

Re-Mixing City vs. Re-Mixing the Cities: Interactive Cities, Zipped Regions and Regional Coalition Model. The Case of Orange County as a Successful Illustration of Regional Coalition Model

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1 ABSTRACT

Social and urban stratification can pose a serious threat on attracting the masses into urban spaces, hence on sustainable existence of urban fabrics. This can further develop into possible safety and security risks on their dwellers and users. It may happen directly or indirectly by intensifying the visible or invisible boundaries between the cities and their outskirts, as well as those between the districts, boroughs, and neighborhoods within the cities. This is because those intensified boundaries physically restrict future developments and predispose them to failure even before gestation.

Traditionally authorities in larger cities have learned to deploy 'inclusiveness' so that the development plans can be carried out under a larger yet more unified umbrella of planning and managerial tasks. Quite the contrary, the smaller cities in most cases cannot come into the same point of agreement to make a coalition work, due to decentralization prescriptions along with many other reasons e.g. limited human resources, budget and time.

This paper aims to investigate Orange County in Southern California as one of the most successful regions in overcoming the aforementioned problem. The paper starts with an analytical history of demographic and geographical changes in the region. Contemplating on potentials of the region, it will then discuss how the entire region has been shaped based on the coalition at the scale it was formed. Finally, it concludes with a coalition model for regional planning and suggests its application to the similar situations for acquiring a record of success in regional developments.

2 INTRODUCTION

Social and urban stratification can pose a serious threat on attracting the masses into urban spaces, hence on sustainable existence of urban spaces and urban fabrics likewise. This can further develop into possible safety and security risks on their dwellers and users. It may occur as a result of assimilationist policies and urban gentrification, intensifying the visible or invisible boundaries between the cities and their outskirts, as well as those between the districts, boroughs, and neighborhoods within the cities. This is because those intensified boundaries restrict future developments and predispose them to failure even before gestation.

More recently, social and urban sustainability debates have concentrated on issues related to the terms incorporation and multiculturalism – or as a normative precept: mixed societies. Conversation about multiculturalism is of particular significance as a mode of inclusion (Kivisto and Faist, 2007); thereby having (re-)mixed city. Despite varied and contested meanings of multiculturalism, there is a general consensus that involves valorizing ethnic, cultural diversity, accessibility of resources, social mobility and avoidance of social stratification. Glazer (1997) asserts that 'we are all multiculturalists now' – even if it has not been translated into official policies (Favell, 1998, Modood, 2001, Pearson, 2001, Kivisto, 2002, Joppke and Morawska, 2003, Kymlicka, 2003). Kivisto and Faist (2007) however believe that 'more recently the view has been challenged by those who contend that the multicultural moment is over as state policy, social practice, and perhaps as theoretical construct as well' (See Delanty, 2000, p.104; and also Barry, 2001; Kelly, 2002; Wolfe, 2003; Joppke, 2005).

Mixed society and mixed city in practice go beyond implementing and maintaining mere social practice, cultural features, and state policy. It is a complex, multi-layered and multi-dimensional practice which engages every social structure of city actively and effectively. The mixed city could be achieved, even if partially, by giving weight to diversity of economy, ethnicity, language, etc. This diversity can be reached by adopting diversifying policies in all respects including spatial and physical planning.

Contrary to the fact that the United States is accused of being an *assimilationist model of melting pot*, State of California's Orange County with 34 cities, is a highly demanded and a growing county, which can pride itself on embracing diversity and multiculturalism. This county has successfully enhanced the idea of

diversity through what we shall call '*mixing the cities*'; by mixing many social, cultural, economic, and spatial aspects of planning within urban contexts. The post 1994 bankrupt Orange County is now considered a successful model not only for attracting investments or for its flourished urban attractions, but for making the proper and balanced urban atmosphere – where almost everyone could feel at home; what is crucial for social sustainability and a sustainable growth.

This paper aims to provide an analysis of the current condition of the County, portraying the success of this region that stems from its diversity beyond its mere geopolitical and climate advantages. The paper starts with the regional and demographic analysis that points out the diversity of the region. Investigating the potentials of the region, it will then discuss how the spatial planning has facilitated the diversification within the entire region through the coalition between the cities of the county, each of which playing a crucial but complementary role to the others which is substantial to the success of the County. Finally, to achieve diversity successfully, it concludes that, in similar cases, the idea of 'mixed city' ought to be replaced by an all-inclusive region including 'mixed cities' which utilizes a model of regional coalition; a model of Mixed-Cities Coalition and Competition (MCCC).

3 URBAN PLANNING AMBIANCE IN THE UNITED STATES

"Every time Treasury changes the Tax Code, every time Congress alters a welfare program, every time the Defense Department awards a military contract, urban policy is being made" (Donna Shalala). According to US Bureau of the Census (1997) 87504 units of government were identified and listed in 1997 in the United States. In that year, there were 3043 counties, 19372 municipalities, and 16629 townships. Increasing number of the government units has led to intergovernmental problems (Cullingworth, 2003).

On the other hand, not only hardly do American cities make comprehensive plans, but they also never lend themselves to carrying out those plans. Moreover, in the planning system neither does the country come to an agreement with its organizations upon the content of 'public interest', nor does it permit the centralization needed to carry a plan into effect (Banfield, 1961). However, Campbell *et al.* (1976), amongst many others, proclaim that citizens' familiarity with current political events and issues is severely limited.

The institutional framework, that defines the legislative body responsibilities, 'blurs the distinction between policy making and policy applying, and so enlarges the role of the administrator who has to decide a specific case' (Mandelker, 1962).

Domination of the law and lawyers over planning issues, limited allowance for discretion, zoning as the focus point of planning actions, regulatory barriers etc. are just a few problems facing the planning agencies in the United States. Furthermore, those agencies are facing a myriad of social and technical problems e.g. decayed inner-city, urban sprawl, urban and environmental contamination, along with problems of race, sex, social class and poverty, which in turn call for public policy, new regulations, and regulatory and control mechanisms at federal and states levels.

In such a complex planning system, where discretions should be kept to bare minimum, decision making is a tough job. Orange County and its associated cities are no exception. The demographic and related information, which follows in this paper however, support the hypothesis that multiculturalism in this region is historically very well-established. The subsequent analysis of findings will help cast light on more facts which will help argue for this hypothesis. The following section will discuss the demographic and monetary diversity for which the region is renowned. Despite what was just pointed out there are some exception which will help prove the rule; some cities lacking some of what attributes as multiculturalism. In other words, some cities in OC are providing diversified urban context that fills the existing gap in other cities, for unified multicultural region.

