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Network Governance and Regional Equity: Shared Agendas or Problematic Partners?

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Network Governance and Regional Equity: Shared Agendas or Problematic Partners?

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I. **Introduction/Motivation**

The new economic reality of heightened international competition, constant technological change, and cross border migration flows—referred to in shorthand as "globalization"—has upset traditional forms of governing capitalist economies. Nation-states were once considered the only appropriate scale to create socialist planned economies or establish the institutions that guide free-market exchange. Today, many political scientists and sociologists argue that the sovereignty of national governments is either greatly diminished (Jessop 1994; Ohmae 1995; Peck 1994) or drastically restructured by "networked" forms of social exchange that ignore political boundaries (Castells 1996). Economic geographers and regional economists argue that globalization has ushered in a new form of competition through which the competitive advantage of firms is set by actors and institutions that operate at a regional or metropolitan scale (Sabel 1989; Storper 1997). Ultimately, there is an emerging consensus in the academic literature as well as policy discourse that the metropolitan scale is a key level of economic exchange.

At the same that economic globalization has led to a "rescaling of the state" (Brenner 2004), traditional models of public action have also been questioned both within and outside of the academy. The archetypical bureaucratic state agency—with clearly defined jurisdictional and functional boundaries—has been challenged by new modes of governing such as market-based organizations drawn from the New Public Management (NPM) approach, public-private partnerships, and coordinated citizen participation through deliberative processes. The restructuring of existing forms of public action opens up new opportunities for non-state actors, such as organized interest groups,

private industry and citizens to engage in governing. Political scientists have agued that decision making will increasingly take place within "networks" of related yet independent social actors rather than within top-down hierarchical organizations (Kettl 2005). Yet the shift towards *governance* and away from *government* may result in decision-making paralysis and diminished political accountability. Rather than a full retreat of bureaucracy, we increasingly see an amalgamation of administrative forms, including hybrids of traditional bureaucracies, market driven organizations, and governance networks incorporating broader participation (Olsen 2005).

While there has been a considerable amount of scholarly work on the increasing salience of the metropolitan scale and on the "network governance" processes, there has been little overlap between these two literatures. We seek to join these fields by: 1) Evaluating the challenges and opportunities posed by network governance systems in a range of policy venues from the local to the global level, and; 2) Applying these insights to the problem of economic inequality within metropolitan regions and the multiple efforts to address it. While other pressing problems are clearly regional in scope (e.g. congestion, natural resource management), we choose to examine equity for two reasons. First, there is considerably less scholarly work on equity issues within the network governance literature[1]. Second, there is now a nascent and rapidly growing movement within some metropolitan areas that explicitly calls for a pro-equity policy agenda at the regional level. Scholars have only recently begun to study this emergent form of *community based regionalism* (Pastor et al. 2004; Pastor 2001b). Although we are

[1] For example much of the literature on successful collaborative governance networks documents cases that solve public action problems around common pool resources or the provision of collective goods. On redistributional issues, however, a common interest is less clearly defined and actors are, theoretically, more inclined to view governance processes as a zero-sum game.

sympathetic with the goals of regional equity and the participatory promise of network governance, our objective is to paint a realistic picture of the limits to joining these agendas.

Political networks are modes of governing. Although networks are often characterized as non-hierarchical and built on reciprocal relationships (Powell 1990), they are also arenas for political bargaining like any other governing institution. Understanding how governing works within a network requires attention to familiar questions about power in political institutions: Who sets the agenda? Who has a seat at the decision-making table? Who sets the rules that guide decision-making processes? We found that the literature on global governance is more attentive to these central questions than the more sanguine approach to governance in studies of U.S. domestic politics. For political actors, network governance poses a spectrum of solutions *and* problems to the task of governing. The solutions include opportunities for information sharing, flexibility in rules and processes, and open deliberation. Some problems include limited access to the network and over or under representation of certain interests within the network. Governance networks which ostensibly promote access to governing may mirror or magnify power and resource imbalances in society. As multi-jurisdictional landscapes with newly formed cross-jurisdictional institutions, the metropolitan and global scales share similar political opportunity structures. In both cases, emerging efforts at network governance offer illustrations of the problems posed by governing through networks and the opportunities that networks can offer to savvy political actors. In particular, the challenges and opportunities that proponents of the regional equity agenda face in U.S.

metropolitan regions share much with the political opportunity structure of transnational advocacy networks.

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows. Section II restates the problems associated with coordinating public action at the regional scale and reviews past attempts to construct formal regional institutions. This brief review underscores the need to scan the wider field of "network governance" for insights. Section III summarizes the literature on network governance applied to both metropolitan regions and global politics and focuses on the solutions and problems that network governance offers political actors. Section IV analyzes the various attempts to pursue a redistributive or pro-equity agenda—including community based regionalism—at the metropolitan scale through the lens of network governance, emphasizing the spectrum of problems and solutions that regional equity proponents are likely to face. Section V concludes and summarizes.

