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# Moving On Up? Regions, Megaregions, and the Changing Geography of Social Equity Organizing

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## Abstract

In recent years, some advocates for social equity have sought to develop new solutions to urban poverty and build new forms of political power at a metropolitan or regional scale. The evolution of American urban areas into sprawling megaregions raises a concern that these “regional equity” advocates today may be facing the same dilemma as urban reformers in the 1960s: They are arriving to a new policy table just as the scale of the economy is shifting up and out. In trying to assess how the potential emergence of megaregions affects opportunities for addressing equity, the authors examine the Northern and Southern California megaregions and argue that “thinking megaregionally” may help to identify some new issues for equity organizing, but there are important challenges: (1) the issues most likely to gain traction at a megaregional scale seem to be primarily related to infrastructure and the environment and may not have the immediacy usually associated with successful mobilization of constituencies and (2) even if the issues are megaregional, the policy levers are likely to be local, state, and federal, rendering the megaregional scale less immediate in a policy sense as well. The authors nonetheless suggest that there may be growing opportunities in the years to come, and

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analysts concerned with equity and social movement may want to conduct further research in this area.

### **Keywords**

megaregions, regional equity, urban social movements, urban geography

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 United States. Indeed, within 10 years more than 200 Black mayors held office, and by 1993, 67 of the country's largest urban centers were headed by African-Americans (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. Amid the rising suburbanization of residents and jobs, 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 jurisdictions (Kraus and Swanstrom 2002).

Forty years later, many equity advocates have set their sights on the larger regional scale that once frustrated their transformational ambitions. Under the banner of "regional equity," 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, Benner, and Matsuoka 2009; Pastor, Lester, and Scoggins 2009). But even as the notion of "thinking regionally" has made its way into the progressive lexicon, some analysts have argued that America's metro areas are now actually reconstituting as sprawling megaregions (Dewar and Epstein 2007; Florida, Gulden, and Mellander 2008). This raises a potential concern that today's regional equity advocates may be facing the same dilemma as urban reformers in the 1960s: They are arriving at the table just as the scales of power and the economy are shifting further up and out. Indeed, borrowing from Rusk (1999), it could 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.

While we think this is an appropriate concern, we argue that equity advocates should be highly selective in any consideration of a megaregional agenda. 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 is, in at least some important ways, yes at the metropolitan level: Dispersion of resources via fiscal inequality and the suburbanization of opportunity is a problem, strategies to promote transit spending and affordable housing are potential regional policies, and faith-based, labor-based, and community-based coalitions have emerged, at least in some places, that seek to link progressive forces for new agendas within metropolitan regions (Orfield 2002; Pastor, Benner, and Matsuoka 2009; Pastor et al. 2000; Puentes and Warren 2006).

As for megaregions, while there are some megaregional scale processes shaping equity—most prominently those related to infrastructure and environmental health—the issues likely to gain traction at a megaregional scale are different from those at a metropolitan level and may not have as immediate an impact on patterns of inequality as processes, such as housing, labor markets, and transportation decisions, that primarily unfold at a regional scale. As for policy, there are some opportunities we highlight, such as in the logistics industry, that may exist at the megaregional level, but the policy levers to affect them are really at local, state, or federal levels. Finally, the politics of megaregions are problematic partly because of the lack of government structures, partly because of the difficulties of organizing over broad geographies, and partly because of the challenges of defining equity (and hence an equity agenda) at a megaregional scale.

This article illustrates these points with an empirical focus on the megaregions of Northern and Southern California. We do this 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 be tripped up by the tangled lines of state governance.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, there really is some form of megaregional organizing being conducted by equity actors in the state, including around the ports

and logistics industries in Southern California and environmental justice issues in Northern California, allowing us to assess both the progress and the possibilities. Finally, California has recently adopted Senate Bill (SB) 375, a companion to the state's global warming initiative that mandates better coordination of housing and transportation decisions (to reduce vehicle miles traveled and hence greenhouse gas emissions) and will both give new leverage to the larger regional planning bodies and require some coordination between them.

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 brief empirical description of California's megaregions as well as some discussion of differences within three distinct areas we identify within each megaregion: the core, the 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, and relate this to megaregional developments. We conclude by returning to a broad discussion of the opportunities, challenges, and limits of "thinking megaregionally" for equity-oriented researchers and activists.

Three caveats before we move forward. First, this is *not* an article about the emergence and evolution of megaregions but rather about whether there are equity possibilities *assuming* that megaregions are emerging. As a result, we do not dwell long on the definition of megaregions; rather, we accept the recent definition and boundaries offered by America 2050, a leading proponent of the megaregion concept, and try to consider the equity and social movement dimensions.<sup>2</sup>

Second, we do not seek here to rehash the argument, as in Imbroscio (2006), about whether there are regional equity coalitions at all and whether they can have an impact (Imbroscio 2006). We understand that others are less enthusiastic about and less identified with the regional equity perspective than we are—and we also understand the disaffection with regional approaches that criticize the power and appeal of local interests and community organizing. But that is not the sort of regional equity approach we have endorsed, stressing instead social movements as a vehicle for progressive regional agendas (Pastor, Benner, and Matsuoka 2009). In any case, the growing attendance at the regional equity summits hosted by PolicyLink, the adoption of regional perspectives by the Partnership for Working Families, the Gamaliel Foundation, and others, and the emerging opportunities at a federal level around efforts like the Sustainable Communities Initiative and Choice Neighborhoods suggest that regional equity is salient for policy and advocacy purposes.