4 INCORPORATIONS, DEMOGRAPHIC AND AVERAGE INCOMES IN ORANGE COUNTY

Orange County (OC) is located in Southern California and has more than 3 million populations, 34 incorporated cities and is spread over a total area of 947.98 square miles (2,455.3 km²), as of March 2012 (see Fig 1).

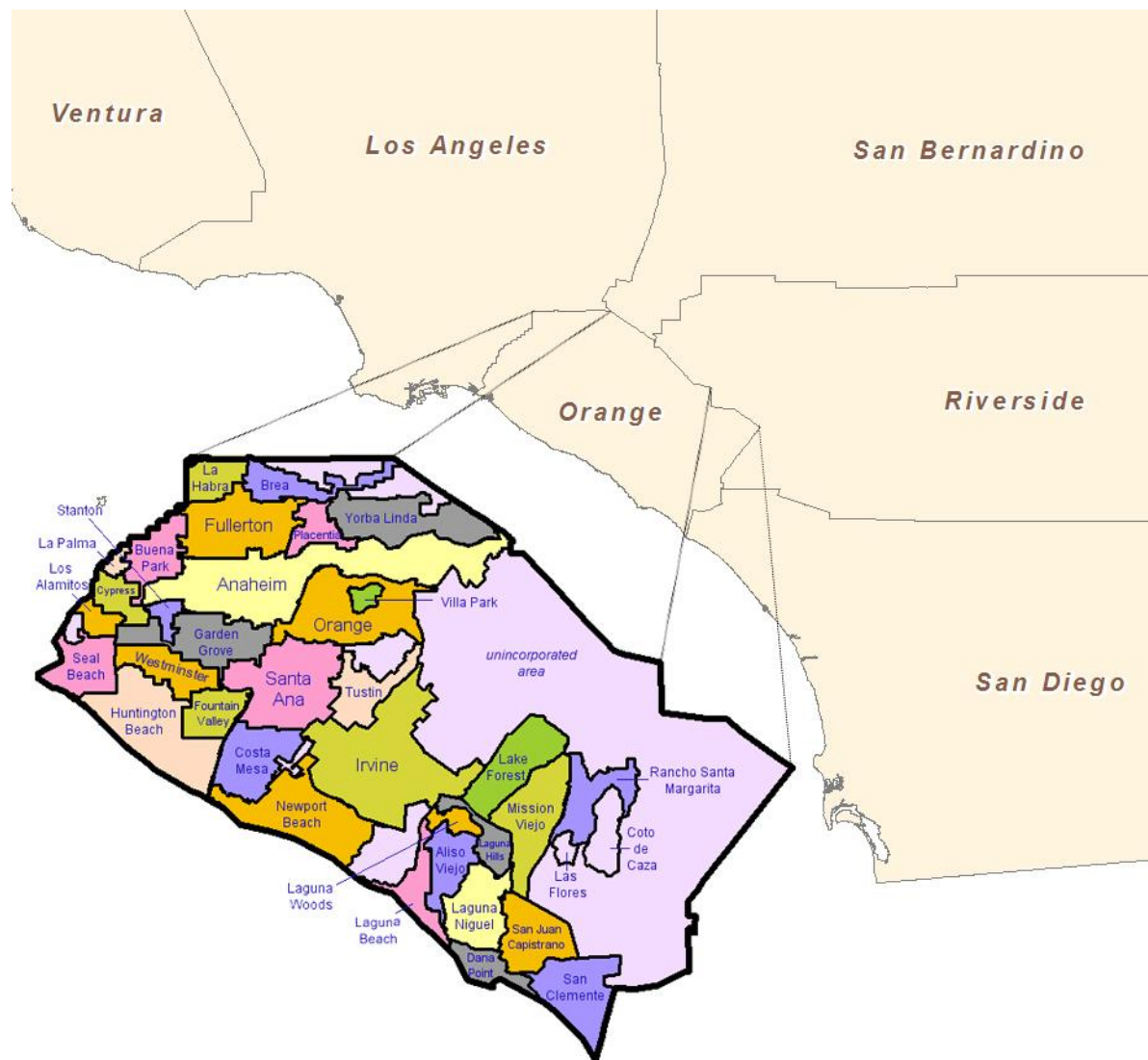


Fig. 1: Orange County and its neighboring counties

The county was incorporated in, but received separate political entity from Los Angeles County in 1889, based on three cities: the city of Anaheim established in 1870; Santa Ana in 1886; and Orange in 1888. In chronological order, Fullerton, Newport Beach, Huntington Beach (originally known as Pacific City), Seal Beach, Brea, La Habra, Placentia, Laguna Beach, Tustin, San Clemente were incorporated and joined the county between 1904 and 1927; and the rest between 1953 and 2001. The newest city is Aliso Viejo. The city of Santa Ana accommodates the governmental bodies of the county (see Fig 2).

According to County of Orange (2012), the county consists of 5 districts; each of which is overseen by a board of supervisor elected by the voters of their district for a four-year term. The general mission of the board is described as “Making Orange County a safe, healthy, and fulfilling place to live, work, and play, today and for generations to come, by providing outstanding, cost-effective regional public services” (County of Orange, 2012).

4.1 OC Chronological Development Provides Specific Characteristics for the Cities

Enough free land ready to be used for new developments with no major environmental risks or any other serious limitations has provided the county with an opportunity to expand in different periods for the past 110 years. The County records show that, in every major period prior to and during the twentieth century, a number of cities have been established and officially joined the county. This implies that incorporated cities have had ample of time not only to be developed and adapt, but also to find their unique role in the region, and to develop the characteristics of their own. The core cities have maintained the very sense of their downtowns and in their further development phases, some new characteristics have adjoined what was already present there. Anaheim, for example, as the oldest city in the region, by hosting Disneyland Park in

fifties, has gradually turned into a tourist hub of the region and beyond. City of Irvine, renowned as a preplanned city in the entire United States, has hosted the prestigious *University of California Irvine (UCI)*. Subsequently accommodating numerous entrepreneurs, businesses, and headquarters, over the last three decades, Irvine has announced herself as a reliable economic region, serving Southern California and creating numerous jobs. This chronological development allowed the county to take the opportunity to contain a variety of cities providing people with various atmospheres, and lifestyles, with different living budgets.

