

Our Salton Sea: Investing in People for a Thriving Region

A partnership of Alianza Coachella Valley; the Assembly Committee on Jobs, Economic Development, and the Economy; the UCR Center for Social Innovation; and the Institute for Social Transformation at UC Santa Cruz



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INTRODUCTION

A Resilient Salton Sea Region

by Silvia Paz, Executive Director, Alianza Coachella Valley

The Our Salton Sea initiative launched in 2021 to provide a more inclusive vision for remediation of the Salton Sea. More than a diminishing body of water requiring environmental mitigation, the revitalization of the Salton Sea creates an opportunity to provide a healthy and economically resilient future for the tens of thousands of people who live within the immediate area.

Talk to people living closest to the sea, like the families in the community of North Shore, and they will tell you about the need for basic infrastructure and services. Beyond the essentials, they realize more than anyone the potential the sea holds for open space and a thriving economy.

The devastating economic and health impacts of the coronavirus pandemic on the region's most vulnerable members reinforced the need to come together to define a more equitable and sustainable future for the people, as well

as the animal and plant life that call the Salton Sea home. The Our Salton Sea initiative brought together elected leaders, researchers, economic development experts, and the community to ask: How can we foster economic mobility and equity in a rural desert economy? The following reports — *Measuring and Developing Inclusive Economies* and *Community Perspectives on Economic Development* — begin to lay a framework for how to achieve economic prosperity while balancing and sustaining the region's economic vitality and opportunity with environmental, and community health.

People who do not live here or who have not had the lived experience of the compounding effects of a remote location, multi-generational poverty, and systemic disinvestment all in the middle of an environmental disaster, philosophically make the economic argument that by simply addressing the environmental crisis at the Salton



Image 1 An envisioned green bridge links the community of North Shore to the Beach and Yacht Club, the only community center serving this population with after school programs, fitness activities, and a summer cooling center.

Sea things will be good for the local economy and thereby help nearby economically depressed communities. This assumption has no basis in reality, unless other resources are deployed and guided by a focused strategy that supports a range of these outcomes and sees that Salton Sea communities prosper at their full potential.

Our Salton Sea calls for a new approach to the Salton Sea, one that is direct and intentional about addressing the needs of communities. Dr. Chris Benner and his colleagues at the UC Santa Cruz Institute for Social Transformation have produced insightful indicators for developing an inclusive economy in the Salton Sea region. Modeled around a solidarity economics framework, this body of work stresses that economic growth benefiting marginalized communities occurs when economic strategies are centered around a community context and inclusive of the people participating in the policy-making process.

To operationalize the solidarity economic framework, Alianza partnered with Dr. Karthick Ramakrishnan at the UCR Center for Social Innovation to ground truth the applicability of the research to our desert economy and context. By engaging others in the review of the indicators for developing an inclusive economy, the resulting economic strategy

could include the social infrastructure that is uniquely suited to the Salton Sea communities.

The most important test of our solidarity economic framework is to evaluate how well the framework meets the environmental, economic, and public health issues affecting our region. To do so, Alianza categorized what we have been hearing from the community when it comes to addressing the Salton Sea and economy. We then applied Benner’s inclusive economy indicators as criteria for project development (Chart 1) to conceptualize a demonstration project at the north end of the Sea.

The results, illustrated in Images 1, 2, and 3, show the following concepts embedded in the proposal to increase resiliency of the Salton Sea and its surrounding communities:

Expansion of CV Link: CV Link is currently a pathway for bicycles, pedestrians, and low-speed electric vehicles connecting the desert cities.

The proposal then calls for the continuation of CV Link through North Shore over highway 111 via a green bridge to a community center called the North Shore Beach and Yacht Club. Continuing from the community center, a 2.5-mile trail connects to the Salton Sea State Park.

Chart 1: Criteria adapted from Benner’s inclusive economy indicators

Criteria	Sub-criteria
1. EQUITY	Upward mobility
	Reduction in inequality
2. INCLUSION	Participation in Markets
	Decision-making
3. GROWTH/STABILITY	Work Opportunity
	Stability
	Dignified Work
4. SOCIOLOGICAL HEALTH	Ecological Health
	Community Health
5. ACCESS TO OPPORTUNITY	Commute
	Transportation, Affordable Housing & Infrastructure

This trail integrates components that increase the resiliency of the region by adding essential infrastructure like broadband, solar-powered shade structures, electric vehicle charging stations, and a marketplace for entrepreneurship opportunities. Additionally, the trail features vegetation and dedicated spaces for art and culture.

Infrastructure: New amenities to increase safety and connectivity

- Multi-modal transportation access
- Pavement and sidewalks
- Walking trails
- Lighting
- Hydration stations
- Broadband

Community Building / Recreation: Public structures that encourage an appreciation of the local people and environment

- Various points of access
- Dedicated spaces for art and culture
- Education on the Salton Sea

Climate Resiliency: Projects to address human environmental impacts and climate extremes

- Habitat
- Revegetation
- Dust suppression
- Shade
- Electric vehicle charging stations

Entrepreneurship: Diverse opportunities for businesses and career-seekers

- Marketplace
- Dining
- Bike rentals

What Makes This Time Different

The coronavirus pandemic has put a strain on many families and further highlighted the disparities facing our region's most economically disadvantaged communities. The lack of stable housing, clean water, reliable transportation, accessible healthcare and economic mobility were problems in the Salton Sea region long



Image 2 A new Salton Sea trailhead at the North Shore Beach and Yacht Club would include art, vegetation, solar shade structures, and electric vehicle charging stations.

before this current crisis, preventing the most vulnerable from the ability to protect themselves from a deadly virus. These same issues stand in the way of an equitable economic recovery and require us to transform outdated ways of thinking about economic development as a single-lane job-training and job-creation strategy to an intersectional approach to eliminate barriers that limit economic prosperity.

The ongoing challenges to the Salton Sea environment and communities have been well documented. What makes current efforts different is the commitment from the Biden and Newsom administrations to invest in a just and equitable recovery from the COVID-19

pandemic and resulting economic impacts. The emphasis both administrations place on the role of infrastructure in recovery, our ability to build renewable energy supply chains, the advancement of multi-benefit approaches that protect the environment, public health, and enhanced economic mobility are exactly the things the Salton Sea region needs to address a historic lack of investment. The Our Salton Sea initiative begins to capture what this might look like for the communities of the Salton Sea.



Image 3 The trail would link the North Shore Beach and Yacht Club to Salton Sea State Park with multi-benefit amenities like shade, camping, a marketplace, and broadband tower.

Salton Sea Initiative Track One: Measuring and Developing Inclusive, Equitable and Sustainable Economies

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Photo Credit: Alianza Coachella Valley

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the face of increasing development opportunities in the Salton Sea region, this report analyzes the opportunities and challenges for ensuring that any future local development projects foster an inclusive, sustainable, and equitable economy. Drawing on an array of inclusive economy and sustainable development literatures and case studies, and in particular a solidarity economics framework, this report provides useful tools for defining, tracking, and building inclusive economies in the Salton Sea context. Reviewing the challenges and opportunities for development in the Salton Sea Region, this report asks two questions. First, “what makes economies inclusive”? Second, “what multi-stakeholder strategies might lead to more inclusive economies?” The first section of this report reviews the Solidarity Economics Framework and how it applies to the context of the Salton Sea region. The second and third sections analyze indicators for tracking, and strategies for building inclusive economies, respectively. This report builds on, and provide more in-depth analysis, to a policy brief released in October 2021 (Edenhofer et al., 2021)

SECTION ONE: SOLIDARITY ECONOMICS IN THE SALTON SEA REGION

THE SOLIDARITY ECONOMICS FRAMEWORK

This report focuses on strategies and practices that can be taken to build an inclusive and sustainable economy. A solidarity economics framework emphasizes how economies thrive under conditions of mutuality and collaboration. It provides a useful alternative to dominant paradigms that prioritize purely economic relations that assume market-driven competition to be natural or preferred (Benner and Pastor, 2021). Solidarity Economics also emphasizes the importance of movements to create the conditions for this collaboration, as a powerful wealthy minority do currently enjoy the benefits of the unequal status quo. Rather than a top-down model of social and economic transformation, this framework advocates for multi-stakeholder action, participation, and solidarity to demand, build, and maintain inclusive, sustainable, and equitable economies. A core tenet of this approach suggests that “the” economy should and can be made into “our” economy, and that the market must foster the needs of society, rather than society catering to the needs of an impersonal market logic.

The Solidarity Economics framework permeates every aspect of this analysis. On the one hand, it offers a guide for defining and measuring the constitutive elements that make economies inclusive, sustainable and equitable. As such, it is a cornerstone for analyzing relevant inclusive economy indicators that weave together economic, social and ecological data measurements. On the other hand, any meaningful solidarity requires participatory collaboration in which those most vulnerable and marginalized mem-

bers of society claim a seat at the decision-making table. Solidarity economics thus underscores our analysis of multi-stakeholder participation and strategies for building inclusive economies.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN THE SALTON SEA REGION

The recent prospects of increased investment and development in the Salton Sea region bring with them new opportunities and challenges for local communities to demand and enact inclusive and sustainable economies. Perhaps most imminently, investors backed by \$16 million in grants from the California Energy Commission hope to “extract lithium from the brine that geothermal plants are already pulling from the Salton Sea” (Cart, 2021). Plans to expand these geothermal plants and capitalize on lithium deposits using cutting-edge technologies have fuelled some to declare the Salton Sea region “Lithium Valley” (Cart, 2021; Cantú, 2021). Other infrastructure projects include far-off proposals to refill the Salton Sea, including one that proposes to bring water from the Sea of Cortez via a massive canal (Olalde, 2021).

In a region marked by high levels of socio-economic inequality and a history of failed development projects, the promises of such developments inspire hope and caution. A solidarity economics approach provides a guide for ensuring that whatever projects go forward, and whatever they promise—green jobs or renewed tourism—contribute to a more inclusive economy that works for everyone.

SECTION TWO: INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY INDICATORS ANALYSIS

Attempting to build, or demand, local economies that foster inclusion, sustainability, and equity, first requires an understanding of what such work entails. The history of development is fraught with well-meaning projects that promise betterment for all, but which exacerbate existing and create new exclusions—form economic inequality to unevenly distributed externalities (Cush, 1995). Defining what makes economies inclusive, is therefore, an essential first step to avoiding such unintended or nefariously overlooked consequences (Sachs, 2010). Section One of The report takes on this task in three parts.

1) Introducing Inclusive Economies

The first part, reviews the concept of inclusive economies by situating it historically within different framings of development. We argue that the allure of an inclusive economy framework extends from mounting critiques of the theoretical limitations and empirical failures of hegemonic traditions that narrowly equate development with free-markets and economic growth. While certainly useful, statistics like GDP, growth, and employment miss much of

what makes economies inclusive, much less sustainable or equitable.

Beyond mere critique, drawing on the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) framework and Benner and Pastor's Inclusive Economies framework--a core component of their vision of solidarity economics--provides an alternative way forward. On the one hand, the three pillars of Sustainable Development--economy, society, and environment--rightly underscores how inclusive economies must account for economic growth, social-welfare, and environmental sustainability. On the other hand, the Inclusive Economies framework places greater emphasis on local contexts, the relations between indicators (both mutually reinforcing and potentially conflicting), and development procedures in addition to the more global and outcome-oriented SDGs. Rather than choose one or the other, we propose a synthesis of these frameworks that takes into accounts their strengths. The result is a relational, multi-scalar, socio-ecological, justice oriented, and self-reflective approach to understanding inclusive, sustainable and equitable economies.

Finally, we emphasize that the self-reflective nature of this approach, and the recognition of potential trade-offs between development goals, demands an ongoing, participatory, and dialogical process of measuring and enacting inclusive economies in which the most marginalized groups have a meaningful say in deciding their collective futures.

2) Inclusive Economy Indicators for the Salton Sea Region

Building off this synthesized framework, the second part of this analysis reviews what inclusive economy indicators are most relevant for the Salton Sea case. In short, we narrow our analysis from a theoretical framework to more concrete goals. Specifically, we emphasize five broad indicator categories: 1) Equity 2) Inclusion 3) Growth and Stability 4) Socio-Ecological Health 5) Geographical Access. For each, we justify its general importance as well as its relevance for building inclusive economies for the Salton Sea region. We also highlight a total of 11 sub-indicators to begin to specify how each might be measured and tracked (a task we complete in the third section). Here is a quick review of our recommendations (summarized in Figure 9):

This framework draws on Sustainable Development and Inclusive Economy frameworks and situates them within the Salton Sea regional context.

Equity is a hallmark of any inclusive economy, and at its very least involves a reduction of inequality and improved possibilities for upward mobility. These are particularly important to the Salton Sea region, marked by appalling levels of socio-economic inequality and few opportunities for upward mobilization.

Inclusion/Participation is the defining characteristic of inclusive economies. While a very broad and complex concept that we explore further in the second section of this report, we emphasized inclusion of key stakeholders (and including those most marginalized and vulnerable groups) in the economy and in development decision-making processes. These sub-indicators are crucial for analyzing existing and proposed development projects, not just on job creation, but on their facilitation of local business ownership and community involvement in deciding what, how, and where such projects take place.

Growth and Stability are useful categories for ensuring that development projects benefit local economies. Considering the promises of many developers to boost economies through job creation, we emphasized three sub-indicators: work opportunity, economic stability, and dignified work. Together these track not only the number of jobs created, but their accessibility to locals, their duration (e.g. long terms vs short term), and their quality (e.g., whether they foster physical, psychological, and cultural health).

Socio-Ecological Health underscores how economic and social wellbeing intrinsically depends on ecological sustainability. The two proposed indicators, ecological and community health, highlight the problems of past and ongoing developments in the Salton Sea region that have ravaged local ecologies and exposed communities to toxic air and inadequate water supplies. Any future development must foster healthy bodies, communities and environments.

Transportation / Geographical Access to Development, stems directly from local experiences and struggles of Salton Sea communities. Emphasizing access to public transportation infrastructures and commute times underscores that for development to be beneficial to local communities it must be not just accessible, but easily, safely, and affordably accessible.

We conclude this second section with a reminder that these categories are not exhaustive and should not be taken as the "best" or "only" relevant indicators. We propose three types of revisions that might be pursued through a dialogical and self-reflective process: 1) add indicators, 2) cut indicators, and 3) reorganize indicators. In the first case, we provide a potential list of additional or alternative indicators that may better represent local interests and values. Second, we suggest that cutting indicators may have the dual benefit of enhancing the feasibility of measurement and accentuate the most prioritized needs of key stakeholders. Third, reorganizing indicators may highlight themes (e.g., gender or education) that are present but not centered in our proposed framework.

3) Tracking Indicators

The final part of this section addresses how this framework and individual indicators might be put into practice and

systematically measured. Before detailing this process, we emphasize the importance of critically interrogating what to measure, how to measure, and who measures. Although any set of indicators inevitably provides a partial view of on-the-ground realities, we argue that the reflexive and ongoing assessment of indicators (e.g., how the relevance of indicators changes over geographies and time), the use of quantitative (e.g., census data) and qualitative (e.g., community testimonies) methods, and the incorporation of participatory data collection and analysis, provides a more holistic and realistic analysis of economic inclusiveness.

Finally, this analysis operationalizes each indicator. To facilitate the measurement of our five broad indicators and eleven sub-indicators, we distill our analysis even further by suggesting 34 concrete data measurements, summarized in Figure 6. For each measurement, we define what it measures, the smallest scale at which it can be measured (so as to increase its relevance to the Salton Sea region), and where the data can be accessed.

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In sum, Section Two of this report provides a guiding framework for understanding and measuring inclusive, sustainable, and equitable economies. Rather than provide a definitive definition of such notoriously slippery concepts, it offered a more situated and dialogical approach to examine what a sustainable, inclusive and equitable economy might require in the particular context of the Salton Sea region. In that sense, while this analysis is prescriptive, it is not exhaustive. Rather than a final checklist, it provides a provisional starting point. It also paves the way for strategizing not only how to understand and measure inclusive economies, but to collectively build them.

SECTION THREE: STRATEGIES AND PARTICIPATORY PRACTICES TO DEVELOP INCLUSIVE, EQUITABLE AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIES

In addition to describing the ways to measure an inclusive and sustainable economy, this report also describes practices and strategies to achieve an inclusive and sustainable economy. It does this through an analysis of meaningful participation in economic decision making and through possible strategies to pursue in civil society, business, and public sectors.

MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION

The report analyzes how to understand and analyze participatory practices, as these are crucial elements of inclusion in the economy. Through a review of the literature on meaningful participation, a few themes for analysis emerge. First, participation is inherently political. In any participatory space, different stakeholders will have different interests in shaping how the participation takes place. Because of the power imbalances that come along with this, the meaningfulness of participation occurs along a spectrum. Participation can be typologized with active domination at the worst end, followed by legitimation, damage control, weak and strong controlled participation, and finally empowerment, where participation builds consciousness and capacity through action.

Achieving meaningful participation is a challenging task. The analysis shows different factors needed to make participation more meaningful. There are challenges of representation and who gets to participate. There are different spaces of decision making, and creating new spaces of participation like social movement or community organizations can provide a means to open up or improve existing spaces of decision making and (non)participation. The scope of what is being decided on also matters—something meaningful has to be on the table for participation to be meaningful.

Figure 17 shows visually the factors needed for participation to be meaningful. First, the subject that is being decided on must be significant, it has to be participation over something meaningful to people's lives. Participants must have influence, the best being some kind of distributed authority. People have to actually be mobilized and brought into the participatory spaces. Furthermore, they have to be brought into participation through networks and coalitions, rather than as isolated individuals. Participants must be able to engage in deliberation around decisions being made, rather than only being informed. Relatedly, because technical experts can dominate deliberation processes and may themselves represent specific interests, there must be some kind of democratization of the knowledge, either by bringing new knowledge to participants or by incorporating communal or experiential forms of knowledge that participants may have. Finally, the process has to have accessible schedules and methods. The full report includes a series of questions meant to be used in analyzing concrete participatory processes.

INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

The next section focuses on economic development strategies and challenges, analyzed as both strategies to confront inequality, and to build mutuality and collaboration. These strategies are grouped in civil society sectors reliant on people-power, business sectors reliant on employers and new productive enterprises, and public sector strategies reliant on the state (see Figure 18), although these sectors often blur into each other. The strategies presented are analyzed around their capacity to support to improve local economic development in a holistic way, as the indicators analysis present. The strategies are also analyzed in the context of pre-existing economic conditions and the context of new large scale project development.

Pre-existing Economic Conditions: The report first describes strategies for changing the pre-existing economic conditions in a region like the Salton Sea. Civil society sector strategies like unionization and worker centers are ways to directly confront inequality through shifting the power imbalance between workers and business owners. Union strategies at their best have the capacity to battle inclusion not only in the workplace, but also to fight for better conditions for the communities workers work and live in, like how striking education workers have brought new resources to struggling school districts. While some sectors like healthcare and education are prime for unionization, worker centers help to organize industries and populations that are difficult to unionize and increase labor standards. These strategies are strong in that they directly challenge inequality and build power for workers in the economy, although the difficult nature of these struggles should not be ignored.

Business sector strategies also are important. Anchor collaborations involve harnessing the purchasing power of large non-profit or public institutions to support new local business endeavors, most transformatively worker-owned cooperatives. Another route to new employee owned businesses are community wealth funds related to business succession. As baby boomer small business owners begin to retire, many businesses have no succession plans, but training and assistance centers can be put into place to support a transition to worker owned businesses. These two strategies bring inclusion, equality, and democracy into the economy. Furthermore they represent collaborative solutions that rely most heavily on resources and enterprises already in place. A challenge is that the potential scope of these endeavors is unclear. Another business sector strategy involves building healthcare career ladders to solve healthcare labor shortages by building training and financial assistance into workforce development for people already employed in less skilled positions in the same industry. This is a strong strategy because it is collaborative from employer-union-education partnerships, and benefits employers and employees. One challenge is that these programs seem to largely operate in unionized worksites, so unionization is likely to be a prerequisite. Finally incentivizing investment was analyzed. Tax breaks for specific zones introduced in 2017 and earlier have failed to adequately increase employment. This strategy has not increased employment at a national level or state level. It seems that it is not a successful strategy.

Public sector strategies of transportation justice, housing, and participatory budgeting are also considered. Transportation is a crucial component of a healthy economic, social, and civic life. Strategies to increase public transportation through movement pressure and partnering with planning agencies shows the importance of meaningful participation for success. The same is true for participatory budgeting, where the mobilizations of community groups and networks remain important. In housing, strategies include using the power of the state with community actors to keep housing permanently affordable and accessible through land trusts, land banks, and tax policies, along with housing first models to help people experiencing homelessness to find stable housing.

New Large Scale Projects: Strategies for inclusion among large-scale investments are crucial in a region like the Salton Sea. There are numerous challenges to achieving inclusive development through extractive industries like lithium, or other major projects. Mining has been associated more often than not with poor economic indicators for the regions they operate in. One major factor is the ecological damage and water usage that comes from any extractive activity. Others include the mismatch of labor markets and mining location because of long distance

commuting practices in the industry. This means that often local residents receive all of the negative externalities, but without employment.

The civil society sector section focuses on labor strategies, but because of the geographic labor market mismatch, strategies beyond labor may be necessary to ensure local employment. This includes community organization, which in other cases has proven to be the only method to ensure local employment and environmental regulation. A challenge with these strategies is that they are difficult and often conflictual. Another civil sector strategy includes participatory monitoring and evaluation, which involves residents engaging in monitoring for either environmental contamination or social outcomes from programs. This strategy is helpful because it includes disadvantaged groups in the conversation, at times counter to the expertise that is often dominated by companies. Overall these strategies appear necessary to avoid the huge firms that operate major projects dominating all aspects of the process.

Business sector strategies in this section focus largely on the challenges of building outwards from a new large scale project, including the challenges of bringing backwards and forwards linkages into the economy around lithium production. These processes are by no means automatic, and in fact are quite difficult to achieve. Coordination rather than market forces will be necessary for other lithium related enterprises to form in the region. Inclusion in industry clusters is also a challenge, but intentional efforts can support inclusion.

Public sector strategies focus on how governments can use their leverage to keep benefits in the local area where new projects are centered. Some local regulatory leverage, like zoning, exists and can be used. Furthermore, any public infrastructure spending includes project labor agreements that include community workforce agreements, where unions are hired and hiring provisions include mandatory amounts of local and disadvantaged people to be hired, along with on the job training to support workforce development. Tribal governments and indigenous movements can also use pressure through tribal sovereignty and treaty rights. These public sector strategies, while useful, also come down to power, and participation is a necessary factor.

Overall, the takeaway is that there is no single fix to the economy of an area like the Salton Sea region, especially given the effects of the larger national and global economy on any given region. Instead, constant movement around building participation, developing inclusive economic programs, businesses, and services, and countering the negative effects of large developments while seeking to gain benefits from them will be necessary. These strate-

gies, practices, and cases show that questions of power never leave the economy. But they also show that taking action to foster mutuality is possible.

INTRODUCTION

The challenges and contradictions of “development for all” permeate our historical moment. For some, a lack of development relegates entire communities to a life of struggle for the most basic of necessities—healthy food, sufficient water, clean air. For others, the unfulfilled promises of development, marked by the uneven distribution of benefits and externalities, has only exacerbated poverty, social unrest, and environmental degradation. Still others experience the gains of development, but only for a fleeting moment as employment opportunities shift with the winds of globalized efficiency and profit maximization.

The Salton Sea region¹ exemplifies these challenges. The booming tourism industry of decades past has largely dried up like the receding shoreline of the Sea for which the area is named. The toxic residues left behind by a century of industrial agricultural runoff increasingly threaten community health—the region suffers some of the highest asthma rates in California. The sediments of past developments compound the current lack of development.

But such bleak scenarios are not inherent to development. And the promise of new development projects need not lead, once again, to community exclusion, social hardship and ecological degradation. Global and regional efforts to ensure inclusive, sustainable, and equitable development are on the rise. While these are not free of contradiction, they provide and legitimize a platform from which communities can demand that any economy be inclusive, and that any development be sustainable and sustained. To provide a guide for doing just that, this report analyzes the possibilities and requirements for measuring and building an inclusive, equitable, and sustainable economy in the Salton Sea region.

The report consists of three sections, briefly reviewed here.

SOLIDARITY ECONOMICS IN THE SALTON SEA REGION

The first section reviews our guiding solidarity economics framework and its relevance in the Salton Sea regional context. The solidarity economics framework builds on increasing evidence that economies that are more equitable do better overall (even by traditional economic metrics). Moreover, this approach emphasizes that, due to the structurally entrenched power dynamics and commitment to a dominant economic paradigm characterized by inequality, any transition to more equitable and inclusive economies requires action by empowered communities. Beyond push-

ing for better economic outcomes, this framework demands more inclusive decision-making processes.

The Solidarity Economics framework offers a guide for defining and measuring the constitutive elements that make economies inclusive, sustainable and equitable. As such, it is a cornerstone for analyzing relevant inclusive economy indicators that weave together economic, social and ecological data measurements. Furthermore, any meaningful solidarity--economic or otherwise--requires participatory collaboration in which those most vulnerable and marginalized members of society claim a seat at the decision-making table. Solidarity economics thus underscores our analysis of multi-stakeholder participation and strategies for building inclusive economies.

The recent prospects of increased investment and development in the Salton Sea region bring with them new opportunities and challenges for local communities to demand and enact inclusive and sustainable economies. Perhaps most imminently, investors backed by \$16 million in grants from the California Energy Commission hope to "extract lithium from the brine that geothermal plants are already pulling from the Salton Sea (Cart, 2021). Plans to expand these geothermal plants and capitalize on lithium deposits using cutting-edge technologies have fuelled some to declare the Salton Sea region "Lithium Valley" (Cart, 2021; Cantú, 2021). Other infrastructure projects include far-off proposals to refill the Salton Sea, including one that proposes to bring water from the Sea of Cortez via a massive canal (Olalde, 2021).

In a region marked by high levels of socio-economic inequality and a history of failed development projects, the promises of such developments inspire hope and caution. A solidarity economics approach provides a guide for ensuring that whatever projects go forward, and whatever they promise--green jobs or renewed tourism--they contribute to a more inclusive economy that works for everyone.

INCLUSIVE & SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY INDICATORS ANALYSIS

Critical assessment of the possibilities, challenges and potential contradictions of inclusive economies in the Salton Sea context necessitates delineating what constitutes inclusion in the first place. How might we define corollary concepts like economic growth, equity, stability, and sustainability and their relation to one another? At what scales do inclusive economies most effectively operate? How might we recognize key trade-offs in order to ensure that those most-impacted stakeholders have a meaningful and informed voice at the table in deciding their fate? How can affected communities measure and track inclusive economies in order to make claims and hold those in key positions of power accountable to their promises? To tackle

these looming questions, the first section of our analysis reviews what makes economies inclusive, and what indicators could be used by key stakeholders in the region, to track progress towards creating an inclusive, equitable, sustainable economy in the region.

First, we summarize the vast literature on inclusive economy and sustainable development frameworks. Understanding what makes an inclusive economy different from other economies, and why inclusive economies are desirable requires a bit of historical context. Therefore, we situate our analysis within key debates on economic development. Crucially, inclusive economy frameworks emerge within the context of budding critique of the hegemonic and uncritical usage of economic growth statistics as proxies for development. Various strands of critiques--and critiques of critiques--influence conceptualization of truly inclusive economies. Two primary framings that influence the present analysis--the Sustainable Development framework and more recent Inclusive Economy Framework couched within Benner and Pastor's solidarity economics approach (2015, 2016, 2021)--differentially emphasize the central importance of environmental sustainability, equity, social well-being, and economic growth and stability. Moreover they do so at different scales. We find that a synthesis of these two approaches is warranted to best understand the possibilities, challenges and potential trade-offs of local development in the Salton Sea context.

After reviewing our inclusive economy framework, we compile a list of indicators to measure and track key elements of such an economy. Five broad indicator categories, with eleven sub-indicator categories stand out. The five broad indicators are: 1) Equity 2) Inclusion 3) Growth and Stability 4) Socio-Ecological Health 5) Geographical Access. We analyze how each relates to building an inclusive and sustainable economy, in general and more specifically in the Salton Sea region. Although these recommendations attempt to address the demographic, historical, economic and socio-political particularities of the Salton Sea context, we emphasize that this work is not a definitive checklist of "the only" or "best" indicators. Rather, our hope is that they provide a starting point and road map for ongoing collaborative and participatory deliberation--a key ingredient itself for building inclusive economies.

The indicators examined in this study are only useful if they can be reliably measured at a local scale and tracked over time. Consequently, the third part of this section verifies and locates existing and available data sources for easily tracking each sub-indicator. In addition to the five broad indicator categories and eleven sub-indicators, we provide a detailed list and definition of 34 specific indicator data measurements. We also note where they can be accessed, and the smallest scale at which they can be measured. Finally, beyond examining the indicators themselves, this

section highlights that what we measure (both referring to substance and scale), how we measure (choosing qualitative or quantitative methods), and who measures (e.g., community science) matters, and is never neutral.

BEST STRATEGIES AND PRACTICES TO DEVELOP INCLUSIVE, EQUITABLE AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIES

The second section of this analysis reviews the literature on what practices, institutions, and coalitions are necessary for communities to ensure that economic development is inclusive, and equitable, in regards to both pre-existing economic conditions and new large-scale investments in a region.

This section first sets the stage with a “solidarity economics” framework developed from Benner and Pastor (2021). This framework centers the importance of mutuality and collaboration—in contrast to competition—as the central component of increased and equitable prosperity in an economy. This framework also includes the importance of movements to pressure for the inclusion necessary for relations of mutuality to take place (Benner & Pastor, 2021). This framework allows for an exploration of first, strategies aimed at directly confronting exclusion or inequality through movement activity and participation, second, at strategies that involve cooperation and collaboration between different stakeholders, and third, at the relationship between confrontation and collaboration.

The next section focuses on how to analyze meaningful participation. Given that any inclusive economy should include the participation of the people that live within it, and that many of the economic development strategies presented rely on participation as well, this section explores the literature on the politics and spectrums of participation. A clear pattern emerges from the literature that all participation is not the same, and a spectrum of participation is presented. Based on synthesizing the literature on meaningful participation a list of questions that can be used to analyze the meaningfulness of participation is provided.

Following this, the analysis examines strategies for fostering meaningful participation throughout processes of economic development. It focuses on two strategies in particular. First, we analyze strategies for democratizing and improving the current economy of a region. Second, we analyze strategies and challenges for economic inclusion amid the development of large-scale projects. In each of these contexts civil society sector, business sector, and public sector strategies are considered. Civil society sector strategies involve the participation of everyday residents in confronting unequal conditions. Business sector strategies involve thinking about how to produce new wealth or employment in an area, either through new productive

endeavors or through partnerships with employers, employees, and organizations. Public sector strategies involve using the power of the state to create public resources or institutionalize relations of mutuality in place of competition.

These strategies explored here need to be taken as pieces of a larger push to democratize and build equitable prosperity in the Salton Sea region. There is no silver bullet for inclusive economies, but rather this needs to be built from many endeavors that incorporate as many members of the economy as possible. The strategies and economic challenges analyzed include union strategies, worker centers, anchor institution collaborations, employee ownership, building career ladders, investment incentivization, transportation justice strategies, housing, participatory budgeting, lithium supply chain linkages, business clusters, strategies to deal with long distance commuting labor forces in large-scale investments, community organizing around extraction, pressure, participatory monitoring and evaluation, dealing with booms, treaty rights, local regulatory leverage, project labor agreements and community workforce agreements.

We conclude that measuring inclusive economies in the Salton Sea region is a political process that requires attending to social, ecological and economic indicators, as well as the synergies and trade-offs between them. Moreover, we argue that building towards inclusive economies must incorporate participatory and solidarity economic approaches that engage multiple stakeholders, with particular emphasis placed on the needs and interests of the most vulnerable and marginalized communities.

PART ONE: SOLIDARITY ECONOMICS IN THE SALTON SEA REGION

1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: SOLIDARITY ECONOMICS

Binding this report together is the overall theoretical framework of “solidarity economics” as put forward by Chris Benner and Manuel Pastor (2021). Dominant liberal and neoliberal market ideologies have relied on a notion of self-interested individuals, and have built a policy system around this to incentivise this type of behavior. In contrast, Benner and Pastor find that our economy (and society) are built largely around collaboration and mutuality. The core of solidarity economics is that first, the economy is “our” economy rather than “the” economy, meaning that it is built from human relationships that themselves affect the way the economy functions, contra to market ideology there are not natural laws of competition shaping markets, but rather our institutions, laws and values shaping how markets operate. Second, mutuality is key to economic well

being: we need each other. And third, social movements are necessary to change the system, as wealthy sectors do currently benefit from this current arrangement at the expense of most people and society as a whole. Centrally, they provide evidence that increasing mutuality leads to increasing prosperity and productivity. In sum, equity, prosperity and efficiency are not necessary trade-offs, as equity increases prosperity and efficiency.

This framework matters because it allows us to overcome the belief that there is a trade-off between equity and prosperity. When mutuality is put at the center of economic life and reinforced through policy and popular participation, prosperity can actually grow. In many cases this can be due to increases in productivity when people feel that they have a sense of ownership in their economic endeavors. Beyond economic growth, other equally important components of inclusive prosperity also require cooperation and mutuality to achieve (health, happiness, free time, clean water, housing, political inclusion, for example).

The solidarity economics framework, with an emphasis on both mutuality and movements, also puts into focus a necessary tension that runs present throughout many of the examples and strategies below. While an inclusive economy built around collaboration and equity is the world we seek to achieve:

we will only get to that better world through active organizing that seeks to rebalance power. Mutuality and cooperation may be the goal, but getting there will require the antagonistic friction of politically defining who benefits from current arrangements and determining how to diminish their influence in order to promote the interests of the many. This dialectic of embracing mutuality as a goal and movements as a strategy is a difficult balancing act—but it must be done if change is to take place (Benner & Pastor, 2021, 23).

In other words, to be a part of a collaboration you first have to have a seat at the table, and you have to have enough power to be taken seriously at the table. In this report then there are two overarching themes to strategies. The first, appeals largely to excluded and marginalized groups, and might contradict the interests of the current beneficiaries of an unequal economic status quo. These include strategies like unionization, and approaches to participation that operate outside pre-existing channels. These are the strategies to confront inequality directly, and redistribute power to marginalized and excluded groups. In other words, this is about getting a seat at the table to begin with. The second, we can think of as creating collaborations. This includes strategies where communities are already at the table, or new endeavors to build community wealth, like anchor-institution strategies and participatory budgeting. Within these two categories, there is often important overlap.

Even in collaborations the mobilization of community organizations to have their voices heard remains important, and not automatic.

The take away from these two pieces together is that the increased mutuality fostered can produce greater prosperity across a number of indicators, even if it has to be fought for and upsets the segments of society that benefit from the status quo. Finding ways to lock in more mutuality through policy is also important. A good example of this is in minimum wage raises. Benner and Pastor note that minimum wages have been often attacked as causing unemployment, but the data has shown that increasing the minimum wage actually does not lead to unemployment, because workers earning more spend more, and much of that locally (Benner & Pastor, 2021, pp. 16–19). See for instance Flagstaff, Arizona, where a 2016 minimum wage law raising wages to \$15.50 from \$8.50 over five years has not produced unemployment, but has increased worker pay 14% for food service worker incomes and 19% in food service hourly pay as of 2019 (Wells, 2019). Yet this law, which was passed from a voter ballot initiative, had to win a repeal effort launched by the city's Chamber of Commerce. Much of what is suggested in this document around local prosperity focuses on economic multiplier effects like this. Multiplier effects are a Keynesian concept that describe the increased economic prosperity as spending continues from increased demand and consumption among those that otherwise would not have money to spend (Keynes, 1964, pp. 113–131). Increasing wages bring increased demand in an economy, and the more local economic activity remains the more benefits to the region economically. The more leakage of money out of the economy, the less the local multiplier. This is especially important when looking at large-scale investments like lithium mining.

The move from movements to mutuality is central in the analysis. Benner and Pastor note that metropolitan areas in the US that performed better on the goals of both social equity and economic prosperity together had developed diverse collaborative “epistemic communities” to create programs and plans for an inclusive future. This sometimes occurred only after struggles to achieve this inclusion. Conflict became collaboration (Benner & Pastor, 2021, pp. 56–58). This is a desirable outcome. This report also seeks to provide the tools necessary to analyze participatory and collaborative practices to ensure that they are bringing the marginalized into decision making in a meaningful way, more than just as a gesture.

The political economist Karl Polanyi showed that free markets were not free but actually had to be created through states and institutions. Because of the social dislocation created by treating labor and nature as commodities in a market, society had to be subordinated and shaped into “market society”. Instead, what is needed for inclusive,

democratic, and just economies is for the economy to be re-subordinated to society, and in particular, the majority who have been excluded from the benefits of the status quo (Polanyi, 1944).

2. CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN THE SALTON SEA REGION

There are some specifics of the pre-existing conditions for the Salton Sea region that warrant attention. We should think about these in terms of people (the data on Salton Sea region residents, even if they commute to workplaces outside of the area) and place (employment and industries within the geographic Salton Sea region). The first is the data around employment. For the Salton Sea region as a whole, stretching from the top of the Coachella Valley in Palm Springs to the US-Mexico border in Imperial County, a few trends emerge in overall employment. See Figure 1 for the region being analyzed and Figure 2 for the employment data. Healthcare and social assistance is the largest employment sector for both jobs in the area and total employment for residents. In addition, according to Burning Glass job opening data, registered nurses made up the largest share of job openings, showing a nursing labor shortage in the region despite the large health and social services workforce (See Figure 3). Other important sectors include education, retail, and service. Another important sector is agriculture, which is the largest employment sector for many of the region's most disadvantaged areas.

The concentration of agriculture to specific areas that are the most poor shows that inequality in the region is not only vertical across social sectors, but also concentrated geographically. This makes it especially important to focus on both people and place. For example, residents in the four communities that make up the Eastern Coachella Valley (Mecca, Thermal, Oasis, Northshore) are employed mostly in agriculture (26%), followed by accommodation and food services (11.2%) and retail (10.5%). Geographically, the jobs in the Eastern Coachella Valley are overwhelmingly agriculture (61%) and education (20.6%), making up 81.6% of all jobs just in these two sectors. This is obviously unequal compared to the rest of the region, and for example residents of Palm Springs in the Western Coachella Valley are concentrated in different industries (with virtually no agriculture employment), many of which are also low wage sectors. See Figure 4 for employment in the Eastern Coachella Valley and Figure 5 for employment in Palm Springs.

Overall the picture is this: the Salton Sea region is highly unequally developed geographically. Yet, even in more wealthy areas, there are still large amounts of poorly paid workers, often those who have to make daily commutes from the more disadvantaged regions if they have the means to. This means strategies need to be taken to tackle

region wide inequality, and to decrease inequality across regions.

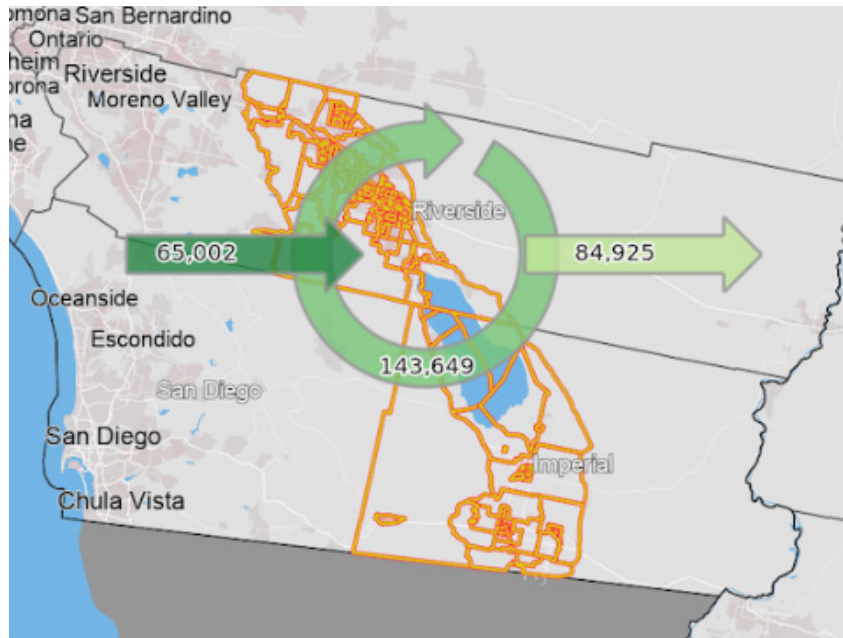
The second situation explored is how to approach inclusive development regarding the introduction of new, large-scale projects into a region. Steps are being taken to make the Salton Sea geothermal field a large-scale lithium producer. By recent estimates, the Salton Sea region holds 2,000 metric kilotons of lithium in reserves, while global annual lithium production is 77 kilotons per year, demonstrating huge lithium potential (University of California Salton Sea Task Force, 2021, p. 79). This would be conducted with new technology that promises to be more effective and environmentally friendly than other lithium mining (University of California Salton Sea Task Force, 2021). Although green technology is a common refrain in extractive industries that prove to still be ecologically disastrous (Kirsch, 2010), there is some reason to be optimistic relative to other lithium operations. At the same time there will be major concerns about the uneven impacts of the new operations (including water usage), and also about if the residents of the Salton Sea region will benefit from this new extraction. It is clear from the scholarship that extractive projects do not translate necessarily into development, and often make economic development worse (Freudenburg & Wilson, 2002).

There are other large-scale projects proposed and being analyzed in the region, including the massive scale plans to bring water from the Sea of Cortez into the Salton Sea. The likelihood of this bi-national infrastructure project coming to fruition is less than clear, but either way ensuring that this benefits residents' well being is also fundamental to it having a positive developmental effect on the region.

PART TWO: INCLUSIVE & SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY INDICATORS ANALYSIS

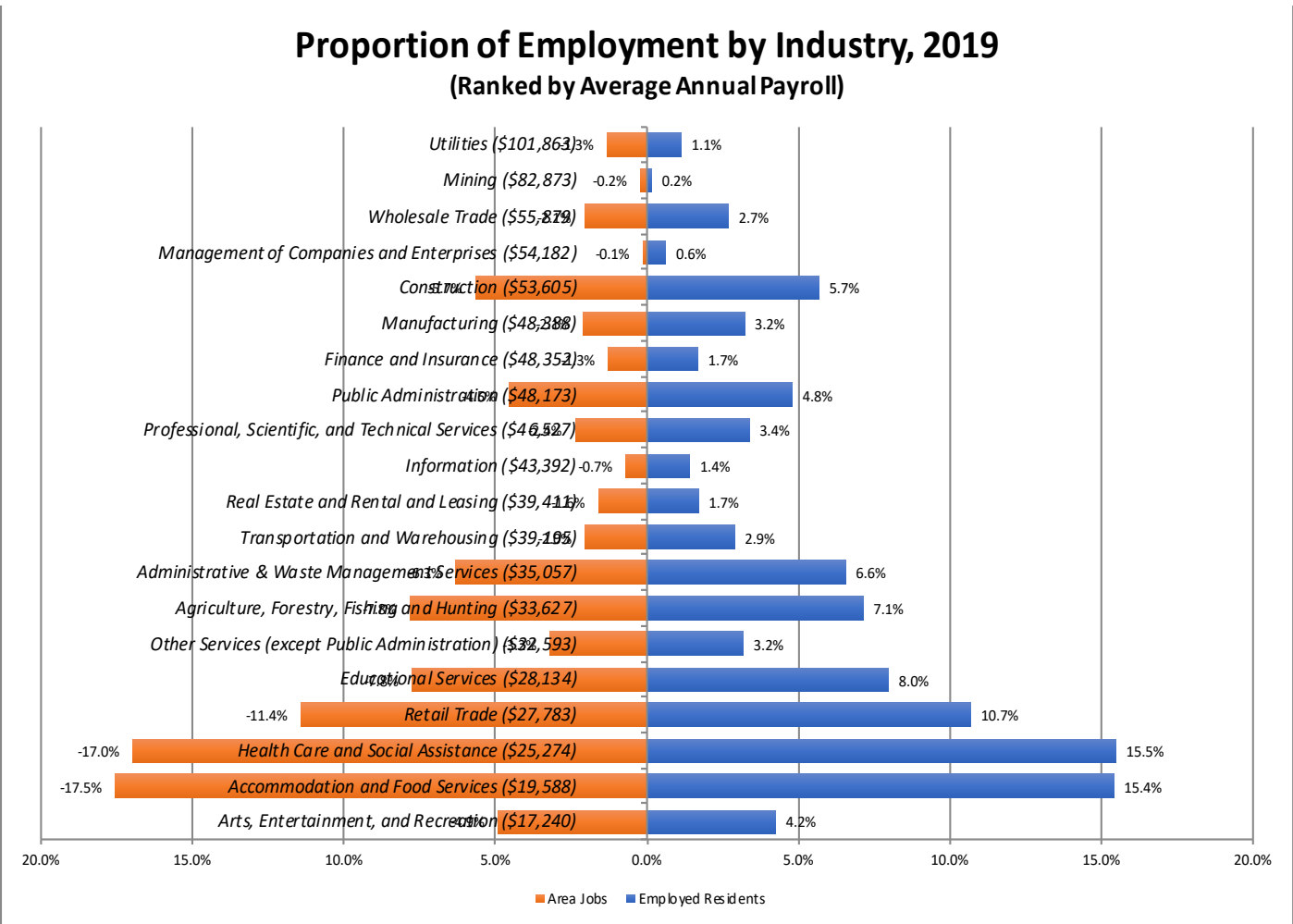
This analysis develops proposals for a set of indicators that could be used by Alianza, and other stakeholders in the Salton Sea region, to track progress towards creating inclusive, equitable, and sustainable economies. The analysis is organized as follows. First, in order to introduce and situate what we mean by inclusive economies, we provide a brief overview of the origins, evolutions, and implications of recent literature on inclusive and sustainable development. Second, cutting through the vast literature on development indicators, this section suggests a narrow set of indicators that resonate with the Salton Sea region. We also provide a set of alternative indicators to stoke further discussion and deliberation on the tentative, everchanging, and political nature of choosing indicators. Finally, this analysis lists, locates, and analyzes data sources for tracking each indicator.

FIGURE 1 - SALTON SEA REGION ANALYZED



Source: US Census “On the Map” data. The Arrows represent workers commuting into and out of the region. The circular arrow represents workers that both live and work in the region.

FIGURE 2 - SALTON SEA REGION EMPLOYMENT

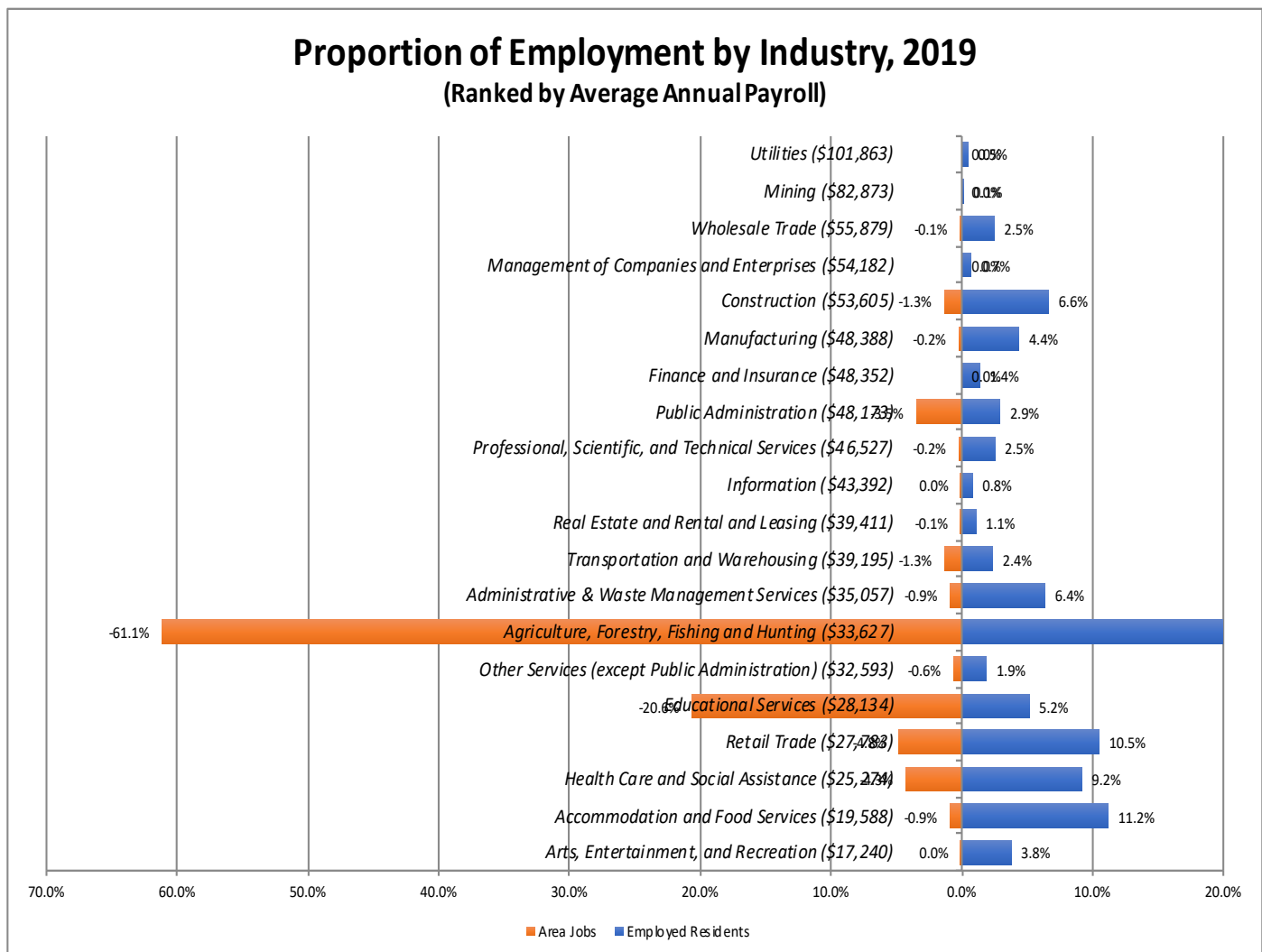


Source: US Census “On the Map” data.

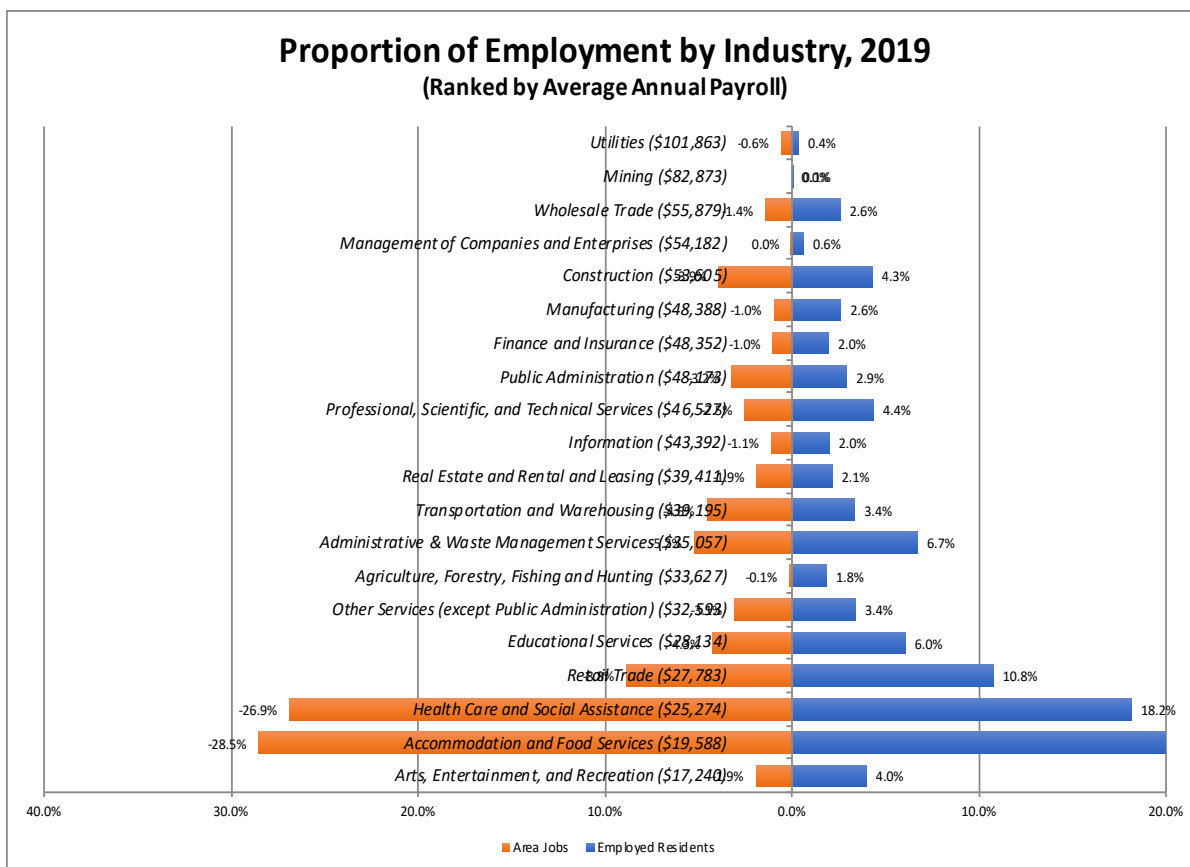
FIGURE 3 - JOB OPENINGS IN THE SALTON SEA REGION

High Demand Occupations	Openings (2019)	Average Salary Range (2021)	
Registered Nurses	2,445	\$69,353	\$81,258
Retail Salespersons	1,399	\$38,605	\$47,352
First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	760	\$41,914	\$61,302
Software Developers, Applications	642	\$74,471	\$86,627
Customer Service Representatives	568	\$35,778	\$42,412
Medical Records and Health Information Technicians	568	\$43,887	\$52,721
Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products	557	\$55,765	\$84,299
Security Guards	488	\$43,804	\$49,730
Insurance Sales Agents	487	\$80,789	\$97,104
Physicians and Surgeons, All Other	481	\$151,484	\$226,833

Source: Derived from Burning Glass Data with the help of Beth Tamayose

FIGURE 4 - EMPLOYMENT IN EASTERN COACHELLA VALLEY (THERMAL, MECCA, NORTHSORE, OASIS)

Source: US Census "On the Map" data.

FIGURE 5 - EMPLOYMENT IN PALM SPRINGS

Source: US Census "On the Map" data.

3. INTRODUCING INCLUSIVE ECONOMIES

Before addressing how and what to measure for tracking movement towards more inclusive economies, two inter-related questions stand out: Why are inclusive economies desirable? And what are inclusive economies in the first place? To answer the first question requires situating the rise of inclusive economy narratives within the historical and theoretical context of evolving literatures on development. To answer the second, we review a variety of frameworks that provide useful approaches for defining and measuring distinct, yet overlapping aspects of inclusive and sustainable economies.

3.1 HISTORICALLY SITUATING INCLUSIVE ECONOMY FRAMEWORKS

A vast literature explores the difficulties and possibilities for measuring economic development and deciphering what particular economic indicators mean for social and ecological wellbeing (Stiglitz et al., 2009). Scholars and activists across diverse fields of study and social movements increasingly agree that some form of inclusive economic indicators are necessary to hold accountable and track promises of sustainable development (Mitchell, 1996). As we'll see, significant differences underlie these arguments. Yet, in the most general terms, they coalesce around a critique of the limitations of purely economic indicators for

measuring socio-ecological well-being. We briefly situate these approaches in a common historical context and examine their utility for understanding and framing inclusive economy indicators.

While theories of development trajectories and development indicators are not the same, they are inextricably linked. Indeed, narrowly economic theories of development lead, logically (albeit simplistically), to exclusively economic indicators of development. The equation of development with economic development is as old as developmentalism itself. Developmentalism—the notion of local and national economic growth as a motor for universal progress—arose in the context of post-colonial and neo-imperialist efforts to (re)integrate former colonies into the global economy (Esteva, 2010). Measurements of "the economy"—defined in taken-for-granted statistics like gross domestic progress (GDP), unemployment, standard of living, consumption, and balance of payments—stood as surrogate place holders for social and national wellbeing (Mitchell, 2002; Watts, 2005). Linear models of progress demanded a universal commitment to economic policies that led to industrialization, export-oriented production, and eventually "high mass consumption" (Rostow, 1960). The neoliberal turn that took hold in the U.S. during the early 1980s marked the zenith of this economism. Neoliberal policies placed economic growth, and social well-being more generally, in the

invisible hand of the free market (Harvey, 2005). President Ronald Reagan famously summed up the ethos of the day, stating, “government isn’t the solution to the problem, government is the problem” (cited in, Hathaway, 2020, p. 324). In this context, the indicators of a healthy economy and happy society boiled down to increased economic profit margins. The deployment of neoliberal orthodoxy and its correlated indicators of high GDP, stock prices, CEO earnings, and low inflation, propelled on-the-ground policies enforcing economic deregulation (e.g., union busting and the rollback of environmental regulations), privatization (e.g., the transfer of public assets into private hands), and fiscal austerity (e.g., cuts to social welfare), among others (Williamson, 1990).

The legacy of development as economic growth continues today, as does the overreliance on economic indicators. Yet the empirical failure and theoretical limitations of such approaches have led to a proliferation of alternative developments that require alternative and more robust measurements. First, scholarship increasingly points to the empirical failure of trickle-down, free-market economics to deliver on its promise of sustained economic growth and increased social well-being. Economist Thomas Piketty highlights how economic growth over the past half century has spurred an appalling increase in social and economic inequality and destabilization of democratic institutions (Piketty, 2014). He concludes that, “Economic growth is quite simply incapable of satisfying this democratic and meritocratic hope, which must create specific institutions for the purpose and not rely solely on market forces or technological progress” (Piketty, 2014, p. 96).² Growth, then, is an insufficient indicator of inclusive economies.

Other critiques of purely economic theories and indicators of development stem from analyses that problematize the reification of economic growth as a surrogate for wellbeing. Scholars have increasingly highlighted the false assumptions that economic indicators measure social well-being. For example, renowned development scholar, Robert Chambers, takes on the oft-used statistic of GDP. He states, “Much of the good life is uncouned in GDP (friendship, love, story-telling, self-sacrifice, laughter, music, health, creativity...) and much of the bad life adds to it (insurance claims, security guards, fossil fuel consumption, cutting down forests...)” (Chambers, 1995, p. 184). This critique goes beyond problematizations of GDP’s broad-brush insights that smooth over subnational differences and socio-economic inequalities within states. It strikes at the heart of assumptions about the desirability of a sustained increase of GDP. It also provides alternative social indicators for measuring “the good life” that exceed purely economic statistics.³

Another critique of purely economic measurements of social wellbeing focuses not so much on the blind spots

of economic statistics or the inherent contradictions of economic growth, but rather on the privileging of free markets to achieve economic growth. Based on the empirical data mentioned above that link neoliberal policies with staggeringly high inequality and low economic growth, scholars have increasingly theorized that inequality is bad for growth (Benner et al., 2018; Pacetti, 2016). That is, that “inequality might itself damage prosperity and economic sustainability” (Benner & Pastor, 2015, p. 8). Here, the problem is not with high GDP or economic growth themselves, but rather that the achievement of these desirable outcomes requires collaborative, democratic, and more equal economies. Equity, as well as growth, must be considered a key indicator of development. These approaches most closely align with notions of sustainable development, inclusive development and inclusive economies, explored below.

This cursory review of contrasting critiques of development as economic development highlights an emerging trend that bridges critical scholarship and mainstream institutions like the United Nations. Despite vast differences in theoretical and ideological approaches, increasing agreement suggests that some form of inclusive and sustainable economies are not only desirable, but necessary for enhancing socio-ecological wellbeing. Moreover, indicators of such inclusiveness must go beyond purely economic indicators. But what exactly are inclusive economies? Who and what should be included? How might they be measured? In other words, how should we define and frame inclusive economies? It is an examination of these questions to which we now turn.

3.2 FRAMING INCLUSIVE ECONOMIES

Assessing inclusive economies is an inherently interdisciplinary endeavor. It not only cuts across a truly vast array of disciplines (from geography, ecology, and feminist studies to business management, economics and engineering), but also incorporates multi-scalar analyses and diverse methodological approaches (e.g., life cycle assessment, commodity chain analysis) (Mancini & Sala, 2018). Mainstream literature on “Sustainable development indicators translate sustainability issues into (usually) quantifiable measures of economic, environmental and social performance” (Azapagic, 2004, p. 643). Yet qualitative measurement of indicators (e.g., descriptive statements by at-risk communities) provide important information beyond the purview of purely quantitative valuations (Azapagic, 2004). In short, there are myriad framings of what constitutes an inclusive economy.

Importantly, any answer to “what are inclusive economies?” inevitably influences how development is assessed—not only regarding what indicators are measured, but also how they are measured, by who, and for who.

FIGURE 6 - THE 17 UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Source: United Nations website (<https://sdgs.un.org/goals>)

FIGURE 7 - INCLUSIVE ECONOMIES FRAMEWORK

INCLUSIVE ECONOMIES <i>Expand opportunities for more broadly shared prosperity, especially for those facing the greatest barriers to advancing their well-being.</i>	EQUITABLE	A. Upward mobility for all.	Experiences of historically marginalized populations	Distribution of power
		B. Reduction of inequality.		
		C. Equal access to public goods and ecosystem services.		
	PARTICIPATORY	D. People are able to access and participate in markets as workers, consumers, and business owners.		
		E. Decision-making transparency and accountability.		
		F. Widespread technology infrastructure for the betterment of all.		
	GROWING	G. Increasing good job and work opportunity.		
		H. Improving material well-being.		
		I. Economic transformation for the betterment of all.		
	SUSTAINABLE	J. Social and economic well-being is increasingly sustained over time.		
		K. Greater investments in environmental health and reduced natural resource usage.		
		L. Decision-making processes incorporating long-term costs.		
	STABLE	M. Public and private confidence in the future and ability to predict outcome of economic decisions.		
		N. Members of society are able to invest in their future.		
		O. Economic resilience to shocks and stresses.		

Source: Benner et al. (2018, iv)

Rather than conduct a comprehensive review of the diverse literature on inclusive economies, or definitively provide one definition of inclusive economies, this section highlights points of emphasis and overlapping trends that will help elucidate relevant and concrete indicators for inclusive development in the context of the Salton Sea region. We highlight two particularly salient and well-recognized frameworks in particular: Sustainable Development and Inclusive Economies. We also weave in relevant aspects from a number of other literatures, such as corporate social responsibility, environmental justice, and feminist political ecology. Furthermore, we address challenges to these framings, specifying their underlying tensions, contradictions and trade-offs.

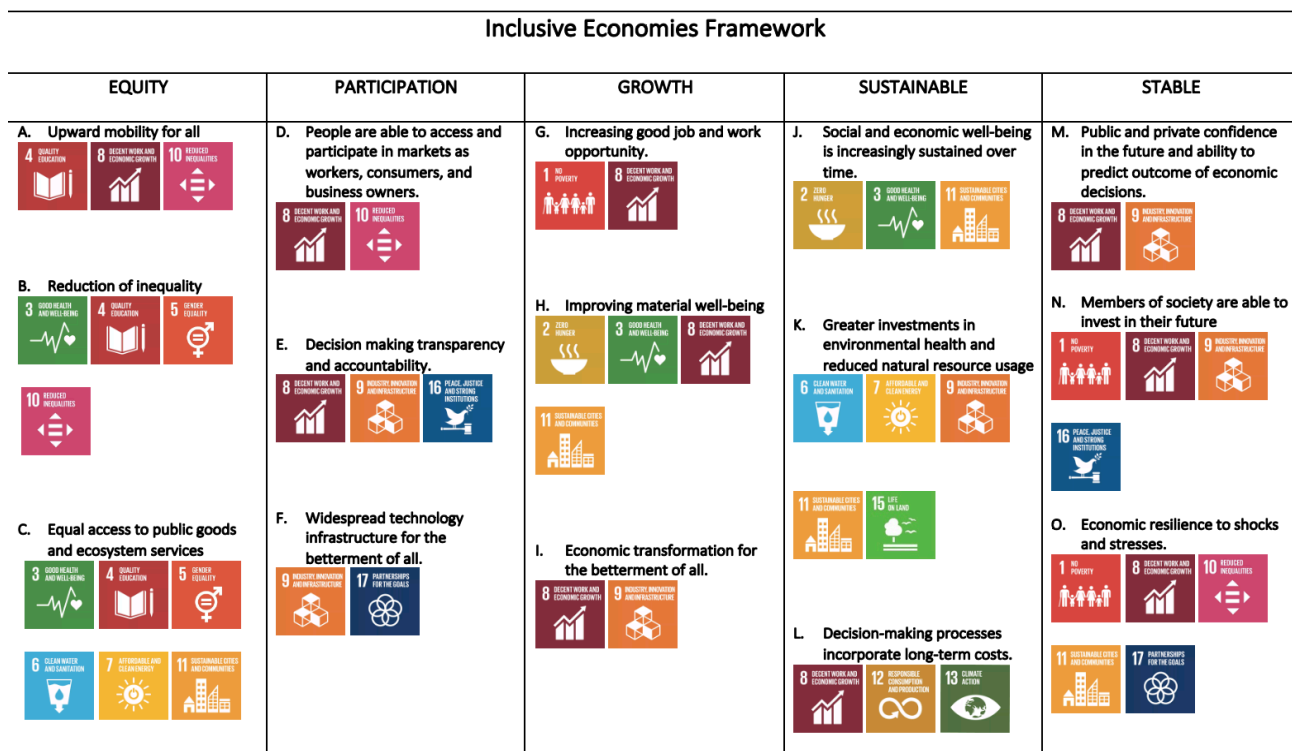
Sustainable Development Framework: Since its unveiling on the international stage in the 1987 Brundtland Report, the language of “sustainable development” has become the hegemonic discourse of international development. The three mutually reinforcing pillars of sustainable development—economic growth, social wellbeing, and environmental sustainability—emerge in popular notions of “green growth”, “integrated conservation and development projects”, and “clean extractive industries”, to name a few. Nowhere has this framework been more fully embraced than in the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals

(SDGs). The SDGs transform these three pillars into 17 concrete goals to be achieved by 2030 (see Figure 6).

An impressive 231 indicators help mark the progress of this global agenda. These mostly address progress at the national scale (Benner et al., 2018). However, they provide a useful guideline for addressing similar issues at local and community levels. For example, a focus on SDG categories of “quality education”, “clean water and sanitation”, and “reduced inequalities” could still be useful when paired with more context-specific indicators (e.g., municipal education statistics, localized water quality measurements, and county inequality statistics). The utility and relevance of the SDGs for development projects in the Salton Sea region—or any local context—rests not only in the particular set of indicators it provides, but also the legitimation the framework gives to tackling diverse, intersecting, and yet often overlooked, development indicators. As feminist political ecology literatures attest, economic growth without reduced inequality, improved infrastructure without clean water, decent work without gender equality cannot achieve sustainable development (Rocheleau et al., 1996).

Beyond its intersectional scope—addressing issues like poverty, hunger, health, and climate change—the SDGs also offer a model for multi-stakeholder partnerships. In its

FIGURE 8 - INTEGRATED FRAMEWORKS



efforts to achieve its ambitious agenda, the United Nations promotes public, private, and civil society action and collaboration. In particular, calls for sustainable development have reignited notions of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) that emphasize obligations to promote, and potential benefits gained from, private-sector-led sustainability initiatives. For example, the benefits of ensuring safe and healthy work environments can reduce labor and health costs as well as higher value for certified products and standards (Azapagic, 2004). Couched within CSR, projects like the Global Reporting Initiative provide valuable tools for tracking the disclosure of private sector environmental and social information (Mancini & Sala, 2018). These approaches emphasize the mutual benefits of tracking the socio-ecological impacts of sectors like mining across complete project life cycles—from mine development through mine closure and post-closure. While such information sharing and communication does not encompass key issues like gender imbalance, it helps locate macro-scale analysis in local case studies by delving into particular corporate operations (Mancini & Sala, 2018). More generally, even when partnerships operate at the national and supranational scales, the lessons might be usefully applied in more localized contexts to find common ground between local businesses, municipal government, and community-based organizations.

Inclusive Economy Framework: The proliferation and implementation of the sustainable development framework across academic fields of study and on-the-ground development projects have spurred increasing debates regarding the utility and limitations of the SDGs for both measuring and promoting social-ecological wellbeing. Emerging work on “inclusive development” and “inclusive economies” propose alternative frameworks. Inclusive economies are those “in which there is expanded opportunity for more broadly shared prosperity, especially for those facing the greatest barriers to advancing their well-being” (Benner & Pastor, 2016, p. 3). In a similar vein, Gupta et al., define inclusive economies as “development that includes marginalized people, sectors and countries in social, political and economic processes for increased human well-being, social and environmental sustainability, and empowerment” (2015, p. 546). While neither of these concepts necessarily contradict the SDGs framework, they place greater emphasis on issues of scale, procedure, and relationality.

Unlike sustainable development, which promotes a primarily national, international or global framework, inclusive economies and inclusive development emphasize local or regional indicators. For example, in a critique of economism, Gupta et al., maintain that inclusive growth

has a single-minded focus on economic performance indicators; it inadequately captures the multiple dimensions of poverty; it is concerned with absolute, not relative, poverty;

and it cannot analyze the local to global drivers of inequality and how these are continually reproduced (2015, p. 545).

Consequently, any reliable development indicators must be situated locally, while taking into account both local and global political economic relations. This focus on scale is paramount for applying relevant SDG indicators to local communities and regions, like those in California’s Salton Sea.

Beyond their multi-scalar analysis, the key contribution of these “inclusive” frameworks is their attention to the procedures of development in addition to outcomes of development. This dual focus resonates with Environmental Justice literatures that distinguish between distributive justice (e.g., who gets what) and procedural justice (e.g., who decides) (Walker, 2012). A procedural focus is useful because “purely distributive paradigms tend to ignore the institutional contexts that influence or determine the distributions” (Shrader-Frechette, 2002, 27). Said differently, “process-focused frameworks are generally more comprehensive than those...outcomes-focused frameworks (Benner & Pastor, 2016, p. 6). Consequently, ensuring just transitions—whether to more sustainable economies or more inclusive economies—demand measurements not only of the outcomes of resource allocation (e.g., environmental “goods” and “bads”), but also of the meaningful participation of the most vulnerable stakeholders in guiding processes of that reallocation.

In line with SDGs, inclusive frameworks also emphasize the relations between development indicators. The inclusive economy framework “draws on fields like feminist economics, ecological economics, political economy, and theories of social well-being and economic development” (Benner & Pastor, 2016, p. 6). Similarly, inclusive development “addresses the structural inequalities faced by women, the disabled, indigenous peoples and the rural poor” (Gupta et al., 2015, p. 545). Through this intersectional approach, these frameworks show important synergies between development goals and indicators. However, more so than the SDGs, inclusive frameworks also caution that relations between indicators may also spark tension, contradiction and power-laden trade-offs (see below for further discussion) (Benner & Pastor, 2016, p. 13). Underscoring methodological relationality, this insight reinforces the importance of attending to multiple scales and procedural as well as distributive justice.

A final distinction that separates inclusive frameworks from SDGs is organizational. That is, while highlighting similar issues and agendas, the inclusive economy framework reduces the 17 SDGs to five key categories: 1) Equity, 2) Participation, 3) Growth, 4) Sustainability, and 5) Stability (Benner & Pastor, 2003) (see figure 7). Similarly, the inclusive development framework proposes six categories:

1) concern for marginalized communities, 2) international law/human rights, 3) economic well being, 4) security well-being, 5) democratic (participatory), 6) relational approach (taken from Gupta et al., 2015, p. 545). The point here is not that one organizational strategy is better than another. As we'll see below, these are not the only or even the "best" framings. Rather, the inclusive frameworks offer a useful strategy for emphasizing certain categories by distilling complexity in ways that highlight salient issues within a given historical and spatial context.

3.3 INTEGRATING FRAMINGS

The key distinctions between sustainable development and inclusive economy frameworks highlighted above should not overshadow how they overlap and complement one another. Rather than choosing one over the other, an integrative approach may prove more useful for understanding and measuring how development might contribute to socio-ecological well-being.

Figure 8 exemplifies one attempt to integrate these frameworks. However, repackaging the SDGs within the ready-made inclusive economies categories forgoes potential opportunities for cross-fertilization. For example, SDG goals 13 and 15 (dealing with climate action and terrestrial biodiversity respectively) only appear under Sustainability while they certainly influence every category (e.g., equality in access to biodiversity or resistance to climate induced economic shocks). Meanwhile goal 14 (concerning aquatic life) remains conspicuously absent altogether. While certainly a useful synthesis, a two-way integration that bridges the limits and benefits of each framework may be a productive next step.

For example, as we've noted, the SDGs use the nation state as its unit of analysis while inclusive economy frameworks emphasize local contingencies. Neither position negates the other, but rather gains salience when analyzed together—local contexts emerge within global processes and global processes are never divorced from localities. Similarly, the inclusive economic indicators that address economic stability and sustainability might usefully draw on the SDGs and even inclusive development concern with ecological resilience and sustainability, usually referenced in terms of "access to ecosystem services" (Gupta et al., 2015). As a final example, the notions of "just growth" embedded within inclusive economy frameworks (Benner & Pastor, 2015) lend a moral justification for sustainable development that goes beyond economic rationalities. The latter may rightly highlight win-win solutions, but often at the expense of dealing with (or even acknowledging) more difficult and irreconcilable trade-offs.