Third, as will be clear, we are not arguing here that such regional equity organizers *must* consider the megaregional level and begin to act there; this

qualification may be especially important because we are clearly among a set of authors and actors who insisted on the importance of considering the regional level in progressive organizing, and we are definitely not trying to echo that clarion call for megaregions (Pastor et al. 2000; Benner 2002; Benner, Leete, and Pastor 2007; Pastor, Benner, and Matsuoka 2009). Indeed, we do not mean to privilege the megaregion or suggest that to ignore it is to completely miss the boat. Rather, we are exploring in this article a more limited question—whether there is something about working at the megaregion level that will be a useful part of a full strategy for economic, social, and geographic justice.

### **Equity, Megaregions, and the California Context**

Regional equity advocates have come to understand equity as referring to both people and place. Achieving regional equity means ensuring that members of all racial, ethnic, and income groups have opportunities to live reasonably and have decent work in all parts of the region while all neighborhoods are supported to be vibrant places with healthy environments, including affordable housing choices, good schools, access to open space, and decent transit connecting people to jobs (Pastor, Benner, and Rosner 2006). While equity has become increasingly prominent in the literature on regionalism, it has been given relatively short shrift to date in the literature on megaregions.<sup>3</sup> Given the relative youth of megaregions as an analytical framework, the somewhat scattered coverage of issues of social inequality is understandable.<sup>4</sup> After all, there is still a significant debate simply on how to define megaregions as well as whether the 10 U.S. megaregions usually cited in the literature are in fact the right ones (Florida, Gulden, and Mellander 2008; Goldfeld 2007). However, the relative lack of attention to equity may be the result of more than the novelty of the scale: As Dewar and Epstein (2007, 121) suggest, “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.” A view from the clouds, in short, can dim attention to neighborhoods and disparities.

Can equity issues be effectively raised at the megaregional level? Interestingly, the bread-and-butter economic analysis of megaregions has paid little attention to equity concerns. There has been a debate about whether megaregions contain the entire value chain for an industry (Sassen 2007) and whether industry value chains are dispersing across megaregions (Feser and Hewings 2007). Lang and Knox (2009) have written about linkages *across* U.S. megalopolises, including goods movement, rail transport, extended commuting, and

institutional connections, a topic that does have equity implications for those working in and living near the goods movement industries (Lang and Knox 2009). However, few analysts explicitly consider the workforce implications or residential equity dimensions of these spatial trends.

Jones (2007) provides the most complete review of the intersection of social equity and megaregions thus far. Building on an earlier framework developed by Blackwell and Fox (2004) around *regional equity*, he argues that megaregional strategies might seem to be better at addressing intermetro disparities—such as that between the core and periphery of a megaregion—than at addressing the city–suburb metro differences that have been at the heart of some elements of the regional equity movement.<sup>5</sup> Given that, he is skeptical that a megaregional equity movement will emerge, writing,

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 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. (Jones 2007, 8)

Some planning bodies, such as the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) and San Francisco Planning and Urban Research (SPUR), have considered social 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 (Kern Council of Governments [KERNCOG], San Diego Association of Governments [SANDAG], and SCAG 2005). Meanwhile, SPUR has argued that linking “cold” and “hot” cores through improved transit connections in a megaregion could open the job market to more workers (Metcalf and Terplan 2007).

As scant as the attention to equity policy may be, even less attention has been paid to the politics of equity organizing in the megaregion. Part of this is the lack of government structures and thus government targets. While John,

Tickell, and Musson (2005) suggest that megaregions could best be administered in a top-down fashion, Metcalf and Terplan (2007) are doubtful that institutional structures will evolve and hence encourage a more networked approach to developing initiatives, campaigns, and projects. With megaregional government unlikely, most scholars are calling for improving megaregional *governance* (Dewar and Epstein 2007; Teitz and Barbour 2007). But how should equity be raised in this amorphous context—and who will do it? How will minority voices remain undiluted among the large numbers of people living in a megaregion? And to whom will social justice advocates speak, and what will the key issues be that might resonate with their constituencies?

## The California Context

To understand the potential for equity issues at the megaregion level, we need to consider the specific circumstances and concerns. Here, we look at California's two megaregions (Southern and Northern California), starting first with a brief demographic and economic overview, with comparisons both to other U.S. megaregions and then to each other.<sup>6</sup>

As Table 1 indicates, the Southern and Northern California megaregions differ from other megaregions in the United States along several demographic, social, and economic dimensions. Southern California, for example, is the most diverse of America's megaregions: It is the only megaregion where the majority of its residents are people of color (58.2%), 38.5% of whom are Latino. Of all the megaregions, Northern California has the largest share of Asian or Pacific Islander residents (14%). In addition to Northern and Southern California being among the most racially diverse of the megaregions, they also have the largest foreign-born populations: In 2000, 29% of the Southern California and 24% of the Northern California megaregion populations were foreign born. Finally, there has been an interesting shift in growth dynamics: While Northern California was in the middle of the employment and population growth pack in both the 1980s and the 1990s, Southern California had the third highest employment and population growth rate in the 1980s but slipped to the lowest employment growth and third lowest population growth in the 1990s.