II. The problem of the metropolitan scale

The social, economic, and environmental trends which link local communities within metropolitan regions are growing increasingly salient in political debates at the local, state, and national level. Clogged "beltways" string together rings of ostensibly "separate" suburban communities; smog thoughtlessly crosses jurisdictional boundaries to blanket entire valleys; and continuous urban growth draws populations and employment away from the central city. While these problems effect nearly everyone within a given region, the specific and everyday indicators of economy inequality—uneven access to jobs, affordable housing, and high quality education—are felt disproportionately across a complex geography made up of formal jurisdictional boundaries (e.g. urban versus suburban, inner-ring versus ex-urban) as well as the

informal, yet tractable fault lines of racially and ethnically segregated neighborhoods. Overall, the institutional fragmentation of U.S. metropolitan areas is complex and highly variegated, with jurisdictional divisions among cities, counties, townships, school districts, and special districts, as well as the overlapping authority of state and national bureaucracies. This regional institutional smorgasbord can present challenges to inter-jurisdictional cooperation for even the most basic efforts at shared service provision in areas such as transportation or waste disposal. Yet the challenge is heightened considerably for issues of equity, such as tax base sharing, setting wage standards, providing low-income housing assistance, and seeking environmental justice.

While the regional or metropolitan scale has become increasingly important for competitiveness and for solving practical and environmental problems, efforts to redraw formal jurisdictional boundaries at the metropolitan level have, generally, been turned down by the public. The argument to consolidate competing local jurisdictions into unified metropolitan governments—to avoid free-rider problems, fiscal disparities, and rationalize public service provision—dates back to the early 20th century (Stephens and Wikstrom 2000). However the political will to create such formal institutions and grant them redistributional authority has waxed and waned throughout the 20th century. Three distinct models of "waves" (Wallis 1994) of metropolitan governance can be identified in the literature.

The first "wave" of governance reforms—referred to as rationalization—consisted of local government consolidation primarily through the annexation of suburban areas by the dominant central city. Annexations were common in the late 19th and early 20th century, however after World-War II suburbs fought annexation and the jurisdictional

complexity of metropolitan areas grew rapidly in the ensuing decades. While mainstream planners continued to view the fragmented metropolis as highly problematic, a group of political scientists and economists defined a new model of metropolitan governance based on public choice theory (Ostrom, Tiebout and Warren 1961; Tiebout 1956). Public choice theorists argued that multiple competing local governments actually produce greater efficiency and promote more democratic participation. Citizens act as consumers who "vote with their feet" and select the local government that best matches their preference for public goods with their capacity to pay for services. Under this model of governance, metropolitan-wide institutions are only created through voluntary cooperation among independent local governments. This model explains the proliferation of regional special-purpose districts that are enabled to provide a only narrow set of 'pure' public goods that have broad support (e.g. mosquito abatement, water treatment).

During the 1990s there was heightened recognition on the part of politicians, planners, and foundations that the existing pattern of metropolitan growth generates unwanted outcomes (e.g. suburban sprawl). Proponents of the "Smart Growth" movement argued that a host of social problems would be ameliorated through stronger institutional constraints (on the actions of individual local governments) at the metropolitan scale. Despite the renewed interest in acting regionally, this "third wave" (Wallis 1994) of regionalism does not call for the creation of a single formal regional government. Instead, this approach recognizes the importance of multiple political entities with a metropolitan region, yet seeks to find stable institutional mechanisms that promote metropolitan-wide cooperation and overcome the problems of excessive

competition. In the current model of metropolitan governance, the landscape of decision making/policy action is highly variegated. In some issue areas multiple independent local governments cooperate to provide public services, on other problems the state or federal government may force or encourage regional cooperation, in yet other forms, non-governmental organizations may take the lead role in acting regionally (often on issues of economic competitiveness). All of these forms of non-traditional action fall under the term metropolitan "governance."

Governance: old and new

> Observation of certain local communities makes it appear that inclusive over-all organization for many general purposes is weak or non-existent…A great deal of the communities' activities consist of undirected co-operation of particular social structures, each seeking particular goals, and in doing so, meshing with others. (Long 1958, 252)

Although the term "governance" has the sheen of a fresh concept, as it is increasingly redefined and explored in a rush of scholarly work, the underlying notion that much of "governing" does not emerge from the "government" was most eloquently described by Norton Long nearly 50 years ago. Long bases his work on a study of the Boston metropolitan area, and his observations provide the backdrop for conceptualizing the local or metropolitan level as "an ecology of games." In his use of the term "games," Long is not implying formal theoretical models, but rather the specialized behavior of various groups of individuals who inhabit the same territorial space. Some individuals play by the rules of banking, others by the rules of politics, and so on. What governs these numerous and simultaneously occurring games? In Long's formulation, over-all institutions are either lacking or weak, and the "common interest, if such there be, is to be realized through institutional interactions rather than through the self-conscious

rationality of a determinate group charged with its formulation and attainment." (Long 1958, 255)

Yet the term "governance" implies hopeful expectations which are utterly absent from Long's ecology of games. This is not due to the term itself, but is a product of scholarly attention to various types of "new governance" which are often conflated with governance itself, such as "collaborative governance," "participatory governance," and "public-private partnerships." Studies which seek to define these types of governance often draw on empirical examples which roughly approximate the geographic scale of the metropolitan region. These include studies of collaborative resource governance, such as watersheds (Innes et al. 2006), and governance involving local citizens in school or police department decision-making (Fung, Wright and Abers 2003). Collaboration, participation, and partnership are not neutral terms; their positive valence suggests a form of decision making which is cooperative, open, and includes a "seat at the table" for all interested parties. In practice, research on these modes of governance turns up mixed results, whether success is defined in terms of the outcome of the decision-making or the process itself (Ansell and Gash 2006).