While both sustainable development and inclusive economy discourses emerge from admirable attempts to bridge

dichotomies of economic equity/growth, sustainability/increased production, and healthy communities/healthy profit margins, vast and varied research shows that such win-win scenarios are never ensured and always context contingent (see O'Connor, 1988; Polanyi, 1944; Meadows et al., 2006; Kallis, 2011). Acknowledging, and taking seriously, trade-offs both within and between inclusive economy indicators is paramount for any framework. For example, between categories, decision-makers must weigh the benefits of zero-carbon infrastructure and the costs of non-carbon waste production. Similarly, within categories like ensuring access to clean water often runs up against competing interests and uses of a finite resource.⁴

Such potential conflicts underscore both spatial and temporal⁵ tensions—how resources are distributed unevenly across geographies and through time—and opposing values. Consequently, choosing indicators is never a neutral process. It always portrays embedded values (whether made explicit or not). In certain contexts, competing valuations of water as commodity, resource, living entity (indigenous cosmologies), or of housing as a home (to be lived in) or an asset (to be profited from) remain incommensurable.

Attention to such complexity does not necessarily undercut notions of inclusive economies or just growth. Rather it emphasizes the contingent and value-laden nature of forming and tracking indicators. It problematizes uncritical assumptions of "win-win" scenarios in which social well-being, economic growth, and environmental sustainability coexist without trade-offs. These framings reinforce the notion that this report does not provide a checklist, but represents the beginning of (or better yet, stokes the fires of an already existing) deliberative, participatory, and political process. That every indicator entails trade-offs should not discourage the strategic use of a particular indicator. However, it does demand an ongoing, self-reflective (self-critical), participatory and dialogical process of measuring and enacting community development policies, in which the most vulnerable and marginalized groups have a meaningful say in deciding their collective futures.

4. INCLUSIVE ECONOMY INDICATORS FOR THE SALTON SEA REGION

Extending our previous examination of what inclusive economy frameworks offer and why they are desirable for pursuing more equitable, just, and sustainable social-economic wellbeing, we now turn our focus to the specific indicators that characterize inclusive economies. The indicators presented below should not be thought of as end goals—fixed targets to be achieved—but as signposts to guide ongoing, everchanging, and deliberative processes. In part, this is because when coming up with development or well-being indicators for others "Error is inherent in the

FIGURE 9 - SALTON SEA INCLUSIVE ECONOMY INDICATOR FRAMEWORK

Salton Sea Region Inclusive Economy Indicator Framework	Broad Indicators	Sub-Indicators
	1. EQUITY	Upward Mobility
		Reduction of Inequality
	2. INCLUSION	Participation in Markets
		Decision-making
	3. GROWTH/STABILITY	Work Opportunity
		Stability
		Dignified Work
	4. SOCIOLOGICAL HEALTH	Ecological Health
		Community Health
	5. ACCESS TO OPPORTUNITY	Commute
		Transportation, Affordable Housing & Infrastructure

enterprise” (Chambers, 1995, p. 185). We have attempted to base our recommendations on a preliminary review of the Salton Sea region and other case studies that share similar demographic, historical, economic, and/or socio-political contexts. Yet, the limits of this analysis, based on literature reviews rather than on community experience and testimony, can only go so far. To measure truly inclusive economies, the “co-creation of data and indicators [with meaningful participation of the most impacted stakeholders] matters” (Benner & Pastor, 2018: p. v).

Furthermore, the complexities, trade-offs, and politics inherent in defining inclusive economies make any holistic review of what makes an inclusive economy tick in general or even in the specific case of the Salton Sea region beyond the scope of the present analysis. The indicators presented here should not be taken as the only or most relevant indicators for an inclusive economy in the Salton Sea. Indicators’ relevance is relational and contextual. Indicators change across geographies, temporal scales, and communities of justice. These suggestions should be taken as guideposts rather than definitive and inflexible decrees. Yet, we must start somewhere. It is just such a start that this analysis aims to begin.

4.1 SUGGESTED INDICATORS OVERVIEW

We have highlighted five overarching indicator categories with multiple sub-indicators that might track the pulse of a healthy and inclusive local economy in the Salton Sea context. Rather than a checklist, these should inspire collaborative and participatory deliberation. They provide a potential road map to discuss which indicators are most relevant to diverse communities within the region, keeping in mind that indicators reflecting diverse interests may not always overlap, and may even conflict. Our hope is that the five broad indicator categories and subcategories simultaneously show the complex politics within each indicator and hopefully facilitate more concrete measurement that cuts through this complexity.

The five broad indicator categories are: 1) Equity 2) Inclusion 3) Growth and Stability 4) Socio-Ecological Health 5) Geographical Access (Figure 9). We briefly review how each relates to establishing an inclusive economy in the Salton Sea region. We also suggest what sub-indicators are most relevant for operationalizing and measuring each broad indicator category.

1. Equity

Equity is the cornerstone of Inclusive Economy frameworks. As Benner and Pastor argue, emergent research

provocatively suggests that, rather than an inherent outcome of economic growth, inequality may actually hinder growth (Benner & Pastor, 2015). A far cry from free market advocates that peddle hyper-individualism and debunked myths that “a rising tide lifts all boats,” the link between equity and growth is inseparable from community well-being, or what Benner and Pastor call “social cohesion” (2015, p. 8). Following the integrative approach to equity, Inclusive Economy frameworks define equitable economies as:

More opportunities are available to enable upward mobility for more people. All segments of society, especially the poor or socially disadvantaged groups, are able to take advantage of these opportunities. Inequality is declining, rather than increasing. People have equal access to a more solid economic foundation, including equal access to adequate public goods, services, and infrastructure, such as public transit, education, clean air and water (Benner & Pastor, 2016, p. 14).

It should be clear from this sweeping definition that equity permeates each of the other indicator categories described here. However, its primary importance warrants a categorical focus on 1) reduced inequality and 2) opportunities for upward mobility.

These two sub-indicators are particularly important for development in the Salton Sea region. First, according to a PPIC Statewide Survey, Inland Empire families in the top 90th percentile have 9.7 times more income than families in the bottom 10th percentile (before taxes) (Bohn & Thorman, 2018).⁶ Indicators of equity in the Salton Sea must take into account such income ratios as well as absolute statistical values regarding housing cost burden and persons in poverty. Moreover, a better understanding of equity would disaggregate such data along relevant categories of difference. For example, the SDGs address “Average hourly earnings of employees, by sex, age, occupation and persons with disabilities” (UN General Assembly, 2020). A specific analysis of which categories of difference are most relevant for the Salton Sea—that is which groups make up the “community of justice” that must be highlighted due to their historical marginalization and invisibility—should emerge through ongoing dialogue with diverse communities throughout the region.

⁷While important, reducing inequality is insufficient by itself—as scenarios of equal, yet impoverished communities attest. The notion of equity explored here incorporates socio-ecological well-being and the ability to move out of socio-economic poverty. With few local opportunities beyond healthcare and retail (Tamayose, 2021), limits to upward mobility opportunities threaten to widen the inequality gap in the Salton Sea region. Measurements of upward mobility include access to financial services (e.g.,

percentage of population using banking services), education (e.g. percentage of community with higher educational achievement than their parents), and intergenerational income mobility (e.g., intergenerational income) (Benner & Pastor, 2016).

2. Inclusion/Participation

The origins of the environmental justice (EJ) movement focused primarily on “distributive justice,” tightly linked to notions of equity (Cole & Foster, 2001). Although similar concerns persist today, EJ scholarship and movements increasingly emphasize the importance of “procedural justice”—the idea that meaningful participation in the distribution of resources is vital to promote equitable outcomes (Pellow, 2017). In a similar fashion, Brenner and Pastor argue that “Promoting equal participation in markets is fundamental to advancing inclusive economies” (2016, p. 18). Indeed, inclusion is the defining characteristic of inclusive economies.

Like the other categories explored in this analysis, inclusion is a broad term with an array of potential indicators. It may refer to such disparate processes as access to transportation and built infrastructure as well as employment opportunity and gender equality (see below). According to the UN’s SDG number 16, inclusion must attend to the “Proportion of positions in national and local institutions, including (a) the legislatures; (b) the public services; and (c) the judiciary, compared to national distributions, by sex, age, persons with disabilities and population groups” (UN General Assembly, 2017, p. 19). However, due to the time and space constraints of our analysis, we emphasize a narrower notion of inclusion that addresses 1) inclusion in the market and 2) inclusion in decision-making. Furthermore, we provide a much more detailed analysis of what constitutes meaningful participation and how to achieve it below (see section two of this study). We hope that this may serve as a starting point rather than an endpoint of discussion on the multifaceted importance of inclusion for measuring and developing inclusive economies.

Following Benner and Pastor, inclusion in the market refers to a community’s participation in the economy as “workers, consumers and business owners” (2016, p. 19). While development advocates often highlight their project’s contribution to employment and consumption opportunities (e.g., in the case of healthcare facilities that offer jobs and service), business ownership is too often overlooked. While large development projects like lithium mining or infrastructure projects might boost business opportunities in indirect (e.g., non-mining sectors) local economies, such impacts are often uneven and short-term (see the next section on growth and stability). To gauge a truly inclusive economy, identifying labor force participation and new

business density can be helpful indicators (Benner & Pastor, 2016).

Community participation in decision-making processes—from the evaluation and development of particular projects to data production about and regulation of those projects—is also vital for an inclusive economy. A vast literature on participatory development emphasizes the importance of all stakeholders' access to resources (e.g., financial, legal), information (e.g., environmental impact assessments (EIAs)), and knowledge production (e.g., the information on which EIAs are assessed) (Prokopy & Castelloe, 1999; Cornwall, 2003; Suiseeya, 2020). Such thorough measures are often difficult to establish and more so to maintain. Consequently, “free, prior and informed consent” has emerged as the bare minimum standard of participation.

Free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) gained international traction in the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention known commonly as the International Labour Organization Convention (ILO) 169, held in 1989. In 2007 the United Nations General Assembly recognized FPIC as a “prerequisite for any activity that affects [indigenous peoples] ancestral lands, territories and natural resources” (FAO, 2016, p. 4). While originally coined in the context of indigenous struggles, development experts have increasingly recognized that,

FPIC is not only important for indigenous peoples but it is also good practice to undertake with local communities, as involving them in the decision making of any proposed development activity increases their sense of ownership and engagement and, moreover, helps guarantee their right to development as a basic human rights principle (FAO, 2016, p. 5).

The basic principle of FPIC mandates that communities give their consent to development projects that have the potential to impact them (whether that impact is negative or positive). And that such consent should be given freely (e.g., not coerced) and prior to the launch of the given project.

In practice, FPIC has deemphasized the consent, and focused more on informing communities. For example, in states like California, FPIC is not written into the regulatory codes. Rather, California law requires advance public notice (e.g., printed in a local newspaper) and provides the opportunity for limited civic participation (e.g., through town halls) (Cole & Foster, 2001). However, even such informed participation can be limited by an array of challenges: language and literacy barriers, over use of technical/expert jargon, insufficient free time (particularly regarding lower socio-economic status groups with long

work hours, commute times, and limited vacation/time off), among many others.

Considering the complex dynamics of FPIC, finding a quantitative measurement of community participation is challenging. Throughout the literature, the most viable indicator is direct community testimony. As such, community-wide surveys, interviews, and focus groups that address the complexity and lived experience of participation may provide the most accurate indicator. As discussed in more detail in the second section of this report, such community engagement is itself an opportunity to instill democratic and participatory development.

3. Growth and Stability

A key promise of industries like lithium extraction and other infrastructure projects in the Salton Sea region (see above) is to create local prosperity through jobs and economic growth more generally (Roth, 2021b). To assess if increased employment and growth occur, and more pointedly whether they actually lead to social wellbeing requires, at a minimum, attention to three subcategories: 1) work opportunity, 2) material well-being, or what has been called “dignified work” (Human Rights Watch, 2020), and 3) economic stability.

Work opportunity refers to both employment availability (e.g., number of existing jobs or number of new jobs per year) and accessibility (jobs available to local residents). The extractive industry provides a useful lens through which to highlight these aspects. While industries like mining historically have touted job creation as their primary boon to local economies, research shows that many of those jobs are highly skilled (e.g., geoenvironmentalist or hydrologist). The result is often more net jobs, yet continued unemployment for locals without the requisite training.⁸ Notably, this does not take into account the potential for indirect employment opportunities sparked by population increase and multiplier effects (e.g., corollary growth in non-mining sectors) (Cordes et al., 2016).⁹ Adding still further complexity, Evans and Sawyer (2009) note how extractive booms provide mixed results for local small businesses. In the context of Whyalla Australia, the boom of mining towns yielded improved benefits for some businesses (primarily those related to the mining sector in some way) while creating challenges for other businesses (inability to attract employees, skills shortage, and competition from multinational companies as industry grows) (Evans & Sawyer, 2009). Any extractive development in the Salton Sea region must not only create “more jobs” but ensure that those employment opportunities are available to local and in particular those most marginalized communities (in this sense work opportunity is tightly coupled with the previous notion of equity).

Beyond mere work opportunities, a focus on job quality requires attention to a second sub-category, namely dignified work/material well-being. The International Labor Organization's (ILO) notion of "decent work" (codified in the SDG #8) and more recent notions of "dignified work" demand working "conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity" (ILO, 2008; see also Human Rights Watch, 2020). That is, people not only deserve the right to employment—stable jobs and wages—but to dignified and healthy work with benefits that foster physical, psychological, and cultural health (both at the individual and community level) (Narayan et al., 2000). Useful indicators might highlight job quality, workplace safety, living wage, and life expectancy, among others (Benner & Pastor, 2016; UN General Assembly, 2017).

Often, the jobs brought by mining industries that are accessible to locals include low-skilled and precarious work (e.g., construction). While these may be well paid, they are often temporary, lasting just in the first few years of mine's life (before the actual mining operations begin) (Cordes et al., 2016). This not only heightens the need to ensure that any job creation focuses on dignified work, but also leads to the final and related indicator of economic stability. An inclusive economy is only inclusive if the economy works for everyone over the long *durée* of time.

On a more macro-level, stability also refers to insulation from the boom-bust economic cycles notoriously linked to extractive industries (Le Billon & Good, 2015). Mining economies without export diversification are subject to the whims of price fluctuations, economic downturns, and natural disasters. Such "boom and bust economic cycles" reinforce inequality "exacerbate[ing] this trend of disproportionate growth for the top" (Bohn & Thorman, 2018). A stable economy requires buffers against such shocks. Such "boom and bust economic cycles" reinforce inequality "exacerbate[ing] this trend of disproportionate growth for the top" (Bohn & Thorman, 2018). A stable economy requires buffers against such shocks. It requires long-term employment, sustained (or increasing) wages, and access to benefits. To be truly inclusive, job creation in the Salton Sea must be stable, dignified, and long-term.

4. Socio-Ecological Health

The link between a healthy environment and healthy communities permeates the UN's SDGs (codified particularly in goals numbered 3, 6, 13, 14, and 15). Sustainable and biodiverse ecologies facilitate access to ecosystem services that generate livelihood and health benefits—from reductions in ambient air pollution to increased access to potable water. Such socio-ecological health concerns are particularly important in the context of the Salton Sea.¹⁰

Over the past decades, the Salton Sea region has experienced a decline in important ecosystem services such as poor air quality and groundwater depletion. Both are tied to changing hydrosocial cycles—the mix of social and hydrologic processes that shape uneven changes in water flows, toxicity, and accessibility (Boelens et al., 2017). On the one hand, recurring and increasingly severe droughts, more efficient water uses by agricultural industries (resulting in less runoff to the Salton Sea) have severely limited water flows to the Sea. As Buck points out, "the sea is sustained by agricultural water-use inefficiency"—the runoff of over-irrigation (2020, p. 2). On the other hand, "Water politics in the Western U.S. are dramatically accelerating the sea's decline" (Buck, 2020). Specifically, the redistribution of water from the Salton Sea to urban areas (e.g. Los Angeles and San Diego) has led to a quickly diminishing Salton Sea waterbody (Jones & Fleck, 2020; Spiegelman, 2020).

The resulting exposure of more and more shoreline composed of toxic dust, accumulated from over a century of dumping agrochemical-laced runoff into the sea has negatively impacted, and likely will continue to worsen, community health. Imperial County consistently has one of the highest asthma hospitalization rates in California (Bacon, 2017). This is particularly worrisome for local youth who are more vulnerable to respiratory diseases like asthma. Johnston et al (2019) note,

The shrinking of the Salton Sea has both known and likely unforeseen public health implications, including the growing risk of exposure to potentially hazardous wind-blown dust and dust storm events... The consequences on the health and well-being of the local communities, who are staged to bear the disproportionate burden of the rural to urban water transfer, have largely been on the periphery of regulatory and legal discussions regrading water use and the future of the Salton Sea. There are nearly 130,000 people living within 15 miles (24 km) of the Salton Sea, of whom one-third are children" (2019, p. 4).

Here we clearly see the intersection of ecological and social health.

The other potential threat to the socio-ecological health in the region is a decline in fresh groundwater resources from over a half century of overdrawing the region's aquifers (James, 2018). While groundwater has risen in some areas of Coachella Valley (in particular the Indio Subbasin), this has largely relied on imported water and increasing use of surface water (in addition to tiered-rate cost mechanisms) (Sneed & Brandt, 2020). Any future development in the region (like water-intensive lithium extraction) must take into account water quality and quantity of local groundwater resources. This is particularly the case with the proposed lithium mining activities in the region. Although those invested in such lithium production tout a

“new ion exchange technology” (Lilac Solutions, 2021) it is worth noting that lithium extraction from similar brines has been described as “water mining” and devastated local water resources (Bustos-Gallardo et al., 2021; Jerez et al., 2021).

A variety of sub-indicators may be relevant for measuring socio-ecological health. However, four key components of any indicator set, must address the quality (e.g. clean water), quantity (e.g. sufficient amount of clean water), and distribution of environmental goods (e.g. clean air) and bads (e.g. polluted air), as well as resilience to (i.e. ability to cope with) potentially negative impacts (e.g. access to healthcare and asthma treatments). Importantly, measurements of the physical presence and quantity of pollution (e.g. toxic dust or PM 2.5) must be accompanied by social indicators that show how the temporal and geographical distribution of environmental degradation unevenly impacts different populations (through both differentiated direct exposure and/or access to remediation). The notion of distributive injustice (the unequal distribution of environmental goods/bads) demonstrates how socio-ecological health intersects with equity, inclusion, and even economic growth—as these dictate who gets what, who decides, and who can afford to ameliorate potential harms.

5. Transportation / Geographical Access to Development

Transportation and geographic access to development opportunities could easily be considered as a subcategory of any one of the four broad indicators explored here. Equitable and inclusive economies, access to jobs and healthy environments all rely on worker-consumer mobility. However, the centrality of transportation to the Salton Sea region's barriers to inclusive development mandates special attention to this category. Moreover, transportation has increasingly gained traction as a key social and environmental justice issue itself. Transportation justice can only be achieved when “no person or group is disadvantaged by a lack of access to the opportunities they need to lead a meaningful and dignified life” (Karner et al., 2020, p. 440).

The link between transportation and inclusive economies is stark in the Salton Sea region. News reports highlight the dire prospects of inadequate access to public transit in titles like “Miles Away from the Next Stop” (Flores et al., 2016), and “If you miss this bus, you could wait 3 hours in 120-degree heat” (Khokha, 2016). Addressing the “inadequate” infrastructure and “limited” transportation that curtails “connections to jobs and grocery stores” is central to Alianza's work (Alianza webpage).

Much of the literature on transportation justice and equity emphasizes accessibility. “A broad definition of accessibility refers, not only to physical access to goods and services,

but also the transport system itself in terms of its availability (including routing and scheduling), affordability, reliability and safety, as well as access to timetable information” (Lucas et al., 2016, 478). In addition, researchers situate transportation infrastructures within their social contexts. For example, Oswald Beiler & Mohammed argue that transportation policies must pay special attention to “transportation constrained populations, such as households without vehicles, disabled persons, and seniors” (2016, p. 287). The US Department of Transportation (DOT) also proposes three strategies to address transportation justice: 1) “reduce adverse human health and environmental effects on minority and low-income populations” 2) “include all potentially affected communities in the transportation decision-making process” and 3) “ensure that minority and low-income populations receive equitable benefits” (Oswald Beiler & Mohammed, 2016, p. 287). Any set of transportation indicators must address these themes.

Oswald Beiler and Mohammed's (2016) literature review of indicators measuring transportation access found 18 relevant factors grouped into three themes: 1) demographics (e.g., race, age, English proficiency, 2) socio-economics (household income, vehicles per household, cost of living), and 3) transportation and land use (public transit access, school proximity, and network connectivity). Some of the indicators in Figure 5 echo those proposed here in the categories explored above (e.g., employment and household income). Others may be less relevant to the Salton Sea region (e.g. flood hazard). With consideration of the Salton Sea context, we emphasize commute time (e.g. public transit schedules), and physical access to infrastructure (e.g. vehicle availability). Most importantly, “Identifying community needs is essential in order to provide effective and equitable transportation services” (Oswald Beiler & Mohammed, 2016, p. 289).

4.2 Alternative Indicators

As previously mentioned, the five broad indicator categories proposed here, and their corresponding subcategories, are far from exhaustive. In the dialogical and self-reflexive approach advocated for here, we see three general forms of revisions that should be interrogated throughout the process of choosing and measuring indicators: 1) add indicators, 2) cut indicators, 3) reorganize indicators.

First, discussion with stakeholders (and in particular those most vulnerable and marginalized stakeholders) may indicate the need to expand the number of indicators. Said differently, five umbrella categories may not be enough. New categories might reflect community experiences, values, and needs. Alternative broad indicators for inclusive development in the Salton Sea region might include, among many others:

- Quality of education
- Access to affordable and clean energy
- Responsible consumption (e.g., reduced or more efficient natural resource usage)
- Food security / Food sovereignty
- Just business clusters
- Intersectional Equality (gender, race, ability, immigrant status...etc.)
- Transparent Governance (public/private/civil society)¹¹

While elements of each of these categories may be partially reflected in the five broad categories emphasized in this report (for example education and training are vital for upward mobility and access to employment opportunities), naming them explicitly as an area of emphasis could strategically reflect the prioritizations of local stakeholders.

Alternatively, these five categories may be sufficient, yet in need of different sub-indicators or additional measurement strategies. Within each indicator, other areas of emphasis might supplement or replace the particular subcategories listed. For example, greater emphasis on differentiated experiences across categories of gender, indigeneity, or immigrant status would require more targeted indicators to show how these identities intersect with economic equality, access to ecosystem services, health and participation. The proposed and existing industries that dominate the Salton Sea region (e.g. mining, agriculture, and healthcare) are unquestionably gendered and racialized—in terms of who has access to what jobs, pay scales, and responsibilities, among many other factors (Leslie et al., 2019; Glazebrook et al., 2020; Romano & Papastefanaki, 2020).

A second form of revision might take the opposite approach, namely cutting indicators. It may be that particular categories or sub-indicators are simply less relevant for key stakeholders. More strategically, paring down indicators to emphasize one or two priorities could strengthen the core demands of specific interest groups. Said differently, focusing on too many categories may water down key demands and place unnecessary obstacles in the way of achieving the most important goals.¹² Finally, it may be the case that a focus on too many sub-indicators is simply too unwieldy, impractical, and not realistically measurable given resource constraints (e.g., time, know-how, funding) of key stakeholders.

A third option centers on reorganizing the indicators proposed here. For example, through the dialogical process imbued in this analysis we shifted emphasis on particular categories and deemphasized others. Specifically, responding to feedback from Alianza, we promoted “Geographical

Access” from a sub-indicator to a broad category to highlight the special importance of transportation to communities in the Coachella Valley. Similarly, we combined the originally separate categories, “Ecological Sustainability” and “Community Health” into the category of “Socio-Ecological Health” to emphasize the particularly poignant relations between water and air quality on community wellbeing. Ongoing dialogue with key stakeholders may well require additional reorganization to reflect distinct or evolving values and experiences.

Finally, it is worth reemphasizing that the framing proposed in this study is one among many. For example, reframing indicators to address a specific industry (e.g., lithium extraction, healthcare, agriculture, or ecotourism) rather than inclusive development in general may offer new categories, more targeted sub-indicators, and reorganized relationships (both synergies and contradictions) between indicators and measurement strategies.

5. TRACKING SALTON SEA INCLUSIVE ECONOMY INDICATORS

An indicator is only useful if it can be measured and evaluated over time. In the previous section we gave recommendations for choosing indicators relevant for measuring inclusive economies in the Salton Sea region. The five indicators emphasized reflect the broad literature on sustainable and inclusive development as well as the local context of communities surrounding the Salton Sea. However, these choices also reflect our attempt to suggest indicators that are not only salient, but easily measurable. In this section, we review what data exists, is available, and where/how it can be accessed (or produced). Before delving into this analysis, we briefly discuss the inherent politics in deciding what to measure, how to measure, and who gets to measure. We caution that ease of measurement, while a practical and important consideration, provides partial—both in the sense that it is incomplete and biased—understandings, and if left uninterrogated may reproduce the very inequalities that measurements of inclusive economies attempt to address.

5.1 Measuring Inclusive Economy Indicators

All measurements of inclusive economies, and social well-being more generally, are proxies for on-the-ground lived experiences and complex socio-ecological relationships. Common notions like “the economy” or “unemployment” or even “poverty” are abstractions that are used and useful for various purposes and interests (Mitchell, 2002). For example, Chambers (1995) shows how reducing poverty to “economic poverty” misses how income gains meaning and importance only in relation to social safety nets and cultural wants, values, and needs. Moreover, a narrow focus on reducing economic poverty may inadver-

tently diminish social safety nets and disrupt cultural values (Chambers, 1995).¹³ This is not to say that measuring poverty or unemployment or economic growth is arbitrary, irrational or misleading. Such measurements are, however, political. In other words, why and how they are measured and who takes and analyzes such measurements matters.

What to Measure?: This analysis offers suggestions about how best to measure inclusive economies in the Salton Sea region. That is, their internal validity--the extent to which categories measure what they say they measure--must be continually reexamined. For example, the seemingly straightforward sub-indicator of "upward mobility" contains within it various components. As highlighted in Figure 6, this indicator addresses intergenerational educational histories, individual earnings and access to banking institutions. These are essential for understanding class and occupational mobility (Torche, 2015). Yet these indicators inevitably provide a partial view of mobility. Home ownership, debt, disability, gender and racial norms, immigrant status, language proficiency, among many other variables hinder and enable upward mobility.

Similarly, certain sub-indicators may only prove useful in combination with others. For example, "life expectancy at birth" is not an inherent measure of "dignified work." But, it provides useful information when put in conversation with job quality, minimum wage, and per capita income. High paying, unionized coal mining jobs may not meet the necessary criteria for dignified work if employees must endure chronic health problems and the increased potential for premature death (Wallace, 1987; Weeks, 1991).

The point is not to integrate an endless list of salient variables into our analysis. Questions of feasibility and practicality must be considered. Some variables may be easier or harder to operationalize and measure (e.g., the absolute number of college educated adults provided by the census versus the abstract notion of gender norms). Others may be more or less relevant over time. That any set of indicators, at best, provides a partial picture of complex realities does not mean that they are not useful. They can provide vital information to guide community demands, NGO strategies, and public policy.

How to Measure?: After deciding what to measure, one must consider how to go about measuring it. In many instances such decisions are constrained by what data is available, accessible, and easily interpretable. For example, many of the measurements provided in Figure 6 are useful not merely for their explanatory power, but because they are systematically documented by the U.S. census (a reliable source), over time (providing opportunities for longitudinal studies), and freely accessible to all. Moreover much census data is tracked at the county or even census tract level. Such local-scale data is particularly useful for

understanding development trends, opportunities and challenges in a region like the Salton Sea. Other indicators, like "export diversification", which are only available at the state or national level may be relevant indicators (in this case, for measuring a stable economy), but are rather meaningless for analyzing the Salton Sea context.¹⁴

Another key question concerns the use of qualitative and quantitative methods for data collection. Research on economic development has a long tradition of prioritizing quantitative methods (Mayoux, 2006; Lucas et al., 2016). Such data is often powerful for making visible important statistical relationships (e.g., number of persons in poverty, air quality, and commute times). Moreover, due to its prioritization, quantitative data is often the type of data that readily exists (e.g. U.S. census data). However, in certain cases a sole focus on quantitative data proves insufficient. For example, "some aspects of sustainability, notably those related to social and ethical performance, can be expressed more meaningfully in qualitative terms, as descriptive statements" (Azapagic, 2004, p. 649). The slippery concept of "free, prior, and informed consent" provides another example. Difficult to quantify with any degree of nuance beyond "yes consent was given" or "no it wasn't", assessing to what degree consent was given, to who, and in what way, requires qualitative assessment. That such analyses rarely exist pre-made for the population and region under study, and that conducting such analysis may be taxing for those with limited resources (e.g., time, money, know-how) provides important challenges to qualitative approaches. However, it also provides opportunities for fostering participatory research and institutional alliances (see below).

For key indicators highlighted in Figure 6, like "intergenerational education" and "free, prior, and informed consent", we found no existing data sources. Nevertheless, these indicators may prove useful as guides for potential future surveys, interviews, and focus groups.

Who Measures?: Eschewing positivist notions of neutral scientific research, burgeoning critical scholarship (e.g., sociology of science, science and technology studies, feminist standpoint epistemology, and others) convincingly show that who conducts research (e.g. posing research questions, collecting data, and conducting analysis) matters (Harding, 1991; Law, 2004; Tuhiwai Smith, 2012). That is, not only access to information, but access to the very tools of knowledge production facilitates participatory justice. Describing the principles of "participatory action research" (PAR)¹⁵, McTaggart notes that,

Authentic participation in research means sharing in the way research is conceptualized, practiced, and brought to bear on the life-world. It means ownership--responsible agency in the production of knowledge and the improvement of practice. Mere involvement implies none of this

FIGURE10 - SALTON SEA INCLUSIVE ECONOMY INDICATORS & DATA SOURCES

INDICATORS/ Sub-Indicators	Data Measurement	Definition	Data Source	Smallest Scale
1. EQUITY				
1.1 Upward Mobility	Intergenerational education	% of population with a higher education than their parents	Community testimony	Survey population
	Access to financial services	% of households without a checking or savings account	FDIC	State level (or survey population)
	College educ. adults	% of adults (age 25 and over) who have completed a post-secondary certificate/degree	ACS	Census Tract
1.2 Reduction of Inequality	Income Ratio	Gap between highest & lowest income quintile	ACS; Gini Index	County / census tract
	Persons in poverty	% of persons in poverty	ACS	County / census tract
	Gender Equality	Poverty by gender; women-owned firms	ACS	Community Census Report; City
	Housing Cost Burden	% homeowners / renters whose housing is less than 30% of household income	ACS	Census tract
2. INCLUSION / PARTICIPATION				
2.1 Market Participation	Labor force participation ratio	Labor Force Status (working or seeking work)	ACS	Census Tract
	Business ownership	Number of firms owned by gender (men/women), minority (minority/non-minority)	ACS	City
2.2 Decision - making	Free, prior, & informed consent	Only available from community surveys regarding a specific development project	Community testimony	Survey population
	Multi-lingual consultations	Available from community surveys regarding a specific development project	Community testimony	Survey population
3. GROWTH / STABILITY				
3.1 Work opportunity	Employment rate	% of adults age 20-64 employed	ACS	Census Tract
	Job growth	% 1-year change in the number of jobs, within a 5-mile radius	CA EDD	County
	Job availability	Number of jobs per 1,000 people, within a 5-mile radius	LODES, Census	Census Tract
3.2 Stability	Growth rate average per capital income	Year-to-year change in median household income	ACS	Census Tract
	Union representation	Number of affiliated local unions and their members by county	BLS; Inland Empire Labor Council (AFL-CIO); California Labor Federation	County
	Year-to-year GDP	Yearly GDP by county (metro and other areas)	BEA	County
3.3 Dignified Work	Min. basic Income	% of families with income over 200% of the federal poverty level	ACS	Census Tract
	Job quality	% of high paying jobs, within a 5-mile radius	LODES, Census	Census Tract
	Living wage	% of population by county making less than the corresponding living wage	Calculated using BLS data and the MIT living wage calculator	County
	Per capita income	Median income	ACS, Census	Census Tract
	Life expectancy at birth	Life expectancy at birth by state and census tract	CDC	Census Tract

FIGURE10 - SALTON SEA INCLUSIVE ECONOMY INDICATORS & DATA SOURCES - CONT'D

INDICATORS/ Sub-Indicators	Data Measurement	Definition	Data Source	Smallest Scale
4. SOCIO - ECOLOGICAL HEALTH				
4.1 Ecological Health	Air quality	Annual mean concentration of PM 2.5	Cal/EPA; "bucket brigades"	County (and sub-county data)
	Salton Sea salinity	Salinity measurement; water quality statistics	CA NRA; Salton Sea Management Program	Salton Sea
	Salton Sea biodiversity loss	Number of species; populations size of species	CA NRA; Salton Sea Management Program	Salton Sea
4.2 Community Health	Percentage of population with respiratory disease	Prevalence of asthma (metropolitan area).	CDC, HARC	Metropolitan and Micropolitan Statistical Areas (MMSAs)
	Water Accessibility	Physical Vulnerability to Water Outages; Water Quality; Water affordability	OEHHA (Cal HRTW 1.0 Report & Data Tool)	Community Water System
	Access to Healthcare	Number of locations providing basic medical services per 1,000 population within 5-mile radius	CDC, Census	Census Tract
	Years of life lost	Years of potential life lost	CDC, FRED, Census	County
5. TRANSPORTATION / GEOGRAPHICAL ACCESS TO DEVELOPMENT				
5.1 Commute	Public transportation hours of operation	Number of hours public transportation is in operation	RTA; ICTC	County
	Commute time	% of workers whose commute time is less than 30 minutes	ACS	Census Tract
5.2 Infrastructure	Access to public transport	% of population that is within one mile buffer of a fixed route transit or rail stop	Center for Neighborhood Technology	Zip code
	Vehicle availability	% of households with at least 1 vehicle or 1 vehicle per worker	ACS	Census Tract
	Percentage of household with internet	Number of households per 1000 with high-speed internet	FCC	County

and creates the risk of co option and exploitation of people in the realization of the plans of others (McTaggart, 1991, p. 171).

From this view, those most impacted by the results of research should have a say and a hand in the doing of that research.

In the context of this study, most of the recommended indicators come with ready-made and available data. Such data may be a powerful resource for communities to pursue their interests in fostering inclusive development. However, this does not preclude the opportunity--and in the case of a few indicators, the necessity--of community participation in producing key information. As mentioned previously, assessing "intergenerational education" and "free, prior, and informed consent" may require facilitating spaces for documenting and uplifting community testimony.

Quantitative data collection may also benefit from community participation. For example community-led projects to collect air and water quality data, known as "bucket brigades" (Gabel, 2011; Louisiana Bucket Brigade, 2021), may be helpful not only to corroborate existing data (see Figure 6 point 4, socio-ecological health), but to create disaggregated data to see if and how exposure to environmental goods/bads are distributed unevenly across geographies (e.g. urban/rural) and identities (e.g., race, socio-economic status) of difference (Sze, 2006). In such cases, the research questions, the data collection, and often the analysis responds to, and are proposed by, local communities.

Community-led research has been increasingly effective, especially with the proliferation of low-cost equipment (like air monitoring sensors) (Commodore et al., 2017). However, major challenges remain both in terms of ensuring sustained and meaningful community participation throughout the research process, as well as lacking expertise and organizational capacity (Harrison, 2011).

5.2 Indicators, Sub-Indicators, Measurements and Data Sources

Based on the preceding analysis, Figure 10 summarizes our recommendations of inclusive economy indicators for the Salton Sea region. We emphasize five broad category indicators and 11 sub-indicators (see column one). Each broad indicator has at least two sub-indicators (we provide three for the "Growth/Stability" category). Each sub-indicator is further divided into specific data measurements (see column two). Based on the multifaceted complexity of each sub-indicator as well as the available data, specific measurements for each sub-indicator range from between two (e.g., "Market Participation") to five (e.g., "Dignified Work") in number. We provide a total of 34 data measurements. For each one, we define what is actually measured and at what scale (columns three and five,

respectively). While each of the data measurements can be measured at different scales, for the purposes of getting the most fine-grained analysis possible for the Salton Sea region, we provide the smallest scale at which data is available. In most cases data can be found at the census tract, zip code, or county level. In a few cases, city and state scales are reported. Finally, we list where the data is available and provide hyperlinks to facilitate the ease of data access.