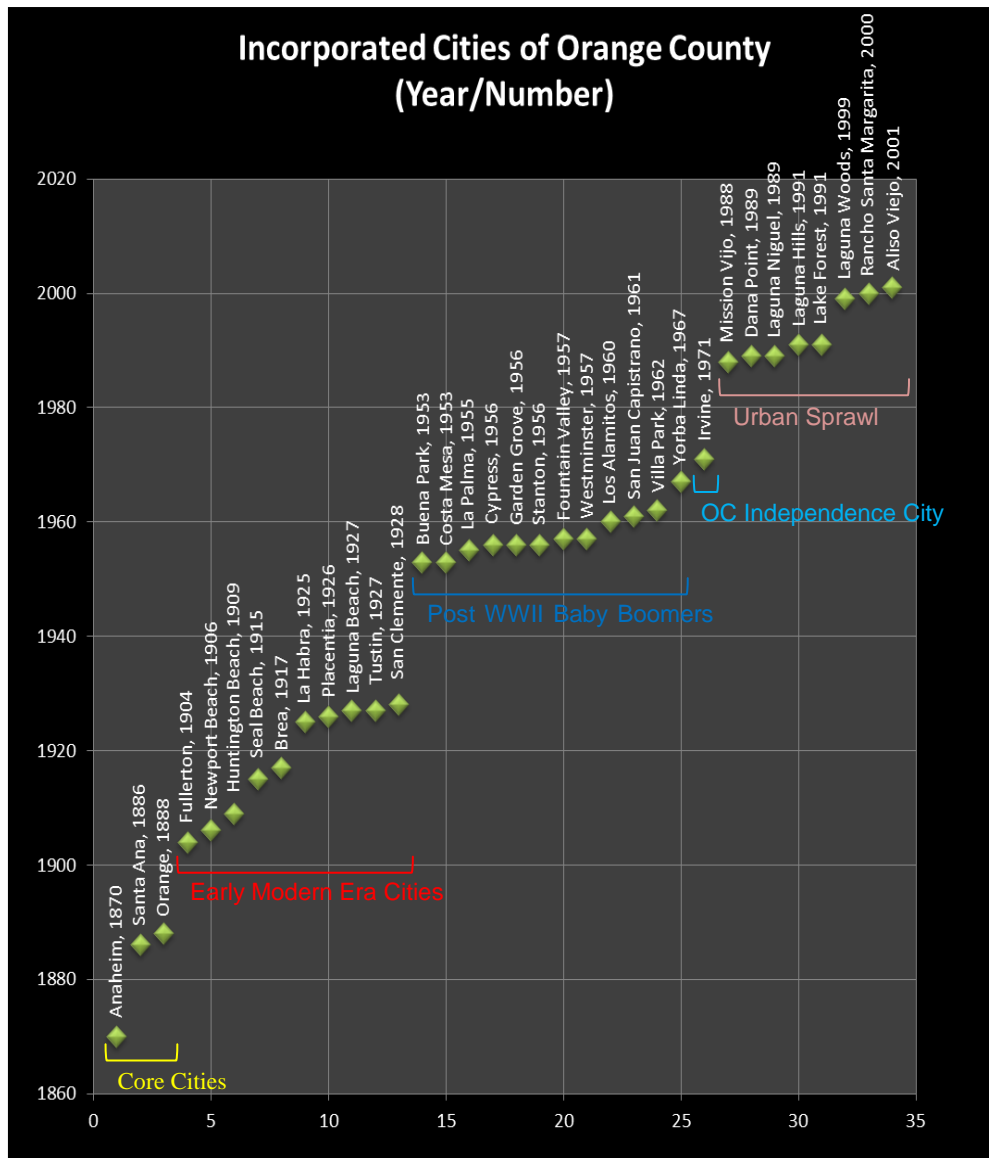


Fig. 2: Incorporated cities of Orange County

4.2 Diversity of Incomes

The high cost of living in OC—from property and gas high prices through to sales tax, and maintenance costs—, certainly, makes the residents to think about their expenditure carefully. However the differences are obvious from place to place. The fact is that in a number of urban parcels—urban segments with specific income, race, education or age characteristic—in the area even families in lower incomes bands can reside. The accommodation and other costs, in such parcels, dramatically are lower than the others. In fact, although the overall income of the region is higher than average in the United States and also higher than the neighboring counties, the statistics derived from census 2010, show that the county contains a variety of parcels where household incomes range from the lowest to the highest in the country. This is considerable

because some cities like Newport Beach and some districts —which are not part of any other cities yet like Coto de Caza —are free from some parcels with families in lower income brackets.

In fact, most parcels with higher incomes (per household) are concentrated in a limited number of cities and independent areas. The average household income of the county is shown in Fig. 3.

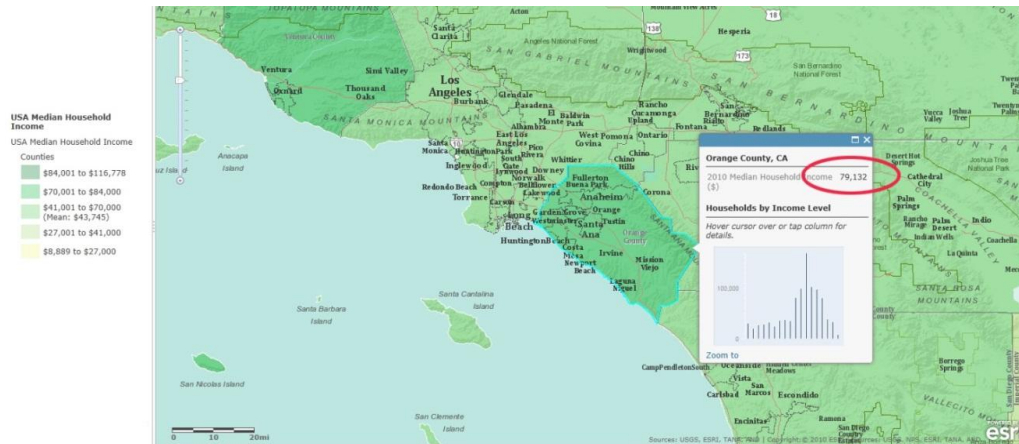


Fig. 3: Average household income of Orange County (and the counties around)

Color-coded inspection of income bands shows the distribution of household income with their sample parcels in Figs. 4 to 8. This reveals that the parcels accommodating families with varied incomes spread throughout the county with 25 cities already accommodating more than 2 brackets. However this range varies from city to city.