While most megaregions experienced declining racial segregation between 1990 and 2000, Southern California actually became slightly more segregated over the decade, at least as measured by the Non-Hispanic White Dissimilarity Index.<sup>7</sup> Southern and Northern California, along with the Northeast, had the highest increases in the ratio of income at the 80th and 20th percentiles, indicating a rise in inequality over the decade. While poverty rates in California

Table I. Comparing the Ten Megaregions

	Arizona Sun			Gulf		Northern			Southern			Texas
	Corridor	Cascadia	Coast	Midwest	Northeast	California	Piedmont	California	Florida	California	Florida	Triangle
Population, 2000	4,512,646	7,258,485	6,432,767	52,230,122	50,534,540	12,163,544	14,734,601	20,390,831	14,535,569	20,390,831	14,535,569	15,450,032
Population Growth, 1980-1990	34.8%	16.6%	6.6%	1.1%	6.5%	22.7%	15.8%	27.8%	34.3%	27.8%	34.3%	23.1%
Population Growth, 1990-2000	40.4%	21.2%	13.5%	7.4%	8.2%	15.6%	24.2%	13.0%	23.7%	13.0%	23.7%	25.6%
Demographics, 2000												
White	65.2%	79.4%	56.1%	79.2%	67.0%	51.4%	69.1%	41.8%	64.5%	41.8%	64.5%	55.3%
Black	3.2%	3.1%	21.6%	12.0%	15.0%	6.2%	22.3%	6.9%	13.9%	6.9%	13.9%	13.7%
Latino	25.9%	7.3%	19.4%	5.1%	11.0%	24.4%	4.8%	38.5%	18.1%	38.5%	18.1%	25.9%
Asian/Pacific Islander	2.0%	5.8%	1.3%	2.1%	4.8%	14.0%	1.9%	9.9%	1.7%	9.9%	1.7%	3.4%
Other	3.7%	4.4%	1.5%	1.7%	2.3%	4.0%	1.8%	3.0%	1.9%	3.0%	1.9%	1.7%
Percent Foreign Born, 2000	13.6%	11.3%	8.6%	7.1%	16.1%	23.9%	7.2%	29.0%	18.6%	29.0%	18.6%	14.9%
Non-Hispanic White Dissimilarity Index, 1990	45.5	32.2	49.8	59.8	59.8	40.5	51.2	50.0	52.6	50.0	52.6	47.8
Non-Hispanic White Dissimilarity Index, 2000	44.7	29.1	47.0	53.6	56.0	40.2	46.8	50.1	47.0	50.1	47.0	46.9
Per Capita Income, 2000	\$21,054	\$23,369	\$16,566	\$22,251	\$25,609	\$25,656	\$21,693	\$21,218	\$21,835	\$21,218	\$21,835	\$21,415
Median Household Income, 2000	\$44,769	\$47,037	\$35,320	\$44,841	\$50,164	\$54,129	\$41,279	\$46,051	\$40,286	\$46,051	\$40,286	\$44,656
Employment Growth												
Change in Employment, 1990-2000	39.4%	22.3%	17.1%	10.2%	3.4%	10.8%	21.4%	1.3%	20.3%	1.3%	20.3%	23.1%
Change in Employment, 1980-1990	44.7%	26.6%	7.6%	9.6%	17.6%	28.8%	28.4%	33.0%	46.9%	33.0%	46.9%	25.6%
80-20 Income Ratio, 1990	4.13	3.79	5.46	4.17	4.24	4.09	4.29	4.17	4.11	4.17	4.11	4.43
80-20 Income Ratio, 2000	3.98	3.82	4.98	4.00	4.55	4.50	4.17	4.54	4.19	4.54	4.19	4.23
% change in Distribution Ratio, 1990-2000	-3.6%	1.0%	-8.9%	-4.0%	7.3%	9.8%	-2.8%	8.8%	2.0%	8.8%	2.0%	-4.4%
Poverty Rate, 2000	12.90	10.22	20.00	10.05	10.77	12.12	11.38	15.37	12.32	15.37	12.32	13.07
Poverty Rate, 1990	14.34	10.44	23.52	11.63	9.81	11.38	12.16	13.02	12.29	13.02	12.29	15.24
Poverty Rate, 1980	11.87	9.66	18.85	9.94	11.10	10.54	13.72	11.78	12.88	11.78	12.88	12.48
Percent of Working Poor Households	9.6%	6.3%	14.6%	6.1%	5.5%	6.9%	7.6%	11.9%	9.0%	11.9%	9.0%	10.0%
% of Poor in High Poverty Tracts, 2000	49.9%	21.1%	60.5%	38.7%	45.0%	37.5%	29.7%	55.0%	36.6%	55.0%	36.6%	46.5%
Poverty Dissimilarity Index, 2000	37.7	27.8	28.5	37.8	40.4	32.0	29.6	34.2	30.7	34.2	30.7	34.4

are not as high as in the Gulf Coast, poverty in both California megaregions has been steadily increasing since the 1980s, and by 2000 Southern California had the second highest poverty rate of all megaregions.<sup>8</sup> 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.

