California Metropatterns
A Regional Agenda for Community and Stability in California
Myron Orfield
Thomas Luce
Key Findings

- The suburbs are diverse
  - At-risk, aging
  - At-risk, developing
  - Affluent, residential
  - Affluent job centers

- All suburbs are hurt by lack of regional cooperation

- All places benefit from regional reform

- Reform is politically possible
Schools are a powerful indicator of a community’s health and a predictor of the future.

Middle-class families choose to live in the least poor school districts they can afford.

When a place’s schools begin to become poorer, in more cases than not, the community will follow.
LOS ANGELES REGION:
Percentage of Elementary Students Eligible for Free Lunch by School, 1997

Legend
Regional Value: 60.0%
- 0.0 to 13.1% (279)
- 13.4 to 39.7% (377)
- 40.0 to 59.9% (341)
- 60.0 to 76.4% (379)
- 76.6 to 93.0% (464)
- 93.2% or more (314)
- No data (33)

Note: Schools with “No data” had less than 50 students in 1997.
Map 2
LOS ANGELES REGION:
Change in Percentage Points of Elementary Students Eligible for Free Lunch by School, 1992-1997

Legend
Regional Value: 5.6
-47.8 to -1.1 (308)
-1.0 to 1.9 (367)
2.0 to 5.5 (316)
5.6 to 10.7 (339)
10.8 to 17.4 (351)
17.5 or more (343)
No data (163)

Note: Schools with "no data" either had fewer than 50 students or else did not have free lunch data available in 1992.

Data Source: National Center for Education Statistics.
LOS ANGELES REGION:
Percentage of Non-Asian Elementary Students by School, 1997

Legend
Regional Value: 62.9%
- 0.0 to 22.8% (389)
- 23.1 to 41.4% (347)
- 41.7 to 62.7% (371)
- 62.9 to 78.1% (324)
- 78.3 to 94.8% (426)
- 95.0% or more (320)
- No data (10)

Note: Schools with "No data" had less than 50 students in 1997.

Data Source: National Center for Education Statistics.
LOS ANGELES REGION:
Change in Percentage Points of Non-Asian Minority Elementary Students by School, 1992-1997

Legend
Regional Value: 5.6%
-28.7 to 0.0 (328)
0.1 to 2.3 (357)
2.4 to 5.5 (353)
5.6 to 9.5 (382)
9.6 to 16.0 (372)
16.2 or more (233)
No data (162)

Note: Schools with "No data" either had fewer than 50 students or else did not have race data available in 1992.

Data Source: National Center for Education Statistics.
The tax resources of local government

- Tax capacity indicates how high tax rates must be to support a given level of public services.

- Current and prospective residents and businesses want value for their tax dollars.

- Low local tax base combined with high needs push tax rates up and/or services down.
LOS ANGELES REGION:
Percentage Change in Tax Capacity per Household by Municipality and County Unincorporated Area, 1993-1998

Legend
Regional Value: -0.8%
-38.4 to -11.9% (31)
-11.0 to -7.3% (30)
-6.9 to -1.3% (43)
-0.8 to 0.9% (22)
1.6 to 16.3% (46)
20.4% or more (10)
No data (1)

Municipality with “No data” did not have tax data available in 1993 or 1998.

Data Source: California State Controller.
Analysis of over 450 municipalities showed three distinct types of communities:

- **At-risk suburbs** — 54% of the population
  - At-Risk, Aging (22%)
  - At-Risk, Developing (32%)

- **Affluent suburbs** — 18% of the population
  - Residential centers (6%)
  - Job centers (12%)

- **Central cities** — 29% of the population
MEET PATTERNS
Resources vs. Need

Combined Property and Sales Tax Capacity per Household

Percent of Students in Poverty
LOS ANGELES REGION: Community Classification

Legend
- At-Risk, Aging Suburbs (54)
- At-Risk, Developing Suburbs (54)
- Affluent Residential Enclaves (30)
- Affluent Job Center (42)
- Central City (1)
- No Data (1)

Needless, an Affluent Residential Enclave city, is included in the legend but is not shown on the map.

Data Source: Metropolitan Area Research Corporation.
SAN FRANCISCO REGION: Community Classification

Legend
- At-Risk, Segregated (11)
- At-Risk, Older (1)
- At-Risk, Lower Density (47)
- Bedroom Developing (32)
- Affluent Job Center (17)
- Central City (2)
- No data (3)

Data Source: Metropolitan Area Research Corporation.
SAN DIEGO REGION:
Community Classification
CENTRAL VALLEY REGION:
Community Classification

Legend
- At-Risk, Aging Suburbs
- At-Risk, Developing Suburbs
- Affluent Residential Enclaves
- Affluent Job Center
- Central City

Data Source: California State Controllers.
All suburbs are hurt by the status quo

- **At-risk, aging**
  - Low tax base, high and increasing social stress, insufficient or aging infrastructure, insufficient spending on schools

- **At-risk, developing**
  - Growth-related costs, low tax base, high and increasing social stress, insufficient spending on schools and roads

- **Affluent, residential**
  - Long commutes and loss of green space.

- **Affluent job centers**
  - Growth-related costs, congestion, long commutes and loss of green space
Policies to reduce fiscal inequality already exist in all states. Equity-based reforms can:

- Reduce dependence on local property/sales taxes
- Reduce inequalities in tax rates and services
- Reduce competition for tax base
- Encourage joint economic development efforts
- Complement regional land-use planning
Sales tax-base sharing in California could:

- Reduce inequalities in tax base
- Reduce inefficient competition for sales tax base
- Benefit 60-75% of residents in CA’s largest metros
- Encourage joint economic development efforts
- Complement regional land-use planning
The central elements of comprehensive land-use reform include:

- **Smart growth**
  - Reinvest in existing areas
  - Develop in areas that can support it
  - Protect open space
  - Reduce barriers to affordable housing

- **Regional coordination of local planning**
  - Statewide efforts already exist in 16 states
Regional governments exist in all metro areas. They need to perform better by:

- Better coordinating infrastructure with growth
- Reinvesting in older parts of the region
- Developing regional land-use plans
Regional reform is possible

- Nationwide, 80 percent of swing districts are in at-risk and developing suburbs.
- The party that wins these districts will control state legislatures, governorships, Congress and the presidency.
- Regionalism is deeply in the self-interest of these suburbs.
Regional cooperation helps all suburbs

- At-risk, aging
  - Lower taxes, better services and more reinvestment
- At-risk, developing
  - More resources for schools, sewers and clean water, shorter commutes
- Affluent
  - Less congestion, more open space, shorter commutes