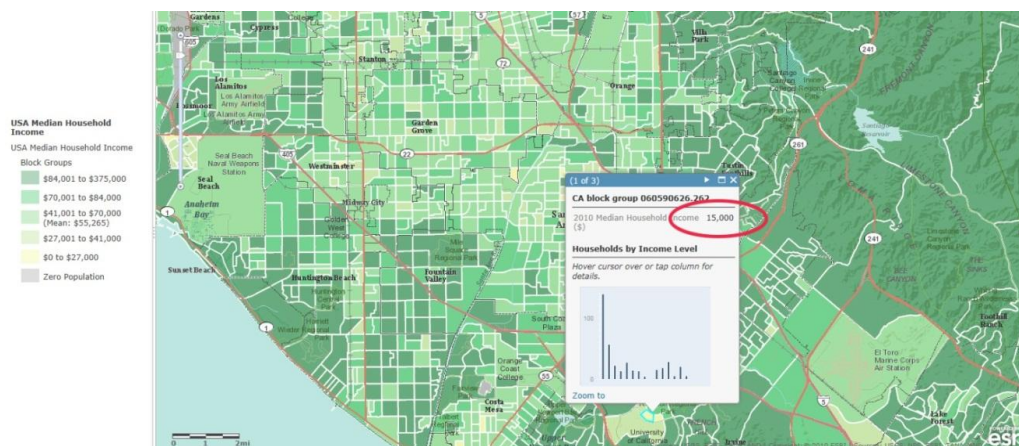


Fig. 4: Sample parcel with average of lower household income

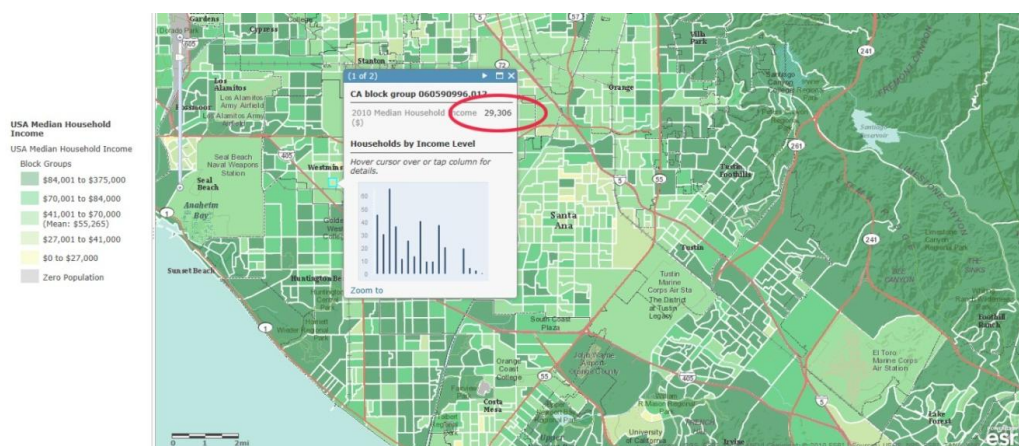


Fig. 5: Sample parcel with average of lower-middle household income

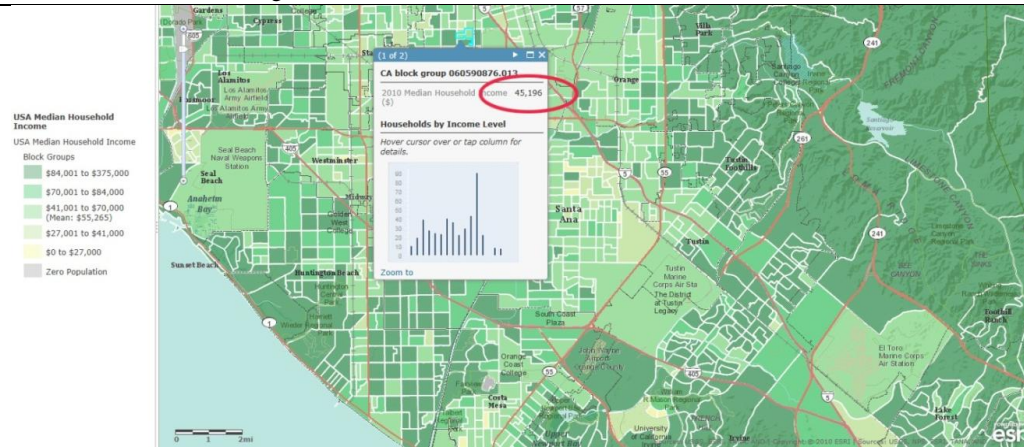


Fig. 6: Sample parcel with average of middle household income

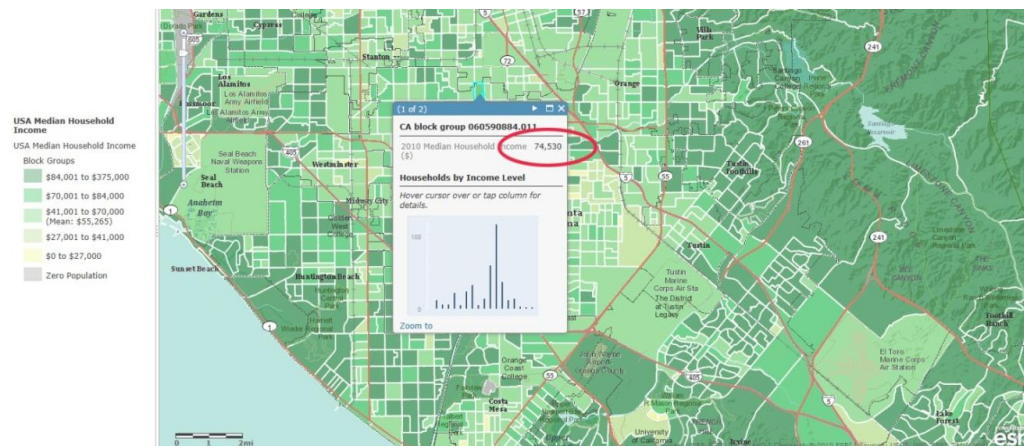


Fig. 7: Sample parcel with average of upper-middle household income

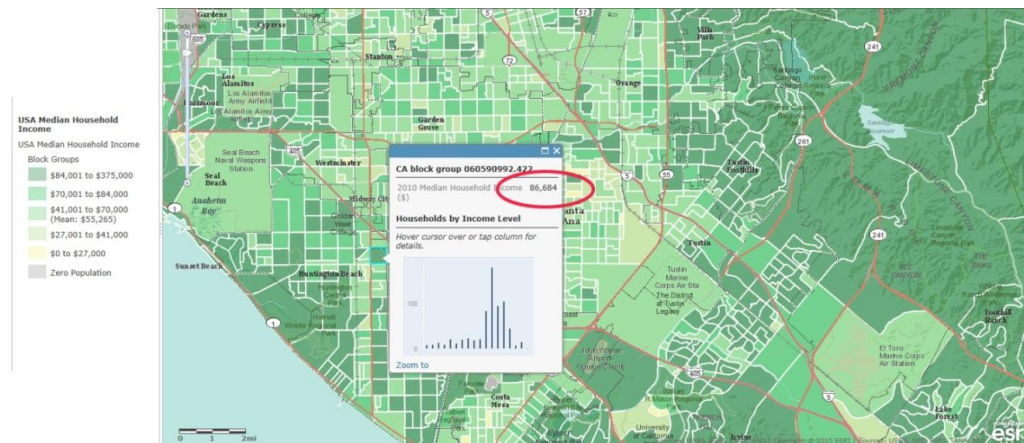


Fig. 8: Sample parcel with average of upper household income

Although the cost of living in this area is fairly high, there are a number of urban parcels carrying different costs of living. They can suit a wider range of families with various incomes. Even if the household income changes, the family can still find a place in the region to fit their budget to stay in, should they choose to. In other words, if cities like Irvine, Newport Beach or Laguna Niguel are accommodating middle-upper and upper class families, there are still other cities which comprise urban parcels accommodating lower and middle-lower class families.

4.3 Home to Diverse Ethnicities

About 60 percent of the population in OC has white backgrounds. However, the adjacency of California to Mexico and some other historical and geopolitical ties have given the county a unique ethnic diversity. A considerable one third of the population is of Hispanic—or Latino— backgrounds settled in different areas

of the state, specifically in the south. They form the first majority in cities like Santa Ana, Anaheim, and Stanton.

Adding to this, the county is also very well-known for being the home to a large population of people with Asian backgrounds. According to census 2010, more than one sixth of the county's population has Asian ethnicity. In Westminster and La Palma, Asian communities are the most populous communities in the cities. In Irvine 40 percent; Garden Grove 37 percent; Fountain Valley 33 percent; Cypress 31 percent of the cities' populations are having Asian backgrounds (See Fig. 9 for more Information).

Despite the overall majority of white backgrounds in the county, people from various ethnicities can still find the communities where they feel at home: the cities with multicultural nature. This diversity helps various ethnicities to gradually become a part of a larger society by experiencing mixed-culture cities and communities.

Apart from these major ethnicities, a considerable portion of population belongs to other ethnicities in the region, e.g. African Americans, Native Americans, Pacific Islanders, as well as people from two or more major ethnicities. This mixture of people from various backgrounds makes the communities and the entire county more viable and livable place for a larger spectrum of citizens than any other single-ethnicity society. This represents an alternative way towards a more sustainable society that can properly and proactively responds to the needs and wants of any multicultural region not only in California but throughout the entire country.

5 MIXING THE CITIES OF MIXED CITIES