Equity analyses tend to focus on the distribution of opportunities *within* a geographic unit, in this case the megaregion. While some previous analyses have delineated megaregion into core areas and spheres of influence (Metcalf and Terplan 2007; Ross 2009), we break the two California regions into core, periphery, and sphere of influence, with the sphere being the furthest out areas; county-level definitions of these sub-megaregional levels are offered in the appendix, but essentially they were constructed around broad labor market sheds using commute patterns from Census Transportation Planning Package data data from 2000 (see Figure 1).<sup>9</sup>

By our definitions, Southern California has 61% of its population in the core, 21% in the periphery, and 18% in the sphere; the figures for Northern California population are 48%, 39%, and 13% respectively. In Southern California, people of color compose 64.3% of the core population, and the percentage declines as the geography radiates out; in Northern California, the core has a larger share of non-White population than the periphery, but the figure rises again in the outlying sphere of influence. The driver, however, is the percentage Latino, and these are largely farmworker communities with weaker ties (and perhaps dissimilar interests) to the urban minority constituencies in the core (see Figure 2). There are also huge income gaps in Northern California: 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, with the periphery falling in between at \$21,108. Southern California's per capita income has a much tighter (but lower) range: between a low of \$19,384 in the megaregion's periphery and a high of \$21,867 in the megaregion's core, with per capita income in the sphere just below that in the core.

The geography of inequality can be further delineated by splitting each of the subregions into its principal cities and suburbs (as defined by the core base statistical areas, or CBSAs). As can be seen in Figure 3, poverty is higher in Northern California's principal cities as compared to its suburbs and was highest (23.1%) 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%); meanwhile, the poverty rates are virtually the same for suburbs regardless of whether they are in the core, periphery, or

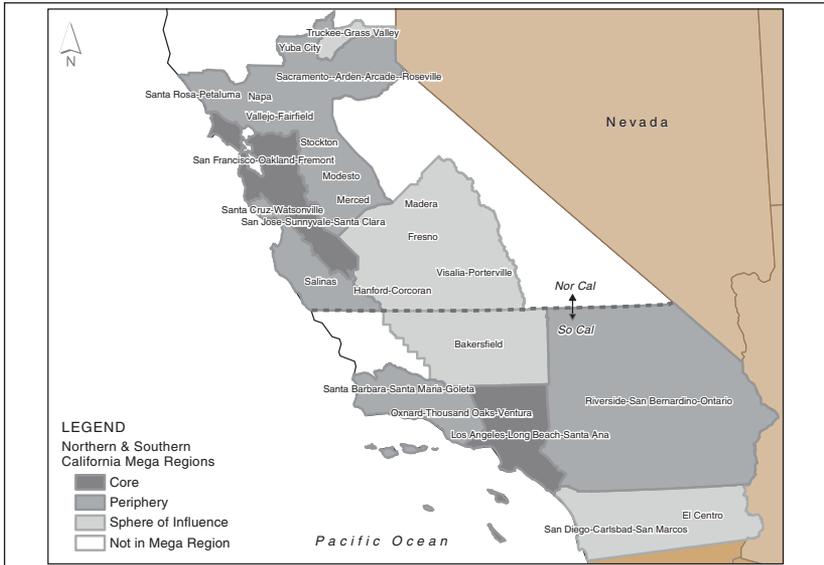


Figure 1. Map of California megaregions

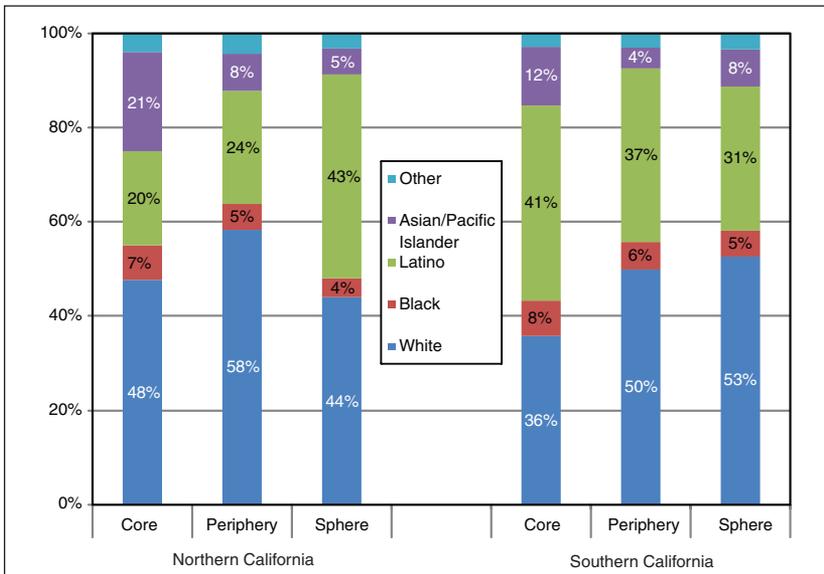


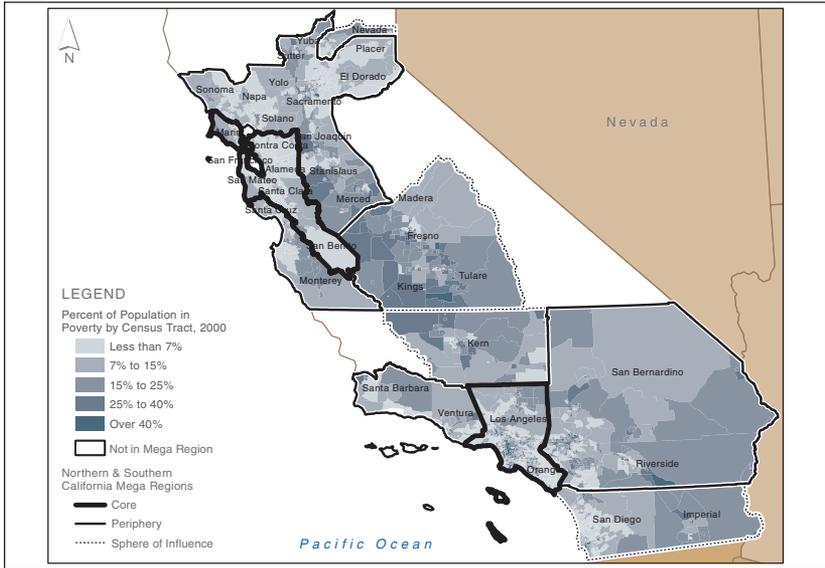
Figure 2. Demographics of core, periphery, and sphere of influence in California's megaregions



