

LOOKING FOR REGIONALISM IN ALL THE WRONG PLACES

Demography, Geography, and Community in Los Angeles County

MANUEL PASTOR, JR.

University of California, Santa Cruz

The new regionalism tends to emphasize the commonalities of central cities and their suburbs. Los Angeles County has surprisingly minor differences between central city and suburb—leading one to wonder why municipal alliances across jurisdictional lines have not been more prominent. The author tackles this anomaly by breaking L.A. County into 58 different areas and tracking demographic and economic change between 1970 and 1990. The analysis suggests that there are important differences in the ethnic and economic dynamics of various subregions. As a result, “smart-growth” politics may have less salience in Los Angeles than would an alternative regionalism rooted in community-based movements and organizations.

SEARCHING FOR REGIONALISM

In recent years, some researchers and policy makers have begun to argue for bridging city and suburb interests under a common regional agenda. Emerging national evidence, for example, indicates that city and suburb often have a shared economic fate; with suburban incomes often driven by the region’s anchor central city, it is in everyone’s interest that urban centers are revived (Barnes and Ledebur 1998; U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development 1996). Likewise, inner-city residents will only do as well as the regional economy in which they are situated; as a result, many activists and

AUTHOR’S NOTE: Funding for this research was provided by the Southern California Studies Center (SCSC) at the University of Southern California (USC) and the Irvine Foundation; research assistance was provided by John Hipp and Rachel Rosner. Thanks to several anonymous referees and to participants in the Harvard Civil Rights Project/Kennedy School workshop on “Suburban Racial Change” and the SCSC workshop on “The Sustainable Metropolis” for comments on earlier versions of this work. Special thanks to Jennifer Wolch of USC for her incisive comments and support through both the analysis and writing.

URBAN AFFAIRS REVIEW, Vol. 36, No. 6, July 2001 747-782
© 2001 Sage Publications

analysts whose central concern is social equity have argued that community developers need to “think and link” to the larger regional polity and economy (Nowak 1997; Jargowsky 1997; Pastor et al. 2000; Rusk 1999). Adding to the potential for city-suburban links is a simple demographic fact: The increasing rates of suburbanization among African-Americans and Latinos mean that older inner-ring suburbs have begun to look more—and could politically act more—like the central city (Orfield 1997, 1998; Frey and Fielding 1995; Frey 1998; Jargowsky 1998).

In many ways, the Los Angeles metropolitan area would seem to be an ideal candidate for a progressive regional agenda that crosses city and suburban lines. The disparity between suburban and city population growth, the usual sign of a central city disconnected from its immediate neighbors, has been quite small (see Table 1). Although the worst aspects of the region’s long-term economic restructuring—such as poverty, low incomes, and slow job growth—have often been felt most sharply by city residents, the gaps with the rest of the county are not that large. Significantly, the racial composition of the city of Los Angeles is also not that different than the rest of L.A. County, and ethnic change in the past several decades has been even more pronounced outside of the city.¹

Yet a new regionalist agenda, at least along the lines of Orfield’s (1997) attempts to link the fates of inner-ring suburbs and the central city, has largely failed to emerge in Southern California. Certain subregional groups, such as the cities centered around the L.A. ports or some municipalities in the ethnic mosaic of the San Gabriel Valley, have found common ground on a limited set of economic development policies, but the central city of Los Angeles is often at policy odds with its neighbors. Within Los Angeles itself, leaders in the San Fernando Valley have threatened to secede, and a recent controversy over management of the city’s school district has given momentum to secessionist efforts in other neighborhoods.

With municipal actors standing to a side, regionalist efforts focused on equity between various communities and social actors have instead been undertaken by more traditional constituencies such as labor unions and activist community-based organizations. Through the latter part of the 1990s, for example, the L.A.-based Labor/Community Strategy Center has organized bus riders to challenge the regional transportation authority on the grounds that its spending on rail has shortchanged the largely minority ridership of the most overcrowded bus system in the country. The labor movement has also taken a regional approach and scored some surprising victories, including in April 2000, when 8,500 janitors, covering office buildings from Santa Monica to Los Angeles to Glendale, undertook a successful strike for higher wages that garnered the sympathies of the broad public. With several other

TABLE 1: Comparing L.A. City and L.A. County

	% Anglo	% African-American	% Latino	% Asian	% Population Growth since 1970
Demographics in 1990					
Los Angeles City	37.3	13.0	39.9	9.8	24.3
Rest of county	43.1	8.9	36.5	11.5	27.5
	% Blue Collar	% Job Growth, 1980-1990	% Poor	Income to Mean	House Value to Mean
Economics in 1990					
Los Angeles City	41.5	5.0	18.9	95.6	106.4
Rest of county	39.2	27.5	12.6	102.5	96.4
	% Anglo	% African-American	% Latino	% Asian	
Demographic change since 1970					
Baseline in 1970					
Los Angeles City	59.8	17.9	18.4	3.9	
Rest of county	73.5	6.1	18.2	2.2	
Change 1970-1990					
Los Angeles City	-22.5	-4.9	21.5	5.9	
Rest of county	-30.5	2.8	18.3	9.3	

NOTE: Demographic figures and poverty weighted by population in Public Use Microdata Areas. Percentage blue collar weighted by labor force; job growth weighted by jobs.

examples easily at hand (see Pastor et al. forthcoming), some analysts have suggested that the area has become home to a new movement for “growth with equity,” which crosses racial and often geographic lines.²

Although a significant part of this pattern—more forward progress on what might be termed *community- or labor-based regionalism* than on the municipal links envisioned by Orfield and others—may reflect the relative strengths at coalition building of certain political and community leaders, there is also a structural explanation: The boundaries of Los Angeles City and the surrounding county may not reflect regional breakdowns relevant to municipal-based regional organizing. After all, the central city of Los Angeles has its own “internal” suburbs—that is, areas which are demographically and economically closer to the traditional suburban profile—whereas natural allies in the adjoining cities and unincorporated county territory in south and southeast Los Angeles, areas also hard-hit by the recession of the

early 1990s, are located in different political jurisdictions. Although reaching across these lines could be done by municipal actors, in Los Angeles, more seems to have occurred on the activist or community level—and an analysis that breaks up both the city and county of Los Angeles into many different subareas may help illuminate both the challenges and the possibilities.³

I seek to do this by offering a novel use of the 1990 Public Use Microdata Areas (PUMAs). Specifically, I use detailed information to construct the 1990 PUMA shapes and boundaries, connect these to reconciled tract shapes and data for the 1970, 1980, and 1990 census years, and then take the PUMA shapes back through the census years to explore certain demographic and economic changes over time. In considering these dynamics, I offer two new breakdowns of “neighborhoods” or “areas” in the county. The first is based on a historic definition of inner-city areas (by including certain inner-ring suburbs and excluding L.A. City’s own suburbs); the second classifies subareas by degree and type of ethnic change. These classifications, particularly the latter, reveal an ongoing “suburbanization” and a growing inequality between neighborhood types. Although the pattern suggests that the usually proposed central-city/suburb alliances may be difficult, it also suggests certain commonalities by race and economic experience that may help explain the basis for certain subregional groupings (such as in southeast L.A.) as well as the community-based but regionally focused social justice movements that have emerged in recent years.

This article proceeds as follows. I begin by exploring central-city/suburban differences, comparing Los Angeles with the rest of the country. I then explain the basic data strategy taken to recompose the region for analytical purposes. I then explore the patterns shown by a finer breakdown of subareas in L.A. County, first by “inner city” and suburbs and second by degree and type of ethnic change. I then turn to an account of the evolution of neighborhood difference, supplementing a short history with a brief econometric analysis of the determinants of demographic change. The final section returns to the issue of political alliances and directions, with special attention to the implications for “new regionalist” or “smart-growth” movements.

CITY AND SUBURB IN LOS ANGELES

The usual story of urban decline is straightforward: For various reasons, including federal subsidies for sprawl, the central city is abandoned by the wealthy and the white; employment and commercial growth follow the population exodus to outlying areas, creating problems of spatial mismatch for the inner-city poor; and as a result of these processes, central cities spiral

downward and suburbanites prosper (Wilson 1996; Jargowsky 1997). Of course, the new literature on city-suburban economics warn us that such gains will only be relative—suburbs generally fare worst when their central city is in decline (Savitch et al. 1993; Voith 1992, 1998)—but the general tale of separating fates and racial isolation remains a salient one, especially for many East Coast and midwestern cities.

Many analysts and activists have sought to bridge the resulting gap between poor communities and their surrounding regions. In his seminal book *Metropolitica*, Myron Orfield (1997) stressed potential common interests between leaders in the central city and older inner-ring suburbs, noting that the latter areas are themselves suffering from economic dislocations and a rising presence of poor and minority residents. Orfield has argued for regional revenue sharing, noting that “high-wealth,” low-need suburbs could provide the resources necessary to help their central-city and inner-ring neighbors handle the fiscal strain of poverty and high-need schoolchildren. David Rusk (1999) also stressed the need to link city-suburb fates in *Inside Game, Outside Game*: In a striking analysis of poor neighborhoods, he found that locally focused community development efforts generally have quite modest economic impacts (compared with regional forces) and instead suggested that central cities should form alliances with neighboring suburbs.

Within these “new regionalist” frameworks, the main agents for reform are generally municipal actors, especially various mayors and city managers who may find may common economic, environmental, and social ground in stopping sprawl and resteeering growth to the inner city. This focus on municipal-level actors has also been a characteristic of the emerging smart-growth movement, which stresses the need to coordinate land-use decisions and shift federal, state, and city tax policy and infrastructural investment.