As Long observed 50 years ago, today there remains no single institution bears clear responsibility for the boundary crossing problems of metropolitan regions. Before any regional institution is constructed to address a given issue, there must be a minimum level of political consensus about the problem itself and the ability to solve it. Because there is no preexisting electoral geography at the regional scale this political consensus cannot be studied in a traditional sense. Instead the process of building consensus to act regionally can occur at various overlapping scales and involves a wide variety of social

actors including grassroots citizens' movements, non-profit advocacy groups and business associations as well as elected officials and organized political parties. Within this complex system of governing institutions and actors does the study of "network governance" offer a solution? In particular, can examples of network governance from other fields shed light on the seemingly intractable problems of regional inequalities?

III. Governance Networks

Networks, much like governance, have become a frequently used and often misunderstood concept. Yet the descriptive power of viewing the relationships among actors as a network serves as a complementary and useful conceptual framework for understanding patterns of governance. Public organizations are traditionally viewed as hierarchical Weberian bureaucracies, with centralized power and a top-down command structure. Due to the trends towards new governance, alongside increasing pressure for public organizations to handle more complex, multi-layered, and technologically sophisticated issues, the traditional hierarchical form of organization no longer describes the form of governing in a number of policy areas. For example, local government agencies are increasingly likely to contract out for services (such as water treatment or garbage collection) to private firms, local public bureaucracies more frequently involve advocacy groups and other interested parties in decision-making, and large scale efforts to solve metropolitan problems—such as reforming public school systems or providing low cost housing—increasingly involve the combined resources of private foundations, non-profit advocacy groups, and various public bureaucracies. These trends contribute to a form of governance which resembles a horizontal network of relationships rather than a tightly ordered hierarchy.

What characteristics indicate that a public organization or a cluster of organizations is a "network"? Powell (1990) provides a useful set of defining factors which distinguish networks from hierarchical and market forms of organization. For example, networks typically involve relational communication across actors, rather than communication governed by top-down commands and routines. Additionally, networks are built on reciprocal forms of exchange—actors provide information or resources to one another to support the goals of the network, rather than for economic gain or to follow certain protocol. Thus, networks depend upon a higher level of goal consensus and normative commitment among actors than other forms of organization in order to maintain the reciprocal exchange among actors. Additionally, networks are typically more flexible than hierarchical forms of organization. Actors involved in networks are not as reliant on standard protocols, and are often better situated to adapt the organization's structure and procedures to new circumstances (Ansell 2000).

In the governance literature, the network form is sometimes cast as a way of dealing with particularly complex governing problems, such as rapidly changing policy areas or issues involving coordination among large numbers of actors. Although this strand in the literature often draws on empirical examples, there is also a normative perspective underlying these studies, suggesting that a governance network is a preferred form of governing due to its purported flexibility and openness to participants. In our view, these studies see governance networks as a "solution." These types of studies frequently draw on examples from governance of natural resources, such as watersheds or nature preserves. A separate strand in the governance literature focuses more on the circumstances which make any form of governing very difficult. In these studies, a

system which lacks hierarchy or involves a wide range of actors presents a great challenge to many actors and key opportunities for others. When these studies discuss empirical examples of governance networks, they focus more on description than normative claims. In our view, these studies see governance networks as a "problem," which requires new approaches and strategies among the participating actors. This is not to say that governance networks are negative; however, the organizational form is not a solution in itself—it requires the actors to adapt, or in some cases, work to change the rules and structure of the governance network to fit their goals. Studies which cast governance networks as a problem often focus on governance at the global level.

Governance networks as "solution"

Public organizations often undergo restructuring in order to increase the organization's effectiveness or improve the organization's ability to adapt to outside changes or uncertainty. The expectation that a new form of organizing can change and improve the way groups of organizations interact underlies the literature on governance networks as solutions. Often, this literature juxtaposes the "old" hierarchical and traditionally bureaucratic mode of organization with the "new" governance network. A summary of this perspective appears in Kettl's (2005) report, "The *Next* Government of the United States: Challenges for Performance in the 21st Century." Kettl discusses several imperatives for changing the structure of U.S. government institutions to respond to future challenges, such as the increasing incidence of non-routine or "wicked" problems (Kettl, 2005, 19). Wicked problems typically allow little time for responders to react, there is a high cost to failure, they involve issues critical to citizens needs (such as health or transportation), and responsibility for the problem is highly diffused. Several of

the imperatives that Kettl identifies are characteristics of governance networks. For example, Kettl asserts that "public administration [should function] more *organically*, through heterarchy, than *rigidly* through hierarchy," and "citizenship [should work] more through *engagement* than *remoteness*" (Kettl, 2005, 8). These imperatives involve a diffusion of power to additional actors outside the traditional bureaucracy—a heterarchy—as well as increasing involvement by citizens. Additionally, they point to reciprocal forms of communication and the involvement of more outside groups and ordinary citizens in decision-making. Kettl argues that in order for government agencies to have immediate access to knowledge of rapidly changing problems and remain responsive to the public interest, this form of organization is not only preferable, but necessary.