**Figure 3.** Poverty rates in California megaregions by area and city or suburb, 2000

sphere. The percentage of the poor living in high-poverty tracts (i.e., tracts where more than 20% of the population falls below the poverty level) is 72% in the sphere of influence in Northern California (again suggesting rural concentrations) versus 26% in the core. In Southern California, the similar figures for poverty concentration are 60% in the core, 44% in the periphery, and 49% in the sphere of influence, a far more even phenomenon. Northern California, in short, 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 (also see the tract map in Figure 4).

Thus, while both California regions rank high among all America’s megaregions in terms of inequality, each has a different pattern and different opportunities. For Northern California, a key equity issue is improving the prospects for those further out, some of whom may have been forced there by high housing prices in the booming core. The challenge is that the spatial and racial differences may make alliance building hard: west Oakland and west Fresno can seem like entirely different worlds, and the sharp run-up in core housing prices during the 2000s forced out many of the distressed constituencies that could constitute the base for regional and megaregional efforts for equity.



**Figure 4.** Poverty by tract for California megaregions

In Southern California, there is more commonality across geography. Housing prices also skyrocketed and induced people to move from places like Los Angeles and Orange County to the Inland Empire and Bakersfield, but a significant presence of low-income Latino immigrants also remains. Part of this may be that the low-income areas of the core in Southern California—south Los Angeles, east Los Angeles, and the industrial belt running down the Alameda Corridor—are more geographically contiguous and large, creating an anchor set of communities more resistant to gentrification. In any case, organizing around a common economic issue that touches multiple parts of the megaregion might have more salience in such an area. It is to these issues of politics within the megaregions that we now turn.

## Politics of Megaregional Equity in Northern and Southern California

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 United States. Still, there are “political” (in the broad sense) processes that take place and particular equity opportunities and dynamics in both the Northern and Southern California megaregions.

### *Northern California Megaregion*

Northern California has historically been rooted in the San Francisco Bay Area.<sup>10</sup> San Francisco itself was also previously the heart of the megaregion, 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 and Silicon Valley became the Northern California megaregion’s economic engine. As high-tech industries spread out from their early origins around Stanford University to the rest of the Bay Area, they eventually began to expand to the Sacramento region as well (e.g., Apple Computer, Hewlett-Packard, Intel, NEC, and a host of smaller firms).

The economic boom of the 1990s resulted in rapidly accelerating housing prices in the Bay Area and led to dramatic growth in housing developments in the peripheral areas of the Bay, such as Vallejo, as well as the Tri-Valley area of Livermore, Pleasanton, and Dublin. In addition, there was some sprawl into Central Valley towns in the “sphere of influence,” with many Bay Area workers enduring multihour commutes in exchange for more affordable living circumstances. New residential developments 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.

Along the way, 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 “hourglass” employment structure, in which highly paid engineers, programmers, technicians, and professional staff coexist with relatively low-paid workers in the service industries, including clerical staff, building services (janitorial, landscaping), cafeteria, and laundry staff, 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, Fresno, in the heart of the Central Valley, not only ranked fourth in poverty levels of all metropolitan regions in the country in 2000, with 26.2% of the population living below the poverty line, but also

ranked first in concentrated poverty, with 43.5% of poor individuals living in census tracts where at least 40.0% of the population had income below the poverty level (Berube 2006; Berube and Katz 2005).

### *Networked Regionalism and Civic Entrepreneurialism*

The rapid economic evolution and economic recentering of the megaregion was matched by an institutional evolution in regional business leadership. By the early 1990s, organizations like the Bay Area Council,<sup>11</sup> the Silicon Valley Manufacturing Group,<sup>12</sup> and Joint Venture: Silicon Valley Network were all on the rise,<sup>13</sup> providing models for public–private ventures throughout the country. Prominent regional organizations in Northern California outside the Bay Area itself include the Sierra Business Council,<sup>14</sup> established in 1994 and one of the early leaders in the new regionalism of the 1990s, and Valley Vision,<sup>15</sup> also established in 1994, which has played a prominent role in the Sacramento area.

In the Fresno area, the Fresno Business Council (established in 1993) has also played a leading role in promoting regional public–private collaborations,<sup>16</sup> such as the Fresno Area Collaborative Regional Initiative that was launched in 2001, and has subsequently evolved into a regional jobs initiative that has focused on cluster promotion and job creation in a number of key industries in the region.<sup>17</sup> In 2005, Governor Schwarzenegger signed an executive order creating the California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley,<sup>18</sup> a public–private partnership covering an eight-county region with over \$5 million in additional earmarked funds to improve the region's economic vitality and quality of life.