If demographic and economic commonalities make for common interest, Los Angeles would seem to be a perfect locale for the city-suburb alliances implicit in the new regionalist and smart-growth frameworks. The city of L.A. is only about 6% less Anglo than the county in which it sits; the suburbs actually have a higher percentage of Asians than the city itself, and African-Americans and Latinos are nearly as present outside the city as within it.⁴ Population growth has been slower in the city than in the suburbs, but the difference over 20 years is quite small. The class mix (i.e., the percentage of blue-collar residents) is similar in the city and outside. There are significant gaps in some economic variables—poverty is about 6 percentage points higher and job growth 20 percentage points lower in the city—but income is only about 8% lower in the central city than in the rest of the county.⁵

Indeed, central-city/suburb differentiation is much less in Los Angeles than in other U.S. metro areas. Drawing on the “The State of the Nation’s

Cities" (SNC), a database compiled by Glickman, Lahr, and Wyly, I compared the Los Angeles metropolitan statistical area (MSA) to 22 other MSAs with a large central city.⁶ Table 2 looks at the relative (central city vs. the overall metro area) percentage minority, household income, home value, poverty rates, unemployment, manufacturing, inequality, and income growth: As can be seen, the central city of Los Angeles generally has more in common with the rest of its metro area than do other central cities with their respective metro areas.⁷

At the suggestion of a referee, I also compare Los Angeles with selected metro areas. Los Angeles is America's second largest central city after New York, with New York being anomalous because of its sheer size and because a disproportionate share of its metro population (well over 80%) lives in its geographically spread central city. I therefore compare Los Angeles to the metro areas of the next three largest central cities, all of which have a share of the metro population in the central city more comparable with that of L.A.: Those city-regions are Chicago, Houston, and Philadelphia. Although Los Angeles is in the middle with regard to the population share in the central city, it is the least likely to have a central-city population that is more minority, suggesting more homogeneity between city and suburb. L.A.'s central city also has the highest relative household income and per capita income growth and the most balance between central-city and suburban poverty rates, unemployment rates, and general income inequality.⁸ Interestingly, the dissimilarity indices for Anglo residential proximity to African-Americans or Latinos are the second highest in this small group, but the African-American/Latino dissimilarity index is the lowest. This proximity suggests that organizing across black-brown lines may have special importance and potential salience in L.A.⁹

The fact that L.A.'s demographic, class, and income variables are less skewed along city-metro lines than in the rest of the nation leads one to wonder: Where are the geographic inequalities that many analysts suggest helped trigger the civil unrest of 1992 (Johnson et al. 1992; Ong and Lawrence 1995; Pastor 1995)? Los Angeles is indeed marked by cleavages of distress, but they do not cut in a simple fashion between the central city and its suburbs. As can be gleaned from the tract-level picture of poverty in Figure 1, the city of L.A. has pockets of opulence, but areas with severe economic difficulties extend well beyond city boundaries, stretching through the unincorporated areas and inner-ring suburbs of southern and eastern Los Angeles, as well as in parts of the San Fernando and San Gabriel Valleys. And although the rest of the county is about as minority as the city itself, metro-level residential dissimilarity indices are higher than the national average (see Table 2), suggesting that residential segregation exists more within, not between, the usual

TABLE 2: Comparative Statistics: Los Angeles and Other Metro Areas

	<i>Los Angeles</i>	<i>Rest of Sample</i>
Demographics		
% of metro population in central city, 1990	39.3	44.9
% minority in central city, 1990	63.1	49.8
% minority in metro area, 1990	59.3	32.1
Relative % minority central city/metro 1990 ^a	106.4	174.2
Economics		
Relative median household income central city/metro 1990 ^a	88.4	82.1
Relative median housing value central city/metro 1990 ^a	109.0	97.0
Relative poverty rates central city/metro 1990 ^a	125.1	160.3
Relative male unemployment rate central city/metro 1990 ^a	113.7	141.8
Relative manufacturing employment central city/metro 1990 ^a	89.9	88.0
Relative inequality central city/metro 1990 ^a	121.8	134.7
% growth in per capita income, metro area, 1980-1990	96.4	102.3
Relative growth in per capita income central city/metro 1990 ^a	98.3	92.3
Residential segregation		
Dissimilarity index, metro level, Anglo:African-American, 1990	78.7	67.8
Dissimilarity index, metro level, Anglo:Latino, 1990	64.6	49.7
Dissimilarity index, metro level, African-American:Latino, 1990	59.8	60.6

a. For these relative measures, 100 equals parity between central city and metro area.

jurisdictional lines. In short, the relative balance between city and suburban demographics and economics in the county may mask as much as it reveals about L.A.'s political economy.

ANOTHER APPROACH: ANALYTICAL FRAME AND BASIC DATA

What, then, is the appropriate level of analysis to find differing patterns of distress across geography? One usual strategy is the census tract, the unit used in building the geographic coverage of poverty in Figure 1. But the median tract in L.A. County is only about a half square mile and contains fewer than 5,000 residents, hardly the scale of a localized job or retail market. In this study, I focus instead on Public Use Microdata Areas (PUMAs), the geographic tag used in the U.S. Census Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS).¹⁰ As can be seen from Figure 2 and the detailed list in Table 3, Los Angeles County had 58 different PUMAs in 1990 that were generally geographically compact and followed recognizable historical, social, and

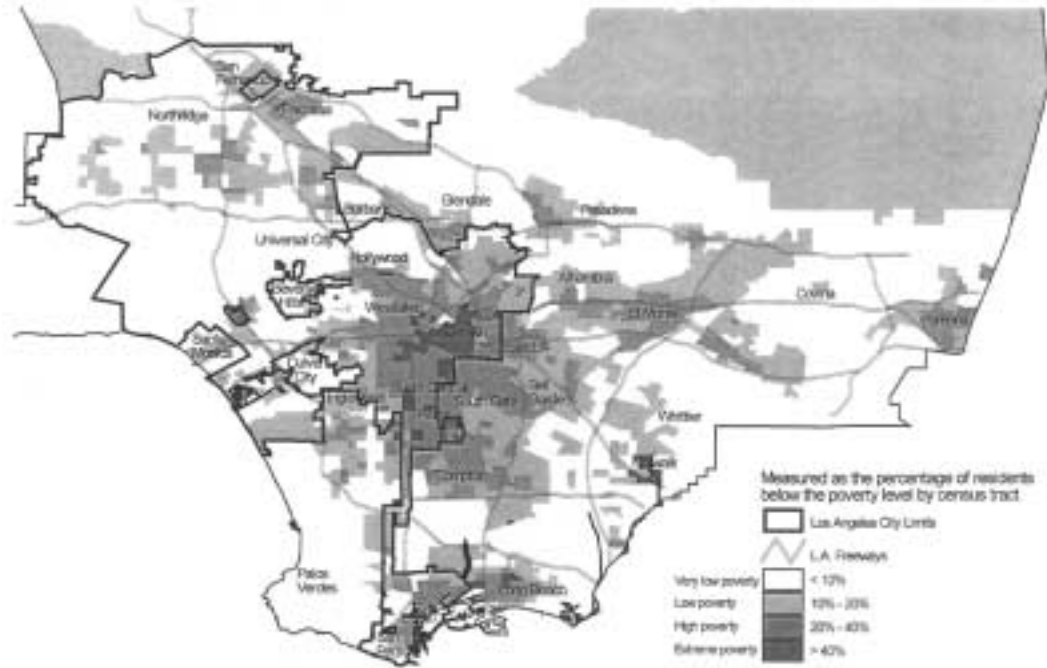


Figure 1: Geographic Distribution of the Poor, Los Angeles County, 1990

political boundaries.¹¹ Populations within each PUMA averaged around 150,000, whereas jobs within each PUMA averaged slightly less than 80,000, making them a reasonable scale for examining the localized labor, retail, and economic development trends central to new regionalist concerns.

PUMAs have not generally been used for historical analysis, mostly because 1990 was the first year that such a specific geographic identifier was used for the PUMS data. Prior to the 1990s, individuals were tagged by “county block group”: In 1980, there were only three of these in L.A. County, and in 1970, the county block group consisted of all of L.A. County. The usual approach to linking data over time would involve working forward using the largest common denominator—that is, the single-county coverage of 1970. This, however, would eliminate the possibility for examining sub-area demographic change.

I therefore tagged all 1990 census tracts with their 1990 PUMA characterization and then linked this to a limited set of data series from the 1970 and 1980 censuses, which had been reallocated into the 1990 tract shapes.^{12,13} I then mapped the PUMAs back into the 1980 and 1970 censuses and tracked the changes in these 58 different areas over time.¹⁴ I also matched an employment database available at the tract level in 1980 and 1990, using this to calculate job growth and changes in job density. I should stress that these figures represent actual jobs in a particular area and not necessarily the employment status of the residents of that area; as such, they are useful for calculating the job-density and job-growth measures key to the spatial mismatch component of the “declining central-city” story.¹⁵

Merged at the PUMA level, these various series on population and employment comprise the basic data set used in this study. The demographic figures reported throughout are weighted by population; thus, the number for population growth in the central city reflects the increase over the whole base in that area rather than the arithmetic mean of the 21 PUMAs contained within it. In practice, such weighting has little effect on demographic composition, but it does appropriately dampen the growth rates; by contrast, when unweighted, fast growth in a low-population suburb can raise the mean for the suburban group, even if its contribution to the entire suburban populace is minimal. The percentage poor is also weighted by population, the percentage blue collar is weighted by the labor force, and job growth is weighted by the initial job base. Household income and housing values are unweighted; they are derived at the PUMA levels as the average tract median, then calculated for the central city and other geographic categories as the average of these averages. All together, these provide a basis for revealing the patterns of distress and potential for alliances by subareas in the county.

TABLE 3: Comparative Statistics: Los Angeles and Selected Metro Areas

	<i>Los Angeles</i>	<i>Chicago</i>	<i>Houston</i>	<i>Philadelphia</i>
Comparative demographics				
Population in central city, 1990	3,485,398	2,783,726	1,630,672	1,585,577
% of metro population				
in central city, 1990	39.3	37.6	49.1	32.2
% minority in central city, 1990	63.1	62.0	59.3	47.9
% minority in metro area, 1990	59.3	33.7	43.2	24.6
Relative % minority central city/metro 1990 ^a	106.4	184.0	137.2	195.1
Economics inequalities				
Relative median household income central city/metro 1990 ^a	88.4	72.5	83.4	69.5
Relative poverty rates central city/metro 1990 ^a	125.1	191.5	137.5	194.3
Relative male unemployment rate central city/metro 1990 ^a	113.7	171.2	123.6	175.5
Relative inequality central city/metro 1990 ^a	121.8	182.7	137.3	151.8
Relative growth in per capita income central city/metro 1990 ^a	98.3	90.9	91.1	83.7
Residential segregation				
Dissimilarity index, metro level, Anglo:African-American, 1990	78.7	87.3	69.4	82.9
Dissimilarity index, metro level, Anglo:Latino, 1990	64.6	59.8	49.5	70.8
Dissimilarity index, metro level, African-American:Latino, 1990	59.8	86.4	63.0	79.8

a. For these relative measures, 100 equals parity between central city and metro area.