Figure 10 follows the guiding framework previously laid out. The boundaries within and between each indicator and sub-indicator conform less to a rigid reality than to a stylized and strategic representation of complexly inter-related processes. This systematized figure serves to cut through such complexity and provide an accessible tool for understanding and measuring inclusive economies. Indeed, the adding of endless indicators or the intricate highlighting of the extensive interrelationships within and between categories would quickly devolve into unintelligibility and undercut the practical utility of such a visual aid.

Equally importantly, however, Figure 10 also provides a platform on which to build, extend, and revise our framework. That is, the practicality of this tool should not be uncritically accepted. One such amendment we propose at the outset is to disaggregate every indicator and data measurement by race and gender wherever possible. This practice is rooted both in the vast development literature--which convincingly documents the necessity of explicitly emphasizing gender and racial justice to ensure inclusive outcomes--and in the on-the-ground realities of the demographically diverse Salton Sea region.

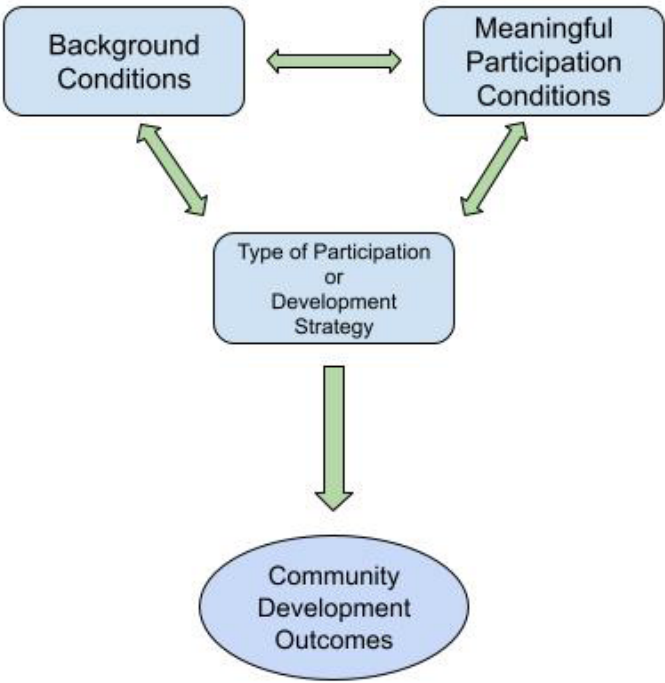
PART THREE: STRATEGIES AND PARTICIPATORY PRACTICES TO DEVELOP INCLUSIVE, EQUITABLE AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIES

This section of the report reviews the literature on participation and inclusive economic development strategies. Whereas the earlier section develops a series of indicators to measure the well-being of a region or community, this section looks at the processes by which this is to be achieved. It focuses on two interrelated processes: 1) inclusive economic development strategies, and 2) popular participation. To make this relevant to the Salton Sea region, it situates these processes in two contexts: A) strategies to improve the current conditions and industries in a region, and B) the best strategies when large-scale megaproject investment is entering a region, like the lithium and Salton Sea restoration projects being proposed. The Salton Sea region (Riverside and Imperial County) is a mix of large scale agriculture surrounding more urban or exurban areas, with the largest employment sectors geographically

FIGURE 11 - OVERLAPPING AND INTERACTING CATEGORIES

	PRE-EXISTING ECONOMIC CONDITIONS	NEW LARGE-SCALE PROJECTS
DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES	What are the best economic development strategies for inclusion and sustainability based on what is already in a region?	What are the best economic development strategies for inclusion and sustainability amid large-scale outside investment?
PARTICIPATION	What participatory institutions empower communities to improve community power in the existing economy?	What participatory institutions ensure community control over how new large-scale investments develop?

FIGURE12 - APPROACH TO ANALYSIS



in the region being health, education, service, agriculture, and retail, according to US census “On the Map” data (see the introduction to this report). Many residents also work outside of the immediate Salton Sea region, and commuting is high both internally within the region and with areas outside of it.

This report is structured around creating inclusive, participatory, and just economies in regards to two different contexts: first the pre-existing regional economic conditions and second, new large scale projects which are entering a region. The questions to be answered from these contexts are presented in Figure 11.

What is important to note is that there is no silver bullet for development. Because economic, geographic, and environmental inequality are the result of many different sources including power imbalances in workplaces, infrastructure problems, contamination, racism, budget cuts, and global economic changes, single interventions will not change this. As a result, no single policy or industry can fix an economy, especially local economies in a globalized world. Nevertheless, there are many strategies that can be taken simultaneously in order to attack the different sources of inequality and exclusion, and build new economic institutions and practices that can make progress. These strategies, as will be explored in Section 4 below, are rooted in civil society sector, enterprise sector, and public sector strategies. Civil society sector strategies involve bringing the participation of excluded populations into the economic world in order for them to have a say and improve their well being. Enterprise strategies involve bringing new forms of business and production into being, through new relationships and collaborations. Public strategies involve bringing the power of the state to support inclusive economies, and institutionalizing the relations of mutuality needed for this. Participation is the central aspect of the civil society sector strategies, but is also important to both enterprise and public strategies, as it is necessary to ensure that residents’ voices are included in economic policy.

6. MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION

This segment of the report focuses on participation, and what makes participation meaningful. A review of literature makes it abundantly clear that all participation is not equal. Participation instead runs on a spectrum from domination to empowerment. In fact, the wide praise for participation in development, environmental, and other spheres, has largely come from the phrase’s ability to be applied to a wide variation of scenarios. In this section, the conditions are identified for meaningful participation, the relevance of background political and economic conditions, and how those interact with the specific form of participatory pro-

cess (see below). This will be important to understanding how participation affects development outcomes.

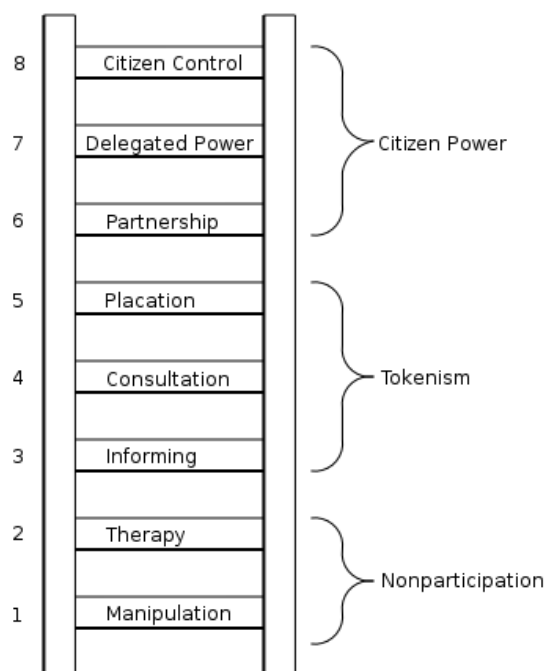
6.1 PARTICIPATION

While participation is a concept widely used to think about democracy, development, and rights, it remains difficult to fit under one definition. Multiple authors have noted that the concept of participation has come to be widely applied to many different situations and with multiple connotations (Leal, 2007; Thorpe & Gaventa, 2020; White, 1996). One starting point is to understand what should not be considered participation. According to participatory practitioners, participation is not: “a human relations exercise that attempts to sell a predetermined solution to the public; a haphazard string of encounters with the public; a hollow attempt at transparent decision-making, where information is withheld and planning occurs behind closed doors; or a one-way communication process, where the lead organization fails to recognize that public participation is about both providing and receiving information” (Stewart & Sinclair, 2007, p. 165).

In contrast to this non-participation, Thorpe and Gaventa adopt Steifel and Wolfe’s definition of participation, which represents a more ideal form. They write: “Participation entails ‘organised efforts to increase control over resources and regulative institutions in given social situations, on the part of groups and movements hitherto excluded from such control’” (Stiefel and Wolfe 1994, 5, as cited in Thorpe and Gaventa, 2020 p.8).

There are a few important features in this definition. One factor important about this definition is that it implies that this activity is collective and organized, and is more than just individual-based participation. It also puts an emphasis beyond simply consultation, but recognizes the importance of participant control. That is, participation when meaningful means participants are having influence on decisions and likely have some impact on the process of the participation itself. It also means that participation should extend into the economic realm, meaning that participation should affect decisions about not only social or political matters, but over economic resources (Thorpe and Gaventa, 2020, p. 8).


This definition fits with earlier connotations of participation which were fundamentally about popular power and education. According to Leal, the concept of participation, and participatory action research were rooted in people acting for themselves and becoming agents of their own lives. During the cold war era, the many revolutionary moments across the planet had programs or strategies rooted in participatory action and popular education. In contrast, the World Bank, in the era of “structural adjustment”, used the concept of participation to bring legitimacy

FIGURE13 - EIGHT RUNGS ON A LADDER OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION**FIGURE14 - SPECTRUM OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation



IAP2's Spectrum of Public Participation was designed to assist with the selection of the level of participation that defines the public's role in any public participation process. The Spectrum is used internationally, and it is found in public participation plans around the world.

INCREASING IMPACT ON THE DECISION 					
	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

to these reforms. However, this was participation as a way of managing, and it had a technocratic purpose, believing simply that the right combination of technology, capital and knowledge was necessary for structural adjustment programs to be implemented with the correct policies and planning mechanisms. This did not actually have any real stakes on the table for empowerment. Leal describes this as a sort of counter-hegemony being integrated into the hegemonic order, or, in other words, a bottom up alternative being integrated into the status quo. He found that the concept lost its connotation related to class (Leal, 2007).

With this history in mind, and a definition of participation that ultimately rests on empowerment and self-determination, the following sections underscore the many factors to analyze when determining if participation is meaningful, and how to make it meaningful.

6.2 POLITICS OF PARTICIPATION

A first step towards analyzing meaningful participation is to recognize that participation is political in nature. This is clear if we take the position that participation is fundamentally about ensuring that typically excluded groups have decision making power. But even without a clear redistribution of power, participation remains political. The broader, universally acclaimed (if vague) understanding of participation obscures that there are many different forms of participation and that different groups have different interests they want to achieve through participation. Sarah White says that treating participation homogeneously has the effect of depoliticizing what is actually political. Steps for dealing with the false non-political connotation to participation include, first, recognizing that participation is a political issue. Second, the diverse and conflicting interests in participation must be analyzed. And third, it requires recognizing that participation and non-participation are not neutral choices, but are shaped by the larger political world (White, 1996, pp. 14–15).

Because there are different interests that people bring to a participatory space, different groups will struggle to control the dynamics of the participation. Top down and bottom up actors in the participatory space are likely to have mismatched goals for the process, and are likely to struggle to determine what kind of process dominates. Groups can “co-opt a space from below”, and the poor's best option may include intentionally boycotting participation if they consider it useless. On the top down side, groups implementing participation can try to control what is acceptable in the space. There are also likely to be internal political dynamics within any group or organization participating (White, 1996).

Furthermore, as participation has been institutionalized more and more widely, it can also be used to delegitimize

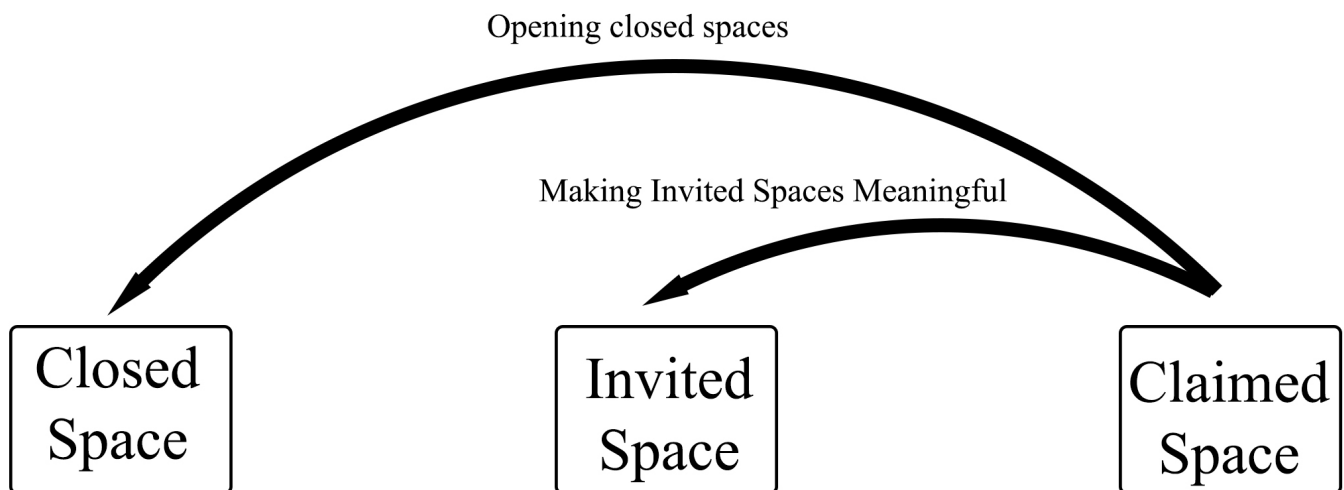
older forms of participation. “With the proliferation of ‘invited participation’ – the creation of opportunities and fora for participation – has come an increasing illegitimacy of older forms of participation, including the use of popular protest to express dissent and present demands. With this has come a diminished space for people to set their own agendas, rather than to try to be accommodated within those of the powerful” (Cornwall, 2008, pp. 280–281). What is crucial for both organizations implementing participatory spaces and the people participating is to analyze and ensure that the participatory space is not an attempt to simply gain the consent of excluded populations who otherwise may oppose a project development, or policy, and to ensure that the participation helps give excluded populations power to determine the courses of their own lives. The following sections help elaborate on this and provide a series of questions for analyzing participation.

6.3 HOW MEANINGFUL IS THE PARTICIPATION? WHAT PURPOSE IS IT SERVING?

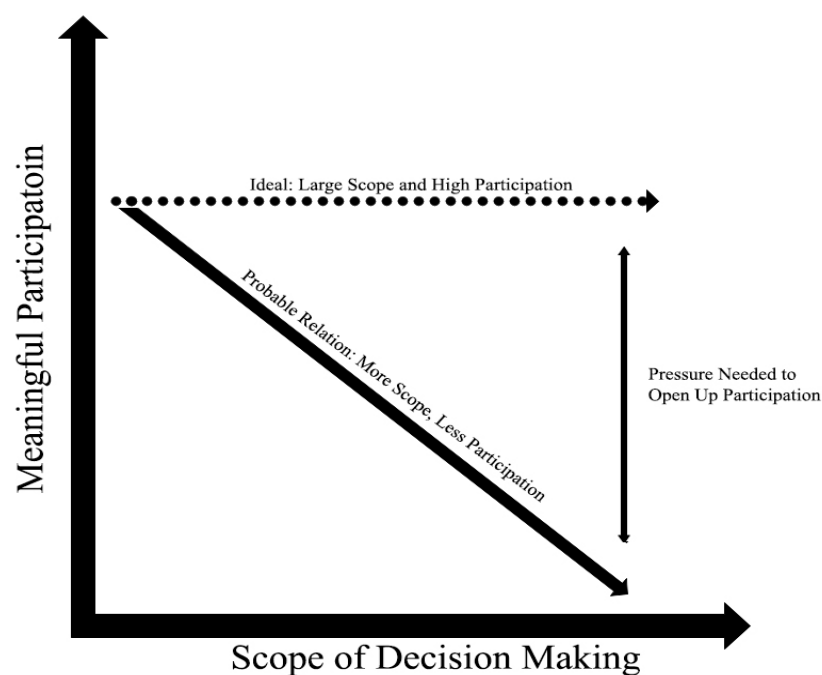
Given the ambiguity around the term participation, there have been a number of attempts to put participation on a spectrum. In broad terms, the various spectrums all move towards empowerment of participants at the most meaningful end, which is often difficult to achieve and requires self-organizing endeavors of participant populations themselves (see also information on ‘claimed spaces’ below). At the bottom are practices publicly framed as participation but which are really forms of domination, legitimation for decisions already made, or cost-saving strategies. In between are participatory processes that allow some kind of participant input and influence.

Following from a review of the literature on meaningful participation, most participatory processes put forward on the different typologies and spectrums fit into the following categories.

- **Domination:** Powerful actors controlling or defeating opponents through participatory processes. This is an attempt to dissolve existing opposition, or to undermine pre-existing popular mobilization through participatory (Leiva, 2019).
- **Legitimation:** These are often rubber stamp processes (for example Environmental Impact Assessment consultation requirements) (Nguyen et al., 2020; Schilling-Vacaflor & Flemmer, 2015).
- **Damage control:** This is participation or listening only with the intent of preventing problems or avoiding mistakes.
- **Weak Controlled Participation:** This involves some listening and consideration of community concerns, but with no guarantees of community influence or power.

FIGURE15 - RELATIONS BETWEEN SPACES OF DECISION MAKING

An Illustration of the Interaction Between Spaces of Decision Making

FIGURE16 - INTERACTION BETWEEN SCOPE OF DECISION MAKING AND MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION

- **Strong Controlled Participation:** In this form community participants have some kind of decision making power, approaching meaningful participation.
- **Empowerment:** Here communities or groups organize themselves and take actions on their own terms. This is an iterative process of consciousness and capacity building through action.
- **Delegated Authority -** Citizens have dominant decision making authority around a specific program or project. Citizens rather than typical power holders may have a majority of seats, or specific and clearly elaborated powers. This could include citizen-side veto power.
- **Citizen Control -** At the top of the ladder citizens have ultimate control over the implementation and planning of a program or project. They could have control over design, management, and negotiating power around changes, from the outside, regarding community development grants and things of this nature. For example, funds used for development programs would have a board composed of the community members it is meant to serve, and possibly for democratic economic ends (such as funding employee owned industries).

One of the earliest and still very astute participation spectrums was put forward by Arnstein in 1969 to evaluate the participation practices implemented in US federal urban development programs (Arnstein, 1969, p. 217). She distinguishes between non-participation, tokenism, and citizen power as the overarching characteristics of different levels of participation See Figure 13.

- **Manipulation-** This is (non)participation that serves as PR, or as a “participation” rubber stamp needed to get something approved. Officials “educate”, advise, persuade citizens, and not vice versa.
- **Therapy-** In this type of space, participants are heard but rather than taking their concerns into account, the space is oriented around changing the participants feelings around a problem. The “pathologies” of the participants is what the focus is, rather than changing the cause of their concerns.
- **Informing-** This is a step in the right direction towards empowerment. “However, too frequently the emphasis is placed on a one-way flow of information -from officials to citizens-with no channel provided for feedback and no power for negotiation” (Arnstein, 1969, p. 219).
- **Consulting -** This is about hearing citizen opinions, and is better than informing, but without other forms of power for participants it becomes merely window dressing. This is often done through surveys, public hearings, and things like this. What the range of options in consultation are also matters. Questions like “Do you support education?” may not allow for much critical feedback.
- **Placation -** In this form members of typically excluded community groups sit on boards, and can advise, and give advice. But regular power-holders retain decision making power.
- **Partnership -** In this, there is some redistribution of power and some distribution of decision-making. There is a space for negotiation, along with set rules of the game. Typically a partnership is demanded by citizens, not invited by the government or agency. It is important that the representatives in the partnership are accountable to a base.

White has also developed a spectrum of participation, ranging from participation only in name (nominal) to transformative forms of participation where all parties are seeking to empower and transform through the self-activity of the participants (White, 1996)

The International Association for Public Participation also provides a participation spectrum. The spectrum continues moves from less to more participant impact on decision making. At the bottom of the spectrum is simply informing, with no decision making power. Empowerment is at the high end of the spectrum, where final decision-making power sits with the community or public (see Figure 14).¹⁶

This crux of all of these spectrums of meaningful participation is decision-making power: who has it, and who does not. This point runs throughout all of the focus on meaningful participation. However, there are many other aspects necessary to analyze to ensure that participation is meaningful.

6.4 LOCATING THE SPACES OF DECISION-MAKING AND PARTICIPATION

Decision-making takes place in different types of spaces. We can identify at least three categories of participatory spaces useful to determining how meaningful participation can be. Oswald and colleagues note three types of decision-making spaces: Closed, Invited, and Claimed: (Oswald et al., 2018, pp. 7–8).

- **Closed:** These are the spaces behind closed doors that are entirely non-participatory. They have to be opened up for participation. This is the way most economic policy is made, and is the way most decisions are made in the workplace. Traditional decision-makers hold the power and operate behind the scenes. This is common in bureaucracies, economic policymaking, and business negotiations.

- **Invited:** “Existing decision-making spaces where people are invited to participate.” These can include any number of institutionalized venues for participation. This may include public participation in policy-making processes, participation requirements on environmental impact assessments, investment decisionmaking process, participatory budgeting. The important theme in these spaces is how meaningful they are, and what the entity inviting participants is seeking from the participation.
- **Claimed Spaces.** “Decision-making spaces which have been claimed and created by people and organisations themselves.” These are spaces that are formed by people themselves, rather than invited spaces. These include Associations, organisations, social movements, grassroots economic endeavors, cooperatives, worker’s organizations and unions when they are at their best. These spaces represent the self-determination and empowerment of people usually left out of decision-making.

Applying the political lens to these different spaces we can see that these different types of spaces are not static but often emerge and interact. The most clear version of this is the interaction between claimed spaces and invited and closed spaces. Much of our lives are shaped by the policy decisions that come not only from elected representatives (who may be more or less “representative”), but from bosses, city managers and bureaucrats operating behind the scenes without accountability. It often takes actions from claimed spaces to be able to open up closed spaces for some kind of participation. In fact, it appears that most endeavors to increase democracy in economic policymaking have come from social movements (claimed spaces) pressuring to bring in citizen voice or make accountable economic decision-makers (Thorpe & Gaventa, 2020, p. 21) See Figure 15.

It is also the case that participation in claimed spaces is able to take less meaningful spaces and turn them into meaningful spaces. This relates to a fundamental point about the conditions of meaningful participation, that networks and coalitions rather than simply individuals must be brought into participatory processes (see more below) (Thorpe & Gaventa, 2020). Furthermore, challenges to invited spaces from social movement organizations (claimed spaces) may be the only effective way to ensure community voice in development projects. For example, much of the literature on the participatory institution and right of free prior and informed consent for indigenous people has shown it to be less than meaningful (Fulmer et al., 2008; Jaskoski, 2014; Schilling-Vacaflor & Flemmer, 2015). Instead, meaningful participation emerges from the interaction between claimed and invited spaces. Maiah Jaskoski has shown how indigenous and community

groups in Peru and Colombia have won concessions and protections against mega-mining projects through contesting and challenging the participatory institutions: “...they refused to be consulted, they challenged the lack of, or their exclusion from, prior consultation, and they preemptively achieved environmental protections” (Jaskoski, 2014, 2020, pp. 1–2). Communities and indigenous organizations across Latin America have also taken the invited participatory institution of prior consultation, and through self-organization have created the “hybrid-institution” of *consultas populares* (popular consultations). These are consultations created and participated in by communities and popular organizations themselves. These consultations, where communities vote on if they will allow mining in their territories, have overwhelmingly rejected mining projects while still appealing to the legal right and legitimacy of the consultations based on interpretations of international and domestic law. For example, over 600,000 people had participated in *consultas populares* in Guatemala by 2012 (Walter & Urkidi, 2017). This type of hybrid institution between invited and claimed spaces shows that it is not participatory spaces per se, but active efforts by participants that bring a self-empowerment.

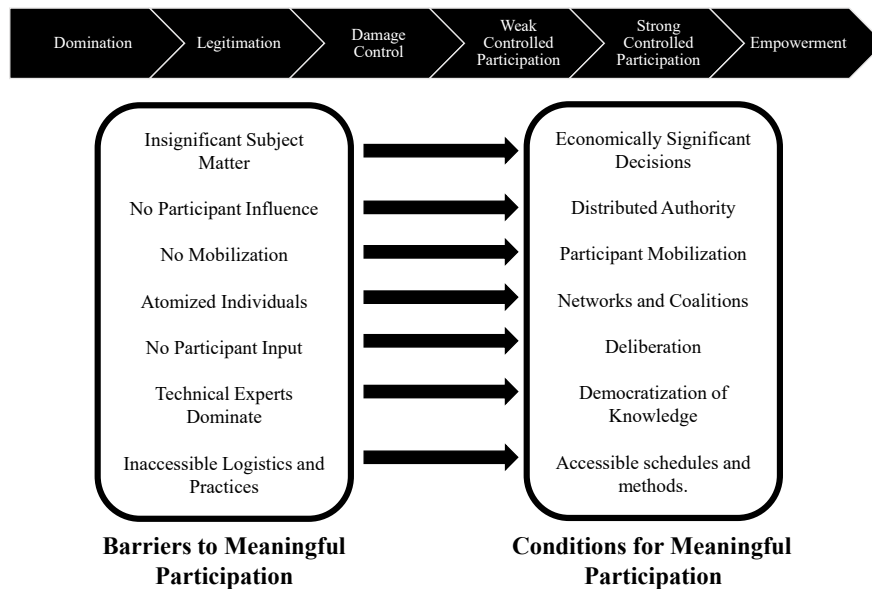
The flip side of these interpretations is that invited participatory spaces can also be created to undermine, control, or dissolve claimed decision making spaces. Unfortunately, the attempt to use dialogue as a method to deal with structural problems represents the lowest rungs on Arnstein's (1969) ladder of participation, therapy and manipulation. Dialogue becomes a strategy to undermine an opponent when it stands in for actual solutions to structural problems and instead only attempts to control the actions of affected communities. For example, in Chile in Constitución, Calama, Antofagasta and the Choapa Valley—communities that had conflicts against mining—mining companies have hired consultants to lead community participatory events alongside the creation of public-private development corporations that have undermined opposition. Through dialogue processes the consultants learn the values of the local residents which they use as a way to integrate the company and build its social capital, which is used to dissolve opposition and begin extraction (Leiva, 2019). The lesson is that in situations where invited participatory spaces are created in response to popular participation coming from claimed spaces, it is crucial for community members to analyze if participation is meaningful or not.

6.5 WHO PARTICIPATES?

Another common theme in the literature on meaningful participation is interrogating who actually is participating. The first clear question to ask is are people actually participating? Spaces inviting public participation may have low rates of participation. Filling the gap between the space for participation and actual participation is a central condition

FIGURE17 - SCOPE, MEANING AND COMMUNITY ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

Meaningful Participation + Meaningful Scope = Community Economic Empowerment



This figure shows that meaningful participation and meaningful scope of subject matter are necessary pieces for community economic empowerment. As these two factors become more meaningful, the level of participation and empowerment should increase. And the conditions for these are presented as well.

necessary for meaningful participation (Thorpe & Gaventa, 2020).

There are also a number of reasons that potential participants decide not to participate in self-exclusion from participation. These include that people simply cannot, they do not have the time after accounting for work, caring for children. Spaces for participation may be culturally or otherwise uncomfortable for participants. Participants may have a sort of resignation, or a fatigue of participation, especially following past participation that did not deliver any benefits to the community (Cornwall, 2008, pp. 279-80).

Beyond a general lack of participation—and especially when we take participation to centrally be about the increasing control over decision making by typically excluded groups—ensuring that participation includes oppressed, exploited, and marginalized groups is important. The idea of “community” participation should not gloss over the differences within any community. Differences of race, gender, class, and more exist within a community. There are disparities in different territorial areas also, for example areas with poor transportation, concentrated poverty, or language barriers may be underrepresented in participatory decision making covering wider areas (Thorpe & Gaventa, 2020, pp. 37–38).

Similar to the problem of assuming a homogeneous community, groups who are being represented in participatory spaces should not be considered homogenous themselves. Internal divisions within outwardly appearing homogenous groups are important to factor in. For example, sexism,

racism, and citizen vs non-citizen differences may reappear within groups that otherwise seem homogenous. When participatory spaces recreate these dynamics, intentional actions need to be taken to prevent discrimination from undermining participation and solidarity. For example, women have had to fight for their equal participation in Argentina’s “Worker Recovered Enterprise” movement. When cooperatives have recognized racism and sexism being reproduced in the workplace (even as it is a larger system beyond any individual workplace), taking deliberative and participatory actions to identify barriers to equal participation and change the structure within the workplace has helped to prevent gendered and racialized divisions of labor (Thorpe & Gaventa, 2020, p. 38).

Another challenge, related to representation is the notion of “elite capture” or “elite cooptation.” This can simply be related to the greater access to resources that elites in participation spaces have. Power dynamics between partners also must be factored in. For example, the amount of resources or expertise that a partner brings (often rooted in their structural location), means that within the participatory space some voices will dominate others (for example, Global North vs Global South, business and community partners) (Thorpe & Gaventa, 2020, p. 38). One of the most challenging aspects of this is the notion of “representation.” If in participatory spaces representatives are to stand in for the entire group, they run the risk of misrepresenting the larger group. In fact, there are many reasons to expect representatives of any group on any

board, roundtable, or committee to be among the more privileged of their group. This can occur even when they are still discriminated against in decision making spaces.¹⁷ There are also differing political opinions within otherwise homogenous groups, and as such different members of a group may have different interests in the participatory space (White, 1996).

The difficulty of representation tending towards more elite members of a group is a challenge in itself, but it can also be at risk of intentional cooptations by the powerful.

A risk of all participatory processes is that they get co-opted by elites or certain groups. This is why it is so important to think carefully about who is participating. Due to practicalities, it is very likely that 'representatives' of certain groups or communities will participate. However, this throws up questions: How have those representatives been selected/chosen? Who are they claiming to represent? The idea of a 'community' or 'civil society' (or any large homogenous group) can be problematic, as within apparently cohesive communities/groups there will be differences in perspectives and experiences – between men and women, young and old, between ethnicities and

religions, and between classes. Are participants there to represent others, such as beneficiaries, stakeholders, intermediaries, investors, or specific marginalised groups, or are they there to represent their own interests? (Oswald et al., 2018, p. 7).

This relates to Arnstein's segments of the participation ladder that she characterizes as "degrees of tokenism" (Arnstein, 1969, p. 217). She noted that political figures encouraged participation of community leaders in order to coopt them, legitimize themselves, and delegitimize the community leader to their prior base (Arnstein, 1969). In participation around new mining installations, there have been fierce battles over who counts as representatives of indigenous communities (Castillo, 2016).

In sum, there are both challenges to achieving participation, ensuring that discrimination does not appear in participatory spaces, ensuring that representative participation is actually representative and that elites cannot capture the participation process. There are some measures that can be taken to prevent elite capture. These include increasing outreach, ensuring participation occurs in the most accessible times and locations, ensuring there is adequate language interpretation and that language is

FIGURE18 - STRATEGIES ANALYZED - TABLE

CIVIL SOCIETY SECTOR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Union Strategies • Worker Center • Community Organization Strategies • Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation
BUSINESS SECTOR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extractive Development • Linkages • Incentivization • Anchor institution Strategies • Healthcare Career Ladders • Employee Ownership
PUBLIC SECTOR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transportation • Housing Policy • Local Regulation • Community Workforce Agreements • Participatory Budgeting

generally jargon-free, ensuring safe spaces, and preparing community members before the participation takes place (Oswald et al., 2018, p. 14).

6.6 SCOPE OF PARTICIPATION

While the subject of judging participation as meaningful or not has to be put in context of what is actually at stake. Even more meaningful forms of participation are put into what is at stake. “Delegated power over choosing the colour of paint for a clinic’s waiting room in the name of ‘patient involvement’ – in the absence of any involvement in decisions on what the clinic actually does – may count for little in transforming power relations” (Cornwall, 2008, p. 273). Farrington and Bebbington put participation on a scale of depth (how meaningful) and scope (the range of what is at stake) (Farrington & Bebbington, 1993, p. 105).

Some of the most impactful decisions are made behind closed doors. In fact, much of the ideology and practice of the current economic system has been to intentionally keep the economy off limits from democracy, and has made the social conditions for democracy weaker (Gill, 1998; Kurtz, 2004; Slobodian, 2018). Furthermore, Thorpe and Gaventa find that in economic policymaking, some of the most impactful decision making is largely done in closed spaces and has to be opened from social movement pressure for any kind of participation or accountability to occur (Thorpe & Gaventa, 2020). Furthermore, in many corporate social responsibility schemes, what is up for participation is small relative to the scale of the project in question, while the scope of the project is usually off limits, not to mention profits. We can take this to show that as the stakes or scope of what decisions are to be made in the participatory space, the more difficulty and more resistance there will be to achieving meaningful participation.

This is represented in Figure 16, which is intended to visually display the problem, not as any kind of scientific finding. The greater the scope of the decision being made or program being implemented, meaningful participation decreases. The ideal would be meaningful participation as scope increased. This would entail empowerment and democratic decision making in the workplace and in economic policy, which would entail real redistribution of power and resources. Because of this, closing the gap between what is typical of the status quo and what is ideal would require more power the larger the scope.

6.7 CONDITIONS FOR MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION

Given what has been listed above, it is clear that participation is not automatically meaningful, and at worst may be intentionally made that way. Given this, it is important to look at what conditions make a participatory space meaningful, rather than a rubber stamp to be sent to the relevant investors, managers, or bureaucracy.

Thorpe and Gaventa identify five conditions that are necessary for meaningful participation in economic governance and decision making. These are distributed authority, mobilization, networks and coalitions, deliberation, and democratization of knowledge.

Distributed authority means that in a space, organization, or institution, the ability to decide has to be given to people beyond those typically in a position to make decisions. In a company, this would include employees having decision making authority, which is why cooperative models are so lauded. Outside of enterprises and organizations, this distributed authority may appear more as asserting a voice (perhaps from a claimed space). It is important to distinguish between decision making authority, and simple consultation. Decision making authority would entail that there would be some sort of citizen right to make final decisions, or veto decisions made without participation.

Mobilization relates to the need to close the gap between the space for participation being open, and people actually participating. It also entails that mobilization is the process necessary to open closed spaces. Mobilization is also crucial to creating consciousness:

Participation requires that people view themselves as active citizens that are willing to act to effect change (ibid.), are aware of their rights and needs, and have the capacity to engage in these processes. However, these characteristics cannot be taken for granted and may need to be built and learned, as people gain a sense of their power within. Mobilisation may be especially important in economic governance or with respect to business decision making where concepts of accountability and rights are less well embedded than in political domains. This raising of consciousness is often a first order outcome of participation, built through processes of mobilisation (Thorpe & Gaventa, 2020, p. 29).

The link between mobilization and political and economic consciousness raising is important in the literature on unions. Fantasia’s classic work argues that it is in the process of collective action that union members and the broader communities that support them develop a consciousness of themselves as workers and the importance of solidarity across former lines of difference (Fantasia, 1989).

Networks and Coalitions are important because atomized individuals are not capable of exerting influence in economic affairs. Instead, it is when they operate together in groups that they are able to influence the outcomes of economic processes or policies. The mobilization of networks and coalitions creates the opportunity to bring some amount of political will into participation, where groups of people are able to have more influence. This is especially

important in economic policymaking where many opportunities for participation have to be opened up. This also is important to avoid a single representative of a group misrepresenting the larger group. If women are mobilized through networks and coalitions of organizations, then women as a group would have more voice than a single woman standing in for an entire group, for example.

Deliberation: For participation to be meaningful, deliberation and the voice of participants must be heard, moving beyond even the standard of one person one vote. The best solutions to problems must be able to reach the participatory space, and this can only come from deliberation. Deliberation entails coming to decisions horizontally, rather than as a result of power. However, structural power imbalances can create problems for equality in deliberation, and should be addressed both internally to the participatory space (for example language barriers) and externally, through building power for typically excluded groups to be able to enter the participatory space on more equal footing (for example more time off for workers so they have time to participate) (Thorpe & Gaventa, 2020, pp. 31–32).

Democratization of knowledge as a central condition is a response to how technical expertise is used to legitimate positions in economic decision making, even in more open and deliberative spaces. Access to knowledge has to be made more easily available. Attempts should also be made to build popular economic literacy. Jargon should be translated into simple language. Included in meaningful participation must be a certain acceptance of experiential knowledge, that is the knowledge that people bring to a space from their life experiences (Thorpe & Gaventa, 2020, pp. 32–33). This has been crucial in many mining cases where residents noticed health and environmental problems, while companies with teams of experts maintained that there were no problems (Slack, 2009). Attempts to build participatory or democratized information gathering is also an important tool. This can include community organizations bringing in experts to bring in other points of view, as when Salvadoran communities brought in their own mining experts who found serious contamination (Spalding, 2014). It also can mean teaching and creating the ability for community members to become experts, like for young residents nearby the Escobal mine who collect water to monitor for contamination coming from the now suspended mine (Woltke, 2021). This type of logic could be translated into community economic data collection.