While these business-led regionalist efforts often attempted to tackle issues of economic development, they tended to pay little attention to issues of social equity and expanding economic opportunities for disadvantaged sectors of society. Part of this is the constituency base in business: To the extent equity was addressed, it was as part of a notion that enlightened civic leaders should see social issues as critical to quality of life (Henton 1997, 2003). Moreover, the collaborative ethos inherent in these efforts tended to eschew the sort of conflict inherent in discussing distribution, and so the ability and even interest of such business-led collaborations to effectively address equity issues were limited (Innes and Rongerude 2005).

Moreover, even if equity were to be taken up by business, it would not likely be at a megaregional scale. After all, the business efforts themselves were networked and not under one umbrella: Civic leaders in the Bay Area reached

to their counterparts in the Central Valley through prominent networking organizations, creating a sort of overlapping web of parallel regionalist groups that share information, perspectives, and strategies. They did not, however, seem focused on developing a megaregional vision or set of planning processes, let alone one that would incorporate equity concerns.

### *Equity Organizing in Northern California*

This networked approach was mimicked, in certain ways, by explicitly pro-equity groups. 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 nonprofit 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 and community benefits for local residents out of publicly subsidized development projects (Brownstein 2000; Dean and Reynolds 2009; Pastor, Benner, and Matsuoka 2009). Similarly, the Urban Habitat Program, now based in Oakland, has built a Bay Area-wide, multi-sector, and multicounty Social Equity Caucus 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.<sup>19</sup> Smart growth organizations in the Bay Area have also embraced social justice, with the Transportation and Land Use Coalition (now renamed TransForm) 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.<sup>20</sup>

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 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,<sup>21</sup> with the goal of building a multi-issue, multijurisdiction, multiconstituency 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, regionwide organizing around immigrants' rights and other critical regional issues continues through

such networks as the Central Valley Partnership,<sup>22</sup> a range of faith-based initiatives affiliated with PICO California,<sup>23</sup> and other more decentralized peace and justice networks.<sup>24</sup>

In short, organizing at a regional scale has been powerful in the Bay Area and increasing in the Central Valley, matching the evolution of business-led regionalist efforts. But yet another parallel is the lack of megaregional coordination: 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 Sacramento as well, but even within the Bay Area itself they have operated largely autonomously, collaborating where needed on statewide policy issues but not engaged in megaregional scale organizing or even in 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 statewide, 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 locally focused. Environmental issues often have a broader and perhaps more common scale, however, and have created the opportunity for several megaregional coalitions within the so-called environmental justice community. The most prominent examples of this are the Environmental Justice Coalition for Water (EJCW) and the Central Valley Air Quality Coalition.<sup>25</sup>

The EJCW 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.<sup>26</sup> Its scope is currently statewide, 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 and Sacramento Delta watershed (Innes et al. 2006). 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, London and Liévanos 2009, p.706)

The Central Valley Air Quality Coalition is another megaregional partnership of more than 70 organizations, formally established in 2004.<sup>27</sup> 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).

In short, there are few megaregional scale equity organizing initiatives in Northern California. Those equity efforts that do focus on the megaregion are mostly limited to the environmental justice field, and success has been mixed, with a tendency to migrate to statewide policy and organizing. This is not the track record likely to attract more organizers to the megaregional 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 discrimination 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 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 compose the Southern California megaregion (Jargowsky 2005). Second, the area, particularly Los Angeles County, saw a sharp increase in “working poverty,” suggesting that rising inequality was related to the shifting composition of the economy and slipping wages for available employment (Pastor and Scoggins 2007). 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 (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; Teitz 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 proponents 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. Los Angeles would seem to be an unlikely place for new formulations about urban form and social equity: It has long been regarded 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 article (see Pastor, Benner and Matsuoka 2009, chap. 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 that 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."<sup>28</sup>

This has created an opening for other voices, particularly labor. In *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 immigrant labor and an emphasis on the role of professional organizers. 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 geographic in the sequential attempt to secure city and county power, and the labor-affiliated think tank 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 Staples 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 Los Angeles'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 other 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 below-ground level freight rail "expressway" to speed transport of imported goods through south Los Angeles, community groups forged the 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 the 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 into 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, Benner, and Matsuoka 2009).

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. With the seeming anger of a disenfranchised population evident—and evidently channeled to the singularly unhelpful strategy of burning down one's own neighborhood—social justice organizations found themselves grappling with the need for a new approach to organizing. 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."<sup>29</sup> The growing movement had its 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."<sup>30</sup> 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 agenda.

### *What About the Megaregion?*

The same community and labor forces that embraced a variant of the “regional equity” view have offered one potential approach to equity issues at the megaregional level. In keeping with the admonitions of Teitz and Barbour (2007), the issues with which they have been concerned are not housing or tax sharing but infrastructure and employment. The particular focus is investments in the ports and support for the logistics industry in Southern California.<sup>31</sup>

These are, after all, megaports and megaprojects—40% 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, SANDAG, and SCAG 2005). 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 20% 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 could be important to promoting 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 who 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 percentage of Latinos employed in trucking and warehousing in Los Angeles County went from 28% in 1980 to 72% in 2005. Under this owner–operator system, truckers’ wages have fallen to around \$12 an hour after expenses (and without benefits).<sup>32</sup>

Making this megaindustry really equitable requires 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 the 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. The environmental argument is that the owner–operators are poorly placed to take on the financial risk of vehicle retrofit and that a concessionaire system spreads the risk across a multivehicle company; the justice argument, of course, is that truckers can be more easily organized under such a system.