MAPPING DIFFERENCE

With the demographic and employment data in place, I used the PUMAs to create several new ways to break up and therefore understand Los Angeles County. The first was simply a new inner-city/suburb split, based on various historical readings of what did and did not constitute the inner city or core areas of Los Angeles in 1970.¹⁶ The second took into account patterns of demographic change by PUMA on the grounds that this was a basis for both geographic divisions and coalitional commonalities.

Starting with the first breakdown, the inner city was considered to include the following city communities: Eagle Rock, Glassell Park, El Sereno, Highland Park, Lincoln Heights, Boyle Heights, Downtown, Central Avenue–

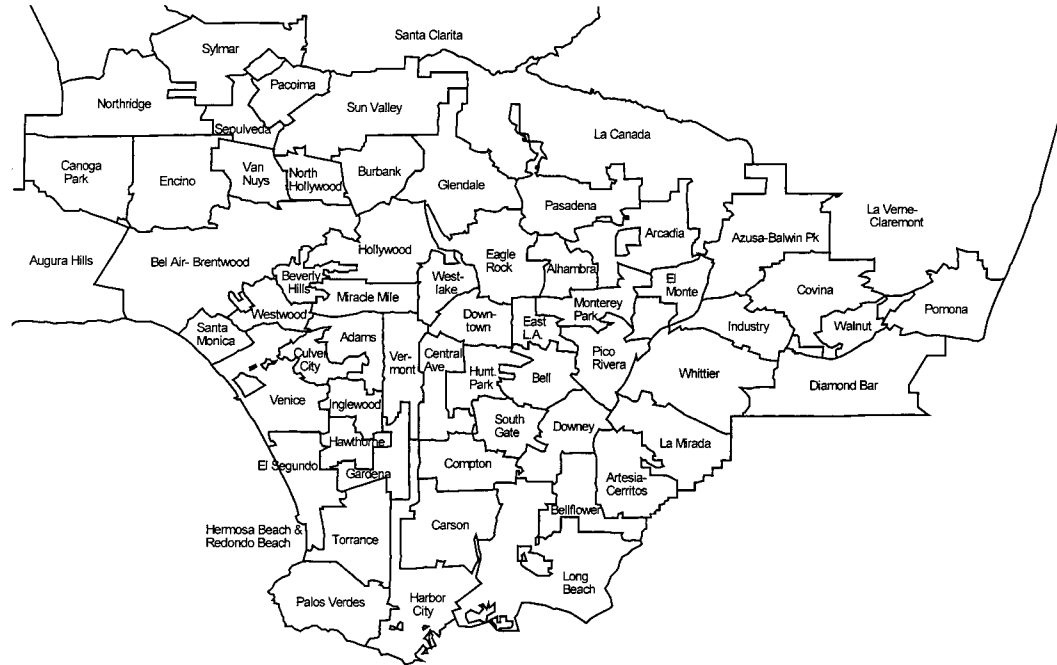


Figure 2: Public Use Microdata Areas (PUMAs), Los Angeles County, 1990

South, Green Meadows, Watts, Adams–La Brea, Crenshaw, South Vermont, Vermont Square, West Adams–Exposition Park, Miracle Mile North, Wilshire Center, Hollywood, Los Feliz, Westlake, Silverlake–Chinatown, Harbor City, North Shoestring, and San Pedro. Also included in this “inner-city” appellation are the following areas outside of the city of L.A.: unincorporated East L.A., Huntington Park, Carson, Bell Gardens, Bell, Commerce, Cudahy, Maywood, Vernon, and Compton. Excluded in this inner-city characterization are all the noncity area suburbs as well as city areas such as Bel Air, Pacific Palisades, Westwood–West L.A., and the various PUMAs in the San Fernando Valley (a subregion that has, in recent years, seen the formation of a movement to secede from the city!). The resulting map (see Figure 3) shows a geography more typical of eastern urban areas—a central “inner” city surrounded by a ring of suburbs.

As we see in Table 5, the demographic and economic characterizations are also more typical of the East and of the rest of the metro-area profiles in Tables 2 and 3. The “inner city” is far more minority, blue collar, and poor. Both house values and household income are significantly below the rest of Los Angeles County. Job growth is a staggering 29 percentage points lower in the inner city and indeed was negative over the time period considered.

As with the broader comparisons of Table 2, one standout feature of Los Angeles remains its demographics across the metro area. Note that population growth is not that different between the inner city and the suburbs; indeed, inner-city growth was more rapid, reflecting both higher birth rates and increased immigration.¹⁷ Interestingly, African-Americans have left the central city and enhanced their presence in the suburbs, making Latinos and Asians the new key minority groups in the inner city. Still, the Asian presence has grown more outside the inner city, partly reflecting the tendency of new Asian immigrants to skip the traditional central-city ports of entry and enter the United States via suburban routes. Latinos constitute the group that has raised its presence most in the inner city; however, because the change in Latino presence between 1970 and 1990 was much less when we broke the county up into L.A. City and rest of county, this suggests that Latino growth has been particularly strong in the inner-ring suburbs—especially in South L.A.—that I have considered here as part of the “inner city.”

A second recharacterization of the Los Angeles area makes use of these subpatterns of demographic change. As noted in the introduction, some analysts have focused special attention on the demographic transition in the suburbs, arguing that the increased minority presence outside the central city may facilitate links and coalition building with inner-city concerns and actors (Frey 1998; Frey and Fielding 1995). To pursue this analysis, I calculated the demographic/ethnic character of each of the PUMAs for 1970, 1980, and



Figure 3: Inner City and Suburbs by Public Use Microdata Area (PUMA), Los Angeles County, 1990

TABLE 4: 1990 Public Use Microdata Areas (PUMAs) in Los Angeles County

<i>PUMA</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>Description (PUMAs in L.A. County)</i>
5200	166,223	Burbank and San Fernando
5300	180,038	Glendale
5400	120,076	Monterey Park and Rosemead
5500	126,379	East Los Angeles
5600	127,934	Huntington Park, Florence-Graham,* and Walnut Park*
5700	148,229	Lynwood and South Gate
5800	106,209	El Monte
5900	131,723	Pomona
6000	104,138	Carson and West Carson*
6100	109,602	Inglewood
6200	132,398	Beverly Hills, Culver City, West Hollywood, Ladera Heights,* Marina del Rey,* and View Park–Windsor Hills*
6300	131,591	Pasadena
6401	236,084	Lancaster, Palmdale, and various areas in north-central L.A. County*
6402	141,472	Santa Clarita, Val Verde,* and various areas in northwestern L.A. County
6403	139,618	La Canada Flintridge, Monrovia, Sierra Madre, Altadena,* and La Crescenta–Montrose*
6404	106,042	Alhambra and South Pasadena
6405	145,597	Arcadia, San Gabriel, San Marino, Temple City, East Pasadena,* and North El Monte*
6406	139,685	Bell Gardens, Bell, Commerce, Cudahy, Maywood, and Vernon
6407	144,089	Compton, East Compton,* and Willowbrook*
6408	144,711	Azusa, Baldwin Park, Bradbury, Duarte, Irwindale, and Citrus*
6409	156,380	Claremont, Glendora, La Verne, San Dimas, and Charter Oak*
6410	103,653	Diamond Bar, La Habra Heights, and Rowland Heights
6411	157,437	Covina, West Covina, and Vincent*
6412	111,998	Industry, La Puente, South El Monte, Avocado Heights,* Valinda,* and West Puente Valley*
6413	159,220	Whittier, Hacienda Heights,* and West Whittier–Los Nietos*
6414	118,741	Montebello and Pico Rivera
6415	114,853	La Mirada, Santa Fe Springs, East La Mirada,* and South Whittier*
6416	163,405	Artesia, Cerritos, and Norwalk
6417	139,113	Downey and Paramount
6418	149,011	Bellflower, Hawaiian Gardens, and Lakewood
6419	152,489	Lomita and Torrance
6420	195,581	Avalon, El Segundo, Hermosa Beach, Manhattan Beach, Palos Verdes Estates, Ranchos Palos Verdes, Redondo Beach, and Rolling Hills Estates
6421	129,410	Gardena, Lawndale, Alondra Park,* West Athens,* and Westmont*
6422	102,219	Hawthorne, Del Aire,* and Lennox*
6423	159,644	Agoura Hills, Hidden Hills, Santa Monica, Westlake Village, and

(continued)

TABLE 4: Continued

<i>PUMA</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>Description (PUMAs in L.A. County)</i>
6424	103,341	other small parts of western L.A. County* Signal Hill, Walnut, East San Gabriel,* Palmdale East,* and South San Jose Hills*
6501	237,315	Eagle-Rock Glassell, El Sereno, Highland Park, and Lincoln Heights
6502	134,932	Boyle Heights, Downtown, and parts of Wholesale
6503	234,621	Central Avenue–South, Green Meadows, and Watts
6504	169,397	Adams–La Brea and Crenshaw
6505	257,469	South Vermont, Vermont Square, and West Adams–Exposition Park
6506	240,908	Miracle Mile North, Wilshire Center North and South
6507	247,665	Hollywood and part of Los Feliz
6508	188,661	Westlake and Silverlake–Chinatown
6509	150,525	Bel Air, Brentwood Hills, Studio City, Pacific Palisades, and parts of other areas in West L.A. San Fernando Valley
6510	120,242	North Hollywood
6511	100,672	Pacoima
6512	130,700	Van Nuys, Sherman Oaks
6513	103,378	Sepulveda and part of Mission Hills
6514	120,016	Sun Valley and Tujunga–Sunland
6515	111,882	Sylmar, parts of Mission Hills, and Granada Hills
6516	150,541	Canoga Park and Woodland Hills
6517	146,056	Chatsworth, Northridge, and part of Granada Hills
6518	152,805	Encino–Tarzana and Reseda
6519	104,101	Westwood–West Los Angeles and parts of Brentwood–Sawtelle and Palms
6520	195,481	Barnes City, Mar Vista, Venice, and Westchester
6521	188,031	Harbor City, North Shoestring, and San Pedro
6600	429,433	Long Beach

NOTE: Areas marked with an asterisk (*) are unincorporated areas of the county, defined here by the names used by the L.A. County Office of Regional Planning. PUMAs 6501 to 6521 are all part of the city of Los Angeles; we offer their neighborhood names, which are again taken from the regional planning authorities. When a PUMA includes a very small portion of a neighborhood (and most of the neighborhood is another PUMA), we drop mention here to focus on the central character of each PUMA.

1990. I then arranged the observations on a scatterplot that had on one axis the percentage Anglo in 1990 and on the other the change in percentage Anglo between 1970 and 1990 (see Figure 4). The figure also includes lines indicating the average Anglo presence in 1990 and the average change in percentage Anglo between 1970 and 1990.

