the ports and support for the logistics industry in Southern California.32

30 The framing, in part, emerged during a period in which Villaraigosa had a part-time appointment as a Fellow at the University of Southern California's Center for Sustainable Cities and helped co-facilitate a workshop on the future of metropolitan Los Angeles. That workshop produced a popularly oriented book {Fulton, 2003 #1241} and a related and more academic work that emerged from a parallel process at the Center (Wolch, Pastor and Dreier 2004).
31 Moreover, megaregions, because of their sharp differences between core and periphery metros in terms of income and housing costs, can result in an inequitable allocation of resources under tax-sharing: a stressed suburb in Los Angeles County, for example, can look rich compared to a bucolic neighborhood in Imperial County.
32 See {Pastor, 2005 #1238} {Rubin, 2006 #1239} for broader frameworks on equity and infrastructure.
These are, after all, megaports and megaprojects – 40 percent of U.S. imports move through the Long Beach and Los Angeles ports – with megaconsequences for economic growth not limited to neighborhoods, cities, or metro areas {KERNCOG, 2005 #1219}. At the same, they do have highly local consequences: activities related to port operations and related trucking and intermodal switching yards are estimated to generate twenty percent of Southern California’s total emissions of diesel particulates (Hricko 2008) and both the emissions and their attendant health consequences are concentrated in a band of communities stretching from the ports themselves along freeway and train corridors that first head north, then east to warehousing operations in the Inland Empire of Riverside and San Bernardino. Local environmental justice groups hailing from Wilmington, the City of Commerce, and Riverside have banded together to form an arc of resistance that matches that trajectory – and they have been one of the political forces behind new policies to clean up port operations.

As the same time, the ports are key to the region’s economic future and may be important to addressing issues of equitable development. As SCAG leaders have pointed out, the logistics industry generates jobs that require lower levels of education and can offer a starting step to mobility for immigrant and other workers. The problem is that this is not automatic – that is, there is no guarantee that simply generating the employment will also generate the community benefits. The short-haul truckers that service the port are a case in point. The popular association of truckers with Teamsters conjures up images of protected employment and high wages. But the deregulation of the trucking industry led to the entrance of individual owner-operators and a demographic transformation: the percent of Latinos employed in trucking and warehousing went from 27 percent in 1980 to 71 percent in 2005. And under the contractor set of relationships, in which the individual is bearing the risk of maintaining the truck and companies
have less reason to avoid wasting trucker time in queues, trucker wages have fallen to around $12 an hour after expenses (and without benefits).33

Making this megaindustry really equitable requires, in short, improving the quality of employment. A new and much more nimble labor movement has tried to do that by interjecting itself into the debate over the “greening” of the port, forming a Coalition for Clean and Safe Ports that has succeeded in passing a Clean Air Action Plan in 2006 that requires that 17,000 trucks be retrofitted or replaced to reduce emissions; since this will require deep financial pockets as well as ease of inspection over the results, the labor groups and their environmentalist and environmental justice allies argued for a concessionaire system that would replace the independent owners with larger companies that have straightforward employee relationships – and can thus be more easily organized. The latter twist on how to clean up trucks (via a concessionaire system or by providing finance to owner-operators) has been the subject of a lawsuit by the trucking association and a split between the cities of Long Beach and Los Angeles although the retrofitting is, as of late 2009, proceeding ahead of schedule. But the important point is that this was a megaregional campaign led by equity proponents – and they have begun linking with other ports throughout the nation to pursue similar goals.

Labor unions and their allies are also setting their sights on the overall goods movements industry. Likening warehouse workers to janitors – they both do work hidden from public view, often for companies that are not the real economic actors (cleaning companies rather than the corporate owners of commercial real estate, a small warehouse owner rather than the Wal-Mart

of whose supply chain he is a part) – labor has developed a campaign to organize warehouse workers that can insure that the industry really does deliver on the promise that SCAG and others have raised.

This may be an emerging recipe for social justice at a megaregional level but to get there will require an active presence across the megaregion. In addition to the linkage of environmental justice organizations, LAANE, the L.A.-based labor-community powerhouse, has been able to join up with two other existing parallel organizations, the Coastal Alliance United for a Sustainable Economy (CAUSE) in Ventura/Santa Barbara and the Center for Policy Initiatives (CPI) in San Diego, and is seeding the creation of analogues in Orange County and the Inland Empire. Again, the community-based forces seem to be outpacing a more fragmented business class in Southern California.