The argument about *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 ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles, with the more conservative leadership in the former port opting to allow owner–operators to wiggle their way from under the lawsuit. With the strategy held up in the courts, labor and its allies jumped scale once again, organizing with other port communities to change federal legislation to permit concessionaire systems. In a remarkable turn of events, however, a judge ruled in August 2010 against the truckers’ association and in favor of permitting the coalition’s preferred approach at the Los Angeles port. Meanwhile, retrofitting at both ports is proceeding ahead of schedule, and diesel emissions have declined dramatically.

The details are heartening for those who care about environmental health, environmental justice, and social equity, but the point for this article is slightly different: This really was a campaign with megaregional aspects that was led by equity proponents—and they have begun linking with other large 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 ensure 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 Los Angeles-based labor-community powerhouse, has been able to join up with two other existing parallel organizations, the Coastal Alliance United for a Sustainable Economy in Ventura and Santa Barbara and the Center for Policy Initiatives in San Diego, and is seeding the creation of analogues in Orange County and the Inland Empire. Again, while community-based forces seem to be racing to catch up with a highly organized business community in Northern California, the same sort of forces are outpacing a more fragmented business class in Southern California.

However, we must stress that “thinking megaregionally” and “linking megaregionally”—that is, seeing the logistics industries and ports as central to equity and trying to bring together concerned actors over a broad geography—do not necessarily mean acting megaregionally. There are, after all, no megaregional targets in this campaign: There are the ports controlled by their cities, legislation controlled by the feds, and companies with headquarters in both California and other states. What is megaregional is the analysis and the way it feeds into the work—much like the analysis of regional equity helped inform a series of seemingly local efforts, like community benefits agreements and living wage campaigns, that nonetheless sought to build metrowide coalitions and social movements (Pastor, Benner and Matsuoka 2009).

## **Conclusion: Megaregions and Equity Organizing**

We began this article wondering whether equity proponents were arriving late, gaining regional understanding and power just as economic dynamics were shifting to the megaregional level. Fully answering this question would require independent confirmation of whether megaregions really are the “new” level for the global economy, echoing earlier arguments that metro regions are an important “new” level for economic and social concerns (Pastor, Lester, and Scoggins 2009). We have taken a simpler tack here: We assume that megaregions are at least one important level of urban and economic structures and focus on whether there are equity concerns and campaigns that might work at this scale.

To do this, we examined two megaregions, Northern and Southern California. Both are locales where there has been a significant amount of organizing and action under the general banner of “regional equity”—and if “megaregional equity” is likely to gain any ground, surely this would be fertile soil. Our basic conclusion is that there’s something there but perhaps not enough to rush in that direction: While there are clearly some opportunities for megaregional

organizing for equity, this is a challenging level for work, the levers for action exist elsewhere, and the issue set on which traction can be gained may be limited.

The challenges include the fact that the processes affecting inequality may be felt more immediately at the metro or neighborhood and not the megaregional level. Megaregional economies, for example, are probably best understood as overlapping *regional* labor markets rather than a single integrated *megaregional* labor market.<sup>33</sup> 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. There are 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 recently garnered home-owner equity. Still, those losing homes in Stockton are not likely to think of those resisting gentrification in Oakland as their most immediate allies.

Moreover, even if megaregion dynamics do create equity concerns—for example, the job quality issues implicit in the evolving goods movements sector, including the ports and logistics, in Southern California—the actual policy levers often exist elsewhere. The struggle at the Los Angeles and Long Beach ports may have been about the future of the megaregional economy, but it was the federal deregulation of trucking that led to falling wages for drivers, and it was the port authorities of two cities that had to be moved (and in Long Beach unsuccessfully) to support an environmental approach that could improve working conditions. In this sense, thinking megaregionally may provide a big strategic picture, but the tactics will necessarily involve interacting with other levels of actual governmental power.

Finally, the issue set for the megaregional scale may be limited. As Teitz and Barbour (2007) note, infrastructure is one such arena—and the transportation processes linking the ports, the distribution systems, and the location of intermodal transfer stations and warehouse facilities in Southern California are therefore important areas for work (although as noted directly above, the actual policy targets may lie elsewhere). There are also important opportunities linked to environmental management, including water provision and air quality, as indicated by our review of the Northern California experience. But the point here is that the terrain for policy and politics may be less open

than what some have argued is available at the metropolitan level (Dreier, Mollenkopf, and Swanstrom 2001).

It is, however, not an empty set, and the megaregion may become more important in future years. In California, for example, new legislation (SB 375) is requiring that councils of governments do a better job at jobs–housing balance to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from journeys to work—and is also trying to induce contiguous councils of governments to coordinate. At the federal level, the Sustainable Communities Initiative is trying to create incentives for jurisdictions to do better planning together, and investments in high-speed rail will better link megaregions together as economic units. Within these various initiatives are serious equity concerns: Will jobs–housing balance mean crowding out lower income residents? Will jurisdictional coordination also mean accepting a fair share of affordable housing? Will targeted hiring requirements accompany rail investments to create opportunity for disadvantaged residents?

Lifting up these equity concerns will likely require new alliances of social justice organizations that seek to connect multiple distressed communities within their regions while linking together across the megaregion—a megaregional version of “network organizing” (Traynor and Andors 2005). This is a new and sometimes unnatural fit for groups that often have quite defined local bases—but there are examples of such organizing emerging in the labor and environmental justice networks of Southern California. Better understanding and documenting the evolution of such groups will necessitate an evolution in the current literature on megaregions that 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, and so less economics and more political economy may be part of the research frame for the future.