The aforementioned analyses along with many others —like age and education— imply that the diverse atmosphere of the county has formed, been fostered and flourished over the years. This is because of the socio-historical sequences, and was reinvigorated by exerting official policies; a mixture which has proven to work effectively. In fact, what is obvious is that the *mixed cities* which accommodate and serve the people from various backgrounds, race, sex, and age and attempt to respond to their dwellers properly and proportionately, cannot be achieved by simple and single urban task forces in a limited time frame and in a single city with such a size. It means at township scale attaining an all-inclusive urban functionality is possible neither rationally nor practically, unless the city —or town— scales up enough for taking up such a task. One of the benefits of mixed city is to keep people visiting different places of the city. This helps people to get more familiar with various places of the city and keep involved with each other. Logically and rationally, small cities cannot contain all different types of buildings and complexes — also known as urban functions – for keeping their dwellers and spatial users satisfied. Lack of enough space for such ambitious intentions, the unreasonable cost of maintenance that imposes to the city, and the occupancy/use rate, are only some major reasons.

Therefore, to properly achieve the objective of a mixed city, depending on the scale, sometimes combining the cities and achieving mixed city at a higher scale may be inevitable; what we shall call *mixing-cities*. At a regional scale, this act should be considered to maintain and enhance a multicultural society.

But the question remains to be “how this is achievable and if spatial organization of urban functions within a city can facilitate the concept of ‘mixing the cities’”?

5.1 Competition

Every city in Orange County, like any other city in the country, has a unique budgeting mechanism, and city management system as well as its very own priorities, concerns, problems and needs. This means the cities are in a hidden-and-obvious competition with each other. They attempt to attract young professionals and families from higher incomes brackets as a major driver for change and a long-term reliable source for further urban development, at a rate comparable or higher than their other rival cities.

While larger cities have logically, traditionally and organizationally been familiar with centralized decision making for each borough/district, the smaller cities, even those incorporated with a region/county, have been engaged with intracity competitions and in many cases have struggled. Under such circumstances, wasting financial resources on rework and duplication, as a result of lack of attention to the already developed opportunities within close or neighboring cities, is very likely and prevalent. In addition, successful patterns of development and popular characteristics and functions in a city can stimulate duplication and

multiplication of the processes in other cities; what in return, can lead to unjustified results or weakens the potentials of development based on any other intact characteristic within the region.