V. Conclusions: Megaregions and Equity Organizing

We began this paper wondering about whether equity proponents were arriving late, gaining regional understanding and power just as economic dynamics were shifting to the megaregional level. To fully answer this question, we would need to confirm whether megaregions really are the “new” level for the economy; here, we have taken a simpler tack and simply addressed the state of megaregional equity issues in two regions, Northern and Southern California, and examined exactly which equity advocates were indeed taking on the issue and why. While we are quite aware of the risks of generalizing from such a small sample, this is a nascent field and the insights gleaned might be useful. Our basic conclusion: there may be some opportunities for regional organizing for equity but these will need to be selectively chosen and implemented.
One challenge, we would argue, is that the processes affecting inequality at a megaregional scale may be too distance. Megaregional labor markets, for example, are probably best understood as overlapping regional labor markets, rather than a single integrated megaregional labor market, since any job center is unlikely to draw more than a small minority of workers from beyond what would be considered the normal regional boundary. Similarly, housing markets—and related processes of local government finance, educational quality, and neighborhood characteristics—will also continue to be largely shaped by the location of jobs and the constraints of daily home-to-work commutes within overlapping regional economies. This is not to deny the importance of megaregional pressures on equity: in Northern California, for example, higher housing prices in the core have forced low and moderate income families further out in the commuting shed and the current housing downturn is slashing values in those outlying areas more rapidly and the resulting foreclosures destroying only recent garnered home owner equity. Still, these are hard issues around which to organize and make policy progress.

What does seem to be gaining more traction at a megaregional scale are issues related to infrastructure—particularly infrastructure related to transportation and to management of environmental processes. The issues of the logistics industry in Southern California, and the processes linking the ports, distribution systems, and the location of intermodal transfer stations and warehouse facilities, seem increasingly to be unfolding at a megaregional scale in a way that we imagine has parallels in most, if not all megaregions of the U.S. Similarly, there also seem to be important issues related to water provision, air quality, and associated health risks that stretch far beyond regional boundaries, and are perhaps best understood and maybe even tackled at the megaregional scale. In both of these arenas, equity actors have been playing an important role.
and planners could help by filtering any new strategies for the growth and sustainability of megaregions through a fuller social equity lens.

Of course, policy change does not occur simply because there are good ideas or good planning. Rather, it occurs when there are constituencies that are mobilized for change (and so reach for whatever good ideas they and others have generated). Yet the politics of equity at the megaregional level are difficult. On the other hand, we don’t think that building megaregional scale coalitions for equity is essential, at least at this stage, for achieving equity. We do not think, for example, that it is really a matter of the relationship between metros within the megaregion – whether residents in Riverside have rapid rail to employment in downtown L.A. for example – but rather whether the residents just across the river in East Los Angeles (virtually walking distance) have access to employment and to what kind of jobs, and whether poor residents of Riverside have ready access to decent employment and housing within their own region. So perhaps what is required are new alliances of social justice organizations that seek to lift up multiple distressed communities within their regions, while linking together across the megaregion—a megaregional version of “network organizing” (Traynor and Andors 2005). Some organizations are stepping up to this task but it is a new and sometimes unnatural fit for groups that often have quite defined local bases.

As for researchers, we think that the contemporary study of megaregions needs to pay more attention to the emerging constellation of social forces shaping these spaces, including actors in the business community, amongst policy and planning circles, and within equity coalitions. The current literature on megaregions often reads rather technically: megaregions are a new economic scale, we should plan for them more effectively, and here’s a policy package we can adopt. Yet the megaregion, like the metro or even the city, is a messy political space in
which a rational decision-making process is often eschewed in favor of the rough clash of social forces, usually occurring at a lower level of governance and then bubbling up in a way that seems to maximize dysfunction.