TABLE 5: Comparing "Inner City" and "Suburb"

	<i>% Anglo</i>	<i>% African-American</i>	<i>% Latino</i>	<i>% Asian</i>	<i>% Population Growth Since 1970</i>
Demographics in 1990					
Inner city	15.8	19.8	55.0	9.4	27.5
Suburb	50.9	6.8	30.9	11.4	25.7
	<i>% Blue Collar</i>	<i>% Job Growth, 1980-1990</i>	<i>% Poor</i>	<i>Income to Mean</i>	<i>House Value to Mean</i>
Economics in 1990					
Inner city	53.3	-2.4	24.8	67.1	74.8
Suburb	35.7	27.6	11.2	110.5	107.4
	<i>% Anglo</i>	<i>% African-American</i>	<i>% Latino</i>	<i>% Asian</i>	
Demographic change since 1970					
Baseline in 1970					
Inner city	37.2	30.2	27.7	4.9	
Suburb	80.3	3.1	14.5	2.1	
Change 1970-1990					
Inner city	-21.4	-10.4	27.3	4.5	
Suburb	-29.4	3.7	16.4	9.3	

NOTE: Demographic figures and poverty weighted by population in Public Use Metropolitan Areas. Percentage blue collar weighted by labor force; job growth weighted by jobs.

The clustering of the observations suggests five neighborhood types: (1) currently Anglo and stayed Anglo between 1970 and 1990, (2) predominantly ethnic and stayed ethnic over the 1970 to 1990 period, (3) currently ethnic and underwent a significant transition during the 1970 to 1990 period, (4) currently predominantly ethnic and underwent an "average" transition (for an increasingly ethnic county) over the period, and (5) currently predominantly Anglo and underwent an average transition over the period. Table 6 offers a full listing of the PUMAs in these various categories, and Figure 5 maps the areas of transition and stasis.¹⁸

The demographic and economic differences for this breakdown are offered in Table 7. Using weighted population growth, for example, the most significant increase in growth occurred in PUMAs in transition to a more ethnic character. Interestingly, the unweighted growth of areas that "stayed" Anglo was much higher; this is primarily because Anglos were moving into

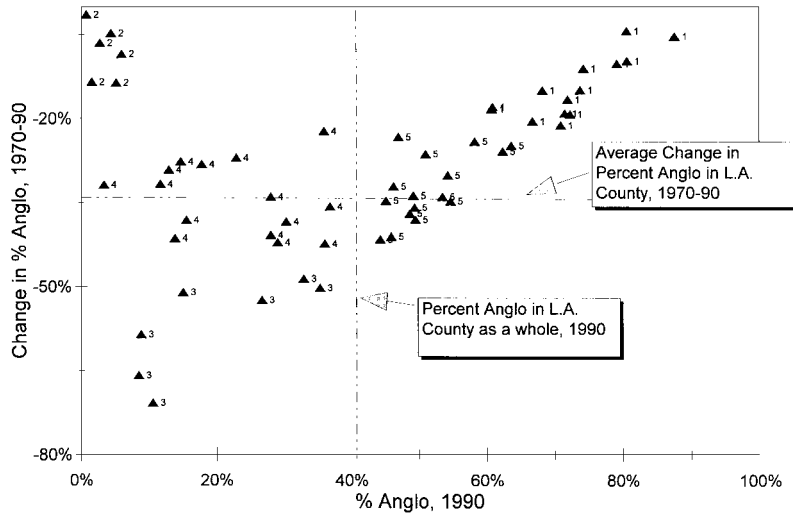


Figure 4: Demographic Transitions in L.A.'s Changing Neighborhoods

the more sparsely populated outer suburbs and thus adding to a smaller initial base. Job growth was fastest in the Anglo-Anglo area; although this partly reflects a smaller base of jobs to begin with, there are no differences in the relative pattern if we use unweighted rather than weighted job growth. Job density (the number of jobs per 100 residents of working age [between 18 and 64 years]) was actually highest in the ethnic-ethnic areas; these areas are the heart of the central city, where many jobs may actually be held by commuting suburbanites, especially in the central business district and some higher-end manufacturing. Only the Anglo-Anglo areas saw job density rise significantly between 1980 and 1990; because this was accompanied by the sharpest group decline in percentage blue collar, the pattern suggests a boom in office-style employment in the more Anglo "suburbs."

Although the forces of deindustrialization induced a fall in percentage blue collar for the county as a whole, the Anglo-ethnic transition areas actually saw an increase in this variable: In essence, a white working class was moving away and being replaced by an even more working-class black and brown population. As can be seen by the data for the ethnic-ethnic and significant transition areas, this ethnic working class is experiencing relatively impoverished conditions, including the slowest job growth and the highest

TABLE 6: L.A. County Neighborhoods by Demographic Transition, 1970-1990

	<i>% Anglo, 1990</i>	<i>Change in % Anglo, 1970-1990</i>
Anglo—stayed Anglo		
Agoura, Hidden Hills, Santa Monica	80.6	-4.3
Avalon, El Segundo, Hermosa Beach	80.6	-9.6
Barnes City, Mar Vista, Venice	60.9	-17.8
Bel Air, Brentwood, Studio City	87.7	-5.2
Beverly Hills, Culver, W. Hollywood	68.2	-14.9
Canoga Park, Woodland Hills	71.5	-19.0
Chatsworth, Northridge	70.9	-21.1
Claremont, Glendora, La Verne	73.8	-14.8
Encino-Tarzana, Reseda	72.3	-19.2
La Canada, Monrovia, Sierra Madre	60.8	-18.2
Lancaster, Palmdale	71.9	-16.5
Lomita, Torrance	66.8	-20.4
Santa Clarita	79.2	-10.1
Westwood, West L.A.	74.3	-11.0
Ethnic—stayed ethnic		
Adams-La Brea, Crenshaw	5.2	-13.6
Boyle Heights, Downtown	6.0	-8.5
Central Avenue-South, Watts	0.7	-1.4
Compton	1.6	-13.5
East L.A.	2.8	-6.5
S. Vermont, West Adams	4.4	-4.7
Anglo—large ethnic transition		
Alhambra/S. Pasadena	32.9	-48.6
Bell Gardens/Bell/Commerce/Cudahy	8.9	-58.5
El Monte	15.2	-51.0
Hawthorne	26.8	-52.4
Inglewood	8.6	-65.9
Lynwood/South Gate	10.6	-70.8
Sepulveda	35.4	-50.2
Average transition, now ethnic		
Artesia, Cerritos, Norwalk	36.8	-35.7
Azusa, Baldwin Park, Duarte	28.1	-40.7
Carson	28.1	-33.9
Eagle Rock, Glassell Park, El Sereno	17.8	-28.1
Gardena, Lawndale	22.9	-26.9
Harbor City, North Shoestring	35.9	-22.2
Huntington Park	3.5	-31.8
Industry, La Puente, S. El Monte	15.6	-38.1
Miracle Mile N., Wilshire Center	30.4	-38.4
Monterey Park, Rosemead	13.9	-41.3
Montebello, Pico Rivera	14.8	-27.6
Pacoima	13.0	-29.1
Pomona	29.1	-42.0

(continued)

TABLE 6: Continued

	<i>% Anglo, 1990</i>	<i>Change in % Anglo, 1970-1990</i>
Signal Hill, Walnut	36.0	-42.3
Westlake, Silverlake-Chinatown	11.8	-31.7
Average transition, now Anglo		
Arcadia, San Gabriel, San Marino	53.5	-33.9
Bellflower, Hawaiian Gardens	62.4	-25.7
Burbank, San Fernando	58.3	-24.0
Covina, West Covina	48.6	-36.9
Diamond Bar, La Habra Heights	45.9	-41.0
Downey, Paramount	44.3	-41.5
Glendale	63.7	-24.7
Hollywood, Los Feliz	46.3	-32.0
La Mirada, Santa Fe Springs	51.0	-26.2
Long Beach	49.4	-35.8
North Hollywood	49.5	-38.0
Pasadena	47.0	-23.3
Sun Valley, Tujunga-Sunland	49.2	-33.7
Sylmar, Granada Hills	54.3	-30.0
Van Nuys, Sherman Oaks	54.7	-34.7
Whittier	45.1	-34.6

poverty rates. Indeed, the trends in relative income between the neighborhood types highlight the “widening divide” first noted in Los Angeles by Ong et al. (1989): Over the 1970s and 1980s, the income in Anglo-Anglo areas drifted further up and away from the county mean, but income in ethnic and significant transition areas fell further and further away from the average.¹⁹

How would the picture look if we adopted another reasonable characterization of ethnic change/transition? Borrowing from a recent study by Pastor, Sadd, and Hipp (2001), I calculated the degree of ethnic change as the absolute sum of the percentage changes in ethnic composition.²⁰ The advantage of this is straightforward: An area that underwent a significant shift from 80% African-American and 20% Latino to 20% African-American and 80% Latino would be counted as having stayed ethnic under the previous categorization but would rank highly on what Pastor, Sadd, and Hipp term “ethnic churning.” If such rapid shifts in ethnic composition weaken the bonds of social capital, this may erode community strength and neighborhood performance and lead to large geographic differences in economic outcomes.