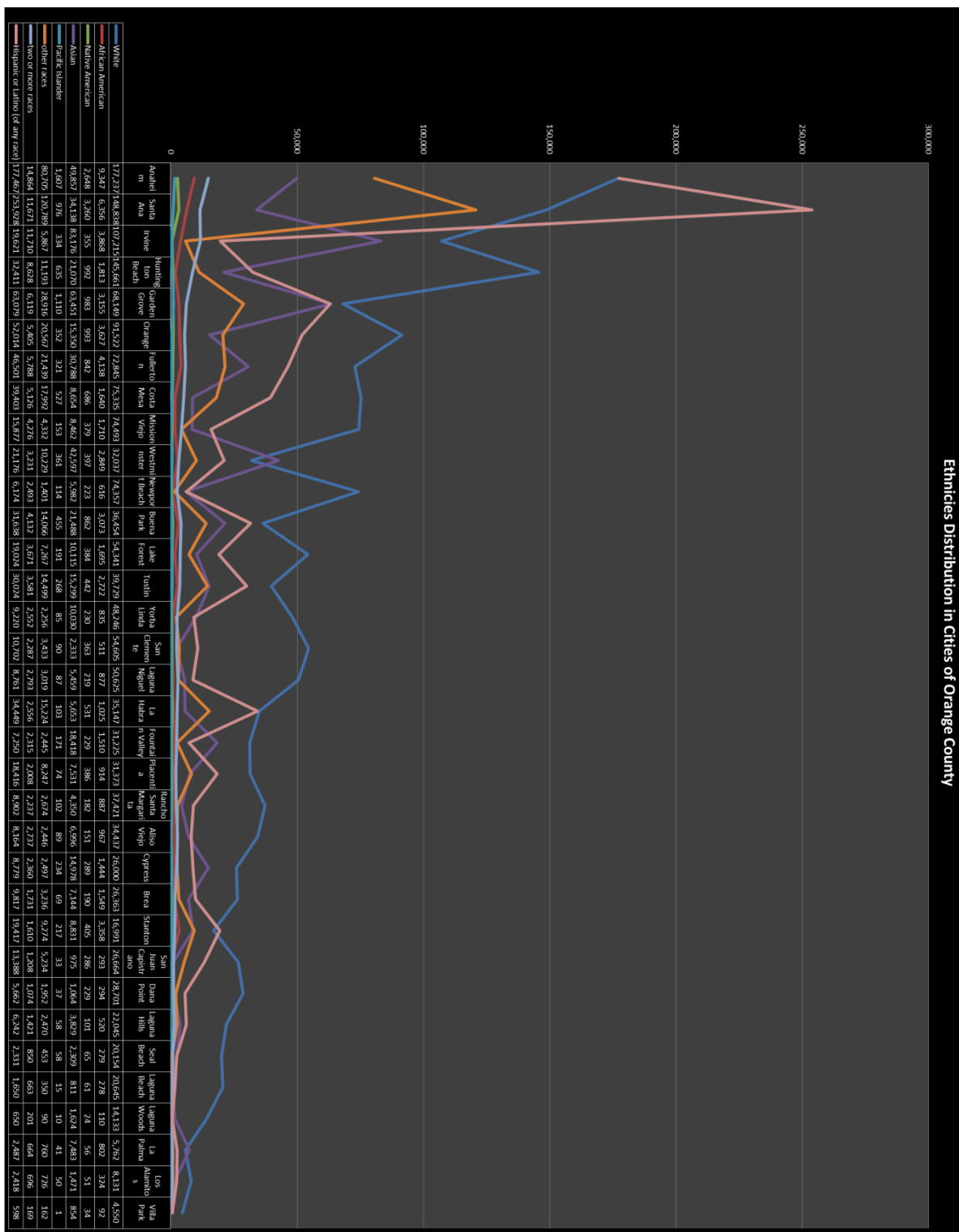


Fig. 9: Main ethnic groups in 34 major cities of Orange County

5.2 Cross Functional Cities: Major Urban Functions Attributed to Different Cities

Tourism industry stands at the third place, after business —tax revenue of the businesses— and shopping, and forms a vital source of income for Orange County’s economy. Average annual temperature of 68°F (20°C), beautiful beaches, as well as outstanding and vivid inland sceneries of the County, accompanied by exceptional urban attractions, have provided a vibrant combination of possibilities for almost all tastes and preferences.

Most cities in Orange County are acting as a role-player in the development process of the region:

- The pre-planned and young city of Irvine as the home of Fortune 1000 headquarters for Allergan, Broadcom, Edwards Lifesciences, Epicor, Standard Pacific and Sun Healthcare Group and as the city hosting a number of thriving businesses and start-up companies founded by young entrepreneurs, in Southern California, provide a proper place for business. In addition, the well-known schooling system of the city and hosting the accredited University of California in Irvine (UCI), constantly invite younger generations and their families to relocate to the area. All these are accompanied by other unique facilities of the city like Irvine great park home of sustainability and a number of social and cultural events as well as William Woollett Jr. Aquatics Center (WWJAC), etc.
- Having an old town accommodating a number of historically well-known buildings in the area and the only international Airport of the county —John Wayne Airport—, Santa Ana hosts governmental bodies of the county, and play a key managerial role in the region.
- Anaheim works as a tourist hub for the County and hosts Disneyland Park; the second largest theme park in the world. The city with its theme park and many other historical attractions works at national and international levels and invites people from various background and with different expectations.
- The city of Costa Mesa, hosts a number of major buildings and complexes. South Coast Plaza shopping center —originally designed by Victor Gruen— with an approximate 24-million visitors per year, Orange County Fair with more than 1.3 million visitors per year and Segerstrom Center for the Art as a performing art complex and offering world's leading performances are some those attractions.
- Orange County Museum of Art and upscale-luxury Fashion Island open air mall —main buildings designed by William Pereira and Welton Becket— as a part of Newport Center, Both are located in the city of Newport Beach.
- Numerous art galleries of Laguna Beach, offering the world's leading fine art works have rendered the this city as the art hub of the region. Producing a fascinating atmosphere in the city, those galleries lay over the flattering sceneries of the Pacific coastline (see Fig. 10).

In addition, Cristal Cathedral — designed by Philip Johnson— and International Center for Possibility Thinking —designed by Richard Meier— in Garden Grove, and numerous seasonal events like Dana wharf sport fishing, whales and dolphins cruises, wild river water park, air combat center, and many others have been spread in the entire county, working as interlinking functions. This dispersion of urban functions ranging from those needed for everyday life to those known as a place for entertainments or occasional events keep everyone, both residents to visitors likewise, busy and happy to move from one location (city) to another in almost all four seasons of the year.

Each major city of the region has a number of urban attractions and key function(s) that cannot be agglomerated in a single city. This has resulted in a region composed of built-up areas on a *cross-functional* network of correlated urban nodes.

Building a cross-functional region is an objective that is achieved by cultivating the major urban functions, across the region. Not only does this approach facilitate the process of establishing specific characteristics for each city, but also expedites the intercity and intracity mobility of the dwellers and users of the different urban spaces which assists the process of mixing various group of spatial users. This causes the development of the dialog between different types of users—from different races, ages, backgrounds and social classes—with each other and with the urban fabrics of the host cities. To the contrary of an experience of an *all-inclusive* and *all-in-one-place cities*, like what can be gained in Las Vegas, in cross-functional-cities model, the citizens, visitors and tourists require commuting from one city to another within the region to arrive at the places they would like visit. This will initiate them into getting familiar with the culture, and some hidden attractions while bringing about their own culture to the heart of the cities. It will also help them learn more about the region and its social dimensions, which in return, makes the mixing procedure smoother and more enjoyable (see Fig. 11).