In this context, equity will necessarily assume an important role. After all, many of the features some deplore about megaregions – a sprawling consumption of land, an inability to coordinate housing and transit decisions – emerge precisely because of a Tieboutian desire of communities to be separate, and at the heart of that are issues of race, class, and segregation. Understanding these political and social dynamics is the stuff of political economy. More work on social movements, business collaboratives, and urban regimes could enrich the field and provide guidance as to how we might generate both the policies and the political will to overcome fragmentation, link together cities and neighborhoods, and tackle social disparity in meaningful and sustainable ways at the regional and megaregional levels.
### Table 1. Comparing the Ten Megaregions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographics, 2000</th>
<th>Arizona Sun Corridor</th>
<th>Cascadia</th>
<th>Gulf Coast</th>
<th>Midwest</th>
<th>Northeast</th>
<th>Northern California</th>
<th>Piedmont</th>
<th>Southern California</th>
<th>Southern Florida</th>
<th>Texas Triangle</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>65.2%</td>
<td>79.4%</td>
<td>56.1%</td>
<td>79.2%</td>
<td>67.0%</td>
<td>51.4%</td>
<td>69.1%</td>
<td>41.8%</td>
<td>64.5%</td>
<td>55.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>21.6%</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
<td>15.0%</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
<td>22.3%</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
<td>13.9%</td>
<td>13.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>25.9%</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
<td>11.0%</td>
<td>24.4%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>38.5%</td>
<td>18.1%</td>
<td>25.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Pacific Islander</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>14.0%</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
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<td>1.5%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percent Foreign Born, 2000</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>16.1%</td>
<td>23.9%</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
<td>29.0%</td>
<td>18.6%</td>
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<td>Non-Hispanic White Dissimilarity Index, 1990</td>
<td>45.5</td>
<td>32.2</td>
<td>49.8</td>
<td>59.8</td>
<td>40.5</td>
<td>51.2</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>52.6</td>
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<td>Non-Hispanic White Dissimilarity Index, 2000</td>
<td>44.7</td>
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<td>47.0</td>
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<td>55.0</td>
<td>42.8</td>
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<td>47.0</td>
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<td>Per Capita Income, 2000</td>
<td>$21,054</td>
<td>$23,369</td>
<td>$16,566</td>
<td>$22,251</td>
<td>$25,609</td>
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<td>$21,693</td>
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<td>$21,835</td>
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<td>Median Household Income, 2000</td>
<td>$44,769</td>
<td>$47,037</td>
<td>$35,320</td>
<td>$44,841</td>
<td>$50,164</td>
<td>$54,129</td>
<td>$41,279</td>
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<td>$40,286</td>
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<td>Employment Growth</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Change in Employment, 1990-2000</td>
<td>39.4%</td>
<td>22.3%</td>
<td>17.1%</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>10.8%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>20.3%</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Change in Employment, 1980-1990</td>
<td>44.7%</td>
<td>26.6%</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
<td>28.8%</td>
<td>28.4%</td>
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<td>46.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poverty Rate, 2000</td>
<td>12.90</td>
<td>10.22</td>
<td>20.00</td>
<td>10.05</td>
<td>10.77</td>
<td>12.12</td>
<td>11.38</td>
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<td>15.24</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percent of Working Poor Households</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
<td>14.6%</td>
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<td>5.3%</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percent of Poor Population in High Poverty Tracts, 2000</td>
<td>49.9%</td>
<td>21.1%</td>
<td>60.5%</td>
<td>38.7%</td>
<td>45.0%</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td>29.7%</td>
<td>55.0%</td>
<td>36.6%</td>
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<td>Poverty Dissimilarity Index, 2000</td>
<td>37.68</td>
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<td>40.43</td>
<td>32.04</td>
<td>29.59</td>
<td>34.16</td>
<td>30.75</td>
<td>34.42</td>
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</table>
Figure 1. Income Growth and Income Distribution in U.S. Megaregions, 1990-2000

The figure illustrates the relationship between median household income growth and change in 80-20 income ratio across different U.S. megaregions from 1990 to 2000. The x-axis represents the change in 80-20 income ratio, while the y-axis shows median household income growth. Each region is marked with a distinctive dot:

- Southern California
- Northern California
- Northeast
- Southern Florida
- Cascadia
- Piedmont
- Midwest
- Arizona Sun Corridor
- Texas Triangle
- Gulf Coast

The data suggests a negative correlation between income growth and income inequality, with regions experiencing higher income growth tending to have a decrease in income inequality.
Figure 2: Map of California Megaregions
Figure 3. Demographics of Core, Periphery and Sphere of Influence in California's Megaregions

- Core: Northern California: 48% White, 58% Other
  - Core: Southern California: 36% White, 50% Other
- Periphery: Northern California: 24% Latino, 5% Other
  - Periphery: Southern California: 37% Latino, 6% Other
- Sphere: Northern California: 7% Asian/Pacific Islander, 4% Other
  - Sphere: Southern California: 8% Asian/Pacific Islander, 6% Other
- Other categories:
  - Asian/Pacific Islander: 21% Core, 20% Periphery, 7% Sphere
  - Latino: 8% Core, 8% Periphery, 4% Sphere
  - Black: 5% Core, 5% Periphery, 4% Sphere
  - White: 44% Core, 44% Periphery, 53% Sphere

0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%
Core  Periphery  Sphere  Core  Periphery  Sphere