As it turns out, little is gained by breaking the PUMAs in this fashion. Arranging the PUMAs into thirds by degree of ethnic transition, job growth

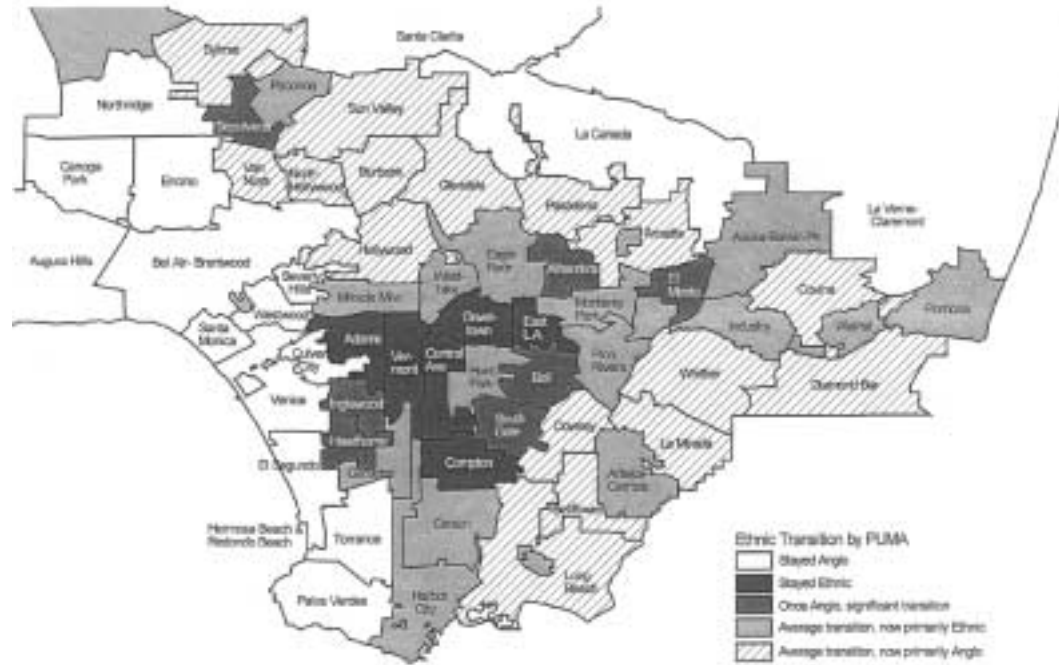


Figure 5: Ethnic Transition by Public Use Microdata Area (PUMA), Los Angeles County, 1990

TABLE 7: Comparing L.A.'s Changing Neighborhoods

	<i>Anglo– Stayed Anglo</i>	<i>Ethnic– Stayed Ethnic</i>	<i>Anglo– Large Ethnic Transition</i>	<i>Average Transition, Now Ethnic</i>	<i>Average Transition, Now Anglo</i>
Neighborhoods by demography					
Population growth, 1970-1990 (%)	25.3	18.9	37.0	32.7	21.9
Unweighted population growth, 1970-1990 (%)	39.7	19.4	37.5	36.2	29.1
Job growth, 1980-1990 (%)	33.0	2.8	4.0	8.6	21.1
Job density, 1980	81.6	113.4	83.8	82.2	75.8
Job density, 1990	91.7	98.0	67.4	72.2	77.5
% blue collar, 1970	33.5	62.6	49.9	52.2	41.4
% blue collar, 1990	26.1	59.9	52.7	48.9	37.2
Poverty rates, 1990 (%)	7.4	29.9	18.5	17.2	12.7
Relative income, 1970	125.7	65.6	91.6	87.0	106.3
Relative income, 1990	135.0	55.2	81.5	87.8	105.7

was virtually the same across the areas. There were differences in poverty, college education, and household income, but this seems to reflect the underlying clusters identified earlier: Virtually all the Anglo–stayed Anglo areas were “low-churning” PUMAs (and they were also nearly all of the low-churning areas); all the Anglo–big transition areas were “high churners”; 75% of the average-transition, now Anglo areas were “average churners”; and 14 of the 15 average-transition, now ethnic neighborhoods were either medium or high churners, with little noticeable difference in key economic or demographic variables between these two categories.

The only group where churning and our earlier categorization did not line up neatly was the set of ethnic–stayed ethnic PUMAs. In this grouping, three areas were low churners, whereas two areas experienced average churning and one area experienced high churning. Of the average/high churners, two experienced a demographic shift from African-American to Latino (South Vermont and Central Avenue), and one shifted from an Anglo/African-American mix to an African-American/Latino mix (Compton). Comparing this more dynamic group with the low churners, I found virtually no difference in population growth, college education, current ethnic composition, or median household income. The average/high churners in this small subsample did experience much higher job growth (16% vs. –3%) and somewhat higher poverty rates (33% vs. 25%), a pattern that likely reflects the

working poverty typical of the Latino in-migrants to these three PUMAs (Pastor 1995).²¹

Thus, our earlier categorization seems sufficient for illustrating one aspect of the “L.A. story”: Los Angeles County is really an area of many different “cities,” with the boundaries of ethnic and economic experience not neatly congruent with political jurisdictions or more traditional city-suburb distinctions. Indeed, a city-suburb breakdown can mask key trends that could feed into finding commonalities by race, class, and more specific geography—and building political alliances throughout the county may therefore involve not municipal leaders but rather new social actors working at a community level in the more distressed areas highlighted by our PUMA analysis.

THE EVOLUTION OF DIFFERENCE

As Pulido (1998) stressed, the social topography of Los Angeles County is not simply a result of random individual choices across an undifferentiated social landscape. Instead, racial settlement patterns in the county were established from the beginning of the century through restrictive housing covenants. As in many other areas of the United States, these initial institutional structures were exacerbated by federal mortgage programs and commercial lending practices that explicitly or implicitly discriminated against minorities (see also Laslett 1996, 55).

But although these various programs and policies may help to explain the ethnic concentrations in Los Angeles as of 1970, they offer less insight into the changing patterns evidenced over 1970 to 1990. By this time, after all, housing covenants had been eliminated by both federal and state laws, and federal mortgage discrimination had become less explicit. Although one can certainly evoke cumulative causation—that is, past discrimination simply solidifies into fixed living patterns—this cannot be a complete explanation.²²

To tease out the history of minority move-in more formally, I conducted a simple set of logistic regressions in which the dependent variable took on a value of 1 for various demographic changes over the two-decade period and 0 otherwise, and the independent variables in the regression represented initial conditions, such as prior residential stability, the percentage of blue-collar workers in the area labor force, initial household income, and beginning percentage minority. The predicted directions of effect were as follows: A more residentially stable area (over the previous five years) was likely to lead to less possibility for minority move-in, blue-collar and poorer areas were more likely to gain minority residents, and a higher existing minority population suggested that the area might have less social barriers to further minority

move-in. This last variable reflects the notion of cumulative causation; if the other variables are significant and the regression can explain most of the variation even when the variable is removed, this suggests that other factors were operating besides simply past history.

In testing for these effects, I used two possible dependent variables. *Transition to ethnic area* was 0 for “Anglo-Anglo” and “average-transition, now Anglo” PUMAs and 1 for PUMAs that experienced an average or significant transition to an ethnic area; the areas that were ethnic and stayed that way were ruled out from the regression. *Degree of ethnic change* was similarly constructed but removed *both* the “Anglo-Anglo” areas and the “ethnic-ethnic” areas from consideration as these were both stable.²³ The results are depicted in the panels in Table 8; for each of the dependent variables, I present results for a regression without the initial ethnic composition and then for a regression, which includes this measure as well as the economic, class structure, and stability measures.

Note first that the explanatory power is generally quite high, as indicated by both the pseudo- R^2 and the percentage of cases predicted correctly. Moreover, the overall regression is nearly as successful even when initial-area ethnicity is not taken into account—and although the other variables often lose their significance, the sign and general coefficient pattern are similar even when initial ethnicity is included. The relatively strong results for the residential stability measure across the panel (given the small sample size) may be somewhat time specific: This variable measures the percentage of residents who had lived in the same house for the previous five years—in this case, the period between the 1965 Watts riots and 1970 in which “white fright” and then “white flight” opened up the space for new minority residents through southern and central Los Angeles. Still, the overall pattern of regression results is consistent with more general accounts of L.A. demographics: The older, poorer, and more working-class districts were the most likely locations for significant ethnic transition.²⁴

Of course, this demographic transition was not a simple or unidimensional process, as illustrated by the cases presented in Table 8. Certain places, such as Long Beach, do show a demographic evolution paralleling the county as a whole: a steady decline in the percentage Anglo accompanied by increases in the representation of the three other major ethnic groups. Inglewood, however, shows rapid white flight between 1970 and 1980 with concurrently rapid African-American move-in; over the 1980s, however, Latino growth seemed to have been squeezing the remaining Anglo population. Bell Gardens shows a straightforward and dramatic pattern of Latino growth and Anglo decline; Monterey Park, a suburb in the San Gabriel Valley, shows the rapid growth of Asians and a consequent reduction in the Anglo population.

TABLE 8: Factors Predicting Ethnic Transition by Public Use Metropolitan Area (PUMA) in L.A. County, 1970-1990

<i>Dependent Variable</i>	<i>Transition to Ethnic Area (1)</i>	<i>Transition to Ethnic Area (2)</i>	<i>Degree of Ethnic Change (3)</i>	<i>Degree of Ethnic Change (4)</i>
% blue collar, 1970	7.828**	6.831	10.221**	9.010
% residing in same house for last five years, 1970	-4.514	-9.520	-14.118*	-20.401*
Median household income, 1970	-0.167****	-0.109*	-0.159***	-0.073
% minority, 1970		-23.757***		-19.955***
Constant	14.912**	30.785****	18.029***	28.822****
Observations	52	52	38	38
Log likelihood	33.3	21.5	26.4	18.4
% cases predicted correctly	84.6	94.2	81.6	89.5
Nagelkerke R^2	0.692	0.824	0.653	0.786

NOTE: Coefficient and the significance level (using the Wald statistic for logistic regressions) are reported.

* $p < .20$. ** $p < .10$. *** $p < .05$. **** $p < .01$.

The Watts area shows an African-American/Latino transition, a pattern of “displacement” that has made for sharp social tensions between the two poorest ethnic groups in the county. Finally, Carson is the rarest of cases either in L.A. or elsewhere: A relatively even balance of major ethnic groups has persisted here with no major “tipping” even after the initial 1970-1980 mass departure of Anglos.²⁵

A complete analysis would go well beyond the statistical exercises above. The forces that have set the parameters for the more recent demographic and economic trajectories have long been in motion. The inclusion of suburbs within the city of Los Angeles has much to do with the city’s annexation of vast swaths of land, particularly in the San Fernando Valley, in the early part of the twentieth century (Dear 1996; Laslett 1996; Soja and Scott 1996). The profusion of separate suburbs cobbled out of previously unincorporated county territory was aided in the 1950s and 1960s by the “Lakewood system” in which municipalities could contract with the county for essential services (Fulton 1997) and, some would argue, was driven in part by racial and class dynamics.²⁶

Of course, the polycentric and shifting ethnic character of the region and the city has been stressed by all these analysts, and so the statistical profiles

TABLE 9: Patterns of Demographic Change in Several of L.A. County's Public Use Metropolitan Areas (PUMAs)

	<i>% Anglo</i>	<i>% Latino</i>	<i>% African-American</i>	<i>% Asian</i>
Long Beach				
1970	85.2	7.4	5.2	2.2
1980	67.7	14.1	11.1	7.2
1990	49.4	23.8	13.1	13.7
Inglewood				
1970	74.4	11.8	11.3	2.4
1980	20.9	17.7	57.9	3.5
1990	8.6	37.3	51.3	2.8
Bell Gardens, Bell, Commerce, Cudahy, Maywood, and Vernon				
1970	67.5	30.3	0.0	2.2
1980	26.7	70.0	0.4	2.8
1990	8.9	88.8	0.5	1.8
Monterey Park and Rosemead				
1970	88.1	10.8	0.0	1.0
1980	77.3	15.9	1.6	5.1
1990	62.4	23.3	4.5	9.8
Central Avenue—South, Green Meadows, and Watts				
1970	2.2	8.3	88.6	0.9
1980	1.2	27.6	70.2	1.0
1990	0.7	58.6	39.6	1.1
Carson and West Carson				
1970	62.0	20.6	10.5	7.0
1980	36.6	23.0	25.0	15.5
1990	28.1	26.6	21.9	23.4

and econometric analysis above essentially confirm a point made in other ways by other authors: The central-city/suburb framework fits less well in Los Angeles than it may elsewhere in the United States. But if this is so, then perhaps political strategies for linking lower-income communities with the larger region may need to be different as well.