In such an atmosphere, the mixing process flows well beyond enacting mere official policies. It turns into being the social practice innate to the daily life of people. As a result, this also resonates with other aspects of social process of mixing cities; acknowledged formally even the governmental bodies.

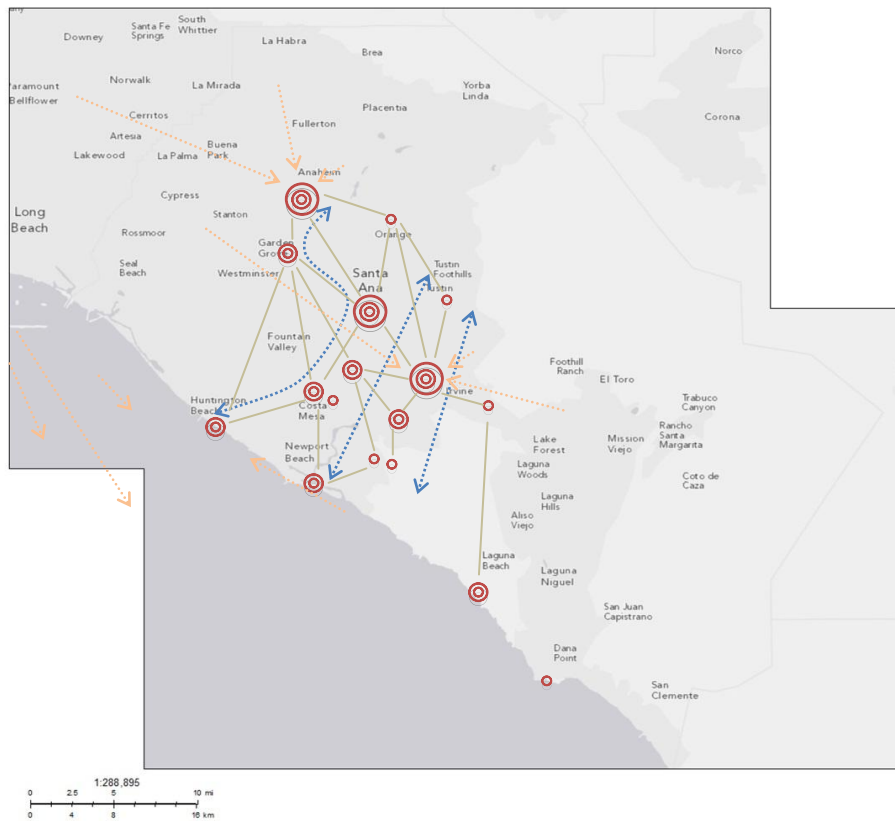


Fig. 10: The spread out urban functions in the cities of Orange County

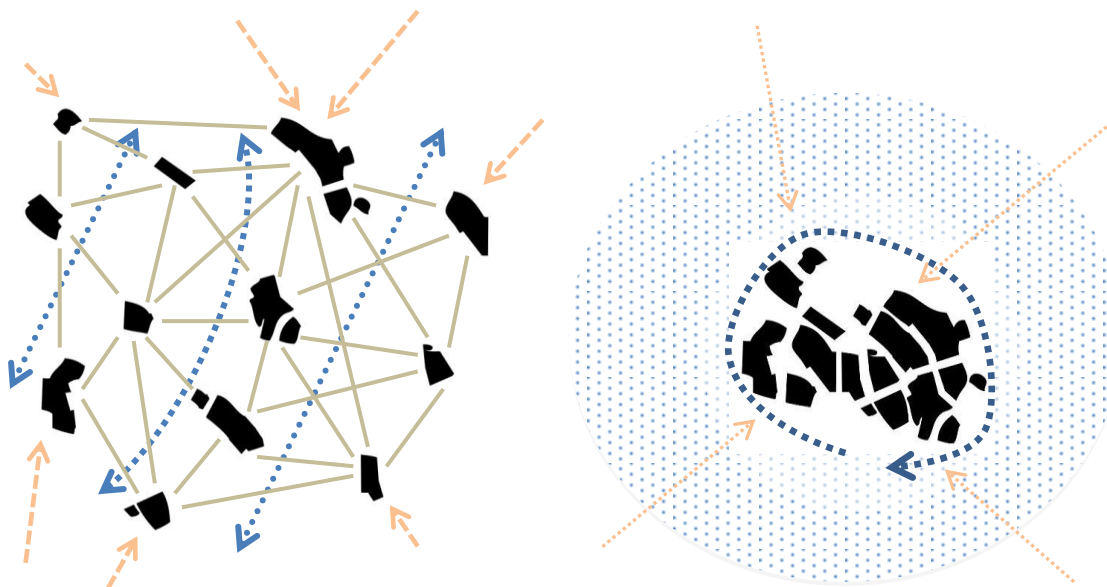


Fig. 11: Reviving urban life in connecting corridors and interfacial urban fabrics in cross-functional region versus all-in-one-place city

The cross-functional region —versus all-inclusive city—, which is heavily based on decentralized governments, holds the *mass-response* characteristic on one hand, and on the other, reinforces the

constructive competition between cities as independent urban entities through which each city attempts to achieve the best position among the others, with regards to its own characteristics and attractions.

6 MODEL OF MIXED-CITIES IN COALITION AND COMPETITION (MCCC)

A cluster of smaller cities, with fully separate authorities, provides decentralized urban management and decision making systems. If, at the same time, the cities are incorporated with their region and are able to work through the regional issues under a regional supervision via the organization whose role is to merely moderate and facilitate the negotiation between cities, they can come into a regional coalition which not only enhances the chance of equal opportunities offered to various cities and the richness of regional diversity, but it also helps the cities work out their chance if they attempt to achieve positions, to propose genuine urban functions or to warrant specific funds at a regional scale. It means, in this coalition system, each city has its own characteristics, yet the entire region, will have the exclusive characteristic that does not exist solely in any of those cities. In this model, the region—according to Gestalt and Systems Theory—is more than arithmetic sum of all participant cities. Fig. 12 indicates how the decision process works in a cross-functional region, using a MCCC model, compared to a traditional model in a large centralized city.