Kettl's call for bureaucratic reorganization is persuasive and calls attention to serious deficiencies in existing bureaucratic arrangements, yet he is largely focused on bureaucracies at the federal level. Other authors have focused on the merits of governance networks in contexts more comparable to the metropolitan region—particularly the governance of watersheds. Watersheds may be uniquely well suited for network governance. For example, watersheds typically "span political, geographic, and ideological boundaries" (Imperial 2005, 283)—making cooperation among a diverse set of actors a necessary precursor to any form of governing. Additionally, public institutions are typically designed for a specific function, yet watersheds involve a wide range of policy areas from ecological to recreational to agricultural.

This problem of bureaucratic "silos" was a key stumbling block to cooperation over water management in California, yet Innes et al. demonstrate how the CALFED

Bay-Delta Water Program produced an organizational structure which promoted collaboration (Innes et al. 2006). CALFED's "networked system of distributed intelligence"(encourages cross agency and cross jurisdiction interactions, linkages across projects, local and regional—instead of centralized—decision making, greater public involvement, and flexible adaptive management (Innes et. al. 2006, 8). The cooperation achieved through CALFED emerged after much frustration with the deadlock which had resulted from traditional power brokering, hierarchical bureaucratic decision-making, and judicial involvement. The strength of CALFED's governance network was particularly evident when agencies needed to react quickly to real time environmental changes, suggesting that this form of governance "is more compatible than the traditional system with complex ecosystem management." (Innes et. al 2006, 8) Additionally, CALFED provided a forum for stakeholder groups with long-standing disagreements to develop mutual understanding. According to Innes et al. (2006), "As participants challenge one another, offer one another unfamiliar information, and create shared understandings, they can produce new strategies for dealing with thorny issues." The CALFED example provides a convincing case for governance networks in ecological management.

Yet watersheds are not the only place based form of governance networks to draw the attention of researchers. At the local level, participatory governance has emerged as another alternative to traditional bureaucracy. Fung and Wright (2001) identify "empowered participatory governance" as a route to increasing citizen involvement in decision-making as well as improving the responsiveness of government agencies. Unlike the network governance of watersheds, empowered participatory governance does not usually involve horizontal or collaborative decision making coordinated among

government agencies and other organized participants. Rather, government agencies often engage in direct contact with private citizens. Yet empowered participatory governance shares many characteristics with network governance. Drawing from empirical examples such as local school councils in Chicago, Fung and Wright (2001) identify several principles and design features common to empowered participatory governance (Fung and Wright 2001). Two of the principles are diffusion of involvement in decision-making through bottom-up participation and deliberative solution generation. Institutional design features include devolution of political and administrative power to local groups such as neighborhood councils. Yet Fung and Wright (2001) also emphasize that the state typically remained a central actor in these efforts. Thus, empowered participatory democracy is closer to heterarchical network governance than traditional bureaucracy; however, the state remains the dominant actor in the network, by supervising and coordinating the activities of the participating citizens.

Each of these studies points to merits of network governance—for improving government response to "wicked" problems; for increasing the likelihood of cooperation among diverse interests; for improving government responsiveness to citizens; and for broadening participation in decision-making. Yet organizational structures—from hierarchical bureaucracies to governance networks—are not typically viewed as ends in themselves for the actors involved. Although Innes et al. (2006) emphasize the collaborative successes of CALFED, it is important to note the perspective of one stakeholder participant whom they quote. This stakeholder notes that "the good part about CALFED" is that "we set a ring…, [and] we know the rules of the fight in the ring" (Innes et. al 2006, 34) From the stakeholder's perspective, simply having access to a

forum and knowing the rules that govern the forum are the most important requirements for a fair fight. These actors often have policy related goals, and they may find more or less success in achieving those goals in different types of organizational arrangements. Brenner emphasizes a related point with regard to metropolitan regionalism:

> There is nothing intrinsically progressive, or, for that matter, intrinsically reactionary, about the metropolitan or regional scale of governance. Until they are vested with substantive political content and organizational capacities through place-specific sociopolitical struggles, metropolitan institutions represent no more than empty jurisdictional shells. (Brenner 2002, 18)

Similarly, governance networks do not intrinsically support a particular agenda—that agenda depends upon who participates in the network and the relative power of the participants. Thus, it is also important to view governance networks from the perspective of the "perplexed participant" attempting to work in a newly emerging governing context.