COMMUNITY AND REGION

In this study, I have tackled a seeming conundrum: Los Angeles County seems to be a place where city and suburb share many demographic and economic features, but these commonalities have nonetheless not provided

especially fertile ground for the new regionalist or smart-growth movements that have taken root in Portland, Minneapolis, and elsewhere. To understand why, I attempted to recompose the county's geography, focusing first on an inner-city, rest-of-county breakdown and then a categorization based on ethnic change and transition. The first of these—which essentially moves the city's internal suburbs out and draws in the immediately adjoining inner-ring suburbs—indicates deep geographic divisions similar to those in East Coast cities. The second reveals even sharper divergences and suggests one of the reasons why the municipal-level alliances have been so difficult to achieve in the L.A. area: The actual commonalities may exist more along the lines of race, class, and specific subgeographic units.

This analytical deconstruction of the county may point to some of the divisive factors behind its literal deconstruction, such as the historic emergence of incorporated cities under the Lakewood plan and the recent secessionist moves in L.A. City's San Fernando Valley area. Yet it also suggests the possibilities for a new equity-oriented regional politics and policy making in Los Angeles. Searching for smart-growth alliances and finding few of them does not mean that progressive regionalism has no possibilities; rather, the "L.A. story" suggests that the basis for such a movement may lie in the broad swath of poor communities across the region as well as certain subregional common interests.

Although organizing poor people across a region is notoriously difficult, Los Angeles can boast of some significant recent successes. The Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy (LAANE), an activist-led coalition stressing the growth of working poverty in Los Angeles, pressured the city of Los Angeles in 1997 to adopt a living wage ordinance; in 1999, the county followed suit with its own more limited version, and LAANE has moved on struggles in Santa Monica and elsewhere in the region. In general, union activities have been impressive, with the 1999 organizing of 74,000 largely immigrant home care workers constituting the biggest single gain of union workers in recent years and the April 2000 janitor's strike being a signal event for U.S. labor.²⁷ A particular focus of labor organizing has been on the working poor who, as indicated in Figure 6's breakdown of PUMAs by the thirds with the lowest, highest, and middle rates of working poverty, tend to be geographically concentrated in areas highlighted by our earlier analysis, a fact that has led certain labor unions to organize in employees' communities as well as their workplaces.²⁸

Indeed, there may be real hope for a "subregional," geographically based approach that would link the troubled areas of the city (and not the city as a whole) with the adjacent economically challenged inner-ring suburbs and unincorporated areas. Municipal-level organizing along these lines has been

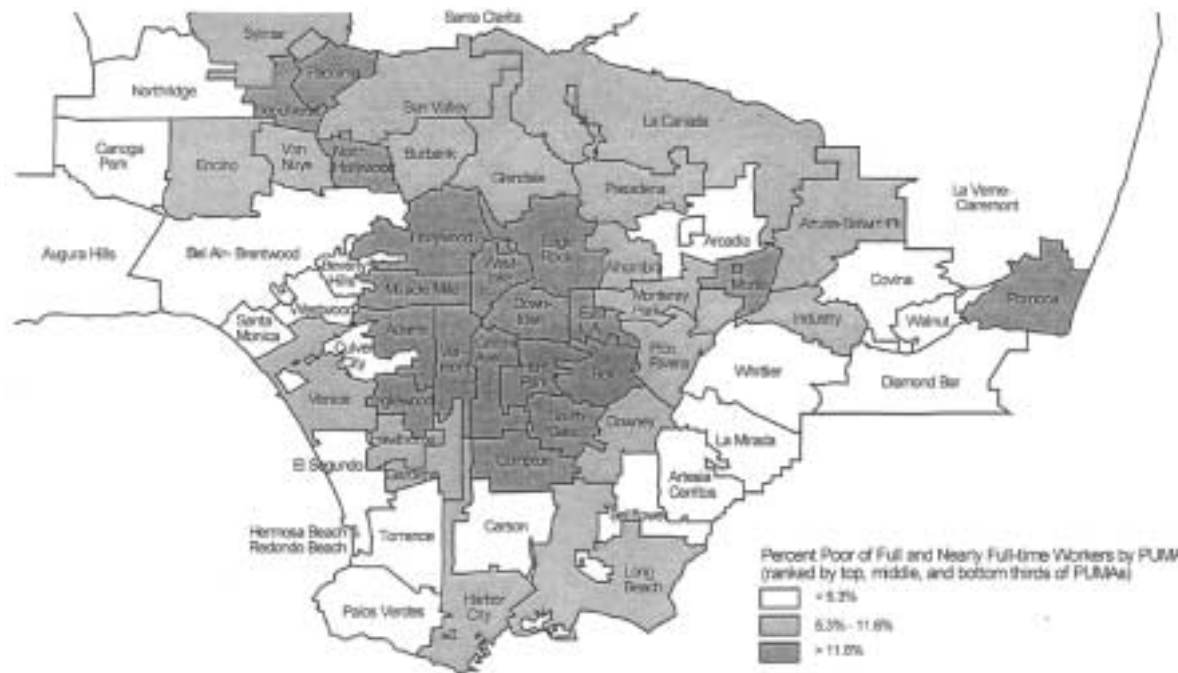


Figure 6: Percentage Poor of Full-Time and Nearly Full-Time Workers by Public Use Microdata Area (PUMA), Los Angeles County, 1990

given some boost by the efforts of the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) to help subregional groups of cities come together to identify the industrial clusters that drive their local economies and use this information to attract firms, shore up investment, and better tap into such regional opportunities.²⁹ An equally important set of actors consists of activist community organizations, many of whom have jumped municipal boundaries and tackled key regional institutions such as the Air Quality Management District, the Metropolitan Transit Authority, county government, and multicity special authorities.

The Alameda Corridor Jobs Coalition, for example, is a collection of community-based organizations, churches, and neighborhood groups that include poorer communities in Los Angeles and community groups in the adjacent cities of the southeast. This coalition arose in response to the Alameda Corridor Project, a \$2 billion effort to build a high-speed rail line from the ports to downtown warehousing operations right through the heart of South L.A. Although promising great benefits for the region, the corridor project actually promised few jobs for local residents either in construction or export firms.³⁰ In response, the coalition successfully lobbied the multicity Alameda Corridor Transportation Authority for a commitment to place local residents in training slots and allocate 30% of the total hours for new hires; as a result, the corridor project reportedly now has the largest local hiring plan of any public works project in the contemporary history of the United States.³¹

Of course, the demographic character of our breakdowns and an overlay of our ethnic change variables on the distress maps of Figures 1 and 6 suggest that any new equity-oriented regional effort would also have to capture support from the “emerging majority” of the African-American, Latino, and Asian communities. These communities are growing in nearly every area of the county, and their members may be able to find common bonds based on a shared sense of past exclusion from political processes. At the same, Sonenshein (1994, 53) argued that “the missing piece, and a critical key to the puzzle of Los Angeles’s future, is the potential role of liberal whites in minority coalitions.” He suggested that such racial coalitions should appeal to a common good and build working alliances on bread-and-butter class and neighborhood concerns.³²

Some organizations have indeed woven together the concerns of the poor and of people of color with a broad regional perspective. As noted in the introduction, the Labor-Community Strategy Center has managed to organize a largely minority bus riders union, which has, in turn, used a combination of legal and community pressure to force better bus service from the regional Metropolitan Transit Authority; although the issue was legally argued on civil rights grounds because of the ethnic character of the ridership,

the changes benefited transit-dependent poor from all over the region, and the organizing was on a full regional scale.³³

Other organizations have brought together innovative organizing about race and poverty at a subregional level. Communities for a Better Environment, for example, is tackling environmental degradation with a constituency that is largely Latino and a geographic coverage that targets a broad area of South L.A., including parts of the city, unincorporated areas of the county, and inner-ring suburbs such as Huntington Park. In 1996, the group sued the regional Air Quality Management District, forcing it to suspend a trading program that was concentrating pollutants in a minority neighborhood and subsequently inducing it to adopt a new set of “environmental justice” principles that cover the whole region.

AGENDA (Action for Grassroots Empowerment and Neighborhood Development Alternatives), an organizing group also based in south-central L.A., has likewise made the local-regional link. AGENDA has taken the lead in forming Metro Alliance, a coalition that brings together a subset of the region’s poorer communities, mostly of color and mostly in South and West L.A., to press public and private decision makers for shifts in regional approaches to infrastructure spending (such as the Alameda Corridor project), the county’s welfare-to-work program, and government subsidies key to new regionally significant development projects (such as the Dreamworks Studio in Los Angeles). The latter effort led to a landmark agreement with the new studio that is designed to provide training in the animation industry for inner-city residents, a prime example of making the link between distressed neighborhoods and regional economic opportunities.³⁴

Interestingly, what has taken less root in Los Angeles is the sort of “smart growth” or new regionalist political strategies typically suggested for other areas—increasing the links between city and suburban political leaders, creating coalitions of “have-not” suburbs against resource-rich ex-urbs, and adopting urban land boundaries as a way of redirecting growth. With the county’s cities still fragmented and Los Angeles itself threatening to split, community-based organizations have often stepped into the vacuum left by municipal actors. Frequently based in areas where poverty, especially working poverty, is high, such groups have discovered that the best way to improve conditions in their own locale is by targeting and transforming regional policy. As such, they have begun to offer a new social justice approach to regionalism—and a new regionalist approach to social justice.