These conditions are crucial for meaningful participation. There are other, more concrete conditions that Stewart and Sinclair have found from interviewing participation practitioners in Canada's environmental sector (Stewart & Sinclair, 2007). The following are the most important factors identified in the study:

- Integrity and accountability
- Participant influence
- Fair notice and time
- Inclusiveness and adequate representation.
- Fair and open dialogue
- Multiple and appropriate methods
- Adequate and accessible information

• **6.8 Analyzing Meaningful Participation**

The above sections have given an overview of the challenges, politics, and spectrums of meaningful participation. In review, the challenges to participation becoming a meaningful path towards community control of economic development appear vast. A general framework for thinking about participation appears in Figure 17.

7. INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

This section of the report is about different strategies for inclusive and economic development. These strategies are broken down into three sectors: popular, public, and business/enterprise sector strategies. These are listed in Table Z. Generally speaking, these categories overlap and are deeply related and interact with each other. For example healthcare career ladders have emerged from collaborations between employers, unions, and education providers like community colleges. Which category this fits in is unclear (unions are civil society sector, employers are business sector, and education is public). Nevertheless these distinctions are helpful analytically in the sense that they put an emphasis on specific aspects of making a healthy economy. Civil society sector actions represent marginalized groups taking actions to actively build power against conditions of inequality and poverty. Business sector strategies involve finding ways to create new employment through new businesses and economic activity. Public sector strategies seek to bring the power of the state in to provide public services, regulate, and institutionalize the relationships of solidarity economics through policy. These different sectors at times represent the tensions between confronting inequality (ie, labor unions), and collaboration (ie, anchor-collaborations). In all cases, meaningful participation remains a means to increase inclusion in conjunction with all of the different sectoral strategies presented, and where participation is incompatible with the strategy, it is likely not a strategy for an inclusive economy.¹⁸

7.1 PRE-EXISTING ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

BOX 1 - QUESTIONS FOR ANALYZING MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION

- 1) What are the politics around the participatory space?
 - a) What are the different interests coming to the participatory space? Are any of these interests directly opposed to each other?
 - b) What are the power imbalances outside the participatory space being brought into the space?
 - c) What are the dynamics in play as different interests jockey for position?
- 2) What are the spaces of decision making and participation?
 - a) What is the subject we care about?
 - i) What are the closed decision making spaces on that subject?
 - ii) What are the spaces we are invited to?
 - iii) What are the spaces we need to create to achieve our goal?
 - b) Is the participatory space an “invited space” created from above or is it a “claimed space” created by participants themselves.
 - c) Is there a closed space where decisions are being made in private?
 - d) Do people need to form new space, organization, campaign, or association to either open existing closed spaces or make invited spaces meaningful?
 - e) Did an invited space emerge following the actions of social movements or excluded populations?
 - f) If so, is it meaningful or a means to control?
- 3) How meaningful is the participation and what purpose does it serve?
 - a) Where does the type of participation happening fall in the categories of participation?
 - i) Domination: A method for the powerful to defeat a bottom up opponent through participation where past efforts failed.
 - ii) Legitimation: A rubber stamp process, or a public relations stunt.
 - iii) Damage control: Participation or listening only with the intent of preventing problems, avoiding mistakes, or lowering costs.
 - iv) Weak Limited Participation: Listening, and consideration of communities with no guarantees of power over decision making.
 - v) Strong Limited Participation: Community participants have some kind of decision making power within an institution.
 - vi) Empowerment: Communities or groups organize themselves and take actions on their own terms. An iterative process of consciousness and capacity building through action.
 - b) What is the purpose of the participation for the implementer and for the participants? Is there a mismatch?
- 4) Who is participating?
 - a) Is there high participation?
 - b) Are all the relevant groups represented?
 - c) Is discrimination occurring in the participatory process?
 - d) Are group representatives accountable and truly representative?
- 5) What is the scope?
 - a) What are the stakes of the decisions being made?
 - b) What will it take to make higher stakes decisions more participatory or bring more stakes into an existing process?
- 6) What are the necessary conditions for meaningful participation?
 - a) Are the following conditions met or what can be done to improve them?
 - i) Is there distributed authority?
 - ii) Are participants mobilized and actually making it to the participatory space?
 - iii) Are networks and coalitions, rather than only individuals, being mobilized and brought into participation?
 - iv) Is there space for meaningful deliberation?
 - v) Is there a democratization of knowledge, including accessible information?
 - vi) Integrity and accountability for participation implementers.
 - vii) Fair notice and time for participation
 - viii) Multiple and appropriate methods for participation.

Box 1. also provides a list of questions corresponding to the above sections. It can be thought of as a series of questions to interrogate the participation occurring around a project.

BOX 2 - COMMUNITY FOODBANK OF SOUTHERN ARIZONA

While many anchor collaborations are rooted in large urban areas, an example that may be of particular interest to the Salton Sea region given the mix of urban and rural conditions is some work happening around Tucson, Arizona. The Community Foodbank of Southern Arizona, an existing non-profit, to fulfill its mission has embarked on an anchor strategy, the Farm-to-Institution Program, where they partner with the University of Arizona, Tucson Medical Center, and Tucson Unified School District to connect small and mid sized farms to these anchor institutions' purchasing. There are a number of important and interesting programs that the Foodbank supports with the Tucson-based Community Investment Corporation in order to create food security and expand community food security and production. These include microloans capacity building grants for local farmers and other food entrepreneurs that contribute to the food bank's mission of ending hunger in the region.²⁴

In scenarios like this, in addition to increased revenues, there is the possibility for multiplier effects within the economy. The money going to local farms is circulated back into the economy as farmers make purchases of farming inputs locally and as the increased income of workers is also spent locally. To secure the maximum multiplier effect it is best to ensure new agricultural production is occurring, rather than simply substituting existing external buyers for local buyers for already existing crops (Duval et al., 2019). This is why the additional programs to support new farms are important.

Through this process, the foodbank has supported new food production, and become the leader in the region for ensuring equality in access to food. distributing over 34 million pounds of food annually, and in 2018 "CFB provided nutrition and garden education to 4,217 K-12 students; engaged 1,839 adults and 420 families in nutritional health education; provided 5,870 seniors with monthly health and nutrition resources; provided 2,000 hours of skills and leadership education to 200 partner institutions and supported two year-round farmers markets" (Carney and Krause, 2019, 5) It also has built a culinary skills job training program through its Caridad Community Kitchen, which provides meals to those in need while giving culinary on the job training to low income and unemployed or underemployed residents.²⁵

This section looks at the different strategies for inclusive economic development in what are already the economic features in the Salton Sea region. This section lays out strategies for improving and developing an inclusive economy in popular, enterprise, and public sectors.

Civil Society Sector Strategies

There are a number of important civil society sector strategies that could be taken in the region. The central premise for popular strategies is organization. This stems from the view that inequality is a result not of innate laws, but rather of imbalances of power. Civil society sector strategies seek to organize ordinary people in order for them to be able to assert power collectively in order to obtain a more economically secure and dignified life.

Jane McAlevey (McAlevey, 2016) has put forward a model of thinking about the different strategies for asserting power for working people. She notes the difference between advocacy, mobilizing, and organizing. Advocacy strategies involve groups or organizations brokering or meeting with power-holders to try to get better conditions for marginalized people, however those marginalized people do not really play a part in the strategy itself. A step up from this is mobilizing, where groups of people already committed to a cause take action. In this scenario there is some people-power in action, but only among a limited group. Organizing, by comparison, seeks to organize majorities in a “universe” (for example a workplace, church, or neighborhood), and in doing so build power. Organizing can take a location like a workplace, and change the fundamental balance of power. For McAlevey, the best example of this strategy comes in the form of unions, and the unions that take this type of strategy for their workers have the best results (McAlevey, 2016).

Union Strategies: There are a few reasons why unionization and union strategies are important for the Salton Sea region. First, while unionization brings better wages and benefits to unionized workers relative to non-unionized workers, unionization also has a tendency to increase the overall wage rates in an industry, even for non-union workers. This is due to a number of reasons including unions helping to set industry labor standards, but also because employers have to raise their wages in order to compete for employees against unionized workplaces (Bivens et al., 2017; Walters & Mishel, 2003). So although taking place at specific workplaces, unionization helps reduce inequality in an economy generally, especially as unions organize low and middle income workers. Second, many of the most exploitative and abusive industries, such as agriculture (APHA, 2017), and other low paying industries like service, are huge industries in the Salton Sea region, but present few options for workers to improve their lives other than through unionizing or other forms of labor organizing.

Finally, there is also an overlap between the strategic sectors for labor and the Salton Sea region employment, specifically in education and care industries. Care and education sectors have large workforces, and they do not have the risk of being outsourced like manufacturing. In these sectors worker organizing also has a special advantage in terms of what McAlevey calls the “whole worker” model of organizing. Whole worker organizing is a concept for how unionization can translate into broader community development. Because workers are also members of communities, when they take action at the worksite (for example a strike or a unionization campaign) they can use all of their networks as community members to bring support to their strike, including neighbors, faith groups, adult and children’s sports teams. By integrating these networks into their fights against inequality, larger segments of society can participate to build empowerment that can carry forward beyond any individual campaign. (see also Fantasia, 1989; McAlevey, 2016)

An even more important feature of whole worker organizing in education and care sectors is that these workers are directly engaged in reproducing the rest of the workforce. As these sectors directly work with community members, they also have stronger connections outside of the worksite. Because of this, when these workers build power and take action at the job site, they are also able to win big for the broader community. The most powerful and clear recent example of this in the United States is the Red for Ed teachers strike-wave that took place in 2018, and actions like those of the Chicago Teachers Union before that. Through these strikes, the teachers were able to not only win increases in their salaries, but major support and resources for their schools and students, and therefore the broader community.

Unionizing in agriculture is definitely more difficult, but due to the low pay, chronic health issues, workplace injuries, and other abuses in the industry, successful unionization would have a serious benefit for many workers. Nevertheless, agricultural labor organizing faces a number of major barriers, including how undocumented immigrants are particularly vulnerable to employer threats, H2A visas tying workers to employers, subcontracting, and general precarity for workers. (APHA, 2017) There are historical successful cases, as the well known story of the United Farmworkers shows. More recently, a wildcat strike of 1,800 farmworkers outside of Bakersfield forced agricultural giant The Wonderful Company to reverse course on a planned paycut (Mohan, 2019). There has also been unionization among berry farmworkers North of Seattle, who signed a collective bargaining agreement with Sakuma Brothers Inc in 2017 (Wozniacka, 2019). So agriculture should be seen as a sector with major potential that faces serious obstacles, rather than one to be written off. There

are also a few advantages for California agricultural workers, one of which is that California is one of a few states that permits agriculture collective bargaining, while agricultural workers are largely excluded from the National Labor Relations Act elsewhere (APHA, 2017).

Still, there have been unionization campaigns with majority undocumented populations that have won big in rural regions in more recent years also that are instructive for their use of mass participation to lower inequality. The case of Smithfield Foods in Tarheel, North Carolina is instructive. Smithfield was a notorious employer that intentionally pitted workers against each other by race, segregated different departments, and had a massive turnover rate in employees, and even had called ICE on organizing employees. However, a hard fought unionization campaign that cut across racial lines, brought community and faith organizations into the fight, and brought in other organizations to support the campaign through a boycott of the company led to a successful unionization and contract. This contract brought the wages for 5,000 workers at Smithfield up to \$15 an hour along with a number of work protections and benefits. (McAlevey, 2016, Chapter 5) This is especially striking in a rural region where the minimum wage is still \$7.50 an hour (US Department of Labor, 2021). This was a very long fight to win, but it shows that developing a strong organizing model for unionization is a possibility, even in rural sectors among vulnerable populations like immigrants. California as a more pro-immigrant state, may also make retaliatory actions by employers against workers through the ICE more costly in terms of reputation and unpopular with political figures and other groups, although that challenge remains and needs to be taken seriously. Finding ways to support unionization and union activity will be important.

Worker Centers: Nevertheless, the difficulties involved in unionization for immigrant and precarious low-wage workers have also led to other labor organizing strategies. A promising model, especially for low-wage immigrant workers, is the worker center. Worker centers are organizations that typically focus on organizing with low-wage, un-unionized workers, and often with a focus on immigrant rights. Worker centers first emerged as organizations run by black urban residents following the decline of manufacturing and the rise of low-wage service work. They are organizations focusing on low-wage sectors rather than specific worksites per se, and often among specific groups (i.e. immigrants). In this they often contain a mix of facilitating workplace organizing, providing services (legal, aid, etc) and launching campaigns to support political, social, and economic change. They also partner with different organizations, including faith groups, non-profits, government offices, community groups, and unions. (Fine, 2007) Worker centers are important because they help create

coalitions and organize ordinary people, which is necessary in order to mobilize people for meaningful participation in other areas.

Theodore, Gutelius and Gonzales (2019) describe worker centers as nonprofits that aim to transform industry practices in low wage industries that cause precarity, abuse, and inequality. The worker center model responds to a rise in what they call “high-violation labor markets,” or labor markets where violations like wage theft are commonplace. Especially in the context of “workplace fissuring,”—employment relations becoming more complex and fragmented through practices like subcontracting—the accountability of firms around labor protections has been made much more elusive. Wage theft is extremely rampant, up to \$2 billion dollars a year are stolen from low wage workers in California (Theodore et al., 2019, p. 4).

The worker center model of change is based in worker leadership development, and operates less on the mass base model of unions. They organize workers that are difficult to unionize. So they complement unions rather than compete with them. According to Theodore et. al, the worker center theory of change has five core components: “1) Transforming industry practices; 2) Modernizing labor standards; 3) Strengthening enforcement of employment and labor laws; 4) Improving job quality and expanding employment opportunities; and 5) Changing the public discourse on low-wage work and inequality”(2019, p. 1).

A huge part of worker center success has been the role that they play in supporting the enforcement of labor standards. Worker centers are crucial for enforcement because of their intimate connections with workers that allow for detailed understandings of low wage industry supply chains and practices. Because of that they have supported the California Division of Labor Standards Enforcement in “strategic enforcement”. That is, in high-violation labor market industries with numerous subcontractors, individual complaints are less likely to change industry practices. But worker centers help enforcement agencies find how to target the top of industry structures, enhance deterrence in specific areas and industries where the worker center operates, publicizing violations, and encourage violation complaints by building trust. This is in addition to worker centers also writing policy that reflects the knowledge that they have received from workers. They have had success in targeting enforcement on discrimination, misclassification (i.e. classifying employees as sub-contractors), and wage theft. (Theodore et al., 2019, pp. 20–25)

Different worker centers take different strategies and operate in different universes of workers (Garrick, 2021). Some worker centers focus on specific industries, focusing on only agricultural or domestic workers for example. In other cases worker centers focus on all workers in a

specific region or population, for example being an organization open to all low wage or immigrant workers in a specific geographic region. Strategy wise, some worker centers take more policy focused strategies based on legal action and attempting to change or create new policies to support workers. On the other hand, some worker centers help to support more worker and movement oriented strategies, including supporting workers to bring more of their co-workers into campaigns to take collective action or unionize. Others target major companies with public image concerns through campaigns to change labor standards across the industry (Garrick, 2021). These different models are not purely choices, but represent the structure of the industries, regions, or populations that worker centers work with.

For the Salton Sea region worker centers may provide a useful strategy that non-profits and other groups in the regions can take immediate steps to create, and there are materials written on the process of forming worker centers (see Bobo & Pabellón, 2016). Problems of wage theft are clearly present in the region, as a Thermal, CA based employer had to pay \$650,000 in penalties for wage theft in 2018 (Damien, 2018). However, most of California's worker centers are urban at this time. But these worker center models would be appropriate for people working in low wage sectors like service, and retail, in the Salton Sea region. There are worker centers in regions similar to the Salton Sea region with a mix of urban and rural areas, like the Central Valley Workers Center located in Fresno.¹⁹

Outside of California there are other important examples of rural worker centers. The most successful of these is the Coalition of Immokalee Workers in Florida. This organization formed out of the extreme abuse that farmworkers were facing in Eastern Florida including low wages, assault by management, and slavery. After a series of labor actions including strikes, the workers decided that they needed to be able to scale up their activity to target the buyers of the food they produced. This entailed organizing and launching a boycott of Taco Bell's parent company Yum Brands, sending workers on national tours, and partnering with consumer groups in order to pressure Yum. (Drainville, 2008) The outcomes of this are impressive, including between 50% and 100% raises for workers and decreasing violence in the fields and other issues like bosses withholding paychecks. (Drainville, 2008, pp. 362–363) The organization has also become a major force from the 1990s on in ending slavery practices in Florida agriculture like debt bondage, and other types of involuntarily labor. (Rosile et al., 2021)

An extremely important point making the CIW such a successful worker center has been its ability to pioneer the “worker-driven social responsibility” agreement through its ability to get purchasers to sign to their Fair Food Program agreements (Garrick, 2021, pp. 143–144). Two

crucial differences between worker-driven social responsibility schemes and traditional multi-stakeholder initiatives involve the WSR model: (1) is structurally designed to center rights holders in the monitoring and implementation of standards; and (2) creates legally binding standards that workers can enforce outside of the initiatives” (MSI Integrity, 2020). Importantly this model brought workers into monitoring and enforcement, and in doing so has been successful at ensuring rights are upheld, which cannot be claimed for other CSR and MSI models (MSI Integrity, 2020). This has spurred the creation of the Worker-Driven Social Responsibility Network, connecting other organizations implementing similar models from the United States and abroad.²⁰

Business Sector Strategies:

This section focuses on the different types of strategies for inclusive development that focus on market, business, or other enterprise related strategies. The focus here is on strategies using the resources already available to build partnerships that allow for inclusive growth and community well being. Central to this analysis is finding ways to promote the relationships of mutuality that can take place through business strategies. This involves strategies involving cooperative, or developing workplace training in order to make the market less competition driven and more inclusive for more increased and more evenly distributed local prosperity.

Anchor institution collaborations. The “Anchor Collaborative” model is an economic strategy for community wealth articulated by The Democracy Center, who have helped form the Anchor Collaborative Network (Porter et al., 2019). The idea of an anchor collaborative begins with “anchor institutions.” Anchor institutions are large non-profit or public employers that are committed to remaining in a location either from investments, property, missions, or partnerships. The prime examples are universities and hospitals, but this can also include school districts, governments, libraries, museums and art institutions, airports, and utilities. These institutions have large scale purchasing needs, and spend huge amounts annually (Porter et al., 2019).

The “collaboration” of the anchor collaboration strategy is about leveraging the large-scale buying power of the anchor institution to build up local business, most democratically through sourcing their needs from new local cooperatives (Porter et al., 2019). The pioneering version of this occurred in Cleveland, where a coalition of organizations, education and medical facilities, and the city government came together to create worker owned laundry, solar, and hydroponic vegetable companies that hired and produced locally for these institutions (Sutton, 2019). The model did have some initial troubles and seemed to underwhelm.

However it has been able to grow steadily over time, has expanded to five businesses employing over 300 workers, and has remained resilient and growing through the pandemic (Brandon Duong, 2021).

Anchor collaboratives require a “backbone organization,” which is a trusted third party convener to bring the collaboration into effect. They build the structure of collaboration by coordinating the work of the anchor collaboration and ensure communication among all of the stakeholders involved, and puts the vision of the collaboration. This backbone organization is fundamental to the success of the initiative. Backbone organizations can be foundations, local governments, and nonprofits. A major challenge is that funding typically has to come before large payoffs, because the infrastructure of the backbone organization must be in place. There is also the Anchor Institutions Funders Group (AIFG) that funds these organizations (Porter et al., 2019).

Building Employee Ownership: There are a number of policies that local and regional governments can take to support community wealth building strategies. Many of these strategies focus on facilitating a more democratic and secure form of employment, especially through employee ownership.

Policies or programs can be put in place to facilitate and support the creation of new cooperatives or finding ways to make it so that employees can become owners and retain their jobs when a business owner would otherwise close or sell. One way to do this would be through creating an employee ownership technical assistance center. This model, such as the Ohio Employee Ownership Center, has helped employees become employee owners of the companies they worked for (Democracy Collaborative, 2014). Working business succession into cooperative models of ownership has a huge amount of potential, given the extremely high rates of baby boomer retirement (10,000 a day) as they reach retirement age. Baby boomers own nearly half of private businesses, and 60-80% do not have any written succession plan, children are less likely to want to continue the family business than former generations and outside buyers are less certain and may implement major changes (like lay-offs) when purchasing. Finding ways to sell the business to employees as cooperatives can permit succession while maintaining job retention, and even improving employee incomes.(Shuler et al., 2020) This is the best option for workers and increasing community wealth, but it will take investment in institutions that can provide the training and support to workers as they transition to employee ownership, like the Ohio Employee Ownership Center. Furthermore, local and city governments can also provide support to incubate cooperatives or other social enterprises, and they can be supported by anchor institution strategies listed earlier (Democracy Collaborative, 2014).

In California there are already efforts towards the goal of employee ownership through succession planning that Salton Sea region workers and non-profits should consider. The Worker-Owned Recovery California (WORC) Coalition is a group of cooperative networks, unions, and nonprofits, that are pushing for succession based employee ownership programs in California.²¹ Given the difficulty of finding buyers for small businesses besides outside large firms during the economic recession brought from COVID 19, and the “silver tsunami” of retirement age business owners, WORC is pushing for state legislation to provide resources for cooperative conversion loans and technical assistance centers to permit a employee ownership based small business retention strategy (Kahn, 2020).

Healthcare Career Ladders: According to US Census Bureau On the Map data, healthcare and social assistance is the largest share of employment for residents of the Salton Sea region (See above pp. 36-39). Registered nurses also appear to be the highest demand job according to recent job opening data from Burning Glass in . This shows that there is at once a huge workforce in this sector, and a shortage of skilled workers. One strategy for this is health care career ladders.

In some industries, and clearly in healthcare, there are problems of shortages of skilled workers, while lower-skilled workers in the same workplace have no opportunity for advancement (ie, the shortage of nurses). Career ladders build pathways and provide the opportunities for workers already employed in an industry to get the training necessary to move up in their careers. There are a number of benefits of this to the employer, chief among them filling vacancies, but also building strong clinical skills and morale. But it is also beneficial to the employees in terms of career advancement and better pay and benefits.(Shirley Ware Education Center, 2002)

In the healthcare industry, there are at least six major barriers to career advancement for workers, including “Lack of a GED or high school diploma, Remedial education and language challenges, Structural barriers to education; Workplace culture and entry-level opportunities; Cost of transportation; Cost of training” (Shirley Ware Education Center, 2002, p. 12). These can be overcome through partnerships between the employer, the union, and a community college or other skills training program. One important step is finding ways to alleviate the cost of training, especially as entry level workers do not have the funds or time to put work aside for education, let alone afford tuition costs or the childcare necessary to attend classes. A solution for transportation issues has been to create employer provided shuttles or other transportation (although increased public transportation could also have a supportive effect).

There are a number of examples of successful career ladders in health. Under an H1B grant at Kaiser Permanente in the Bay area, workers were able to receive full pay and benefits for 40 hours a week of training, after which they were guaranteed positions at the hospital. This proved successful and helped retain the workforce. The grant also allowed for a “Licensed Vocational Nurse to Registered Nurse” program, which also proved very successful (Shirley Ware Education Center, 2002, pp. 16–18). In New York, career ladder programs have been funded by union collective bargaining agreements as well as a number of federal and state grants. Gilroy California has a community college training program based on the various steps in the career ladder. Kaiser Permanente has programs focused on funding through tuition reimbursement, educational leave, forgivable student loans, tuition deferment loans, scholarships, and wage replacement for part time education (Education and Advancement, n.d.; Shirley Ware Education Center, 2002, pp. 16–18). Applying these types of programs could help fill the shortage of nurses with the workforce already in healthcare or social service industries in the Salton Sea region. The career ladders model can also be applied beyond the healthcare sector. For example, as will be described in more detail below, Project Labor Agreements between unions and governments for public infrastructure projects often have provisions to allow for apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs in order to develop the labor force (Figueroa et al., 2011).

Incentivizing investment: A broad strategy that is common to thinking about economic development is around the need to attract investment. There is a logic that by providing tax incentives, for example, companies will move to those areas and in doing so provide jobs. There are multiple problems with this. For one, the connection between incentives and employment has not played out as such in recent years. In 2017, the US Legislature passed the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act which created tax break areas called “opportunity zones” in economically disadvantaged areas across the United States, with the public intent to spur investment and jobs in those areas. However, recent data has shown that outside of urban areas and areas with higher than median black populations, there is little evidence that Opportunity Zones create any increase in employment generally (Atkins et al., 2021). These zones have also had limited effect on increasing property values in these areas, showing that investors are not viewing these areas with a lot of potential (Sage et al., 2021). The same is true for the older system of enterprise zones in California, which also failed to increase employment (Neumark & Kolko, 2010). In many ways these types of incentivization offer a race to the bottom, and where businesses land can be the result of other factors. Many new operations prefer to invest near other factors, like transportation or infrastructural hubs, skilled workforces, and the closeby networks and overlap-

ping industries in clusters (Rosenfeld, 2002). There will be more around this in the next section regarding megaprojects and linkages. Suffice to say that in general, incentives are not enough to bring investments into regions in a way that fosters inclusion and wellbeing of those areas.

Public Sector Strategies:

These strategies are those that rely on action to be taken by government agencies or changes to be made by public policy in order to provide public goods needed for a healthy inclusive economy. Government action is necessary to create the conditions for mutuality and inclusion in the economy, because government is the organization that is able to mobilize the greatest resources, redirect economic activity, build infrastructure, hold together larger economic systems, and enforce regulation. Even still, participation and organizing in relation to the public sector seem to be crucial to the success and scope of public sector programs. Participating in claimed spaces like community organizations and movements to open up policy decision making to residents has proven important, as has the need for participation to be made meaningful in existing spaces.

Transportation: Transportation is a crucial sector for inclusion, and also an especially important sector for the Salton Sea region (see above pp. 24–26). Transportation and mobility are central components for residents in an area to have access to work, education, food, and healthcare. Furthermore, transportation is also a central component for residents to be able to have access to the public sphere, where democratic life occurs (Attoh, 2017). Because of this there is a major concern around transportation justice. This has been recognized by both movements seeking transportation justice (Attoh, 2017; Karner et al., 2020) and governments at different scales that seek to bring more equity into transportation (Oswald Beiler & Mohammed, 2016; Rowangould et al., 2016).

While there are different types of ways to expand transportation access, they are all not equal in the functions they serve. Kafui Attoh shows this difference in a comparison of transportation initiatives in Syracuse and the San Francisco Bay Area, and how they produce or constrict the ability to engage in public life instead of remaining in isolation (Attoh, 2017). The Clinton administration welfare reforms produced a large number of former welfare recipients in need of work, but without cars or access to public transportation. Syracuse undertook an individual based, means tested, car dependent supplementing of the public transportation system called “Rides for Work” where workers could be shuttled to and from work. Along with this a program called “Wheels for Work” offering loans to workers after they had good employment behavior. This was limited only for work and not for other essential needs, for example groceries. In the Bay Area by contrast, the group

Alliance for AC Transit pushed politically through organizing to secure large investments in Bay Area transportation through the passage of measure B which granted over \$250 million in sales tax money to public transit. It also prevented the move of a metro transfer center from downtown Oakland, when developers wanted to move it because they believed that it brought down investment values. The Bay Area example is a better program, in part for economic reasons, but also it allows transit users to be included as a member of the community and involved in the democratic processes of public life (Attoh, 2017). It is important to note that the Bay Area program only came through popular participation. While the Bay Area programs are more just, the lower population density of the Salton Sea region may make a program like that in Syracuse appealing if it could be expanded beyond only means-tested transportation linked to employment.

Because access to transportation is necessary for inclusion in economic and public life, it is crucial to an inclusive economy. In the Salton Sea region the transportation situation is in major need of support and is a clear barrier to inclusion. According to AllTransit data, which tracks. See Figure 19.

Karner et al (2020) map how transportation justice work has shown the relationships between movements and mutuality to be of crucial importance. This is because public transportation requires the state to foster inclusion by its nature as the only viable source of large-scale public goods and infrastructure, but also requires popular pressure and participation to make it act in that way. This is important to achieve epistemic inclusion of communities in planning (Karner et al., 2020). In transportation justice movements strategies can focus on operating inside existing institutionalized processes, and outside of those processes, although often these outside strategies become inside strategies, as these political relations become institutionalized (this maps on to the differences of closed, invited, and claimed spaces analyzed earlier). The authors give a few examples of state- and society-centric towards achieving transportation justice:

Agency-led analysis: this is often seen in the state using performance based planning, which often is the result of comparing and modeling the effects of a transportation project based on a series of indicators.

Traditional public participation: This is the legal need for agencies to have some kind of public participation, informing, commenting, etc. This is often fairly poor, as the analysis of meaningful participation could expect. However, there are some serious attempts even by agencies to include community groups and members into the participatory process.

Litigation, Administrative Complaints, and Conflict Resolution: This includes leveraging components of the law to prevent discriminatory transportation policy. For example, the LA Bus Riders Union sued the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (LACMTA) under Civil Rights Act title VI to prevent the service cuts and fee raises for poor LA residents that were to be redirected to a light rail in a wealthy community, claiming that the project would essentially create an unequal transportation system. Through this the LACMTA had to keep fares low for poor riders and expand service.

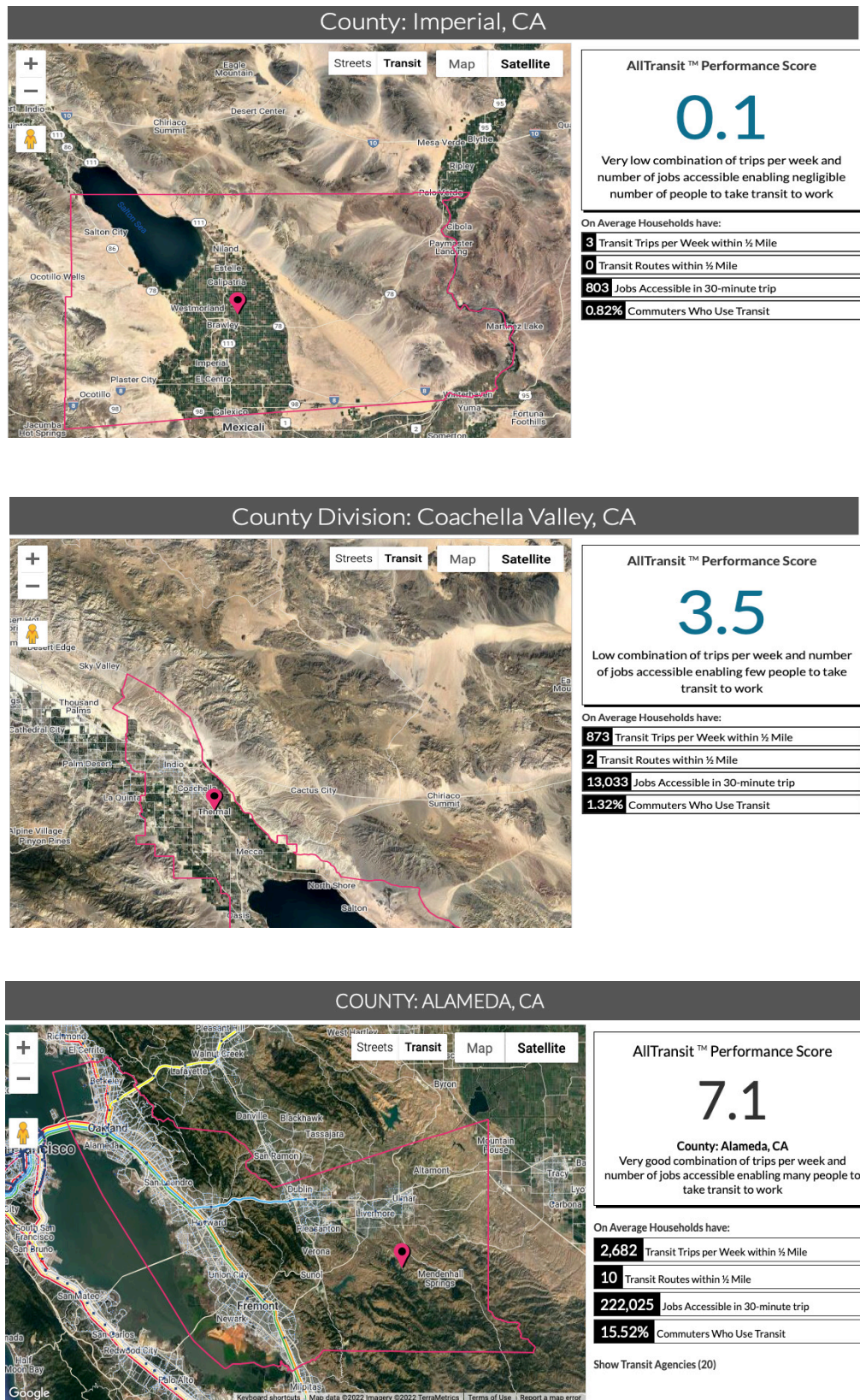
Participatory Budgeting: this involves placing a certain amount of money up for public deliberation over how it is spent. This allows for participation

Community led analysis: This is where community groups, partnering with academics or others, find a way to include alternative transportation frameworks coming from community centric knowledge into transport planning.

Community organizing: This is what it sounds like. This has included organizations forming to pressure government officials, and coalitions being built between transit workers unions and transit riders to advocate for more funding to transportation. (Karner et al., 2020, pp. 443–450)

Community participation is crucial in the identification of transportation needs. Rowangould et al (2016) find there is a mismatch that has occurred between the identification of transportation injustice or inequities in the academic scholarship (not to mention in lawsuits like that of the LA Bus Riders Union) and the lack of finding inequality in state planners' analysis of their projects. Community input can help this methodological problem. For example, in the San Joaquin valley, analysts used community led analysis to identify EJ communities and complement other analyses based on geographic and population data. The analysts received the data from Fresno Council of Governments and then worked with community organizations to analyze and provide feedback to the government. This was done by working with the organization Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability, who helped to convene a "community equity coalition" consisting of multiple organizations that were able to pinpoint important disadvantaged urban and rural unincorporated communities (DUUCs). Through community meeting four DUUCs were identified as being especially disadvantaged, some were rural unincorporated and others urban. This allowed for particularly acute cases to be identified at precise scale, and the community equity coalition's advice was incorporated into the findings of the Fresno Council of Governments (Rowangould et al., 2016). These types of efforts allow for inclusion to be built into the transportation systems in a region, and should be used to support the most geographically unequal regions. A crucial aspect, is ensuring that the participatory inclusion actually

FIGURE 19 - REGIONAL TRANSIT SCORES



has influence on decision making, rather than simply consideration.

Housing: Housing is a fundamental part of an inclusive economy, and housing cost burden is included as one of the suggested indicators for measuring equity in the economy. In a solidarity economics framework, a housing market that produces exclusion undermines the relations of mutuality necessary for a prosperous economy and well being. High housing cost burdens can also reduce available income and spending of renters, reducing multiplier effects. According to the Regional Opportunity Index, for 2014, while housing in the Salton Sea region was more affordable relative to the rest of California, the rates of people living in inadequate housing, measured by the number of houses with more than one person to a room, were very high. This was true especially in the Eastern Coachella Valley but also in the Imperial Valley (See Figure 20). For the Western Coachella Valley, the opposite is true, with higher rents but lower housing inadequacy, showing geographic inequality. According to the Coachella Valley Rescue Mission on any given night over 1000 people are homeless in the Coachella Valley and 37% of residents are on the brink of homelessness.²² There were over 1,400 people homeless in imperial county in 2019 (Varin & Montenegro Brown, 2020). Despite low rental prices relative to the rest of California, people are still struggling to afford the rent.

There are a number of housing and property policies that can be put into practice to support housing stability and access. Given that in California rent control measures are mostly blocked by the Costa-Hawkins act, other steps need to be taken. However, many measures that are touted as a solution to housing shortages and unaffordable rents can either worsen or fail to address the problem. Calls to open the door to new housing development under the idea that expanding housing would curb costs has often come in the form of promoting and subsidizing the development of luxury development that includes a few affordable units attached. This unfortunately has not produced the effect of lowering prices through supply increase as has been expected, and cities spend their resources subsidizing the private developers and landlords that own or sell these units (Stein, 2019). Instead the focus should be on protecting renters, finding ways to secure long term affordability, bringing more housing into the public domain, and disincentivizing speculation around housing. This is a strategy with a long term vision. If the Inland Empire continues to expand as a logistical hub, and if mega-project development and linkages continue in the Salton Sea region, then serious stresses on housing can take place. Preparing for those while housing is at a relatively modest price is worth considering. In sum, policies around housing should maximize the useful part of housing, the shelter and

home it provides, and minimize the non-useful aspects of speculation and rents.