Governance networks as "problem"

In the words of the CALFED stakeholder, governance networks can produce a new set of "rules of the fight." In some cases, the new rules are instituted to replace or reform existing bureaucratic procedures. In other cases, there may be no pre-set rules, because no forum for governing in a particular geographic or policy area exists. The latter case is true of many policy areas in global governance. At the global level, institutions are often young, and stakeholders have only recently been taking advantage of new forms of technology which improve access to information. Yet at the global level, states retain legitimacy and access to resources far greater than non-governmental groups. Although the scale is quite different, it is often also true in U.S. metropolitan regions that broad regional institutions are new and emerging while localities (towns, cities, and counties) possess greater legitimacy and access to resources. Thus, it is instructive to examine the

emergence of governance networks at the global scale, while keeping parallels to the metropolitan region in mind.

One example of networks which have emerged at the international scale is transnational advocacy networks. Keck and Sikkink (1998) characterize these transnational networks as having "voluntary, reciprocal, and horizontal exchanges of information and services" (Keck and Sikkink 1998, 200). They provide examples of such networks advancing the causes of human rights, environmental protection, and women's rights. Yet these networks are difficult to sustain internationally, and the network form of organizing has largely emerged as a political strategy for the activists involved. These activists focus on "gathering and reporting reliable information" from their transnational contacts, and using "symbolic events and conferences to publicize issues and build networks" (Keck and Sikkink 1998) 200. Thus, a transnational advocacy network typically includes a collection of activists with a basic set of agreed upon normative commitments. The network may try to become involved in governance networks in order to promote a cause, but advocacy networks are not in the business of governing. In fact, they are simply participants in broader global civil society, a forum which Keck and Sikkink (1998) describe as a "fragmented and contested area" (Keck and Sikkink 1998, 33). These advocacy networks further emphasize the strategic and political perspective of participants in emerging or existing governance networks.

Regarding networks which do attempt to govern at the global level, a key question for the actors involved is "who has a seat at the table?" With non-governmental organizations claiming to speak for broad global constituencies and states concerned about infringements on sovereignty, having a seat at the table is an essential first step,

and may give the actor a “first comer” opportunity to set the rules of the emerging game. For example, in Dingwerth’s (2005) study of the World Commission on Dams, he observes that the commission designated three categories of stakeholders—intergovernmental, business, and civil society. Thus, business and intergovernmental institutions received “seats” equivalent to the rather large category of civil society—a catch-all for local or state based activists and transnational NGO’s. In this case, even if the rules of the governance network for dams are designed to promote reciprocal communication and engaged solution development, some groups with a large stake in the issue may have little opportunity to participate. Another example of this type of problem appears in the increasing prevalence of non-governmental systems for monitoring multi-national business practices. O’Rourke (O'Rourke) notes that non-governmental organizations vying to advocate for healthier and safer working conditions may actually crowd out the efforts of local union organizers. The businesses may feel more comfortable negotiating with the NGO and avoiding union demands, denying the unions a seat at the table. Thus, in some cases, it becomes a key goal of stakeholders to gain seats at the table for themselves and their supporters. This was the case for actors in the environmental transnational advocacy network involved in fighting tropical deforestation. The network participants sought to ensure that their interests would be represented in the agenda on tropical forest issues, and “won seats at the bargaining table for new actors,” including NGO’s and “local people” (Keck and Sikkink 1998, 160). An additional challenge for many participants in governance networks is the relative power held by different stakeholders and institutions involved in the network. As Keck and Sikkink

acknowledge regarding transnational advocacy networks—"power is exercised within networks, and power often follows from resources." (Keck and Sikkink 1998, 207)

Overall, when networks form around any social problem pre-existing power relations are pervasive. Groups with substantial resources often are first movers in creating new forums and can dictate who has a "seat at the table". Furthermore, power to set the agenda of emerging forums enables privileges actors to frame problems according to their preferences. This is problem is aptly illustrated in efforts to address social inequality in the emerging metropolitan governance networks.

IV. Network governance and regional equity

To ascertain whether the concept of *network governance* is a useful approach for scholars and policy makers who address social justice issues, it is necessary to understand the landscape of actions, actors, and forms of governing currently in place that promote equity within metropolitan regions. As discussed in section two, there have been many attempts over the past four decades to promote regionalism which—to varying degrees—address equity explicitly. In this section we scan the literature to summarize past examples of regional equity initiatives, note their strengths and weaknesses, and highlight the key social actors promoting each form (e.g. elites, grass-roots organizations, national bureaucracies). We devote extra attention to the most recent form of regional equity action discussed in the literature, *community based regionalism* (Pastor et al. 2004), as it is heralded as an effective strategy in practice and as it provides the closest parallel to the network governance discussion above.

In the table below we outline the main forms of pro-equity action at the regional scale. It important to note that the categories presented here are not necessarily mutually exclusive. It is possible for multiple forms to exist within one region.