Both the smart-growth movement and these community-based but regionally focused efforts are nascent social phenomena, and they are likely to intersect and learn from each other in the coming decade in both Los Angeles County and the nation as a whole. Moreover, even community-based efforts

will necessarily turn to the municipal tools and city arenas stressed by smart-growth advocates, as is evidenced by the living wage activities of the Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy or the targeting of city-level subsidies by AGENDA.

However, the key point here is simply that such movements are not easily “seen” in an analysis that focuses mostly on cities, suburbs, and municipal actors. Shifting perspective can help researchers recognize the large numbers of community development corporations, community-based organizations, and labor unions coming together to offer new solutions for reconnecting their neighborhoods and constituencies to regional dynamics.³⁵ It remains too early to tell whether this sort of “community-based regionalism” will gain ground, but if it does, the innovative efforts in Los Angeles—an area where divisions are profound but the old city-suburb models do not fully fit—may help lead the way.

NOTES

1. This is quite different than the “chocolate city, vanilla suburb” story offered by Farley et al. (1978), a characterization seemingly more appropriate to many major midwestern and eastern cities.

2. See Meyerson (1999).

3. In his report on the Los Angeles metro region, Orfield (2000) did offer a finer agglomeration of suburb types, especially distinguishing the high-need communities, middle-class communities, and affluent suburbs from the central city of Los Angeles. Although this set of distinctions is helpful, the municipality-based analysis does not break out the various neighborhoods or areas of the city of Los Angeles, does not assign neighborhood types to important and densely populated unincorporated areas of the county, and yields some anomalous characterizations of key suburbs. As such, the work here fills in gaps and provides a useful complement to the Orfield perspective.

4. L.A. County is itself located in a larger Southern California metropolis; indeed, the regional authority, the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), comprises five counties, of which L.A. is only one. I focus on L.A. County here for three reasons. First, much of the analysis below relies on the novel use of Public Use Microdata Areas (PUMAs); these are more geographically compact and sensibly drawn in L.A. than in the other four counties. Second, SCAG has limited power, and there are therefore few mechanisms for governance at the larger regional level; L.A. County, on the other hand, is a political jurisdiction, and looking for commonalities and alliances in this grouping of nearly 10 million residents certainly seems ambitious enough. Third, L.A. County is more anomalous than the other parts of SCAG. In response to a referee suggestion, we employed the same procedures we use for L.A. to two large parts of SCAG, Orange County and the Riverside/San Bernardino area. We found in Orange County that the central-city areas (Santa Ana and Anaheim) were much less Anglo and much poorer than in the rest of the county (39.2% Anglo and 14.5% poor in the central city vs. 71.9% Anglo and 6.7% poor outside, as of 1990). The differences for these variables were less pronounced in Riverside/San Bernardino but still exceeded Los Angeles County. In both the Orange

and Riverside/San Bernardino areas, housing values were about 20% lower in the central-city area versus the higher central-city prices in Los Angeles County; central-city income was 22% lower than the rest of the area in Orange, 21% lower in Riverside/San Bernardino, and 17% in Los Angeles.

5. City housing prices are actually about 10% higher than in the rest of the county, suggesting a problem of affordability.

6. The database compilers were Norman J. Glickman, Michael Lahr, and Elvin Wyly of the Center for Urban Policy Research, Rutgers University. The database was initially assembled under a Housing and Urban Development (HUD) contract to meet the data needs of the United Nations's Habitat II Conference (held in Istanbul in June 1996) and has been expanded in variable coverage since; I specifically used version 2.11A (September 22, 1997). A large central city was one in which the population exceeded 500,000 in 1990; results are very similar if we include all of the 77 metro areas in the State of the Cities database.

7. Note that the percentage of the metro population living in the central city of Los Angeles is quite similar to the sample average for a similar variable; thus, we are on relatively safe ground comparing central-city/metro measures, the only ones available in this particular database, for L.A. and the rest of the sample. Indeed, the average percentage of residents in the metro area in the central city for Los Angeles is nearly identical to that of the average for the larger 77 metro-area sample.

8. This is not to say that unemployment, poverty, and income disparities are less severe in Los Angeles—after all, L.A.'s civil unrest was a general signal of the distress felt by many residents—but rather that these problems are more geographically spread.

9. For a general view of organizing urban African-Americans and Latinos into coalitions, see the various studies in Betancur and Gills (2000).

10. The Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) contains the full individual responses from 5% of the population. Because tagging each person by his or her census tract location might make it possible to identify the individual, the U.S. Bureau of the Census tries to balance respondent confidentiality and geographic characterization by tagging each person with his or her residence in a broader unit labeled a PUMA.

11. PUMAs are not always perfectly contiguous and may contain tracts located in other areas of the county. However, these are relatively rare occurrences in the Los Angeles County set of PUMAs, which are far more compact and sensible than PUMAs in other major urban areas, including the surrounding counties; moreover, the distribution of noncontiguous tracts seems random, implying that our analysis is not sharply affected.

12. The series come from a database prepared by the California State Department of Finance (DOF). Use of the DOF database was key because it offers consistent geographic tract coverage—a large number of the tracts change shape and population over time as tracts merge and split between census years, and cross-linking the regular census data without tract reconciliation would yield inaccurate results.

13. In connecting the PUMA designations with the DOF database, there are a series of methodological problems. The most significant is that the listing for the PUMAs is for partial tracts. Because the employment and demographic data I use were only available at the whole tract level, I had to work at that level to attain consistency across data sets. Thus, when partial tracts were part of the same whole tract but assigned to different PUMAs, I assigned to the whole tract the PUMA number of the partial tract with the most residents. I then aggregated by whole tract to create a PUMA-match table, linked this file with whole tract-level data, and finally aggregated up to the PUMA. Another approach to constructing PUMAs from tracts involves using the partial tract with the most land area as the deciding factor in assigning a PUMA tag to a whole tract; this has the advantage of making cleaner maps, but we are interested here in the social and not the

physical ecology. Once all whole tracts were tagged, PUMA categories were created in ArcView GIS, and the internal boundaries were dissolved to create the PUMA shapes shown in Figure 2.

14. As noted by a referee, a superior approach would involve designating communities as of 1970 rather than assuming continuity with the 1990 categories. However, there is no accepted aggregation of tracts for that earlier year, and creating one could introduce biases based on my priors; as a result, it seemed methodologically superior to use categories derived by the census.

15. The figures were obtained from the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) census tract data for 1990 on the aggregate number of jobs per tract and also SCAG's 1980 job count by 1980 whole tract. The 1980 and 1990 tracts do not match perfectly, with some 1980 tracts combining into a single 1990 tract, some 1980 tracts splitting into two 1990 tracts, and a smaller number of tracts being created or spliced in a variety of different ways. I therefore created a reallocation program that placed 1980 measures into the relevant 1990 tracts and aggregated by the 1990 PUMA shapes. When two or more 1980 tracts combined into a 1990 tract, it was easy enough to add up employment and allocate the 1980 jobs level for the 1990 tract. More problematic was the case when a 1980 whole tract split into two or more whole tracts in 1990, a situation that required some formula to allocate the 1980 employment into each of the 1990 "child" tracts. To do so, I decided to take the 1990 employment in each of the 1990 "child" tracts, use this to calculate an employment share variable, and then use this variable to carry forward and split the 1980 employment across the "child" tracts.

16. See, for example, the city/suburban mapping employed in Clark (1996).

17. In going from the city to the inner city, we have "moved out" slower growing suburban areas within the city and added fast-growing unincorporated areas adjacent to the city. This helps to explain why inner-city growth now tops the rest of the county when the growth of the central city of L.A. was actually slightly below the non-L.A. portion of the county.

18. Clark (1996) looked at ethnic transitions at a tract level but did not provide the "mapping" we explore here. For a broad view of the county as a whole, see Sabagh and Bozorgmehr (1996).

19. The differences would be more dramatic if we used per capita income rather than median household income, primarily because the ethnic areas tended to have a larger household size. Median housing values follow a similar pattern with some recovery in the ethnic-ethnic areas, probably because of increasing rates of homeownership of recent Latino immigrants.

20. I thank an anonymous referee for pointing me in this general direction, by stressing the need to consider those communities that experienced African-American/Latino transitions.

21. I say in-migrants because a detailed count by PUMA of years in country for the foreign born suggest that these areas are not portals but rather second stops for many Latino immigrants.

22. Note, for example, that although many of the highly minority areas in 1970 either stayed minority through 1990 or experienced significant transition, places such as Sepulveda, Pomona, and South Gate were highly Anglo in 1970 but experienced a large change in the ensuing decades. Thus, despite the validity of demographic "tipping" as a theory of transition, we need more than the past level of minority residents to understand the evolution of our areas.

23. I also constructed a third dependent variable, which excluded both "Anglo-Anglo" and "ethnic-ethnic" areas and took the value of 1 only where an area experienced a significant transition (see the discussion earlier in the text). The results were similar, but the regression did poorly when ethnic composition as of 1970 was not included as an independent. I also tried a multinomial logit in which both the stable (Anglo-Anglo and ethnic-ethnic) areas were excluded and the variable ranged upward over three states: average transition, still Anglo; average transition, now ethnic; and significant transition to ethnic. The significance of the coefficients fell, with past minority presence not significant; in the regression that dropped this variable, the three

other variables were significant at the .05 or .10 level, consistent with the binomial model results reported in the text.

24. An alternative measure of ethnic transition, the “churning” variable discussed in the text, was subjected to a parallel set of logistic regressions. With the dependent variable indicating above or below median churning, the explanatory power of the regression (as measured by the quasi- R^2) falls to .102, rising only to .243 when the percentage minority in 1970 is included as a right-hand side variable. When the dependent variable is set to reflect membership in the high or low churners (the top and bottom third), explanatory power rises to .307 and up to .506 when percentage minority is introduced. This is well below the regressions presented in the table where R^2 varies from .653 to .824. I also tried a multinomial logit in which the dependent ranged over low, average, and high churners; explanatory power was very low, and only income and past percentage minority (when entered) were statistically significant.

25. There has been a decline in the percentage Anglo between 1980 and 1990 (from 37% to 28%), but the fall is less significant than is the usual case for areas with relatively high populations of minority residents (as can be deduced from the regression results in Table 8). Some analysts, such as Jim Johnson of the University of North Carolina, contend that this is just a temporary phenomenon and that Carson, like other areas, will lose Anglo and perhaps African-American residents; on the other hand, local leaders contend that Carson is “the microcosm of the future: a multicultural city which is getting along” and give credit to human relations activities and organizing (see Riccardi 1998).