Other  Asian/Pacific Islander  Latino  Black  White
Figure 4. Poverty Rates in California Megaregions by Area and City/Suburb, 2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Northern California</th>
<th>Southern California</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal Cities</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suburbs</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Core</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Periphery</td>
<td>16.1%</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sphere of Influence</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
<td>15.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Core</td>
<td>11.2%</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Periphery</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>15.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sphere of Influence</td>
<td>18.9%</td>
<td>15.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 5: Poverty by Tract for California Megaregions
## Appendix 1: Northern and Southern California Megaregional definitions

### Northern California MegaRegion:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CBSA</th>
<th>CBSA Name</th>
<th>Counties</th>
<th>Core/Periphery/Sphere</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>41860</td>
<td>San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, CA Metropolitan Statistical Area</td>
<td>Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, San Francisco, San Mateo</td>
<td>Core</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41940</td>
<td>San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, CA Metropolitan Statistical Area</td>
<td>San Benito, Santa Clara</td>
<td>Core</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32900</td>
<td>Merced, CA Metropolitan Statistical Area</td>
<td>Merced</td>
<td>Periphery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33700</td>
<td>Modesto, CA Metropolitan Statistical Area</td>
<td>Stanislaus</td>
<td>Periphery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34900</td>
<td>Napa, CA Metropolitan Statistical Area</td>
<td>Napa</td>
<td>Periphery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40900</td>
<td>Sacramento–Arden-Arcade–Roseville, CA Metropolitan Statistical Area</td>
<td>El Dorado, Placer, Sacramento, Yolo</td>
<td>Periphery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41500</td>
<td>Salinas, CA Metropolitan Statistical Area</td>
<td>Monterey</td>
<td>Periphery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42100</td>
<td>Santa Cruz-Watsonville, CA Metropolitan Statistical Area</td>
<td>Santa Cruz</td>
<td>Periphery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42220</td>
<td>Santa Rosa-Petaluma, CA Metropolitan Statistical Area</td>
<td>Sonoma</td>
<td>Periphery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44700</td>
<td>Stockton, CA Metropolitan Statistical Area</td>
<td>San Joaquin</td>
<td>Periphery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46700</td>
<td>Vallejo-Fairfield, CA Metropolitan Statistical Area</td>
<td>Solano</td>
<td>Periphery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49700</td>
<td>Yuba City, CA Metropolitan Statistical Area</td>
<td>Sutter, Yuba</td>
<td>Periphery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23420</td>
<td>Fresno, CA Metropolitan Statistical Area</td>
<td>Fresno</td>
<td>Sphere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25260</td>
<td>Hanford-Corcoran, CA Metropolitan Statistical Area</td>
<td>Kings</td>
<td>Sphere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31460</td>
<td>Madera, CA Metropolitan Statistical Area</td>
<td>Madera</td>
<td>Sphere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46020</td>
<td>Truckee-Grass Valley, CA Micropolitan Statistical Area</td>
<td>Nevada</td>
<td>Sphere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47300</td>
<td>Visalia-Porterville, CA Metropolitan Statistical Area</td>
<td>Tulare</td>
<td>Sphere</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Southern California MegaRegion:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CBSA</th>
<th>CBSA Name</th>
<th>Counties</th>
<th>Core/Periphery/Sphere</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>31100</td>
<td>Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, CA Metropolitan Statistical Area</td>
<td>Los Angeles, Orange</td>
<td>Core</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37100</td>
<td>Oxnard-Thousand Oaks-Ventura, CA Metropolitan Statistical Area</td>
<td>Ventura</td>
<td>Periphery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40140</td>
<td>Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA Metropolitan Statistical Area</td>
<td>Riverside, San Bernardino</td>
<td>Periphery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42060</td>
<td>Santa Barbara-Santa Maria, CA Metropolitan Statistical Area</td>
<td>Santa Barbara</td>
<td>Periphery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12540</td>
<td>Bakersfield, CA Metropolitan Statistical Area</td>
<td>Kern</td>
<td>Sphere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20940</td>
<td>El Centro, CA Metropolitan Statistical Area</td>
<td>Imperial</td>
<td>Sphere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41740</td>
<td>San Diego-Carlsbad-San Marcos, CA Metropolitan Statistical Area</td>
<td>San Diego</td>
<td>Sphere</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
References
Glaeser, Edward L. 2007. "'Do Regional Economies Need Regional Coordination?'." Cambridge, MA: Harvard Institute of Economic Research
—. 2006b. "Water Management in California: CALFED as an Emergent Form of Governance."


Pastor, Manuel, Chris Benner and Martha Matsuoka. 2009a. This Could Be the Start of Something Big: Social Movements for Regional Equity and the Future of Metropolitan America Ithaca: Cornell University Press.