Table 1. Identifying Forms of Regional Equity Action

Form	Example	Type of Actors involved	Strengths	Weaknesses
Top-down regionalism	Federal transportation legislation mandated creation of MPOs and regional planning processes for capital budgets. Equity is on the agenda in some regions.	-Federal government -Planners/ Technocrats	Creation of formal institutional scale. Federal dollars act as the carrot to bring stakeholders together.	Narrow spectrum for action with regard to equity issues.
State-led	-Minneapolis' MetroGov -Portland's Urban Growth Boundary	-State legislators -City/inner-ring suburban MWC. -Planners/ technocrats	-Formal police power -Direct revenue redistribution based on need.	-Declining urban power within the state houses. -Difficult to achieve in heterogeneous regions. -Indirect impacts through local government
Civic-led regional planning	Chicago Metropolis 2020	-Business and political elites. -Planners -Academics -Foundations	-Broad visioning powers. -possibility for boundary spanning	"Equity through the back door" (Bollens 2002) -Corporate definition of equity problem.
Community-based 1: spatially focused	-Community benefits agreements. (e.g. Staples Center in LA). -"Linked" housing	-Local CBOs. -Unions. -Housing advocacy	-Articulates clear "claim" for redistribution.	-Lower impact. -Potentially divisive

	development.	orgs.	-Links high profile developments to local needs.	
Community-based 2: networked social movements	-Movement to pass citywide or countywide minimum/living wage laws	-Local CBOs -National networks of CBOs -Foundations -Unions -Clergy	-Direct impact on population in need.	-Not truly regional (most laws are at the urban scale) -May generate business flight.

Top-down equity regionalism

Part of early, 'rationalist' justifications for metropolitan consolidation was the elimination of fiscal disparities generated by a fragmented local governance structure. While many planners and academics argued for formal consolidation during the 1960s and 1970s there was relatively little in the way of new federal or state mandates during this period (Stephens and Wickstrom, 2000). In the 1990s federal transportation legislation was passed with language that strongly encouraged metropolitan cooperation by designating a single metropolitan planning organization (MPO) in each region through which to funnel federal transportation investments.

While the bulk of the work of MPOs does not directly relate to distributional issues, two points argue for their inclusion on a list of 'potentially' pro-equity forms of action. First, MPO's make investments decisions on large-scale highway and transit system infrastructure. The scale of such investments inherently creates distinct winners and losers within metropolitan areas. There is some evidence that stronger MPOs take equity into account within the planning process. Second, the creation of MPOs and the resources made available to them through ISTEA effectively creates a new, formal

institution at the regional scale. The strengthening of the regional governance scale creates a public forum for disadvantaged groups to demand resources and redirect investments to underserved areas (Weir, forthcoming). However, since the scope of regional action is limited to the area of transportation, there may be limited scope to make significant impact of the overall level of inequality.

Regional equity through state-level legislation

The second major form of pro-equity regionalism stems for actions taken by the State legislature to form metropolitan institutions. The impetus behind creating state legislation that forced local revenue sharing within metropolitan areas lay in the observation that inner-ring suburbs began to experience "urban" problems such as economic decline, rising crime rates, and a declining tax base. The best example of this form of pro-equity regionalism is Minneapolis' creation of MetroGov in 1971 (Orfield).

The network of actors involved in creating MetroGov was largely limited to elected officials, while those who continue to implement the revenue sharing mechanisms are primarily technocrats. While the creation of formal institutions vested with the power and legitimacy to redistribute resources holds great potential for impacting both spatial and non spatial (labor market) forms of inequality, many researchers in the literature point out that this particular form of regionalism is not widely reproducible. Brenner (2002) expresses guarded optimism about this form when he writes that,

> the establishment of a regional coalition which includes both central cities and declining low-tax base suburbs, and which is simultaneously capable of commanding sufficient support in state legislatures to institute its policy proposals, is an extraordinarily difficult task. Nonetheless…such examples may provide important political reference points for analogous projects to promote progressive regional policies in other metropolitan regions. (Brenner 2002, 17).

Other scholars point out that the only regions which have created strong metropolitan institutions (Minneapolis and Portland) were less divisive along racial and economic lines

than many other large metro regions (Norris, 2001). Weir et al. (2005) point out that this form of regionalism has a dim future since the coalitions which typically supported urban interests in state legislatures have been weakened by institutional, demographic, and economic changes over the past two decades. Lastly, formal regional institutions may lack the flexibility of other forms of governance and may themselves become historical relics of a fixed jurisdictional geography.

Civic-based regionalism and equity

Civic-sector associations are the most common type of organization operating at the metropolitan scale in the United States. These organizations promote regional cooperation on a variety of issues with the primary goal of maintaining and enhancing regional competitiveness in the national and international spheres. For this reason regional civic organizations are most often formed by the business community in order to engage the public sector. While some scholars argue that civic-sector regional organizations, such as Chicago's Metropolis 2020, can be thought of in similar manner as urban growth regimes (Hamilton 2002), the level of influence such organizations have in setting a regional agenda remains mixed. However, there has been considerable growth in both the number and capacity of business-led regional associations (Kantor 2000).