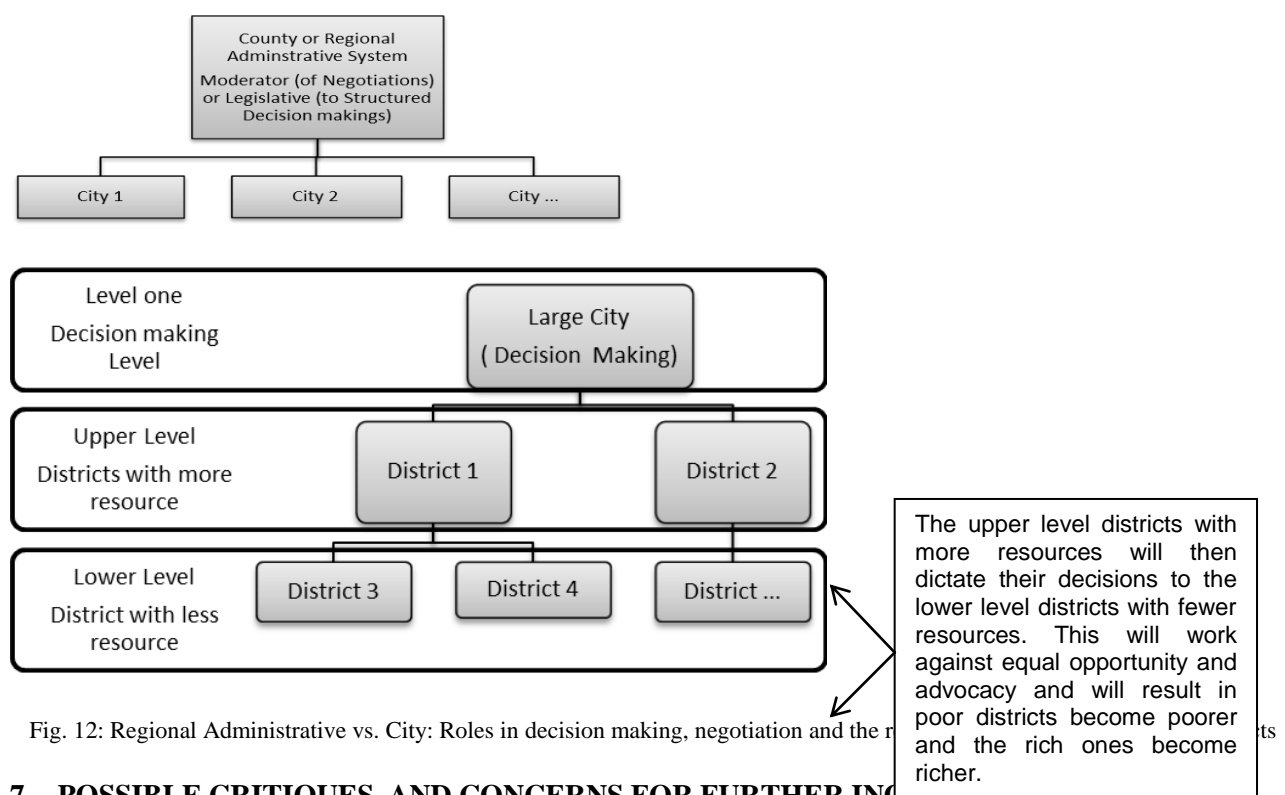


Fig. 12: Regional Administrative vs. City: Roles in decision making, negotiation and the process

7 POSSIBLE CRITIQUES, AND CONCERNS FOR FURTHER INCORPORATION

This model provides a solution to zoning problems which limit people movements within the city and may act against the notion of mixing city. Allocating similar urban functions in one place, zoning policies in most cities in the United States, encourage people to have linear inner-city trips between some major city hotspots of their owns: home, work and leisure. The question that will remain is: what if the similar zones of different cities are allocated close to each other? This also needs to be considered in the framework of MCCC model.

On the other hand giving a proponent role and characteristic to the smaller cities through applying cross-functional model to low density/low rise cities, the issue of urban sprawl can be addressed and gradually alleviated. Therefore the model itself can provide some proper responses to the issue of urban sprawl. However the further concerns of producing new urban sprawl around the major cities of the region will remain valid. In case of Orange County, the fresher incorporated cities are experiencing the same problem: the cities which have no specific characteristics of their own at the regional scale as yet. To tackle this problem, the process of following the model should be seen far from being an end state; it should reiteratively and reflectively be reviewed, reframed, reconsidered and remodeled.

One of the most important concerns is that at which distance (radius) the expansion and inclusion should happen where the urban functions spread out. If the radius is so large, it may endanger the usage of public

transportations or bikes, as the most sustainable transportation alternative to commuting with cars. This may also compromise overall sustainable life of the region which can face the entire model with serious challenges. Therefore, establishing an assessment method that can help evaluate the factors and deliver the proportionate radii of expansion and inclusion needs to be considered for further research and enquiry.

The last concern is about the managerial aspect of launching, maintaining and enhancing of MCCC, if it is supposed to be pursued through a structured method. First, if a region was not diversified enough from various points of view, is the development of the cross-functional region model prior to other socio-cultural policies? Second, because of some legal issues pertaining to decision-making in the United States, is there any way to legalize this coalition and push it to go beyond the simple negotiations and conventional agreements between cities?

8 CONCLUSION

Orange County as a highly demanded region in Southern California has been inviting diversity in various aspects. Although some cities of the county are not considered as mixed cities, but at a larger scale, the county is a mixed region. The process of mixing the cities by spreading the urban functions in different cities turned out into a cross-functional cities/region model.

Traditionally and logically, larger cities' authorities have learned to deploy —at least, to some degree— 'inclusiveness' so that the development plans can be carried out under a larger yet more unified umbrella of planning and managerial tasks: what shall be called *all-inclusive mixing city*. Quite the contrary, pursuing the same strategy for smaller cities are not financially and rationally justified. The smaller cities naturally cannot exist and develop based on an all-inclusive mixing city scheme. Small city as a parcel of the region undertaking a regional dialog with its context has an alternative way of carrying out coalition with other small cities to achieve mixing the cities.

If the coalition model is applied to the region, the separation of the cities can be used as an advantage compared to large city systems. Not only does this provide the required platform for exercise and flourish decentralization, but it also offers a competitive atmosphere between the cities that adds flexibility and dynamicity to the whole region.

The model, which we have called Model of Mixing-Cities Coalition and Competition (MCCC), proposes all-inclusive regions —attaining cross-functional cities— where independent cities come to a regional coalition while the intracity competitive ambiance can be used as the major source of motivation for further development.

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