There are multiple means of doing this. One is through crafting policies to support community land trusts. Community land trusts are a form of property ownership where a not-for-profit entity owns the land, but residents can live at and purchase the property in specific agreements that they cannot sell it for more than the value it was bought for, thereby recuperating costs of living but maintaining perpetual affordability (Democracy Collaborative, 2014, pp. 13–14; Stein, 2019, Chapter 5). While this occurs in many ways outside of the state, land trusts require significant funds to get going. Federal HOME block grants designed to support affordable housing and first time homebuyers could be put towards community land trusts to ensure continued affordability. (Democracy Collaborative, 2014, pp. 13–14) Cities and counties could put money towards this, but this also could be done in combination with other taxation and tax lien strategies. One of these strategies is land banking. Land banks, which are government or non-profit entities that seek to ensure that abandoned, vacant, or tax delinquent properties are instead put to good use, in contrast to selling them to speculators as commonly occurs (Democracy Collaborative, 2014, pp. 12–13). When tax foreclosed properties are acquired by a government, rather than being auctioned they could be incorporated into a community land trust to ensure that the property enters into permanent affordability (Stein, 2019, Chapter 5).

There are also a number of tax strategies that can be implemented to support using housing for shelter. These attempt to mobilize existing housing for use and prevent speculation. These include taxation on vacant homes; "luxury fees" for purchasers of well above median value; taxes on banks when they foreclose on a home; taxes on non-primary residences; and taxing the proportion of rental profits derived from public works (ie, location, proximity to public transit etc) (Stein, 2019, Chapter 5). Given that many cities and regions base their housing policy on subsidizing development, these policies should help to maintain either a tax base that could be reinvested into public or affordable housing, or keep access to housing affordable.

One other strategy to mention is the "housing first" model to address homelessness. This is a program developed in partnerships with governments, non-profits, and landlords to provide rapid rehousing to homeless individuals. This involves finding housing, providing short term rental assistance, and providing case management and light-touch support for homeless individuals and families entering the program (National Alliance to End Homelessness, n.d., 2019). This has proven to be actually cheaper than other methods, and has proven to be more effective at ending chronic homelessness. Salt Lake City implemented a strong housing first program and had major success, dropping the

rate of homelessness by over 90% from 2005-2015, until the city moved away from the program and homelessness reemerged (“Once a National Model, Utah Struggles with Homelessness,” 2019).

Participatory Budgeting: One strategy to ensure that public sector economic development is fostering inclusion is to integrate participatory budgeting into how resources in public sector development are allocated. Participatory budgeting is a process where residents in an area are able to deliberate, and decide democratically how a portion of a public budget should be spent. This allows for community driven development, and participatory action. It also serves as a bridge between the democratic nature of participatory spaces, and the institutionalization of that process (Wampler & Avritzer, 2004).

The pioneering example of participatory budgeting is from Porto Alegre, Brazil. Following the end of the Brazilian dictatorship and transition to democracy, the rise of voluntary associations (neighborhood groups etc) in the 1980s provided a first important moment of building independence for city residents, and through this they learned how to act collectively and learned deliberation, negotiation skills. They were then able to push for new ways of having resources distributed. This was eventually institutionalized into participatory budgeting. In the participatory budgeting process itself, different networks and people engage in order to have their projects approved in the budget, and coalitions, deliberation and negotiation have to take place. This fosters inclusive local democracy and inclusive public spending.

The clearest limitation to participatory budgeting is the amount of money on the table. But as the central point is participation, the conditions of meaningful participation also need to be in place to ensure community driven outcomes. Karner et al. (2019) look at the landmark case study of Fresno’s \$70 million participatory budgeting process that took place around the development of West Fresno. What is important here is that the process, by having a serious amount of money on the table with binding decisions did bring a meaningful scope to the participatory project. What was missing was the engagement of large numbers of people. So even while this was a more open and democratic process, in practice the inability to mobilize ordinary people into participation (and perhaps lack of associational life), including outreach and providing access, undermined the participatory and transformative nature of it. It was also limited by guidelines that determined whether project proposals would be eligible or not. Furthermore, a rapid timeline did not allow for the building of trust between the city and the community, and in fact may have created mistrust. The lesson drawn is that in the future partnerships need to be created to bring in the networks and coalitions into participation (Thorpe & Gaventa, 2020), such

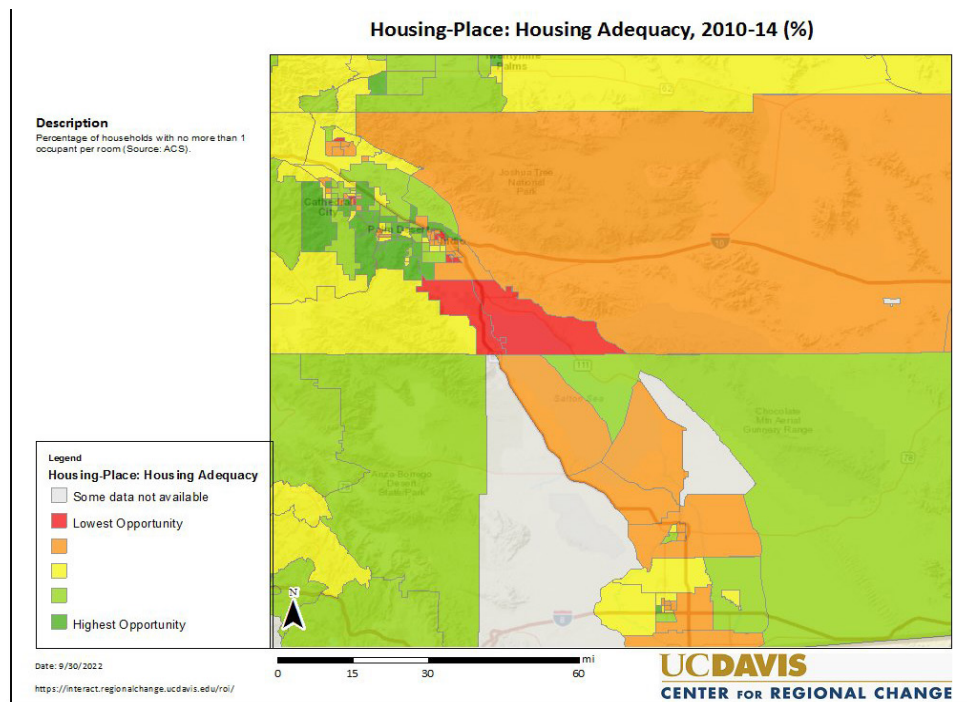
as partnering with worker centers, unions, and other community orgs to ensure larger-scale participation of ordinary people (Karner et al., 2019), which is a crucial piece of the Porto Alegre processes (Wampler & Avritzer, 2004). Pairing significant public spending with meaningful participation could build inclusive development into regions like those around the Salton Sea.

7.2 NEW LARGE-SCALE PROJECTS

Several large-scale investments or infrastructure megaprojects are being proposed or developed in the Salton Sea region. These projects obviously interact with the conditions already on the ground in the Salton Sea Region. But there are a number of specific situations that they create which need to be identified. While the millions of dollars entering the region to build and expand geothermal energy production into large-scale lithium production, and the billions of dollars worth of lithium reserves seem as though they would translate into economic development, this is by no means automatic, and in fact may be rather difficult to achieve. While mining is a gigantic industry that produces wealth, it has a record of increasing poverty and unemployment, rather than ameliorating those problems, along with ecological and social damage (Bebbington et al., 2008; Bridge, 2004; Freudenburg & Wilson, 2002; Mancini et al., 2019; Mueller, 2020).

A systematic review of mining and development in rural areas in the US comes from Freudenburg and Wilson (2002), who compiled 301 studies using comparable data on income, poverty, and unemployment rates in rural mining regions. They find that mining in the rural United States is associated with unfavorable outcomes overall. Mining can increase incomes, but poverty and especially unemployment rates are found to be more often made worse or not changed in most cases. Overall, they found 139 cases with adverse effects, 74 with neutral effects and 88 with favorable effects when scored across comparable income, unemployment, and poverty data. See Figure 21. They also found the favorable effects from mining occurred predominantly before 1982, and predominantly from large open pit coal strip mines in the Western states that had accessible and rich coal deposits. Increase in incomes alongside increasing poverty mean increasing inequality. One reason for this may be associated with mechanization in the industry, which is associated with higher paying work for a smaller workforce, who are more often high skilled workers like engineers rather than blue collar workers (Freudenburg & Wilson, 2002, p. 571). Increasing incomes amid increasing poverty also may be the result of data mismatches, where data on income is based on job location, but unemployment and poverty are based on residence. This was found to be true in the Michigan Upper Peninsula, where worksite income was higher than state average, but once commuting was factored in resident

FIGURE 20 - HOUSING ADEQUACY IN THE SALTON SEA REGION



Source: UC Davis Regional Opportunity Index

FIGURE 21- MINING EFFECTS ON DEVELOPMENT IN RURAL UNITED STATES

	ADVERSE	NEUTRAL	FAVORABLE
OVERALL	139 (46.2%)	74 (24.6%)	88 (29.2%)
INCOME	40 (33.9%)	22 (18.6%)	56 (47.5%)
POVERTY	26 (44.1%)	21 (35.6%)	12 (20.3%)
UNEMPLOYMENT	73 (58.9%)	31 (25%)	20 (16.1%)

Source: Derived from Freudenburg and Wilson (2002, pp. 557-560)

income was actually lower than average (Freudenburg & Wilson, 2002, p. 571).

This contradiction between people and place is a crucial one to confront, especially given the severe ecological and health impacts that mining has been associated with (Bridge, 2004), including lithium. Liu and Agusdinata (2020) examined sustainable development and lithium mining in Northern Chile's Atacama Desert by comparing data for the period 1997-2002 and 2012-2017 around water, employment, labor inflows, corporate social responsibility and social movement activity. Overall, mining did bring economic activity and jobs to the region. However, this came at the expense of massive amounts of water usage (over 50 times the domestic use of water), and has significantly reduced water storage in surface water, soil moisture, and groundwater, which is crucial not only for ecological concerns but access to water for livelihoods in the region. (Liu & Agusdinata, 2020, p. 6) Furthermore, while jobs in mining have increased by over 2.5 times, the majority of these jobs were filled by long distance commuter workers, who likely spend their incomes outside of the region. In fact, the number of local residents in mining were displaced, actually shrinking from 52% to 18% of total mining labor, shrunk by 16% overall, and many workers were displaced and moved to new areas (Liu & Agusdinata, 2020, p. 8). They also find that the company, SQM, has a number of corporate social responsibility schemes, but these have been inadequate to get community buy-in, and a range of social movement protests have taken place. Overall, these factors taken together, lithium production has not been able to achieve sustainable development in the Atacama region (Liu & Agusdinata, 2020).

There are some important aspects of the process being proposed at the Salton Sea Geothermal Fields to consider, however. For one, this is expected to be a more environmentally friendly extractive process than hardrock mining (as in Australia) or evaporation ponds (as in Chile, Bolivia, and Argentina). The process in the Salton Sea by contrast, is a process that would expand existing geothermal plants, remove lithium and other minerals from the geothermal brine used in the geothermal energy process, and pump that brine back under the earth. It is expected to use less water resources, and take up less surface area (UCR Salton Sea Taskforce, 2021, pp. 76-78;). From a relative perspective, this does seem like a less ecologically destructive method. Yet, since this is still an experimental method whose impacts are not known, and given the fact that the geothermal plants already pollute the air, create waste and have been cited for violating environmental regulations (Cart, 2021), rigorous monitoring and evaluation of the effects need to take place.

It is also worth noting that there may be another contradiction between lithium and other large-scale restoration

megaprojects. According to a UCR report on the Salton Sea, that geothermal lithium expansion would benefit from a receding Salton Sea to open up more reserves (University of California Salton Sea Task Force, 2021, p. 76). In 2003 a series of negotiations between different agencies over the use of Colorado River water culminated in the Quantification Settlement Agreement, where the Imperial Irrigation District began transferring water to residential districts at the coast. Along with this came a 15 year mitigation program where water that otherwise would be lost was replaced into the Salton Sea, to prevent salinification and receding shores. This ended in 2017, and the lake will rapidly shrink. Plans to replenish the shrinking of the Salton Sea following the end of the water-loss mitigation agreement are based another large-scale infrastructure project to bring water in from the Sea of Cortez in Mexico to replenish lost water and decrease the salinity, although the technical, economic, and political feasibility of this is still being analyzed (Olalde, 2021). In either case, there is a tension that would have to be resolved around the use of receding shorelines for geothermal and lithium production and the efforts to replenish the Salton Sea.

The takeaway is that getting for residents in a region undergoing extractive development, sustainable development and inclusive growth are not the default. The opposite even appears true, that the default is threats to resident wellbeing. Given the fact that these different projects are being introduced into the region, and the challenges and potentials they present for development in the Salton Sea region, the remainder of this explores some strategies to deal with these issues.

Popular Sector Strategies

Because mining is spatially fixed to natural resources, and because mining of any kind has serious risk of polluting nearby areas, if employment or other benefits are not going to the nearby community, mining is of little value to local residents. Popular strategies should be considered to pressure for local benefits from mining. This section places emphasis on the importance of participation and movements in securing inclusive and equitable growth (Benner & Pastor, 2021).

Labor: A first problem to focus on is the problem of mining labor being sourced from outside the local labor markets, using long-distance commuting laborers rather than local residents (as in the Chilean lithium case above). This has the negative effects of both changing the relationship of labor to the local area, and makes union organizing more difficult.

A first point of focus is the way that long distance commuting (LDC) has made union activity more difficult generally. Whereas in past years mining regions may have appeared

more as a company town based around permanent residence of miners, the shift to long distance commuting has led to more a hotel model (Manky, 2017). In Peru, for example, all large scale mines began LDC for employees, where workers are bussed in from larger cities. In part this is because of the high skills needed as mining technology advances. LDC and the absence of community life among workers outside of the worksite has made organizing very difficult, as instead employees work for a multi-day period and then return for multiple days to their home residences, often in large cities far from the mine. Organizing difficulties has also undermined the ability to strike, and the number of strikes was significantly reduced post-1993 mines shifted to LDC. Unions have adapted through cross union networking, networking with regional organizations, among other strategies often led by younger leaders (Manky, 2017). And in Chile a strong federation of unions has taken shape across the many LDC mining sites and has made significant progress for labor (Manky, 2020). Nevertheless, the challenges are serious especially at the local level.

One reason that this is important, is that LDC has the effect of separating the spheres of production and social reproduction spatially. In other words, it separates the workforce from their broader community networks back home, and it separates the community networks around the mine from the labor force. This has the potential to undermine McAlevy's (2016) whole worker model of organizing mentioned earlier. That model of organizing is based on union members using their connections to the broader networks of social life to bring in support for their labor actions, but also to fight for better conditions for the social world they live in (McAlevy, 2016). In an industry like mining, if workers live and work in the same area, they may have more concerns about pollution or problems, and pollution or health issues created from the process could in theory be organized against at the workplace. There are precedents for unions bringing larger community social gains, like the teachers unions of the Red for Ed movement. There are also examples of public health resources being mobilized by unions. It took the actions of striking coal miners in the late 1960s to early 1970s for Black Lung to be recognized as a disease, and for public health money to be dedicated to it through the 1972 Black Lung Benefits Act (Fox & Stone, 1980). It is possible that these two types of organizing could come together. But if there is a major spatial mismatch between work and home for workers, the possibility becomes much more unlikely. It is also possible that the workers in mining will value their employment over environmental impacts even if they live in the region, and should be considered.

Furthermore, as with many other strategies for local economic development in the region, LDC means that mine workers are more likely to spend their money outside of

the work region and back in home areas (Liu & Agusdinata, 2020). This leakage of money away from the region undermines the multiplier effects that higher paying jobs in the mining sector could have. Any way to look at it, the Salton Sea region will be worse off with LDC labor than local residents being employed, or new employees moving permanently into the region, and political strategies are necessary to secure this. Some ideas for this are presented in the following pages around community level organizing, project labor agreements (PLAs), and others.

Community Organization: This type of action, community based organizations pressuring mining companies has been a fundamental force in mining politics across the world (Bebbington & Bury, 2013; Deonandan & Dougherty, 2016; Klein, 2014). While the most high profile forms of this type of organizing involve communities—often indigenous groups—protesting to block or cancel extractive projects, it is also true that community level organizing has been crucial in securing economic, health and environmental protections for mining projects already in place or that are not opposed outright. For example, it took major organizing and protest by indigenous organizations in the Peruvian Amazon around oil pollution in the Rio Corrientes to secure health programs and ensure that environmental regulation and enforcement came up to minimum standards in a negotiated agreement called the Dorissa Accord. The events in the Rio Corrientes case followed a path where: “(1) Affected communities organized themselves. (2) Evidence of social and environmental impacts was gathered. (3) Attempts were made, without success, to initiate a dialogue with authorities. (4) The local population occupied company facilities as a means of exerting pressure. (5) Negotiations were carried out. (6) Implementation and enforcement of the [Dorissa] Accord began” (Bebbington & Scurrah, 2013, p. 190). It was only after organizing that residents were given a seat at the table, and only with community power behind them that any significant regulation occurred.

Community action has also been important to secure any employment for local residents. Community organizations have pressured for local jobs around the Antamina mine in Ancash, Peru. They also pressured subcontractors to hire locally, including using communal companies as subcontractors. The pressure necessary for this was serious, including blocking access to the mine. Through this they were able to achieve an increase from 10% to 30% the local share of mining employment (Manky, 2020, p. 1124). There have been other labor problems with these actions. The communal companies used for subcontracting themselves can and have undercut other worker demands, as they still operate in hierarchical labor relations and boards did not have worker representation. So any future paths should correct these problems, with cooperative business models or others. What is important is that it requires com-

munity action to achieve even these modest employment standards. It is also the case that ensuring companies keep up their end of the bargain has to come from community pressure. Community groups at the Quellaveco mine in Peru have had to protest and block roads in order to make the company keep up with local employment guarantees gained from mobilization and stakeholder engagement (Jamasmie, 2019; see also Jaskoski, 2014, pp. 877–888).

Community driven action has proven necessary to enforce environmental regulations in the United States as well. One case currently underway is the rare earth mining operations proposed along Lake Superior in Minnesota owned by PolyMet. The proposal of the mine has been met with over 100,000 public comments for and against the mine, making it the most contested project in the state's history. Chief concerns of mining opponents are the possibility of pollution in Lake Superior, with an expected life of pollutants in the lake lasting 200 years (Phadke, 2018). However, throughout the permitting process, despite more opposition than support in the mandatory public participation period, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources excluded non-expert comments in their decisionmaking and approved permits anyways (Nguyen et al., 2020). However, recent organizing and legal action by environmental groups and the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa has stopped the project in order to send it back into a licensing stage regarding the environmental safety of the proposed mine's tailings basin, where much of the risk of contaminating leakages would occur (Kraker, 2021). The future of the mine is unclear still, but the enforcement of environmental regulations was only brought about through sustained pressure.

Other regions have found community pressure a fundamental necessity to ensure any enforcement of ecological safety or economic well being regarding mining. For example Kentuckians for the Commonwealth are a group that organize for both economic and environmental justice in Appalachia.²³ Kentuckian for the Commonwealth organizes and takes legal action to enforce environmental law against issues like coal ash pollution, mountaintop removal mining, water contamination, and economic issues related to coal while seeking to build a green transition into the economy of the region. Recently, steps to develop lithium mining in Nevada by Lithium Americas near the Fort McDermitt Paiute and Shoshone Tribe have been halted. Tribal members and ranchers nearby are concerned about the threat to the arid region's water, and tension within the tribe emerged following agreements that the tribe made with the company (Penn et al., 2021). However, multiple issues appeared, including rushed public comment periods on the licensing process, the discovery that Lithium America's plans to bus in workers from the town Winnemucca that has 4% Native American population, and the discovery

that the mine will double its water usage after the first four years. The tribe pulled out from the agreement with the company following a petition by tribal members (Kapoor, 2021). The project is currently in legal battles and a protest camp has emerged at the site (Siegler, 2021).

Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation: Including community members into the monitoring the implementation of either environmental protection or programs for social equity is another strategy to bring power to communities in the face of large-scale capital with technical training and expertise. This is important to ensure that expertise belongs to more than just the company. In addition to this, Participatory Monitoring and Enforcement (PME) is an important model for capacity building in order to track indicators presented earlier and to develop new indicators.

PME is largely about bridging participation into the assessment of projects, environmental conditions, and other outcomes. This is most commonly found in impact assessment and project management and planning. That is, when projects are implemented, such as community development funding or environmental regulation, getting stakeholder participation involved allows for better understanding of the actual impacts, if the project met its objective, if the project objectives remain relevant over time, and if the best practices or strategies occurred (Estrella & Gaventa, 1998).

Estrella and Gaventa (1998) describe that PME also has the function of increasing the capacity of organizations as they learn the skills necessary to successfully monitor and evaluate projects, it allows for stakeholders to negotiate for what needs to be monitored, and helps improve public accountability (such as learning to monitor how funds for community development were spent). There are 4 major stages in PME. 1) Planning or establishing the framework for a PME process, defining the objectives and picking out the indicators. This is a very important step, and is a location where negotiation between stakeholders can take place. The objectives of the monitoring and the outcomes of interest are all up for negotiation here. Also, knowing what the end use of the data is ? 2) Gathering the data. 3) Data analysis. 4) documentation, reporting, and sharing of information. There are often partnerships with analysts, and a wide array of tools for conducting PME (see Estrella and Gaventa, 1998, pp. 32-37).

In sum, the civil society sector strategy around large capital investments like mining involved maximizing participation for as many residents in the area as possible. Given the high likelihood of the plants to bring in long distance commuting workers, it will require organization outside of labor, even in order to make a labor strategy viable for regional development. Organizations in the region should consider forming a coalition or roundtable specifically

focused on lithium that is independent of the lithium producers. This has been a strong model for challenging mining outright (Bebbington et al., 2019; Spalding, 2018), but could also be useful for exercising leverage to ensure that lithium development brings benefits locally. This can serve as a claimed space that could be used to make existing lithium deliberations and policy making more open to meaningful participation. The same model could be applied to any mega-developments, like the plans being proposed to build infrastructure to import water from the Sea of Cortez.

Projects already underway in the Salton Sea region, like the Identifying Violations Impacting Neighborhoods Environmental Justice and Reporting Network should be analyzed and expanded. In many cases it has taken the work of local residents to monitor environmental contamination, because companies were incentivized to ignore it for the sake of costs (see Woltke, 2021).

Business Sector Strategies

Large scale projects like lithium production in the Salton Sea Geothermal Fields will inevitably involve huge amounts of investment and will increase the GDP in the region. What is less clear is how much of that wealth will remain in the Salton Sea region, what amount of other economic activities it will produce, and what scale the negative costs of the production will be. This section thinks through some of the strategies around business activity in the region.

Linkages. An important economic development strategy overall is that of building linkages. These are the creation of linkages to industry and manufacturing of both the inputs into something like Lithium production (ie capital goods manufacturing, services) and the industries that use the output (ie battery manufacturing). This is particularly important in lithium, because the majority of the value in the lithium battery supply chain comes after the raw lithium mining. Instead, downstream industries in the value-chain link are most important for value added. The lithium battery chain moves from extraction, to lithium processing, to lithium refining, lithium cell production, and battery manufacturing. These industries are currently dominated mostly by China, but also Japan and South Korea.(LaRocca, 2020; Stringer & Lombrana, 2019).

Actually achieving these linkages have proven to be a challenge for lithium producing countries. In Chile, a free market attempt to attract backwards linkages failed, or at least seriously underwhelmed, and most of the high tech linkages remained in urban centers and not in the rural areas (Obaya, López, and Pascuini 2021, 3). In Argentina, lithium linkages have been attempted. Argentina's lithium sector is more open to private industry than either Bolivia

or Chile, and is not regulated by a specific lithium body, unlike those cases. Overall backwards linkages are more likely than forwards linkages in Argentina, mostly due to the lack of regional demand, high entry costs, and the dominance of a number of Asian firms in Lithium Battery production. However, even the backward linkages in Argentina were limited, largely because there was not an overarching federal framework to develop these backward linkages besides tax incentives. This means that the essentially free market liberal approach in Argentina has prevented serious linkages from appearing, instead of bringing in coordination to secure this (Obaya et al., 2021). Bolivia, following underwhelming results around technology transfers through attempts at public private partnerships, and announced the creation of a state owned enterprise in 2017 (Hancock et al., 2018). This program languished under the right-wing Añez administration, but under the new Arce government this has begun again, although with more business-centric leanings and outcomes are unclear (Raldes & Cozzaglio, 2020). The takeaway is that actually achieving these linkages is far from automatic, and that coordination rather than simply incentives are necessary to bring linkages into a geographically delimited economy.

The state's sights on turning Imperial Valley into Lithium Valley with other components of the value chain will require serious coordination to achieve this. For example, because almost all lithium globally is refined in China, there will be no reasons to locate later forward linkages such as battery manufacturing into the Salton Sea region unless the region also develops lithium refining. If refined lithium or lithium cells are being imported from abroad, then it would make more sense for battery manufacturers or other firms further along the supply chain to locate near existing logistical hubs or industry clusters in areas with more highly trained workforces than near the Salton Sea Geothermal Fields, or in areas that heavily subsidize their operations, such as the \$1.25 billion incentives the state of Nevada gave to Tesla's battery Gigafactory, located outside Reno Nevada, which is already a regional logistics hub (Hidalgo, 2014).

Clusters. It is important to remember that even this process of building a lithium cluster in the Salton Sea region does not necessarily translate into prosperity for people generally. An industry cluster is a geographic concentration of firms in an industry that have overlapping needs, and a network of relationships among members in the region, in other words locations that bring benefits to industries by the dynamics of their regional location. These include large mid-skilled labor forces, along with specialized services regarding accountants, consultants, suppliers, among others. (Rosenfeld, 2002, pp. 10–11). The development of industry clusters can produce advantages for firms that operate in them, but they run the risk of

excluding lower and middle-income workers from the benefits. While clusters of high-skilled industries might create opportunities for service and support labor, “It is also difficult to develop career ladders from support sectors to the higher paying occupations in the core cluster. Thus, the knowledge intensive ‘New Economy’ has come to be associated with increased income disparities and limited career ladders.” (Rosenfeld, 2002, p. 20) This can be due to lack of education, network gatekeeping preventing lower paid workers from finding job opportunities. Some of these problems can be ameliorated with training and developing career ladders (Rosenfeld, 2002).

Other Challenges. When firms do come to an area, it can bring other challenges. First, if a lithium cluster were to develop in the Salton Sea region, especially given the severity of drought, the question of water for not only extraction but refining and other industries would have to be assessed. Furthermore, if large scale manufacturing does arrive it may bring new challenges, especially given the influx of new labor into a region. For example, following the construction of the Tesla Gigafactory outside of Reno, Nevada, the huge employer brought in a huge amount of labor from outside of Reno, which has since caused housing prices and rents to spike, no-cause evictions soared by 300%, and homeless increased (Damon, 2019). This was after the state of Nevada subsidized the construction of the factory with a \$1.25 billion incentive package (Hidalgo, 2014). Although the Gigafactory is a particularly large venture, steps need to be taken to prepare for these kinds of problems in general to ensure maximum benefit from new industries.

Overdependence on a single industry, especially an extractive industry, is a dangerous path for any region, and is subject to booms and busts. Even with steps taken to prepare the local workforce for employment in a lithium cluster, or if large numbers of residents are able to work on construction projects, these projects have lifespans and will either eventually end, or may be interrupted for significant stretches of time (such as low lithium prices). Actors in the region should continue to work to build other diversified sectors of the economy. Dependence on natural resource industries is a problem for rural areas (Freudenburg & Wilson, 2002; Mueller, 2020).

Public Sector Strategies

While it is true from above that uncoordinated attempts to create linkages under free market strategies are likely to be a failure, it is important to remember that coordination between government and capital also has a problematic history. There are multiple examples of development occurring when capitalists and states work together, but these were accompanied by exclusion of working people from that collaboration, including wage suppression, polit-

ical repression, and authoritarianism (Evans, 1979; Kohli, 2004). Instead, public sector actors need to be working to ensure that local benefits accrue, and that they go to the most in need.

Local Regulatory Leverage. A first and obvious piece, given the environmental and economic damage that extractive industries, and any large-scale infrastructural project, can cause, is to have aggressive regulation and enforcement of environmental standards. This can and should be accompanied by participatory Monitoring and Evaluation, in order to ensure that the experiences of local residents are being brought into the analysis. Larger agencies beyond the local will be necessary for this. However, municipalities do hold some leverage. Municipalities control zoning, and can negotiate with companies to get concessions. However, once that leverage is gone companies may be less willing to negotiate, as occurred in the rural Norwegian municipality of Kvalsund when a company backed out on a 1% tax to form a joint local development company as soon as the necessary zoning codes were passed. (Bjørge & Røiseland, 2018). Other mining municipalities facing large companies have formed coalitions of municipalities to have more bargaining power to negotiate with the industry for regulation (Bjørge & Røiseland, 2018). Connecting municipalities around lithium production or other mining might be a fruitful strategy for the communities around the Salton Sea, as a means to build leverage but also to share knowledge and experiences.

Community Workforce Agreements. Any large-scale project that involves exploiting natural resources or providing public resources will involve the state at some point (Parenti, 2015). When a government contract is given, pressure should be put on government officials to sign project labor agreements (PLAs) with community workforce agreements (CWAs). PLAs are agreements between a government and unions in hiring a workforce for a job, to only hire unions or non-unionized workers that operate under the same rules as unionized workers. This on its own is good.

Increasingly PLAs also have CWAs. “Community Workforce Agreements are PLAs that contain social investment or targeted hiring provisions to create employment and career path opportunities for individuals from low income communities” (Figueroa et al., 2011, p. 4). These hiring provisions include requirements around hiring local residents, minorities and women, the economically disadvantaged, and veterans. Also included in these can be “apprentice and pre-apprentice utilization requirements,” meaning that a certain percentage of the labor force is brought in as apprentices, and in that way receive training on the job, which in turn increases skills and operates as a sort of career ladder. “By specifying the percent of apprentices that should be local residents, women, or members

of minorities, the CWAs provide a vehicle for communities to access needed training and employment opportunities” (Figueroa et al., 2011, p. 12). These are accompanied by pre-apprenticeship programs, for workers with little to no construction experience, that serves as a bridge into apprenticeship programs. This type of agreement can help ensure that jobs and training make it to local residents, especially those most in need of opportunities.

Worker centers helped to push officials in Fresno to adopt a CWA for the expansion of the regional airport. (Prebys-Williams, 2020, p. 12; Taub, 2019). This agreement includes both local hiring agreements, to hire workers from disadvantaged areas, and to hire specifically disadvantaged workers (Taub, 2019).

In mining scenarios there are also what are called community benefit agreements (CBA), which are agreements reached between community groups or members, companies, and/or government agencies. These can include “revenue sharing mechanisms, training and employment opportunities, local business contracts, local infrastructure development, adverse impact mitigation measures, decision-making authority, implementation measures, and impact monitoring programs” (Gunton & Markey, 2021). Including these types of agreements in any process of extraction appears necessary in order to secure any guarantee of development. However, CBAs have been found in the literature to both reinforce the unequal status quo in resource governance, and to support development. CBAs have been found to be used to push a project through by securing minimal level of support without actually considering the well being of communities nearby the project, have been found to bring the unequal power relations into the agreements, and have been found to undermine other forms of regulation like impact assessments. On the other hand, CBAs can direct resources from extraction to local development, and can create legally binding contracts companies have to uphold. Companies often use these as a way to get community approval, or what is often called a “social license to operate” (Gunton & Markey, 2021). However, as with any community oriented extractive programs or invited spaces, CBAs and CBA processes should be assessed on whether the participation and benefits are meaningful, or if they are forms of domination, legitimation, or damage control, as presented in the section on participation in this report.

Treaty Rights. Another strategy to be considered is the power that indigenous governments have through Treaty Rights. Because indigenous people hold territorial rights that can include the right to clean air and water, or access to traditional hunting and fishing grounds, that is backed by law, they have particular leverage in ensuring that new extractive operations are being regulated and beneficial. The use of tribal sovereignty and treaty rights to stop

extractive projects has been a powerful force in anti-extractive movements (Clark, 2002; Klein, 2014, pp. 367-387). Using the leverage of these rights to ensure the problems from lithium or other mega-infrastructure projects are not dumped on local tribal members in the Salton Sea region and in turn local residents generally. Partnering with indigenous nations like those on the Lithium Valley Commission may be a way to ensure that the benefits of and new investments make it to tribal members who are residents of the region.

CONCLUSION

In the face of increasing development opportunities in the Salton Sea region, this report analyzed the opportunities and challenges for ensuring that any future local development projects foster an inclusive, sustainable, and equitable economy. Drawing on an array of inclusive economy and sustainable development literatures and case studies, this report aimed to provide useful tools for defining, tracking, and building inclusive economies in the Salton Sea context. First, we asked, “what makes economies inclusive”? Next, we addressed, “what multi-stakeholder strategies might lead to more inclusive economies?” In this conclusion, we briefly review our main findings and recommendations in answering these questions.

WHAT MAKES ECONOMIES INCLUSIVE?

Attempting to build, or demand, local economies that foster inclusion, sustainability, and equity, first requires an understanding of what such work entails. The history of development is fraught with well-meaning projects that promise betterment for all, but which exacerbate existing and create new exclusions—form economic inequality to unevenly distributed externalities (Cush, 1995). Defining what makes economies inclusive, is therefore, an essential first step to avoiding such unintended or nefariously overlooked consequences (Sachs, 2010). Section One of this report took on this task in three parts.

Introducing Inclusive Economies: The first part, reviewed the concept of inclusive economies by situating it historically within different framings of development. We argued that the allure of an inclusive economy framework extends from mounting critiques of the theoretical limitations and empirical failures of hegemonic traditions that narrowly equate development with free-markets and economic growth. While certainly useful, statistics like GDP, growth, and employment miss much of what makes economies inclusive, much less sustainable or equitable.

Beyond mere critique, drawing on the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) framework and Benner and Pastor's Inclusive Economies framework provided an alternative way forward. On the one hand, the three

pillars of Sustainable Development—economy, society, and environment—rightly underscores how inclusive economies must account for economic growth, social-welfare, and environmental sustainability. On the other hand, the Inclusive Economies framework places greater emphasis on local contexts, the relations between indicators (both mutually reinforcing and potentially conflicting), and development procedures in addition to the more global and outcome-oriented SDGs. Rather than choose one or the other, we proposed a synthesis of these frameworks that takes into accounts their strengths. The result was a relational, multi-scalar, socio-ecological, justice oriented, and self-reflective approach to understanding inclusive, sustainable and equitable economies.

Finally, we emphasized that the self-reflective nature of this approach, and the recognition of potential trade-offs between development goals, demands an ongoing, participatory, and dialogical process of measuring and enacting inclusive economies in which the most marginalized groups have a meaningful say in deciding their collective futures.

Inclusive Economy Indicators for the Salton Sea Region: Building off this synthesized framework, the second part of this analysis, reviewed what inclusive economy indicators are most relevant for the Salton Sea case. In short, we narrowed our analysis from a theoretical framework to more concrete goals. Specifically, we emphasized five broad indicator categories: 1) Equity 2) Inclusion 3) Growth and Stability 4) Socio-Ecological Health 5) Geographical Access. For each, we justified its general importance as well as its relevance for building inclusive economies for the Salton Sea region. We also highlighted a total of 11 sub-indicators to begin to specify how each might be measured and tracked (a task we complete in the third section). Here is a quick review of our recommendations:

First, Equity is a hallmark of any inclusive economy, and at its very least involves a reduction of inequality and improved possibilities for upward mobility. These are particularly important to the Salton Sea region, marked by appalling levels of socio-economic inequality and few opportunities for upward mobilization.

Second, Inclusion/Participation is the defining characteristic of inclusive economies. While a very broad and complex concept that we explore further in the second section of this report, we emphasized inclusion of key stakeholders (and including those most marginalized and vulnerable groups) in the economy and in development decision-making processes. These sub-indicators are crucial for analyzing existing and proposed development projects, not just on job creation, but on their facilitation of local business ownership and community involvement in deciding what, how, and where such projects take place.

Third, Growth and Stability are useful categories for ensuring that development projects benefit local economies. Considering the promises of many developers to boost economies through job creation, we emphasized three sub-indicators: work opportunity, economic stability, and dignified work. Together these track not only the number of jobs created, but their accessibility to locals, their duration (e.g. long terms vs short term), and their quality (e.g., whether they foster physical, psychological, and cultural health).

Fourth, Socio-Ecological Health underscores how economic and social wellbeing intrinsically depends on ecological sustainability. The two proposed indicators, ecological health and community health, highlight the problems of past and ongoing developments in the Salton Sea region that have ravaged local ecologies and exposed communities to toxic air and inadequate water supplies. Any future development must foster healthy bodies, communities and environments.