Civic-based regional organizations have the resources to articulate regional goals and can convene private, non-profit, and civic sector elites. Both business-led and purely civic organizations devote significant financial resources to developing new regional plans which—more than anything—are visioning exercises that seek to promote a broad set of social goals for a given metropolitan area (Johnson 2001). In some cases regional

civic organizations have opened up goal articulation to participatory planning processes which are open to the public.[2]

The major weakness of civic-based regionalist efforts is that they provide only a narrow scope for action on equity issues. Distributional considerations are most often just one of five or six regional goals which, in the case of Chicago Metropolis 2020, includes economic competitiveness/business climate, environmental quality, housing accessibility, education/workforce development, public health, and transportation efficiency. Bollens' (2002) study of civic and public-private sector regional initiatives finds that social equity questions are rarely broached directly by local actors (most often elected officials and business elites) since these problems remain too controversial or threatening to the balance of urban and suburban interests. Instead, he argues that a limited regional equity agenda is pursued "through the back door" as regional civic organizations work to help implement federal or state programs, such as housing vouchers or court mandated desegregation, in a consciously regional manner.

From the perspective of network governance, progressive participants must balance their own goals with the interests of other members within a given organization. The degree to which progressive agents can influence civic organizations depends on their level of power within the network. Since economic competitiveness dominates the action agenda of organizations like Chicago Metropolios 2020, the power of progressive groups is severely limited. An indicator of the degree to which businesses dominate the internal discourse of such agencies can be seen in the creative re-branding of initiatives that have redistributive content. For example, Chicago's Metropolis 2020 advocates for a

[2] For a brief summary of the level and quality of participation across several dozen civic-led regional visioning processes, see: http://www.sustainablepittsburgh.org/pdf/Regional_Visioning_Jan_05.pdf.

regional distribution of "*workforce housing"* rather than "affordable housing," recasting a social justice issue (uneven residential choice) as something that promotes business competitiveness.

Community Based Regionalism

Federal forays into regionalism have largely been limited to infrastructure issues such as transportation and resource management. The lesson from Bollens (2002) is that within civic-based regional associations no one wants to have an overarching discussion about inequality. Furthermore, there seems to be less capacity for regional coalition building among state legislators because central city representatives face declining power relative to suburban lawmakers. Given these countervailing trends, who, is raising the issue of inequality at a regional scale today?

Over the past decade the argument for regional equity has largely come from grassroots community-based organizations which have only very recently begun to coalesce into a national network called the "regional equity movement". Pastor (2001) argues that what distinguishes community based regionalism from both the inter-jurisdictional cooperation model (á-la Orfield) and civic-sector regionalism is the fact that the call for redistribution comes from independent grassroots organizations who are reacting to the local consequences to regional inequality (e.g. concentrated poverty, joblessness, and neighborhood disinvestment). He claims that rather than pushing for urban-suburban cooperation or consolidation, groups of community based organizations began to work together across metropolitan areas. He describes that,

> A new series of L.A. organizations began to refocus their thinking and strategy on regional dynamics… recognizing the fact that the metro region had emerged as a central unity in the world economy and that this created opportunities for a "new organizing" in the Los Angeles area. (Pastor 2001, 263)

Here Pastor argues that progressive actors in Los Angeles use a perspective of the regional scale not as a means to create new formal institutions (e.g. MetroGov) but to find critical leverage points at which to seek specific redress against persistent inequality.

A primary example of this form of regionalism is the community benefits agreement created around the construction of a new basketball stadium and convention center in downtown Los Angeles. In 1999, progressive labor organizations and non-profit advocacy groups joined with affordable housing advocacy groups operating in the areas adjacent to the stadium. This group successfully negotiated with the Los Angeles County Community Redevelopment Agency and the private-sector developer to provide jobs to local residents, ensure that stadium jobs paid a living-wage, and contribute to an affordable housing fund. While these benefits accrued largely to residents and workers located in neighborhoods surrounding the Staples Center, they could not have been secured without an analysis of the importance of this project for the regional economy. In this sense we consider this form of community based regional action to be spatially focused.

Community-based organization and multiscalar networks: Living-wage coalitions and regionalism

Another, closely related form of community-based action to impact regional inequality is the campaign for a living-wage. Since 1994 over 140 local jurisdictions have passed 'living wage' ordinances that set higher wage and benefit standards for firms that contract with the government or receive any form of subsidy. At an even finer level, some cities have created specific "living-wage" zones within their city limits that bound an area of regional importance (e.g. Santa Monica's coast-line tourist zone and San Francisco's Airport). While these laws are enforced at the urban rather than metropolitan level, they nonetheless have the potentially to make a significant impact on regional inequality. By

raising the incomes of low-wage urban workers city-level labor market interventions such as living-wage laws may directly mitigate the spatial inequality between urban and suburban residents. However, such redistributional legislation may harm the city business climate and push firms from the city to the suburbs, undermining the intent of the law. Regardless of the overall direct impact of living and minimum-wage laws, the political coalitions that form to pass these ordinances my indirectly effect the problem of labor market inequality through its impact on the public discourse around economic inequality and social justice at the metropolitan level. Recent research points to the importance of national progressive networks and foundations in disseminating the concept of regional equity as well as the specific toolkit needed to pass living-wage legislation.