26. Miller (1981) was the clearest in arguing that the incorporation efforts under the Lakewood system were intended to benefit wealthier Anglo residents: By drawing boundaries around themselves and contracting for essential services, such residents were able to lower their tax rates while leaving the poor and their needs concentrated in unincorporated areas of the county and therefore paid for from general county coffers. As such, it was “a ‘revolt of the rich against the poor,’ carried out by exit rather than voice” (Miller 1981, 9). Miller also provided a succinct history of annexations by the city of Los Angeles and detailed how the Lakewood plan was a response by the county as well as other political forces.

27. Active organizing campaigns are also under way among service workers at Los Angeles International Airport and elsewhere.

28. Following the procedure in Pastor et al. (2000), I define working as having a full- or nearly full-time job, with full-time meaning at least 35 hours a week and 50 weeks a year and nearly full-time meaning less than full-time but at least 35 hours a week and at least 25 weeks a year. Poverty is defined as being in a household that lives below 150% of the poverty line; this strategy ensures that low-wage teens in a high-income household are not counted, but it risks losing low-wage workers in struggling households with multiple earners such that the household is barely above the 150% cutoff. The calculations were made for all full- and nearly full-time workers in the 5% Public Use Microdata Sample and were then aggregated (using population weights) to the PUMA level. This procedure, by the way, illustrates one of the methodological advantages of using the PUMA shapes: The researcher can generate his or her own summary counts and not rely on the Census Summary Tape Files, which, for example, do not offer summary counts by tract for the working poor.

29. See “Los Angeles: Synonymous with Sprawl, L.A. Has Miles to Go in Regional Efforts” (1997).

30. UCLA planning professor Goetz Wolff, for example, argued that the Alameda Corridor Project enjoyed “no explicit linkages between the construction of the corridor and actual job creation and business development in the corridor cities” (as quoted in Ohland 1995; see also the analysis of trade winners and trade strugglers in Pastor 1999).

31. See Dickerson, Romney, and Torres (1998).

32. Raphael Sonenshein (1993) has eloquently discussed the previous African-American/Jewish alliances that helped pave the election of Tom Bradley and then sustained a key political base for his 20-year reign as mayor of the city. An additional issue for the rainbow approach is that it is generally focused on attaining political power, particularly in specific cities and communities. Although seizing the reins of local government can be an avenue to economic improvement, such an approach can also lead to an excessive focus on public-sector benefits and job opportunities. Given that the public sector is generally downsizing, this offers fewer prospects than a focus on shifting the terms of engagement in the private sector, a task more suited to unions, community-based organizations, and other vehicles for empowerment.

33. With the help of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, the bus riders union sued the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) for violating civil rights by shifting resources from the largely minority bus system to the more Anglo and middle-class rail system; a consent decree in 1996 forced the MTA to put more buses on the street, restrain fare increases, and generally improve service.

34. A detailed and more discursive discussion of all these community-based organizations is available in Pastor et al. (forthcoming).

35. See, for example, the work of the Delaware Valley Community Reinvestment Fund (Nowak 1997) as well as the efforts of the St. Louis-based Metropolitan Congregations United (Rusk 1998) or the Baltimore Citizens Planning and Housing Association (Lutton 1997). One of the first to coin the phrase "community-based regionalism" to describe these efforts was Bernstein (1997).

REFERENCES

- Barnes, W., and L. Ledebur. 1998. *The new regional economies: The U.S. common market and the global economy*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Bernstein, S. 1997. Community-based regionalism key to sustainable future. *Neighborhood Works* 20 (6): 10.
- Betancur, J. J., and D. C. Gills, eds. 2000. *The collaborative city: Opportunities and struggles for blacks and Latinos in U.S. cities*. New York: Garland.
- Clark, W.A.V. 1996. Residential patterns: Avoidance, assimilation, and succession. In *Ethnic Los Angeles*, edited by R. Waldinger and M. Bozorgmehr, 109-38. New York: Russell Sage.
- Dear, M. 1996. In the city, time becomes visible: Intentionality and urbanism in Los Angeles. In *The city: Los Angeles and urban theory at the end of the twentieth century*, edited by A. J. Scott and E. W. Soja, 76-105. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press.
- Dickerson, M., L. Romney, and V. Torres. 1998. Despite Wilson order, goals for diversity thrive elsewhere. *Los Angeles Times*, 13 March.
- Farley, R., H. Schumann, S. Bianchi, D. Colasanto, and S. Hatchett. 1978. Chocolate city, vanilla suburbs: Will the trend toward racially separate communities continue? *Social Science Research* 7:319-44.
- Frey, W. H. 1998. Changing suburban demographics: Beyond the black-white, city-suburb typology. Paper presented at Suburban Racial Change Conference, March, Harvard University, Boston.
- Frey, W. H., and E. L. Fielding. 1995. Changing urban populations: Regional restructuring, racial polarization, and poverty concentration. *Cityscape: A Journal of Policy Development and Research* 1 (2): 1-38.
- Fulton, W. 1997. *The reluctant metropolis: The politics of urban growth in Los Angeles*. Point Arena, CA: Solano.

- Jargowsky, P. 1997. *Poverty and place: Ghettos, barrios, and the American city*. New York: Russell Sage.
- . 1998. Crossing the line: Poverty in the suburbs. Paper presented at Suburban Racial Change Conference, March, Harvard University, Boston.
- Johnson, J. H., Jr., C. K. Jones, W. C. Farrell, Jr., and M. L. Oliver. 1992. The Los Angeles rebellion: A retrospective view. *Economic Development Quarterly* 6 (4): 356-72.
- Laslett, J.H.M. 1996. Historical perspectives: Immigration and the rise of a distinctive urban region, 1900-1970. In *Ethnic Los Angeles*, edited by R. Waldinger and M. Bozorgmehr, 39-75. New York: Russell Sage.
- Los Angeles: Synonymous with sprawl, L.A. has miles to go in regional efforts. 1997. *Neighborhood Works*, November/December.
- Lutton, L. 1997. Boon or bane for your backyard? *Neighborhood Works* 20 (6): 18-21.
- Meyerson, H. 1999. No justice, no growth. *LA Weekly*, 17-23 July.
- Miller, G. J. 1981. *Cities by contract: The politics of municipal incorporation*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Nowak, J. 1997. Neighborhood initiative and the regional economy. *Economic Development Quarterly* 11 (1): 3-10.
- Ohland, G. 1995. The economic engine that couldn't. *LA Weekly*, 9-15 June.
- Ong, P., E. Castellanos, L. Echavarría, A. Forsyth, Y. Galindo, M. Richardson, S. Rigdon-Bensinger, P. Schimek, and H. Van Houten. 1989. *The widening divide: Income inequality and poverty in Los Angeles*. Los Angeles: Graduate School of Architecture and Urban Planning, UCLA.
- Ong, P. M., and J. R. Lawrence. 1995. Race and employment dislocation in California's aerospace industry. *Review of Black Political Economy* 23 (3): 91-101.
- Orfield, M. 1997. *Metropolitica: A regional agenda for community and stability*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution.
- . 1998. Conflict or consensus: Forty years of Minnesota metropolitan politics. *Brookings Review* 16 (4): 31-34.
- . 2000. *Los Angeles metropatterns: Social separation and sprawl in the Los Angeles region*. Minneapolis, MN: Metropolitan Area Research Corporation.
- Pastor, M., Jr. 1995. Economic inequality, Latino poverty and the civil unrest in Los Angeles. *Economic Development Quarterly* (9) 3: 238-58.
- . 1999. Internationalization and inequality in Los Angeles [Mimeo]. Santa Cruz, CA: Latin American & Latino Studies, University of California at Santa Cruz.
- Pastor, M., Jr., P. Dreier, E. Grigsby, and M. López Garza. 2000. *Regions that work: How cities and suburbs can grow together*. Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press.
- . Forthcoming. Common ground at ground zero? The new economy and the new organizing in Los Angeles. *Antipode*.
- Pastor, M., Jr., J. Sadd, and J. Hipp. 2001. Which came first? Toxic facilities, minority move-in, and environmental justice. *Journal of Urban Affairs* (23) 1: 1-21.
- Pulido, L. 2000. Rethinking environmental racism: White privilege and urban development in Los Angeles. 90 (1): 12-40.
- Riccardi, N. 1998. At age 30, Carson celebrates its multicultural success. *Los Angeles Times*, 18 January.
- Rusk, D. 1998. St. Louis congregations challenge urban sprawl. *Shelterforce* 97:21-22, 26.
- . 1999. *Inside game, outside game: Winning strategies for saving urban America*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution.
- Sabagh, G., and M. Bozorgmehr. 1996. Population change: immigration and ethnic transformation. In *Ethnic Los Angeles*, edited by R. Waldinger and M. Bozorgmehr, 79-107. New York: Russell Sage.

- Savitch, H. V., D. Collins, D. Sanders, and J. Markham. 1993. Ties that bind: Central cities, suburbs, and the new metropolitan region. *Economic Development Quarterly* 7 (4): 341-57.
- Soja, E., and A. Scott. 1996. Introduction to Los Angeles: City and region. In *The city: Los Angeles and urban theory at the end of the twentieth century*, edited by A. J. Scott and E. W. Soja, 1-21. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press.
- Sonenshein, R. J. 1993. *Politics in black and white: Race and power in Los Angeles*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press.
- . 1994. Los Angeles coalition politics. In *The Los Angeles riots: Lessons for the urban future*, edited by M. Baldassare, 47-71. Boulder, CO: Westview.
- U.S. Department of Housing and Development (HUD). 1996. *America's new economy and the challenge of the cities: A HUD report on metropolitan economic strategy*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.
- Voith, R. 1992. City and suburban growth: Substitutes or complements? *Business Review* September/October:21-33.
- . 1998. Do suburbs need cities? *Journal of Regional Science* 38 (3): 445-64.
- Wilson, W. J. 1996. *When work disappears: The world of the new urban poor*. New York: Knopf.

Manuel Pastor, Jr. is a professor of Latin American and Latino studies and director of the Center for Justice, Tolerance, and Community at the University of California, Santa Cruz. His most recent book is Regions That Work: How Cities and Suburbs Can Grow Together (University of Minnesota Press, 2000, coauthored with Peter Dreier, Eugene Grigsby, and Marta López-Garza); his current research interests include environmental equity and changing labor markets in regional economies.