The fifth and final indicator category, Transportation / Geographical Access to Development, stems directly from local experiences and struggles of Salton Sea communities. Emphasizing access to public transportation infrastructures and commute times underscores that for development to be beneficial to local communities it must be not just accessible, but easily, safely, and affordably accessible.

We concluded this second section with a reminder that these categories are not exhaustive and should not be taken as the “best” or “only” relevant indicators. We proposed three types of revisions that might be pursued through a dialogical and self-reflective process: 1) add indicators, 2) cut indicators, and 3) reorganize indicators. In the first case, we provide a potential list of additional or alternative indicators that may better represent local interests and values. Second, we suggest that cutting indicators may have the dual benefit of enhancing the feasibility of measurement and accentuate the most prioritized needs of key stakeholders. Third, reorganizing indicators may highlight themes (e.g., gender or education) that are present but not centered in our proposed framework.

Tracking Indicators: The final part of this section, addressed how this framework and individual indicators might be operationalized or put into practice and systematically measured. Before detailing this process, we emphasized the importance of critically interrogating what to measure, how to measure, and who measures. Although any set of indicators inevitably provides a partial view of on-the-ground realities, we argue that the reflexive and ongoing assessment of indicators (e.g., how the relevance of indicators changes over geographies and time), the use of quantitative (e.g., census data) and qualitative (e.g., community testimonies) methods, and the incorporation of

participatory data collection and analysis, provides a more holistic and realistic analysis of economy's inclusiveness.

Finally, this analysis operationalized each indicator. To facilitate the measurement of our five broad indicators and eleven sub-indicators, we distilled our analysis even further by suggesting 34 concrete data measurements, summarized in Figure 6. For each measurement, we define what it measures, the smallest scale at which it can be measured (so as to increase its relevance to the Salton Sea region), and where the data can be accessed.

In sum, Section One of this report provides a guiding framework for understanding and measuring inclusive, sustainable, and equitable economies. Rather than provide a definitive definition of such notoriously slippery concepts, it offered a more situated and dialogical approach to examine what a sustainable, inclusive and equitable economy might require in the particular context of the Salton Sea region. In that sense, while this analysis is prescriptive, it is not exhaustive. Rather than a final checklist, it provides a provisional starting point. It also paves the way for strategizing not only how to understand and measure inclusive economies, but to collectively build them.

WHAT MULTI-STAKEHOLDER STRATEGIES MIGHT LEAD TO INCLUSIVE ECONOMIES?

Section two of this report focused on strategies and practices that can be taken to build an inclusive and sustainable economy. This section took a solidarity economics approach, meaning that the economy thrives under conditions of mutuality and collaboration, as opposed to the dominant paradigm that places relations of competition as either natural or preferred (Benner and Pastor, 2021). This framework also emphasises the importance of movements to create the conditions for this collaboration, as a powerful wealthy minority do currently enjoy the benefits of the unequal status quo. Following Polanyi (1944), the economy should be subordinated to the needs of society, rather than society being submitted to the needs of a market logic.

The following section outlined how to understand and analyze participatory practices, as these are crucial elements of inclusion in the economy. Through a review of the literature on meaningful participation, a few themes for analysis emerged. First, participation is inherently political. In any participatory space, there are different stakeholders with different interests, and they will have interests in shaping how the participation takes place. Because of this, meaningfulness of participation occurs along a spectrum. Synthesizing various spectrums of participation, participation can be found with active domination at the worst end, followed by legitimization, damage control, weak and strong controlled participation, and finally empowerment, where participation builds consciousness and capacity through

action. Achieving meaningful participation can be a challenging task. The analysis shows different factors to look for when analyzing if participation is meaningful, and how to make participation more meaningful. There are multiple aspects to interrogate. There are challenges of representation and who gets to participate. There are different spaces of decision making, and creating new spaces of participation like social movement or community organizations can provide a means to open up or improve existing spaces of decision making and (non)participation. The scope of what is being decided on also matters--something meaningful has to be on the table for participation to be meaningful. A number of conditions necessary for meaningful participation are also discussed. These can serve as qualitative indicators to analyze how meaningful participatory spaces are. Box 1 provides a list of questions to ask in order to assess if a participatory space is meaningful or if it needs to be improved.

The next section focused on economic development strategies and challenges. These were analyzed as both strategies to confront inequality, and to build mutuality and collaboration. These strategies took place in civil society sectors reliant on people-power, business sectors reliant on employers and new productive enterprises, and public sector strategies reliant on the state. However, these sectors often blur into each other. These sectoral strategies were put into two contexts: first, the pre-existing conditions of a region; second, the presence of large-scale investments in a region.

The strategies presented represent many different actions that were analyzed around their capacity to support to improve local economic development in a holistic way, as the indicators analysis present. The report first described strategies for changing the pre-existing economic conditions in a region like the Salton Sea. Civil society sector strategies like unionization and worker centers were presented as a way for directly confronting inequality through shifting the power imbalance between workers and business owners. Union strategies at their best have the capacity to battle inclusion not only in the workplace, but also to fight for better conditions for the communities workers work and live in, as the actions of striking education workers have brought new resources to struggling school districts. While some sectors like healthcare and education are prime for unionization, worker centers help to organize industries and populations that are difficult to unionize. These popular strategies are strong in that they directly challenge inequality. The challenges of these strategies are that they are difficult, especially unionization. However, they are strategies that most directly build power for workers in the economy and society

Business sector strategies that were described included anchor collaborations, career ladders, employee owner-

ship, and investment incentivization. Anchor collaborations involve harnessing the purchasing power of large non-profit or public institutions to support new local business endeavors, most transformatively worker-owned cooperatives. Another route to new business endeavors and employee ownership are community wealth funds related to business succession. That is, as baby boomers begin to retire, many businesses have no succession plans, but training and assistance centers can be put into place to support a transition from retiring owners to worker owned businesses. These two strategies are strong in that they bring inclusion, equality, and democracy into the economy. Furthermore they represent collaborative solutions that rely most heavily on resources and enterprises already in place. A challenge is that the ability to scale these endeavors is unclear. Another business sector strategy involves building healthcare career ladders. This involves solving healthcare labor shortages by building training and financial assistance into workforce development for people already employed in less skilled positions in the same industry. This is a strong strategy because it is collaborative from employer-union-education partnerships, and benefits employers and employees. One challenge is that these programs seem to largely operate in unionized worksites, so unionization is likely to be a prerequisite. Finally incentivizing investment was analyzed. Tax breaks for specific zones introduced in 2017 and earlier have failed to adequately increase employment. This strategy has not increased employment at a national level or state level. It seems that it is not a successful strategy.

Next the report outlined public sector strategies for internal conditions. Transportation justice, housing, and participatory budgeting were considered. These strategies all emphasize the role that the state can play in allocating resources to community needs. Transportation is a crucial component of a healthy economic, social, and civic life. Strategies to increase public transportation through movement pressure and partnering with planning agencies were explored, which showed the importance of meaningful participation. The same is true for participatory budgeting, where the mobilizations of community groups and networks became a clear point of importance. In housing, a number of strategies were described that use the power of the state with community actors to keep housing permanently affordable and accessible through land trusts, land banks, and tax policies, along with housing first models to help people experiencing homelessness to find stable housing.

The next section dealt with strategies for inclusion among large-scale investments. The section began by laying out some of the challenges of achieving inclusive development through extractive industries like lithium, or other major projects. Mining has been associated more often than not

with poor economic indicators for the regions they operate in. One major factor is of course the ecological damage and water usage that comes from any extractive activity. Others include the mismatch of labor markets and mining location because of long distance commuting. This means that often local residents receive all of the negative externalities, but without employment.

The civil society sector section focused on labor strategies, but that because of the geographic labor market mismatch strategies beyond labor may be necessary to ensure local employment. This includes community organization, which in other cases has proven to be the only method to ensure local employment and environmental regulation. A challenge with these strategies is that they are difficult and often conflictual. However, they have often been the only means to achieve a seat at the table. Another civil society sector strategy includes participatory monitoring and evaluation, which involves residents engaging in monitoring for either environmental contamination or social outcomes from programs. This is a strong strategy in that it brings the inclusion of disadvantaged groups into the conversation against expertise that is often dominated by companies. The most important aspect of these popular strategies is that they are consistently necessary to avoid the huge firms that operate major projects dominating the process.

Business sector strategies in this section were largely about the challenges of building outwards from a megaproject. The section focused on the challenges of bringing backwards and forwards linkages into the economy around lithium production. These processes are by no means automatic, and in fact are quite difficult to achieve. Coordination rather than market forces will be necessary for other lithium related enterprises to form in the region. The challenges of inclusion in industry clusters also was also presented, as were the unexpected challenges from large business investments. Some strategies for addressing these problems were considered, but the focus was mostly on challenges to be prepared to encounter and suggests that free-market approaches are likely to fail in producing linkages.

The public sector section focused on different strategies where governments can use their leverage to bring benefits to local areas. Local regulatory leverage can occur from how local and regional governments control zoning. Furthermore, as large scale projects often involve some kind of public infrastructure spending, governments can push for project labor agreements with community workforce agreements, where unions are hired and hiring provisions include mandatory amounts of local and disadvantaged people to be hired, along with on the job training to support workforce development. Tribal governments and indigenous movements can also use pressure through

tribal sovereignty and treaty rights. These public sector strategies, while useful, also come down to power, and participation is a necessary factor.

Overall, the takeaway is that there is no clear fix to the economy of an area like the Salton Sea region, especially given the effects of the larger national and global economy on any given region. Instead, constant movement around building participation, developing inclusive economic programs, businesses, and services, and countering the negative effects of large developments while seeking to gain benefits from them will be necessary. These strategies, practices, and cases show that questions of power never leave the economy. But they also show that taking action to foster mutuality is possible.

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ENDNOTES

- 1 "Salton Sea region" in this report refers to the Coachella Valley in Riverside County and Imperial County. See figure 7 for the area in focus.
- 2 The COVID-19 pandemic has magnified the empirical failures of market-based development. While investment bankers, financiers and billionaires have gained record profits since 2020, joblessness, poverty, and mortality rates have skyrocketed the world over (Stiglitz, 2020). Departing from the tenets of Reaganomics, the notion that markets are incapable of solving global health and economic crises, and that the government must provide solutions, seems to be gaining ground.
- 3 A related critique questions the sustainability of unmitigated economic growth. Citing the ecological "limits to growth" (Meadows et al., 2006), theorists and activists note the tensions between the accelerating resource consumption required to fuel compound economic growth and the inevitable degradation of the social and economic resource base—from deforestation, water pollution and overuse, CO2 emissions, and biodiversity loss (among many others) (O'Connor, 1988). While careful not to fall into Malthusian determinism (Ojeda et al., 2020), these arguments problematize the blind faith in technological fixes to inherently social problems. As economist William Jevons demonstrated, the historical record paradoxically shows that more efficient and "green" technologies often lead to more intensive and extensive social and ecological degradation (York & McGee, 2016). That is, while green technologies may be useful, their "greenness" and utility largely depend on the social and political contexts in which they are deployed (for how this relates to lithium-ion batteries see, Penn & Lipton, 2021). Here, social as well as environmental indicators are paramount for measuring sustainable development.
- 4 Examples of trade-offs pervade the development literature. This is particularly so in the context of extractive development. Mancini and Sala (2018) conduct a literature review that highlights the six most cited social impacts of mining: 1) economic, 2) employment/education, 3) land use, 4) demography, 5) environment, health and safety, and 6) human rights. With the sole exception of economic benefits, they find that mining negatively impacts the other five indicators. This directly relates to the challenges of proposed lithium extractive activities in the Salton Sea. Lithium mining may improve socio-economic conditions in this remote area, even as it open the region to risks of pollution, demographic imbalance (particularly from influx of mine laborers), precarious boom-bust cycles, and declining physical-psychological health (Mancini & Sala, 2018; Kotey & Rolfe, 2014).
- 5 The notion of "creative destruction" usefully portrays the inevitable tension between building new technologies, infrastructures, and economies at the expense of the old (Schumpeter, 1942).
- 6 Inequality in the Inland Empire is the lowest among the regions analyzed by Bohn and Thorman (2018). This is not because of the region's low levels of inequality, but rather reflects the extreme levels of inequality throughout the state. For example, the Bay Area and Los Angeles County boast a "90/10 ratio" of 12.2 and 11.8 respectively (Bohn & Thorman, 2018). While slightly lower than the California and US "90/10 ratio" average (12.3 and 12.6 respectively) (Bohn & Thorman, 2018; Horowitz et al., 2020), such levels of inequality are historically appalling (Piketty, 2014).
- 7 The demographics of the region suggest that a starting place might begin with women, low-income groups, indigenous groups, and undocumented groups (keeping in mind how these categories intersect to produce complex power differentials).
- 8 Access to job training opportunities can be an important indicator for upward mobility and access to employment. However, temporal factors ranging from time-to-degree-completion and employment duration of skilled workers complicate the use of trainings as a silver bullet to access to employment (Cordes et al., 2016)
- 9 Much scholarship ties mining to enclave economies that displace, rather than promote, secondary employment opportunities (Auty, 1994; Acosta, 2009; Karl, 1997). In an historical overview of coal mining in the United States, Matheis (2016) notes the temporal aspect of extractive development, which may offer short term economic benefits, which then become negative after the initial ten-year span. Others note the contingency of the "resource curse", arguing instead that policies dedicated to foster business clusters and value added opportunities can enable local (and national) benefits from extractive industries, however unevenly (Watts, 2004; Bebbington et al., 2008; Arias et al., 2014). Freudenburg and Wilson similarly find that in a literature review of over 300 cases, roughly half indicated negative economic outcomes. The other half were split evenly between favorable and neutral or indeterminate economic outcomes. Such analyses show that employment and economic benefits or burdens are not inherently linked to extractive development.
- 10 Socio-ecological health is a far too broad a topic to be covered comprehensively here. Issues of healthy home and work environments, and other psychological (e.g. stress) and physical exposure (e.g. pesticides or industrial machinery) to harm, may be of vital importance to Salton Sea communities. Therefore, this broad category should be seen as a starting point.
- 11 Each of these categories are reflected in different ways in the Sustainable Development Goals and Benner and Pastor's Inclusive Economy Framework.
- 12 An important caveat is necessary here. Even categories that seem irrelevant to key stakeholders' most cherished interests may be useful for bargaining and alliance-building. For example, measuring biodiversity loss in the Salton Sea may seem irrelevant to more urgent and every-day concerns related to employment or community health. However, incorporating this indicator may foster alliances with potentially powerful stakeholders like the well-funded and internationally respected Audubon Society. Highlighting intersecting interests—how biodiversity, water quality and air pollution may bolster community health and alternative employment opportunities (e.g., eco-tourism)—may prove useful (Roth, 2021).
- 13 Entire areas of study dedicated to "Women in Development" (Koczberski, 1998) and "Feminist Political Ecology" (Rocheleau et al., 1996) similarly document how good intentioned attempts to promote economic development further exacerbated gender inequalities.
- 14 An important caveat here is that while such data may not already exist, it could potentially be produced given the requisite resources. Moreover, even if not measured directly, such indicators can be useful to justify and sharpen the inclusive economy framework deployed here.
- 15 PAR is a methodology that deploys a spiral or cyclical process composed of "planning, acting, observing, and evaluating the result of the action" (McTaggart, 1991, 170).
- 16 See <https://www.iap2.org/page/pillars>
- 17 "From a societal standpoint, the 'most affected' by the social injustices we associate with politically important identities like gender, class, race, and nationality are disproportionately likely to be incarcerated, underemployed, or part of the 44 percent of the world's population without internet access – and thus both left out of the rooms of power and largely ignored by the people in the rooms of power. Individuals who make it past the various social selection pressures that filter out those social identities associated with these negative outcomes are most likely to be in the room. That is, they are most likely to be in the room precisely because of ways in which they are systematically different from (and thus potentially unrepresentative of) the very people they are then asked to represent in the room" (Táíwò, 2020).
- 18 Derived from (Thorpe & Gaventa, 2020) and (Stewart & Sinclair, 2007).
- 19 <https://www.valleyworkers.org/>
- 20 <https://wsr-network.org/>
- 21 https://www.theselc.org/worc_coalition
- 22 <https://www.cvrn.org/who-we-are/homelessness-facts-our-impact/>
- 23 <https://archive.kftc.org/issues/coal-and-water>
- 24 <https://www.communityfoodbank.org/Our-Work/Programs>
- 25 <https://www.communityfoodbank.org/Our-Work/Programs/Culinary-Training>



Alianza's mission is to transform the socio-economic conditions of the Coachella Valley so that people in all communities have opportunities to prosper. We envision one vibrant, healthy, and thriving Coachella Valley where people have a seat at the table for decisions that affect their daily lives..



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Our Salton Sea Initiative

Track Two

Institutional and Community Perspectives on Economic Development

APRIL 2022



Salton Sea, California, USA

Photo Credit: Alianza

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INTRODUCTION

The Salton Sea region of Southern California was once a top leisure destination. Today it has high concentrations of poverty, both polluted air and water, and some of the worst community health metrics in the state. For instance, a review of the CalEnviroScreen 4.0 scores for the region directly surrounding and adjacent to the Salton Sea itself shows that areas in Eastern Coachella Valley and Imperial Valley have scores of 49 and higher (out of a possible 100).

Notably, CalEnviroScreen scores are an aggregate of several indicators, broadly categorized under “pollution burden” and “population characteristics”. In general, the higher the score, the greater the environmental burden on that particular area/population. Policymakers have often viewed such areas as key investments for regional equity efforts. In reality, however, policies, programs, and initiatives - all under the guise of “community economic development” - have frequently overlooked the “community” component, with the result often being that long-term benefits do not materialize for the regions and groups who often end up simply bearing the greatest burden.

The economy of the Salton Sea region is largely driven by industries such as agriculture, retail, and hospitality, which are often low-wage and do not always come with benefits. There are a fair amount of jobs in the healthcare sector, which tend to be higher paying, but there is still a significant wage gap between healthcare (typically higher paid) and healthcare adjacent (typically lower paid) jobs. Currently, there is the potential for emerging technological investments such as solar power generation and lithium extraction (lithium is a key component of battery manufacturing, which is crucial to electrification efforts) to provide economic growth and good jobs (e.g., higher wages, benefits, stable hours).

The project team was tasked with understanding the potential for inclusive economic development within the region, with the ideal hope of better jobs, more opportunities, and an overall brighter economic outlook for the region. As part of this analysis, the project team analyzed the work done by the UCSC team, to better understand the various theoretical approaches to envisioning and actually implementing an inclusive economic development strategy, and then through a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods, ground-truthing to what degree they would work in the region’s particular socio-economic-political situation. As part of this process, both the UCSC and the UCR team co-authored a Policy Brief that introduced the idea of inclusive economics, laid the framework to connect the theoretical base idea of inclusive economic development to current fiscal policy, and explored what that could look like in terms of how policy gets conceptualized and enacted.

This exercise was also intended to better understand what inclusive economic development processes could look like, and in particular to dig deeper into what inclusive community involvement means for different stakeholders. Within the context of potential investments into renewable energy, be they solar or lithium extraction to support battery manufacturing, there is a major concern that this particular type of investment could become simply extractive. This was echoed again and again in the qualitative outreach we conducted. For instance, questions of ‘who gets the jobs’ and ‘who ultimately benefits, and who really shoulders the costs’ came up multiple times throughout the process. And there is some context for this: while this is partially due to this situation historically playing out again and again worldwide, the region itself has been told one thing and experienced a completely different outcome in multiple situations.

Community inclusion is essential for producing the type of equitable economic development that would be most responsive and beneficial for a unique region like the Salton Sea. In this context, we define equitable development as having investments, policies, and practices that intentionally focus on improving outcomes for historically marginalized populations, and that actually improves outcomes for these populations and communities. In particular, we propose that more inclusive processes can result in the type of shared governance necessary to promote equitable economic and workforce development in the region. For example, our Ready to RISE Framework offers clear standards and mechanisms for community input and inclusion that empowers community, giving them a seat at the decision-making table from the very beginning of a project or initiative. Utilizing an inclusive framework, like Ready to RISE, is essential for promoting greater resilience, inclusion, sustainability, and equity in the Salton Sea region as these massive economic and workforce opportunities begin to unfold.

PARTICIPATION AND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

In order to better understand the options for and impact of various development strategies, it was important for us to isolate the various conditions that may serve as key factors in understanding optimal/less-optimal strategies, as well as to what extent participation is inclusive and thus provides the community with a voice and agency.

In large part, there are two major factors at play in any economic development initiative: internal (which we can define as pre-existing economic conditions) and external (which we can define as outside factors). Geographies like the Salton Sea region are most likely particularly impacted by external factors, since in almost all scenarios investment would come from outside the region.

Part of this process was evaluating the questions the UCSC team identified as key to analyzing meaningful participation. As part of this textual analysis, themes and key words were identified, to help better understand important points of consideration, as well as key variables to be aware of.

The textual analysis largely focused on three themes: process, inclusion, and power. This became particularly important as the formal process by which community and economic decisions are made is technically designed to include community participation and thus feedback, but this tends to not happen in practice and has been documented as such in both academic literature and by practitioners on the ground. However, this poses a theoretical and practical challenge, as inclusive economic developments are by their very nature supposed to be inclusive, and yet there is extensive evidence that this does not actually happen. Ideally, an inclusive process involves “learning, relationship building, ownership” (Lachapelle, McCool, and Patterson, 2003) as well as “collaboration, dialogue and interaction” (Innes and Booher, 2004), and addresses fairness, creating responsibility, and ensuring representation (McCool and Guthrie, 2001; Burby, 2003). Technical aspects of the process itself become issues. For instance, outreach efforts such as public meetings are mandated to ensure that there is at least a baseline level of effort put out to provide a platform for the public to provide input. However, the most common critique of this is that this does not actually achieve genuine participation, and as such public officials do not actually receive the information they need to make informed decisions (Innes and Booher, 2000). Additionally, power dynamics are a key variable to consider when trying to assess the inclusiveness of decision-making and policy approaches. In large part, this can be summed up by agencies simply going through the motions of participation versus providing the public with “the real power needed to affect the outcome of the process (Arnstein, 1969)”.

Considering the above, our approach was designed to center on understanding the process (as it was advertised, as it was interpreted to have occurred, and reflections on how it could have gone/could go in the future); understanding who was involved, what inclusion has looked like, what inclusion could look like in the future; and understanding the power dynamics (historically, present, and how power is viewed in the region and by whom).

In large part, we deemed it important to understand as many public viewpoints as possible, to better understand who the trusted messengers are, and to understand why they are trusted by the public. Particularly due to the region’s demographic characteristics and historic lack of investment, it was determined that to the extent possible, as many hard-to-reach populations should be included as was realistically feasible within a COVID environment.

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

As part of the qualitative analysis, we sought to gain perspectives on what inclusive economic development and shared governance could look like directly from the community themselves. This meant outreach to government officials, policymakers, business leaders, community organizations, and the area’s youth, to understand their thoughts on what inclusion could mean and what it might look like in practice. It also meant understanding their perspective on current processes and the opportunities to push the needle toward greater inclusion and ultimately shared governance over ideation, decision-making, and ultimately implementation.

Methods for the qualitative data analysis included conducting interviews and community listening sessions/focus groups. The informant/elite interviews were conducted in English over zoom with government/business stakeholders and grassroots organization leaders, and typically lasted for about 30 minutes. The community listening sessions/focus groups were conducted in both Spanish and English over zoom, and included the area’s youth and several community leaders.

In general, the major takeaways focused on issues around the current policy and development process, the overwhelming dominance of agriculture and the service industry, potential health impacts from any new development, where new jobs would go to, concerns about the reality of lithium and lithium-extraction-adjacent development, the need for more infrastructure including educational investment and support (higher education but also more generally) and the potential for small business development. While it seemed that there was appetite for more inclusive processes, there was also a lot of hesitation as a result of historical policies and practices that had effectively excluded many of the most vulnerable from receiving any potential benefits of development.

INSTITUTIONAL PERSPECTIVES (GOVERNMENT, BUSINESS)

To better understand both current and future economic and workforce development in the Salton Sea region, our center conducted in depth interviews with 6 government officials and business leaders in Coachella Valley and Imperial County. Our conversations with the interviewees centered around the landscape of economic and workforce development in the region, and the different effects that development could have on local communities.

- **Current Employment Opportunities:** The policymakers interviewed identified hospitality, agriculture, and related industries (e.g., packing and canning), and to some degree healthcare and healthcare-adjacent industries as the predominant sources of employment in the

FIGURE #1 - PROPOSED METHODS TO ADDRESS PARTICIPATION AND DEVELOPMENT STRAT

	Internal (Pre-existing Economic Conditions)	External (Large-scale Outside Investment)
Development Strategies	<p>What are the best economic development strategies based on what is already in a region?</p> <p>Qualitative (e.g., interviews, focus groups)</p>	<p>What are the best economic development strategies amid large-scale outside investment?</p> <p>Qualitative (e.g., interviews), Quantitative (e.g., regional economic data)</p>
Participation	<p>What participatory institutions empower community control of the economy?</p> <p>Qualitative (e.g., interviews, power mapping)</p>	<p>What participatory institutions ensure community control over how new large-scale investments develop?</p> <p>Qualitative (e.g., focus groups, power mapping), Quantitative (e.g., regional economic data, projection)</p>

FIGURE #2 - QUESTIONS FOR ANALYZING MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

1. WHAT ARE THE POLITICS AROUND PARTICIPATORY SPACE?
2. HOW MEANINGFUL IS THE PARTICIPATION AND WHAT PURPOSE DOES IT SERVE?
3. WHAT ARE THE SPACES OF DECISION MAKING AND PARTICIPATION?
4. WHO IS PARTICIPATING?
5. WHAT IS THE SCOPE?
6. WHAT ARE THE NECESSARY CONDITIONS FOR MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION?

region. While there was some talk of small businesses, it was mostly references to interest in building up a small business ecosystem. Most of the discussion about small businesses occurred with community members and was referenced in the listening session, though even there primarily in the session with the youth.

- **Barriers Greater Employment Opportunities:** One of the biggest barriers policymakers and business leaders mentioned was infrastructure. While potential industries such as lithium extraction and battery manufacturing have the potential to significantly change the economic landscape, several mentioned that this wasn't going to happen overnight, counter to what the interviewees felt was a general narrative that this will change things quickly.
- **What is Needed to Overcome Barriers:** Educational investments and opportunities were highlighted as necessary to help build up the type of workforce that can access higher-paying jobs related to a potential lithium industry. But even then there was caution that these educational investments needed to happen now, and that the community wouldn't really see the impacts for several decades. Also, there was concern that there would be no guarantee that the current local community would be able to directly benefit from the creation of higher-paying jobs related to lithium extraction and battery manufacturing, which again highlighted the need for education and training.
- **Issues with Available Opportunities:** Several respondents also noted that young people leave because of a lack of opportunities. And for those that do return, they often cannot fully utilize their education and training when they are back "home" because there aren't enough jobs in those professions, or there aren't any training opportunities to help them better position themselves to be competitive for the few professional jobs that do exist in the region.
- **Concerns about Development Impacts:** Another concern was health impacts of any development, and whether or not economic development initiatives are ultimately extractive, and wouldn't actually benefit the local community. Respondents mentioned that there were a fair amount of developments in the past that were advertised as job creators, except the jobs and the tax revenue all went elsewhere. Additionally, even current developments are still geared towards bringing in people from outside the community; several of the government officials and policymakers interviewed acknowledged that the community was not very engaged in the process and that the interests of a select few motivated actions of the decision-making bodies.

This was a sentiment shared by the community leaders interviewed.

- **Suggestions for Opportunities & Related Caveats:** The suggestions for opportunities were fairly mixed. While there was talk about the potential for lithium extraction to be beneficial, there was more discussion about battery-adjacent industries and how that might be a better alternative to battery manufacturing. This was partially because of the realization that manufacturing is still going to be a heavy industry and wouldn't visually be all that "attractive", but also because there was a lot of concern that others from outside the region would be the only ones qualified for the job openings, and that they would simply commute in because the region just isn't that attractive as a place to live. Therefore battery-adjacent industries seemed to be viewed as an option that might provide an opportunity for local residents to gain employment and ideally a foothold into higher-paying industries.

COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

The interviews with community leaders tended to focus on current employment opportunities/lack of opportunities, barriers to community engagement and suggestions for improvement, and what employment opportunities could be most beneficial and desired by current residents.

- **Current Employment Opportunities:** The current landscape is primarily agricultural-focused, with some hospitality. There was some talk about small businesses, but the focus tended to be on farmworkers and to a lesser degree hospitality jobs. The youth in the focus groups talked a lot more about small businesses, and also about opportunities they felt were related to small business start-up and growth.
- **Concerns about New Developments:** Many of the concerns were around health, with some also voicing concerns about who the new jobs would go to – local residents or those from outside the area.
- **Concerns about the Development Process:** In terms of process, there were several concerns raised about the development process and how policymaking occurs, significant doubt about how inclusive things actually are (versus what is advertised and/or said), and the feeling that several recent developments had effectively been approved but seemingly without any community input or understanding of what the local needs and wants are. In the youth focus group there was talk about how there are clear, visible differences between the more and less affluent neighborhoods.
- **Concerns about Equity of Treatment/Pay, Benefits, Support:** The community focus group touched on concerns

TABLE #1 -JOB OPENINGS BREAKDOWN BY TYPE IN THE SALTON SEA REGION, INCLUDING COMPARISON TO RIVERSIDE AND SAN BERNARDINO COUNTIES, 2019 AND 2021

Salton Sea	Openings (2019)	Openings (2021)	Percentage Change (%)	R/SD Opening (2019)	R/SD Opening (2021)	R/SD Percentage Change (%)
Registered Nurses	2,445	2,442	-0.1%	24,679	30,854	25%
Retail Salespersons	1,399	1,669	19.3%	19,145	21,906	14.4%
First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers.	760	899	18.3%	11,598	13,155	13.4%
Software Developers, Applications	642	166	-74.1%	25,186	16,724	-33.6%
Customer Service Representatives	568	739	30.1%	17,399	19,662	13%

Source: Burning Glass Technologies

TABLE #2 - JOB OPENINGS BREAKDOWN IN RIVERSIDE AND SAN BERNARDINO COUNTIES, 2019 AND 2021

Riverside & San Diego	Openings (2019)	Openings (2021)	Percentage Change (%)
Software Developers, Applications	25,186	16,724	-33.6%
Registered Nurses	24,679	30,854	25%
Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing	21,452	19,946	-7%
Computer Occupations, All Other I	19,780	15,643	-20.9%
Retail Salespersons	19,145	21,906	14.4%

Source: Burning Glass Technologies

TABLE #3 - LONGITUDINAL EMPLOYER-HOUSEHOLD DYNAMICS DATA FOR AREAS ADJACENT AND AROUND THE SALTON SEA

Salton Sea	Salton Sea		Other Imperial County		Other Riverside County		San Diego County	
Industry	Workers	Residents	Workers	Residents	Workers	Residents	Workers	Residents
Accommodation and Food Services	1,462	4,355	4,020	5,039	92,726	105,522	170,683	167,652
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	308	2,327	1,583	2,615	52,182	66,985	92,713	95,737
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	8,741	6,446	8,808	9,284	5,688	14,682	9,614	12,237
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	1,256	1,413	110	581	15,529	21,440	37,567	37,460
Construction	1,036	2,414	1,462	2,484	71,469	74,365	87,672	85,430
Educational Services	3,243	2,808	5,036	5,345	73,137	85,092	13,7,949	136,982
Finance and Insurance	123	523	601	858	10,335	20,649	46,255	48,428
Health Care and Social Assistance	3,154	5,125	7,994	8,848	107,169	136,146	206,283	206,175
Information	28	463	213	520	6,514	14,062	24,664	31,418
Management of Companies and Enterprises	56	282	110	348	3,046	10,067	26,983	26,833

TABLE #3B - LONGITUDINAL EMPLOYER-HOUSEHOLD DYNAMICS DATA FOR AREAS ADJACENT AND AROUND THE SALTON SEA - CONTINUED

Salton Sea	Salton Sea		Other Imperial County		Other Riverside County		San Diego County	
Industry	Workers	Residents	Workers	Residents	Workers	Residents	Workers	Residents
Manufacturing	1,648	1,635	978	2,160	44,511	67,966	115,380	113,785
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	362	113	39	178	416	764	342	526
Other Services [except Public Administration]	346	927	826	1,223	21,446	26,546	51,997	51,147
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	305	1,045	773	1,356	22,935	40,436	153,272	148,006
Public Administration	1,936	1,896	4,614	5,029	32,429	42,555	45,896	45,426
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	175	489	421	620	10,191	14,709	29,590	29,610
Retail Trade	1,444	3,974	4,997	6,233	82,037	96,719	130,556	134,808
Transportation and Warehousing	428	1,026	1,706	2,099	48,520	53,601	29,833	38,536
Utilities	1,121	529	1,292	1,110	3,615	6,438	6,461	6,299
Wholesale Trade	940	1,170	1,377	1,793	26,156	40,784	46,879	51,084
Total	28,112	38,960	46,960	57,723	730,051	939,528	1,450,589	1,467,579

about equity of equal pay for equal work (e.g., gender differences in pay), benefits, and time off from work.

- **Differences Between Developments that Get Approved and Community Needs/Desires:** Some of the interviewees discussed infrastructure, and talked about the community's desire for basic needs like affordable housing (specific mention about trailer park improvements).
- **Realities about Opportunities & Impact on Youth:** Similar to some of the government interviewees, there were questions about realistic job opportunities for youth, either for those who stay or for those who go away for school (or for other reasons) but then want to come back.
- **Role of COVID Pandemic on Highlighting Role of Essential Workers:** One interviewee brought up that in a way COVID may have been helpful because it highlighted the importance of 'essential workers', and expressed hope that this awareness would continue past the pandemic.
- **Potential for New Opportunities:** There were a few mentions of healthcare and health-care related opportunities, and some talk about support for mental health; some similar talk about science-related opportunities. There were several mentions about small businesses, and there seems to be a fair amount of optimism about the promise of small business ownership and that there is a lot of untapped potential and skills that could be harnessed through small business development.

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

We explored several avenues to better understand the current economic and employment landscape in Riverside, San Diego, and Imperial counties, as well as understand the socio-economic makeup of the populations from these counties. Because the aim was to better understand opportunities and obstacles to inclusive economic development, it was important to as fully as possible understand the supply-demand dynamic within the area immediately adjacent to the Salton Sea, as well as surrounding regions that are within the Salton Sea's potential area of influence. It should be noted that for the most part, the analysis did not place heavy emphasis on travel time; while typically there would be tiers of travel time (e.g., 30 minute drive, 45 minute drive, 60 minute drive, >60 minute drive) to compare, both the geography that surrounds the immediate Salton Sea job-shed (e.g., the Sea is directly surrounded by deserts on two sides, and there are limited road access points) and the traveling characteristics of southern California residents (e.g., many commute long distances, and do not live close to where they work) prompted us to focus primarily on the

potential of matching supply of workers with demand for skills and labor.

Our analysis utilized publicly available data from the US Census, Bureau of Labor Statistics, as well as proprietary data from Burning Glass Technologies. As a caveat, the Burning Glass database pulls job opening data from postings that are publicly listed online. This is important to note because the types of jobs that are posted online tend to be higher paid and also require a bachelor's degree. While this does mean that this analysis likely is missing jobs that are primarily advertised and recruited via personal networks and word-of-mouth, it still serves as an important window into the types of job universes that would likely come with investment in lithium extraction and lithium extraction-related industries.

EMPLOYMENT SITUATION IN THE IMMEDIATE SALTON SEA REGION, AND ADJACENT GEOGRAPHIES

Job openings in the Salton Sea region mirror those of Southern California as a whole, with substantial numbers of openings in healthcare, retail, and technology occupations. In particular there is an enormous unmet demand for nurses in the region, with more than 7.5 percent of all job openings in the data being for registered nurses in 2019, and 6.3% in 2021.

If we look at the industrial breakdown of the openings in 2019, it is clear that the driving forces in the local economy are Health Care, Accommodation and Food Services, and Retail Trade, with the remaining new job opportunities spread relatively evenly throughout the other industries. If we then compare these to the neighboring economies of Riverside and San Diego Counties, it becomes clear that the Salton Sea region is significantly more dependent on local population serving industries than their neighbors, with comparatively more openings in health care and food services, and many fewer openings in professional services and manufacturing. This suggests that the region is missing the types of major industry clusters that help to anchor a local economy, and may be more at risk to broader economic fluctuations.

These openings numbers align with the overall industrial employment picture in the region, with the most employment being found in the same three industries. In fact, roughly 50 percent of the total workforce in the region is employed in one of these industries. However, current employment levels show a higher number of Accommodation and Food Services workers than Health Care, suggesting that there is a higher demand for Health Care workers than can currently be met, and that these positions may be harder to fill.