In such a political economy framework, 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 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.

## Appendix: Northern and Southern California Megaregional Definitions

### Northern California MegaRegion:

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

(continued)

## Appendix (continued)

### *Southern California MegaRegion:*

CBSA	CBSA name	Counties	Core/ Periphery/ Sphere
31100	Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, CA Metropolitan Statistical Area	Los Angeles Orange	Core
37100	Oxnard-Thousand Oaks-Ventura, CA Metropolitan Statistical Area	Ventura	Periphery
40140	Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA Metropolitan Statistical Area	Riverside San Bernardino	Periphery
42060	Santa Barbara-Santa Maria, CA Metropolitan Statistical Area	Santa Barbara	Periphery
12540	Bakersfield, CA Metropolitan Statistical Area	Kern	Sphere
20940	El Centro, CA Metropolitan Statistical Area	Imperial	Sphere
41740	San Diego-Carlsbad-San Marcos, CA Metropolitan Statistical Area	San Diego	Sphere

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### **Notes**

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.

2. See <http://www.america2050.org/megaregions.html> for their definitions of megaregions and related maps.
3. Another issue given somewhat short shrift is sustainability (see Wheeler 2009); thus far, most of the attention seems focused on economic issues.
4. The notion of a megaregion has its roots in the earlier “megapolis” concept utilized by Gottman (1957) to identify the northeastern seaboard stretching from Boston to Washington, D.C., but the revival as megaregion involves coverage of the whole United States, comparisons to large global cities, and active support by the group America 2050.
5. Jones (2007) points to megaregional tax sharing as one way to address both inter- and intrametro 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.
6. The data we utilize are constructed by the county definitions of megaregions developed by the America 2050 project of the Regional Plan Association (RPA), matching these counties to core base statistical areas (CBSAs), and then defining our megaregions by CBSAs to take advantage of a CBSA-based database developed to cover all metropolitan and micropolitan areas in the United States. That database 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. Because our database is rooted in CBSAs, this process does omit a small number of rural counties that are in the American 2050 definition of megaregions that do not fall into CBSAs. Still, depending on the CBSA, we are able to account for at least 92.0% of the megaregion’s total population in all megaregions as defined by America 2050, and 98.8% and 100.0% (respectively) of the Northern California and Southern California megaregions’ populations. In 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.
7. This measures the relative segregation of the White population in these megaregions.

8. Part of the problem in Southern California has been a high level of working poverty, defined as a household living below 150% of the poverty level in which the total hours worked by household members exceeds 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).
9. We first constructed core, periphery, and sphere utilizing our own knowledge of labor markets and designations from the California Economic Strategy Panel (see <http://www.labor.ca.gov/panel/>). To double-check the boundaries, we took home-work travel data and calculated the county-level source of each county's workforce; as might be expected, the largest source was always the county itself, but for virtually all our counties, the next largest source was of the same type as the county itself (so for Alameda, for example, the next largest source was Contra Costa County, followed in that case by Santa Clara County), suggesting that our clustering was accurate. There were several counties in the Northern California megaregion where this rule did not hold—for example, in Marin County, the next largest single county contributor to the workforce was nearby Sonoma, but this was actually topped by combining the major core counties together. In any case, in each of the cases where the next largest contributor to the workforce was not of the same megaregion type, the next largest county was from the adjoining CBSA—and since our megaregional data were based on CBSAs, it made sense to keep the county type designated as part of the megaregion type for the CBSA in which it belonged.
10. See Brechin (1999) for a compelling account of San Francisco's role in shaping development throughout Northern California from pre-gold rush days.
11. <http://www.bayareacouncil.org>.
12. Renamed the Silicon Valley Leadership Group in 2005: <http://www.svlg.net>.
13. <http://www.jointventure.org>.
14. <http://www.sbcouncil.org>.
15. <http://www.valleyvision.org>.
16. <http://www.fresnobc.org>.
17. <http://www.fresnojri.org>.
18. <http://www.sjvpartnership.org>.
19. <http://urbanhabitat.org/sec>.
20. <http://www.transformca.org/>.
21. <http://www.equitycoalition.org/>.
22. <http://www.citizenship.net/index.shtml>.
23. <http://www.picocalifornia.org/>.
24. <http://www.fresnoalliance.com/>.
25. Other prominent environmental justice organizations that operate across the megaregion include Californians for Pesticide Reform, a statewide 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 multistate level.
26. <http://www.ejcw.org/>.
  27. <http://www.calcleanair.org/>.
  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 White 2008).
  29. Personal interview, Anthony Thigpenn, July 9, 1999.
  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 cofacilitate a workshop on the future of metropolitan Los Angeles. That workshop produced a popularly oriented book (Fulton et al. 2003) and a related and more academic work that emerged from a parallel process at the center (Wolch, Pastor, and Dreier 2004).
  31. See Pastor and Reed (2005) and Rubin (2006) for broader frameworks on equity and infrastructure.
  32. The information on the demographic shift is taken from the 1980 Public Use Microdata Sample and the 2005 American Community Survey. The data on wages are from a report prepared by CGR Management Consultants for the Gateway Cities Council of Governments (2007).
  33. Indeed, the breakdown we use for core, periphery, and sphere of influence in our Northern and Southern California analysis is based on the notion that job centers are unlikely to draw more than a small minority of workers from beyond what would be considered the normal regional boundary.

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