The role of national foundations in promoting the concept of regional equity has been documented recently by Kleidman (2004) and Pastor et. al. (2006). Kleidman describes that the Gamaliel Foundation has fully adopted a regional equity strategy in their grant making and technical assistance. Specifically this strategy promotes an analysis of the regional economy with an eye towards linking isolated communities to growing sectors (and locations) of the economy.

In the case of the "living-wage movement" (Pollin and Luce 1998) researchers have shown that national community organizing networks play a key role in transmitting policy innovation and political strategies to progressive cities throughout the United States. Based on data collected from 1994-1999, Martin (2001) finds that the existence of an ACORN[3] organizing chapter with a large central city increases the likelihood that

[3] Association of Community Organization for Reform Now (ACORN) is a national network of community-based organizations that advocate for low-income and minority communities throughout the United States. However, their activities and campaigns are strategically located in large, democratic cities and states (Martin, 2001).

the city will pass a living-wage ordinance. Although we are beginning to witness the inter-regional connection of progressive actors into higher scale networks, the specific strategies, alliances, and venues which local equity advocacy groups choose remains extremely important and unique to each region. For example, Martin (2001) also describes how a living-wage campaign initially failed in St. Paul, Minnesota because the ACORN chapter alienated influential local unions because they did not ally themselves with the local central labor council (CLC). To date there has been little research done on the potential for these local progressive coalitions to become stable institutions that can articulate a clear vision and, in turn effective policies, for income redistribution. Furthermore, while we see local living-wage coalitions participating in national networks, this does not necessarily mean that they will take on a stronger regional focus.

Ultimately, in any one region, the discourse around social justice is inherently ephemeral in that it is comprised of a series of "campaigns" which can be highly localized in a spatial sense (e.g. the Staples Center CBA) or aimed at a segment of the workforce (e.g. municipal living-wage ordinances). Researchers such as Pastor (2001) argue that many of these campaigns are an emerging form of regional action in that they often link justice claims to an analysis of wider trends in the regional economy. However, the degree to which either spatially focused community-based regionalist efforts or the 'networked' living-wage movement can initiate and sustain a regional dialogue remains uncertain.

Based on this review of the literature and recent policy innovation we conclude that, for equity issues, public deliberation does not take place around one fixed "table" around which all relevant stakeholders gather to engage one another in something

resembling an “ideal speech situation” (Habermas 1984). Instead, public deliberation occurs in an evolutionary manner as members of progressive networks—like the one Pastor (2001a) describes—engage networks of business and pro-growth interests in a series of skirmishes throughout the region and over time.

V. Conclusion

While there are important lessons drawn from the governance literature with regard to how networks themselves can remain successful and resilient organizations (e.g. incentive structure, use of informal knowledge), these insights may only pertain to behavior within advocacy networks. However, when one examines the broader political debate around equity in any given region, advocacy networks, such as those highlighted in the literature on community-based regionalism, are effectively one voice among many. Community-based networks may engage in debates with other network organizations such as local chambers of commerce, or hierarchies, such as municipal governments, or even individual agents themselves such as firms, workers and voters.

One lesson learned from the global scale is that power imbalances are pervasive throughout this larger frame of debate—often referred to as civil society. As described above, business-led regional associations have vastly greater resources to construct and project their “vision” of regional problems. In this way they may have more control over how “equity” problems are framed at the regional scale. Like the advocacy groups attempting to influence global governance, community-based organizations and progressive actors are forced into direct political actions or protest. These direct and immediate actions occur at “real” political venues such as city-council chambers or

voting booths. In contrast, building a new institution or formal jurisdiction is a slower process which may forestall political action in the short term.

Therefore the literature which focuses on network governance as a 'solution' is of little relevance for the regional equity movement, it depends on clearly defined stakeholders who come together to solve a specific tangible problem. As described here, the problem of inequality is contested and multifaceted and the fragmented nature of metropolitan regions inhibits the identification of a single spatial forum for policy debates. In this sense regional equity is a "wicked problem" in both the traditional sense as well as the spatial sense.

It seems increasingly likely that network governance proponents and the supporters of a regional equity agenda are on a collision course to "find each other." Network governance is a tactic on the look-out for agenda items; regional equity is an agenda in need of a tactic. Although we are sympathetic with the goals of regional equity and the participatory promise of network governance, we are cautious in viewing them as fully compatible. Drawing from Norton Long, we observe that a common interest in regional equity often is non-existent, or only evident within particular regional "games." If such a common interest is present, however, the institutions at the metropolitan level typically lack the capacity or political will to implement equity enhancing policies. We offer an alternative perspective on governance at the metropolitan regional level by drawing from the literature on global governance. Much like the global advocacy networks, as long as regional equity proponents remain on the edges of metropolitan forums they will have to compete in a fragmented and multilayered system, taking their victories where they can. For network governance helps advocates to build upon their

sporadic successes, proponents must not ignore the fundamentally political and strategic nature of the network itself.

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