If we compare the share of employment in each of these major industries with the two neighboring counties, we see that, although these are still the largest industries overall for all three regions, the Salton Sea region is significantly more dependent on Accommodation & Food Services as well as Health Care than the neighboring regions are, with more than a third of all local employment being in these two industries.

This bifurcation between employment opportunities in the Salton Sea and neighboring regions can similarly be seen if we look at the most in demand occupations. Both the local Salton Sea region as well as Riverside & San Diego have heavy demand for Registered Nurses, but there is substantially more demand for technical occupations such as software developers in San Diego and Riverside.

The earnings potential for these most in demand occupations varies greatly. Registered nurses have relatively similar, and high, salaries across all three regions, but software developers have much higher salaries in San Diego County, where they are in high demand, than in the Salton Sea region. In contrast, retail salespersons are relatively more in demand in the Salton Sea region, but these jobs have significantly lower earnings potential than the other in demand occupations and show the difference in availability of “good jobs” across the region.

This lack of high earning jobs is readily apparent if we compare the share of workers and jobs in the region earning more than 40 thousand dollars a year, as a baseline level of job quality. It is clear by this metric that the majority of workers in the Salton Sea region are earning significantly less than their counterparts in the bordering counties. Of even more concern is the gap between local jobs which pay more than this, and residents who earn it. The fact that more residents earn above this level than there are jobs that pay above this level shows that for many workers in the region, it is necessary to commute outside the local labor market in order to secure a job that pays a decent wage. Of course, there is more to a good job than simply the raw income potential, but the shortage of jobs with reasonable wages is a major concern for growth and economic equity in the region.

Another important measure of the quality of local jobs are the number which offer full time, dependable schedules as well as the education required for such a job. In each region, the share of total openings that are full time are between 40 and 50 percent of total job openings, with the 48 percent of openings being full time in the Salton Sea region and roughly 40 percent of openings being full time in San Diego County. Similarly in all regions, roughly half of job openings have no associated educational requirement, however there is a sharp difference between the Salton Sea and Riverside County regions, and San Diego County when

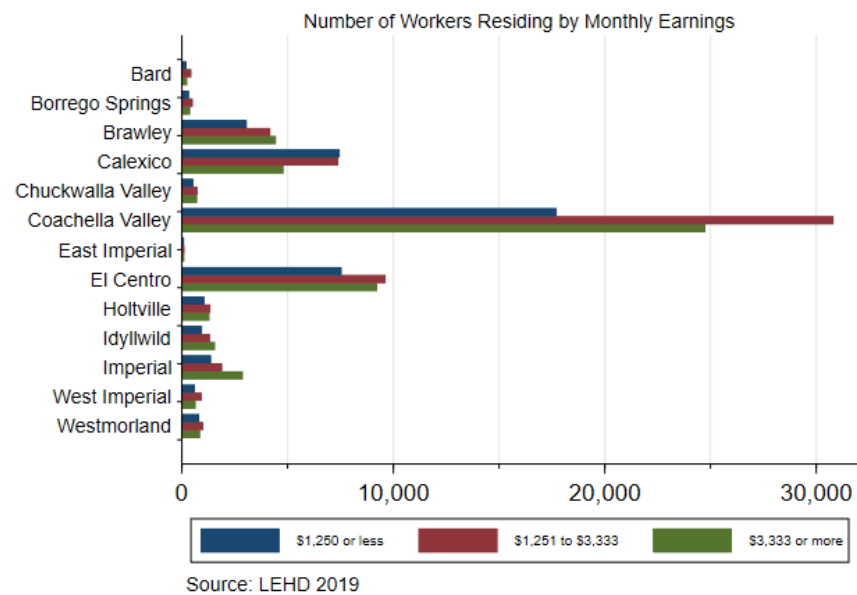
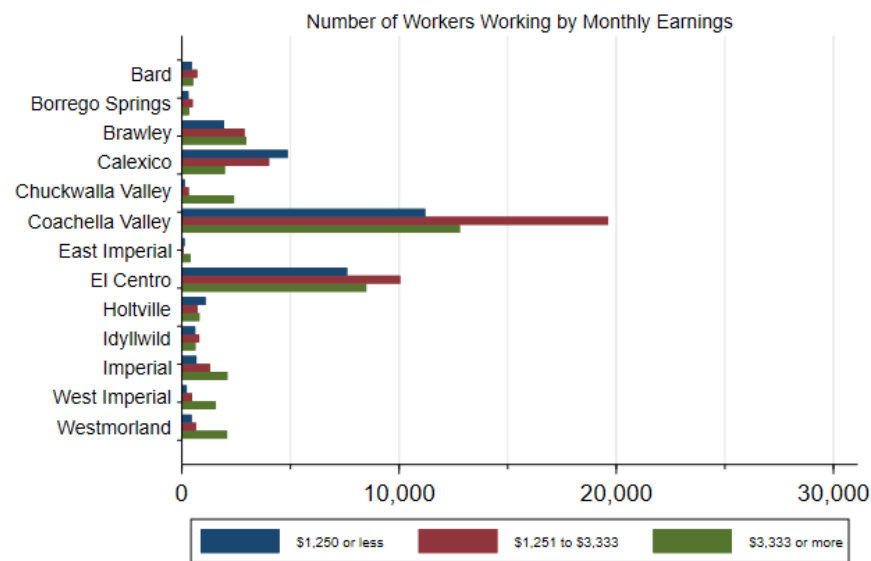
it comes to higher education requirements. More than twice as many job openings in San Diego County requested a college degree as in either of the other regions, which mirrors the general understanding of the local economies. San Diego County benefits immensely from a high tech focus on biosciences and defense, as well as professional services which means that there are many more opportunities for those with college degrees or higher to find suitable employment. In contrast the Salton Sea region has a dearth of suitable opportunities for educated workers outside of healthcare, meaning that educated workers may be forced to either commute or relocate to find suitable opportunities.

The education levels of the regional workforces mirror this understanding, with San Diego County having nearly a third of workers with a university education, in contrast to only 19 percent by the Salton Sea. In spite of the larger supply of college-educated workers, San Diego still has more opportunities available to them as roughly a third of all job opportunities request a bachelor's degree or higher. In the Salton region, only 17 percent of job openings request a bachelor's degree or more, meaning that some educated workers will not be able to find employment opportunities that take advantage of their education level.

This lack of local economic opportunity - largely characterized by lower earnings, fewer hours, lack of opportunities for those with higher educational credentials - may be seen in the commuting patterns present in the region. If we look at the flow of commuters from the Salton Sea region to the various local and neighboring counties, we see a substantial loss of workers, with relatively high numbers commuting to San Diego County in particular, and similarly large numbers commuting to Riverside County and Los Angeles County.

Although the LEHD data does not explicitly tell us which industries people are leaving the region to work in, we can approximate this by comparing the number of local jobs in each industry with the number of residents who are employed in each industry. If we do so, we see that for the Salton Sea region, every sector has more workers than jobs, meaning that in every industry there are not enough opportunities locally to employ the resident workforce. Even the largest local drivers of employment, like Accommodation & Food Services, Retail Trade and Healthcare have 10 percent or more local workers than jobs. In contrast, the ratio of local jobs to local workers is roughly 1 to 1 for San Diego County, meaning that there is sufficient local economic opportunity to employ the residents of the county. Importantly, only looking at the largest sectors by employment understates the gap, as many of the smaller industries locally have fully half of their workers or more commuting to a different county to find work.

FIGURE #3 - LEHD ANALYSIS DONE BY CENSUS COUNTY DIVISION (CCD)



This lack of local economic opportunity, in spite the qualifications of the local workforce, is a dramatic impediment to future economic growth in the region and furthers the gap between those living in high opportunity regions and those not.

One potential economic development project ongoing in the region is the possibility of direct lithium extraction. According to the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL), direct lithium extraction in the region could be done with one-time capital expenditures of \$50 million, and annual operating expenditures of around \$77 million. Given that Imperial County, the closest proxy for the region as a whole, had a gross county product (GCP) of only about \$9 billion in 2019, this level of annual expenditure would be equivalent to a nearly 1 percent increase in GCP locally. If this project were to move forward, there is some question as to whether the economic benefits and jobs would accrue locally, or whether resources would be extracted in exchange for little return to local communities.

Recalling the local jobs to workers ratio, we see that at least three quarters of local workers employed in the mining sector commute to another county to work, so there are at least some workers who would be prepared to shift to local employment if opportunities were opened up.

EMPLOYMENT IN COMMON MINING OCCUPATIONS, EL CENTRO METRO, 2020

Looking specifically at the most common occupations for mining, we see that there are relatively few workers currently employed in these specific occupations. However, a large part of this can be attributed to the lack of local employment opportunities, meaning that workers are not employed locally in these fields. If we look at the more expansive classes of occupations, we see that there are a number of workers available in adjacent fields to draw from to fill positions.

In particular, as we previously noted, the majority of local workers who are employed in primary production, such as mining and manufacturing are forced to commute outside the region for employment. So, there should be a substantial pool of workers who are willing to work locally, assuming that wages are reasonably comparable.

In the El Centro metropolitan area, the largest occupational category by employment is office and administrative, followed by farming, fishing, and forestry, and then by healthcare support, and sales and related. This generally aligns with the data collected via interviews, though notably the interviews and focus group participants did not mention office and administrative support as much as farming, healthcare, and service sector industries.

In the Riverside metropolitan area, the largest occupational category is transportation and material moving, followed by office and administrative support, sales and related, and finally food preparation and serving related. Considering the overwhelming prevalence of warehousing in Riverside County, it follows that the largest proportion of employment is in transportation. Additionally, the presence of UC Riverside in the county may account for the significant share of office and administrative support.

For the San Diego metropolitan area, office and administrative support is the largest occupational category, followed by sales and related, food preparation and serving related, and business and financial operations. Considering that San Diego is a major West Coast tourist destination, it follows that the higher percentages of workers are in hospitality related industries.

In this particular analysis, employment categories that could reasonably be attributed to extraction and extraction-related industries were included - so this means jobs like management positions, business and finance, and various types of engineering expertise. Identified employment categories that are more directly related, but not specifically categorized as extraction, included installation, maintenance, and repair; production; and transportation and material moving. Across all three metropolitan areas, the hourly wages for employment categories that are more heavily focused on white collar-jobs are higher than those of the blue-collar ones. And across all three metropolitan areas, the hourly difference in wages is at least \$6 dollars between the lowest paid white collar job (business and financial operations) and the highest paid blue collar job (construction and extraction), which can mean a difference of at least approximately \$12,500 a year (assuming steady full time hours).

NATIONWIDE OCCUPATIONAL PROJECTIONS, INCLUDING EDUCATION, EXPERIENCE, AND TRAINING DETAILS

Nationwide data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics for Occupational Projections, 2020-30, focusing on "Construction and extraction occupations" indicates that in most cases, the highest education level required is a high school diploma or equivalent, in most cases there is either no prior or less than 5 years of experience required in a related field, and typically there is only moderate on-the-job training needed to gain competence, with only "earth drillers, except oil and gas; and explosives workers, ordnance handling experts, and blasters" requiring long-term on-the-job training. While this may mean that there are low barriers to entry, as the prior section suggests, these occupations in the areas of consideration tend to come with lower wages.

TABLE #4 EMPLOYMENT IN COMMON MINING OCCUPATIONS, EL CENTRO METRO, 2020

Employment in Common Mining Occupations (El Centro Metro, 2020)	
Occupation	Workers
Continuous Mining Machine Operators	0
Operating Engineers and Other Construction Equipment Operators.	160
Excavating and Loading Machine and Dragline Operators, Surface Mining	>100
Industrial Machinery Mechanics	80
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	860
First-Line Supervisors of Construction Trades and Extraction Workers	120
Maintenance Workers, Machinery	0
Plant and System Operators, All Other	0
General and Operations Managers	610
Mobile Heavy Equipment Mechanics, Except Engines	100

Source: https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_20940.htm#47-0000

TABLE #5 - EMPLOYMENT IN OCCUPATIONAL GROUPS RELATED TO MINING, EL CENTRO METRO, 2020

Occupational Group	Number of Workers	% of total Employment
Construction and Extraction Occupations	1,320	2.3%*
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	2,090	3.6%
Production Occupations	1,880	3.3%*
Transportation and Material Moving	4,020	7.0%*

Source: https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_20940.htm#47-0000 & https://www.bls.gov/regions/west/news-release/occupationalemploymentandwages_elcentro.htm

Notes: * The mean hourly wage or percent share of employment is significantly different from the national average of all areas at the 90-percent confidence level.

TABLE #6. TOP TOTAL EMPLOYMENT CATEGORIES BY METRO

El Centro Metro			Riverside Metro			San Diego Metro		
% of Emp.	Category	Mean Hourly Wage	% of Emp.	Category	Mean Hourly Wage	% of Emp.	Category	Mean Hourly Wage
11.4%	Office and administrative support	\$19.48	15%	Transportation and material moving	\$19.11	12.0%	Office and administrative support	\$22.44
10.9%	Farming, fishing, and forestry	\$15.66	11.9%	Office and administrative support	\$21.10	9.8%	Sales and related	\$23.27
9.8%	Healthcare support	\$14.91	9.1%	Sales and related	\$20.61	9.1%	Food preparation and serving related	\$15.80
9.7%	Sales and related	\$18.04	9.0%	Food preparation and serving related	\$14.98	7.2%	Business and financial operations	\$39.74

Sources:

El Centro: https://www.bls.gov/regions/west/news-release/occupationalemploymentandwages_elcentro.htm

Riverside: https://www.bls.gov/regions/west/news-release/occupationalemploymentandwages_riverside.htm

San Diego: https://www.bls.gov/regions/west/news-release/occupationalemploymentandwages_sandiego.htm

OCCUPATIONAL EMPLOYMENT AND WAGE ESTIMATES

A comparison of the May 2020 Metropolitan and Nonmetropolitan Area Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates for the non-MSA areas of Nevada against those for El Centro, CA revealed that there were several job categories that were in the non-MSA Nevada list that did not appear in the El Centro list. Non-Metropolitan Nevada was specifically chosen as a comparison because it is home to Silver Peak, a lithium mine (Silver Peak, NV, is located near a dry lake bed). While we cannot be sure that these jobs are specifically attributed to the lithium mine (there are other mining operations in the area; lithium is just one mineral that is being extracted), it does lend some potentially important points of comparison regarding the types of jobs that could come with economic investment like lithium extraction.

In the management and business and financial categories the jobs were similar across both areas. However, under Architecture and Engineering Occupations, non-Metropolitan Nevada had far more engineering occupations listed. Additionally, non-Metropolitan Nevada had a relevant listing - Geoscientists, except Hydrologists and Geographers - under Life, Physical, and Social Science occupations.

In general, the mean annual wages for these occupations in non-Metropolitan areas of Nevada ranged from \$52,060 (environmental engineering technologists and technicians) to \$103,060 (mechanical engineers). Geoscientists, except Hydrologists and Geographers - which was categorized under Life, Physical, and Social Science occupations, a category that did not exist on the El Centro list - had a mean annual wage of \$94,000.

POLITICAL ECONOMY ANALYSIS

As part of the overall analysis a political economy model was explored to better understand the potential for a particular economic development intervention to create a better supply and demand balance. In Figure 2a below, the existing healthcare industry is used as a case study in order to better understand the impact of an intervention (in this case better jobs) on supply and demand for health services jobs. The overall theory of change here is that by creating better career pathways, by better organizing, and by better matching and mentoring the market can better match an increased demand for "good" healthcare service jobs with via greater supply through structural investments. In Figure 2b, lithium extraction is introduced as a new industry entrant. In this case, the theory of change hypothesizes that we can better link battery manufacturing supply and demand by understanding opportunities to expand and improve upon current economic and employment structures and have a workforce that is nimble enough to adapt to changing environments and circumstances.

In large part, one of the larger issues highlighted by this political economy analysis is the ability to actually link supply and demand within the context of current educational levels versus where they would need to be, and how adaptable and resilient the current employment pool actually is, particularly considering that a substantial set of jobs that currently exist in the region could be automated in the future. Additionally, the potential for non-local residents to be substantially competitive for future lithium or other clean energy type jobs is somewhat of a question mark, particularly if the aim is for local residents to have access to higher paying jobs as they often require a bachelor's degree. Right now, the immediate regions in Imperial County that most likely would be the employee pool for new investments are Imperial, Brawley, and El Centro.

Finally, it is unclear whether lithium extraction and/or lithium-adjacent industries can provide a pareto efficient situation. The adoption of policies that tend to leave more people in society worse off - even though they do not absolutely need to - has more often been the norm. And to link to another system failure, it is not clear that promises can and will be made to avoid opportunistic behavior.

DISCUSSION

The combined qualitative and quantitative analysis indicates that there are a few important factors at play in the Salton Sea region.

First, existing economic industries and existing socio-political structures in the Riverside and Imperial county areas play a large role in area residents' perceptions of what is possible in terms of economic development, not to mention what 'inclusive' could actually mean in practice. As one interviewee noted, it is really difficult to understand 'what could be' outside of 'what the current situation is'. Additionally the ideas of 'inclusion' and of 'best' are fairly mixed. For instance, much of the qualitative data indicates that while government agencies and policymakers appear to at least on the surface be inclusive, in reality many residents feel that they are left out of the process, not to mention that most outcomes tend to be geared for specific groups, and not for everyone. In a few instances, interviewees and listening session participants alluded to there being visible, noticeable differences in how groups are treated/viewed, and that many are left out of the entire process, with even fewer being a consideration at the ideation stage. When asked about what economic development they would like to see, many interviewees talked primarily about basic needs like housing and infrastructure, and spent comparably little time discussing what types of jobs they'd like to see in the region. Additionally, one interviewee talked about how policymakers - who look and talk and act like they are from the area - think they know what is best for the community, but there were real questions about in whose

TABLE #7 - MEAN HOURLY WAGES FOR EMPLOYMENT CATEGORIES RELATED (DIRECTLY AND TANGENTIALLY) TO EXTRACTION AND EXTRACTION-RELATED INDUSTRIES

	El Centro Metro	Riverside Metro	San Diego Metro
Management	\$49.78*	\$56.03*	\$67.19*
Business and Financial Operations	\$34.23*	\$35.16*	\$39.74*
Architecture and Engineering	\$38.66*	\$43.28	\$46.71*
Construction and extraction	\$27.82*	\$27.38*	\$29.02*
Installation, maintenance, and repair	\$25.68	\$26.40*	\$27.55*
Production	\$21.42	\$19.72*	\$21.79*
Transportation and material moving	\$18.86	\$19.11	\$19.96*

Notes: * The mean hourly wage or percent share of employment is significantly different from the national average of all areas at the 90-percent confidence level.

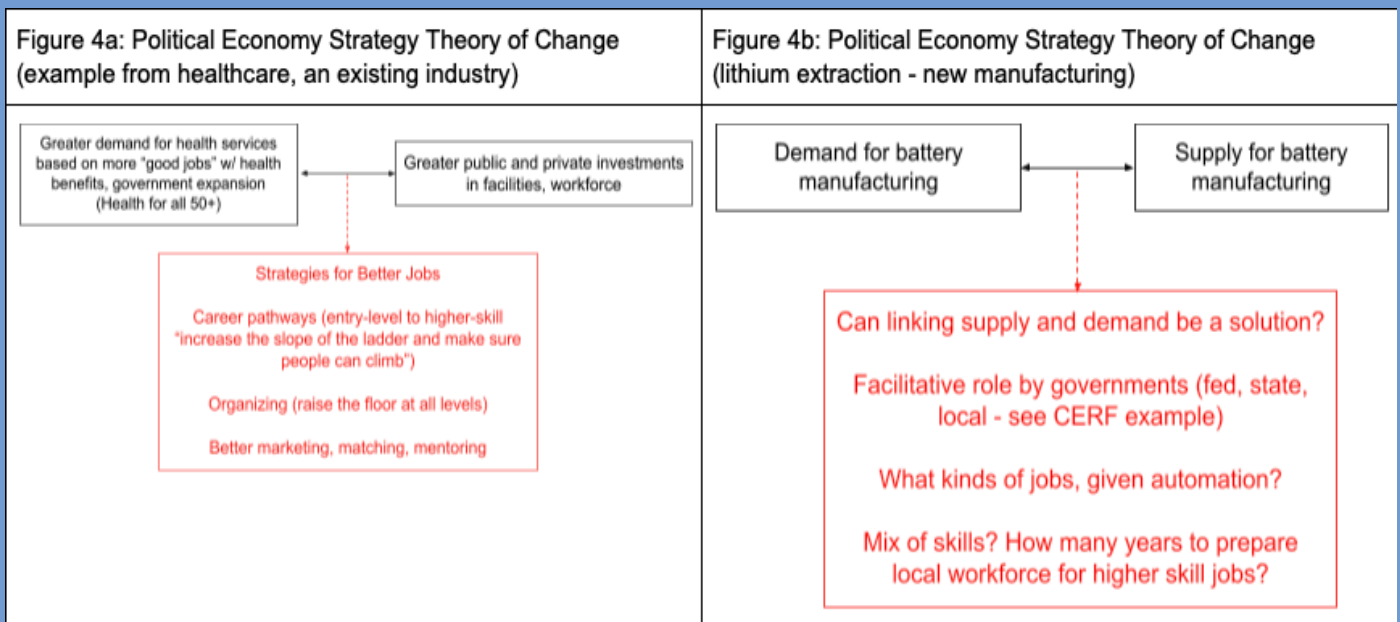
Source:

El Centro: https://www.bls.gov/regions/west/news-release/occupationalemploymentandwages_elcentro.htm

Riverside: https://www.bls.gov/regions/west/news-release/occupationalemploymentandwages_riverside.htm

San Diego: https://www.bls.gov/regions/west/news-release/occupationalemploymentandwages_sandiego.htm

FIGURE #4: TWO EXAMPLES OF CHANGE THEORIES; A: EXISTING INDUSTRY, B: NEW INDUSTRY



**TABLE #8 - NATIONAL OCCUPATIONAL PROJECTIONS, 2020-30, AND WORKER CHARACTERISTICS, 2020
(IN THOUSANDS)**

2020 National Employment Matrix title	Emp, 2020	Emp, 2030	Pct change, 2020-30	Openings, 2020-30 ann avg	Median annual wage, 2020	Education	Experience	Training
Total, all occupations	153,533.80	165,413.70	7.7	18,474.40	\$41,950	—	—	—
Construction and extraction occupations	6,971.10	7,371.20	5.7	741.4	\$48,610	—	—	—
Extraction workers	225.9	264	16.9	32.5	\$46,020	—	—	—
Excavating and loading machine and dragline operators, surface mining	41.3	43.1	4.5	5.1	\$45,150	High school diploma or equivalent	Less than 5 years	Moderate-term on-the-job training
Continuous mining machine operators	15.2	16.1	5.7	1.9	\$56,920	No formal educational credential	None	Moderate-term on-the-job training
Roof bolters, mining	2.1	1.9	-6.9	0.2	\$61,190	High school diploma or equivalent†	None	Moderate-term on-the-job training
Loading and moving machine operators, underground mining	3.5	3.3	-5.5	0.4	\$56,640	No formal educational credential	None	Short-term on-the-job training
Rock splitters, quarry	4.6	4.9	6	0.6	\$37,130	No formal educational credential	None	Short-term on-the-job training
Roustabouts, oil and gas	43.5	56.4	29.5	7.2	\$39,420	No formal educational credential	None	Moderate-term on-the-job training
Helpers--extraction workers	12.6	15.5	23	1.9	\$37,860	High school diploma or equivalent	None	Moderate-term on-the-job training
Earth drillers, except oil and gas; and explosives workers, ordnance handling experts, and blasters	23.2	25.1	8	3	\$48,510	High school diploma or equivalent	Less than 5 years	Long-term on-the-job training
Underground mining machine operators and extraction workers, all other	12.6	13.9	10.2	1.7	\$52,400	High school diploma or equivalent	None	Moderate-term on-the-job training

interests are they making decisions? And there were real questions about what the actual outcomes would be.

Second, the region's demographics likely will play a role in the realities of what is possible for the immediate future as well as the long/longer-term future. As one interviewee noted, in order to be able to capitalize on economic development investments that would require a bachelor's degree at minimum, and most likely a graduate degree, educational changes and investments need to happen now, and at the youngest grades. Meaning, kindergarten, and realistically pre-kindergarten. But that also means that investments in these students would not be realized until decades later. Yet, there are possibilities for job creation generally, and jobs with the lowest barriers to entry most likely will go to local residents. The big question is exactly how many jobs will be created.

Currently, the pockets with the highest educational levels (i.e., areas with the lowest percentages of residents who reported at most a high school degree) but also closest to the Salton Sea area are in the Coachella Valley region of Riverside County, central San Diego County, and around the county seat of Imperial County. There are large pockets of areas immediately adjacent to the Salton Sea region that have high concentrations of the population who have at most a high school education. It should be noted that many of these regions are sparsely populated, and many are not very developed in terms of infrastructure (e.g., there is a large desert region to the west of the Salton Sea in San Diego County.) This dispersion of educational attainment leads into the third point.

The realities of lithium extraction and related industries as a potential source of inclusive economic development and thus growth appear to be mixed. To the point above about educational attainment, a simple google map distance analysis shows that the areas in San Diego and Riverside counties which also correspondingly had the highest educational attainment levels were over an hour commute - and sometimes over an hour and a half commute - one-way from the southern shore of the Salton Sea. Realistically, this indicates that any economic development that would result in on-site job openings will likely draw from those who reside in El Centro, Brawley, and Imperial.

Considering the jobs analysis done from Bureau of Labor Statistics employment numbers for the El Centro metropolitan area, there are a fair amount of industries that most likely would show up if lithium extraction were to become a reality, where there are no current employment numbers listed. Granted, this could change if there is investment in lithium extraction and related industries, but it could also become a supply and demand problem in that there may be a demand for individuals with these skills, expertise, and background, but there is no comparable supply of workers

available to fill all of these positions. Which then brings the question of who will fill these jobs? Will local residents be not only eligible, but also competitive? And if local residents are not eligible for these positions or are ultimately not competitive applicants, will the region be able to attract the type of applicants needed to fill these positions? As one interviewee noted, there are real infrastructure issues that need to be addressed in order to make the region more attractive to new investments, and those need to be addressed sooner rather than later. Which also echoed input mentioned in the first point, about a pressing need for basic infrastructure (e.g., roads, internet/broadband, cellular signal, electricity), including adequate housing (and supportive infrastructure for this housing) for the region's residents.

OPTIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

To conduct truly inclusive economic and workforce development in the Salton Sea region, it is essential that community be actively and robustly engaged from the beginning. While there are efforts underway, including mechanisms like Community Benefits Agreements (CBAs), often these efforts lack long-term benefits and may not be strongly enforced. In fact, according to our interviews some community members feel that mechanisms like CBAs are helpful, but ultimately a reaction to development that they have not been included in. Community members want true partnership and input about the development proposed, and in some cases already happening in their communities.

PUBLIC PRIVATE COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS (PPCP)

A Public Private Community Partnership (PPCP) is an operational model that relies on the synergistic relationship between the three parties (public, private, and community) that can be employed to achieve sustainable and equitable development through joint development of a business/service/organization that provides mutual benefits to the parties and maximum benefit to the wider community. These types of partnerships can be used to promote local income enhancement, sustainable livelihoods and participatory development across all sectors and topics.

Important aspects that need to be in place for a successful PPCP include the creation of an enabling environment at the state and local level for promoting partnership between private sector and community for development. This can include institutional mechanisms that work to promote partnerships at the local and state level. Another important consideration is building up the capacities of the local community for effective participation in local economic development facilitated by the private sector.

The High Road Training Partnership (H RTP) in California, is an example of this type of collaboration with labor,

government, and the private sector at the table. The H RTP is focused on workforce development, and involves community via labor groups, but generally not directly. In terms of a successful PPCP in the Salton Sea region, community would need to be purposefully and actively engaged in the process directly.

THE READY TO RISE FRAMEWORK

Employing a standardized framework that could provide greater clarity on “how” to adequately engage community and accountability on the quality of this inclusion would further promote truly inclusive economic and workforce development. The Ready to RISE Framework developed by the Center for Social Innovation at the University of California Riverside has been a result of nearly two years of research and engagement that has enabled community organizations to field-test and refine various concepts and measures. This framework builds on the core notion of “shovel readiness,” and adds conceptual precision and measurability to notions of resilience, inclusion, sustainability, and equity that decision-makers often uphold as important priorities but remain vague on the details. This framework will be increasingly important as funds from legislation, tied to President Biden’s Build Back Better agenda, filter down to the state level. Any projects or initiatives that receive funding should be not merely “shovel” ready, but “Ready to RISE” utilizing metrics and standards for resilience, inclusion, sustainability, and equity. For more details about the Ready to RISE Framework, please download and read our report: [Our Salton Sea: Where Theory Meets Practice on Inclusive Economic Development](#).

The mixed-method findings from this report point to both the need and opportunity for greater inclusive economic and workforce development in the Salton Sea region and surrounding communities. The convergence of increasing investments in “Lithium Valley” and the commitments from state and federal governments to promote inclusive economic recovery, (see the Biden Administration’s Build Back Better Regional Challenge (BBBRC) and California’s Community Economic Resilience Fund (CERF), have opened a window of opportunity for the region to cement inclusive economic and workforce development as the new standard. Having greater and more robust community inclusion in decision-making means not only inviting in but also listening to, learning from, and respecting the perspectives of experts in local communities and local economies—including residents and workers who have firsthand knowledge of benefits as well as challenges, and barriers as well as solutions. Mechanisms highlighted in this report like Public Private Community Partnerships can be used to do some of this work, and frameworks like Ready to RISE can help ensure accountability and long-term success.

Importantly, greater community inclusion is not only a moral imperative, it is also sound economic policy. There is a plethora of bipartisan research that details the numerous economic benefits of creating a more inclusive economy. Everyone, including historically marginalized and excluded communities, would benefit from greater inclusion and participation. With this in mind, equity and inclusion in economic and workforce development is not merely an option, it is a necessity.

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TABLE #9 - MAY 2020 METROPOLITAN AND NONMETROPOLITAN AREA OCCUPATIONAL EMPLOYMENT AND WAGE ESTIMATES FOR EL CENTRO, CA

Occupation	Est Total	Hourly Mean	Ann. Mean	Ann 10th Pctl	Ann. 25th Pctl	Ann. Median	Ann. 75th Pctl	Ann. 90th Pctl
<u>All Occupations</u>	57,410	23.96	49,840	27,070	28,770	35,510	60,680	93,890
<u>Management Occupations</u>	2,330	49.78	103,550	50,250	69,890	99,090	125,770	164,790
<u>Architectural and Engineering Managers</u>	40	62.52	130,050	86,880	112,330	132,340	155,360	173,990
<u>Business and Financial Operations Occupations</u>	2,140	34.23	71,200	37,100	52,650	66,390	89,520	104,790
<u>Cost Estimators</u>	40	34.99	72,770	46,530	56,620	67,250	78,570	127,690
<u>Logisticians</u>	30	29.18	60,700	29,320	33,550	58,580	73,050	115,560
<u>Architecture and Engineering Occupations</u>	<u>320</u>	<u>38.66</u>	<u>80,410</u>	<u>39,150</u>	<u>60,480</u>	<u>80,390</u>	<u>100,030</u>	<u>120,430</u>
<u>Civil Engineers</u>	<u>40</u>	<u>39.69</u>	<u>82,560</u>	<u>43,070</u>	<u>49,340</u>	<u>86,100</u>	<u>100,840</u>	<u>144,590</u>
<u>Engineers, All Other</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>48.84</u>	<u>101,600</u>	<u>86,950</u>	<u>91,920</u>	<u>100,870</u>	<u>110,480</u>	<u>128,810</u>
<u>Surveying and Mapping Technicians</u>	<u>40</u>	<u>23.85</u>	<u>49,600</u>	<u>27,070</u>	<u>27,080</u>	<u>48,600</u>	<u>66,400</u>	<u>81,950</u>
<u>Calibration Technologists and Technicians and Engineering Technologists and Technicians, Except Drafters, All Other</u>	<u>60</u>	<u>35.1</u>	<u>73,000</u>	<u>30,970</u>	<u>61,360</u>	<u>74,750</u>	<u>88,820</u>	<u>102,560</u>
<u>Construction and Extraction Occupations</u>	<u>1,320</u>	<u>27.82</u>	<u>57,860</u>	<u>31,600</u>	<u>39,440</u>	<u>53,960</u>	<u>73,530</u>	<u>91,460</u>
<u>First-Line Supervisors of Construction Trades and Extraction Workers</u>	<u>120</u>	<u>33.45</u>	<u>69,580</u>	<u>41,880</u>	<u>49,630</u>	<u>62,310</u>	<u>85,960</u>	<u>117,590</u>
<u>Operating Engineers and Other Construction Equipment Operators</u>	<u>160</u>	<u>27.30</u>	<u>56,790</u>	<u>38,160</u>	<u>44,950</u>	<u>56,050</u>	<u>68,620</u>	<u>79,590</u>
<u>Electricians</u>	<u>80</u>	<u>32.92</u>	<u>68,470</u>	<u>43,880</u>	<u>49,230</u>	<u>64,170</u>	<u>88,410</u>	<u>100,960</u>
<u>Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters</u>	<u>50</u>	<u>29.34</u>	<u>61,030</u>	<u>42,160</u>	<u>48,090</u>	<u>58,850</u>	<u>74,830</u>	<u>85,120</u>
<u>Excavating and Loading Machine and Dragline Operators, Surface Mining</u>	<u>**</u>	<u>31.70</u>	<u>65,940</u>	<u>33,540</u>	<u>41,430</u>	<u>57,580</u>	<u>82,250</u>	<u>121,470</u>

Source: https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_20940.htm#47-0000

**TABLE #10 -MAY 2020 METROPOLITAN AND NONMETROPOLITAN AREA OCCUPATIONAL EMPLOYMENT AND WAGE ESTIMATES FOR
NON-METROPOLITAN NEVADA**

Occupation	Est Total	Hourly Mean	Ann. Mean	Ann 10th Pctl	Ann. 25th Pctl	Ann. Median	Ann. 75th Pctl	Ann. 90th Pctl
<u>All Occupations</u>	92,240	24.12	50,170	20,240	27,590	42,660	64,270	84,810
<u>Management Occupations</u>	4,920	48.46	100,810	43,760	61,800	87,950	121,000	171,980
<u>Architectural and Engineering Managers</u>	50	68.64	142,780	88,490	100,850	126,670	161,270	#
<u>Business and Financial Operations Occupations</u>	2,660	31.86	66,270	39,190	49,830	64,020	79,500	97,180
<u>Cost Estimators</u>	70	32.45	67,490	43,290	50,010	65,500	80,030	103,100
<u>Logisticians</u>	50	33.68	70,060	52,910	59,730	70,930	78,500	88,460
<u>Architecture and Engineering Occupations</u>	<u>1,810</u>	<u>40.03</u>	<u>83,260</u>	<u>46,490</u>	<u>61,040</u>	<u>76,810</u>	<u>97,520</u>	<u>127,300</u>
<u>Civil Engineers</u>	<u>270</u>	<u>52.03</u>	<u>108,220</u>	<u>52,740</u>	<u>73,220</u>	<u>97,190</u>	<u>128,270</u>	<u>167,130</u>
<u>Environmental Engineers</u>	<u>90</u>	<u>42.51</u>	<u>88,420</u>	<u>59,450</u>	<u>70,940</u>	<u>88,860</u>	<u>104,090</u>	<u>123,450</u>
<u>Industrial Engineers</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>43.36</u>	<u>90,180</u>	<u>66,780</u>	<u>72,570</u>	<u>82,210</u>	<u>105,960</u>	<u>131,130</u>
<u>Material Engineers</u>	<u>70</u>	<u>46.65</u>	<u>97,040</u>	<u>60,360</u>	<u>72,800</u>	<u>93,170</u>	<u>117,540</u>	<u>150,390</u>
<u>Mechanical Engineers</u>	<u>40</u>	<u>49.55</u>	<u>103,060</u>	<u>66,910</u>	<u>75,880</u>	<u>89,510</u>	<u>107,320</u>	<u>161,930</u>
<u>Mining & Geological Engineers includ- ing mining safety engineers</u>	<u>280</u>	<u>40.71</u>	<u>84,670</u>	<u>57,200</u>	<u>69,050</u>	<u>83,260</u>	<u>97,730</u>	<u>113,070</u>
<u>Engineers, All Others</u>	<u>60</u>	<u>54.02</u>	<u>112,360</u>	<u>46,590</u>	<u>84,380</u>	<u>106,450</u>	<u>153,180</u>	<u>170,650</u>
<u>Civil Engineering Technologists and Technicians</u>	<u>110</u>	<u>27.88</u>	<u>57,990</u>	<u>41,830</u>	<u>45,840</u>	<u>56,010</u>	<u>68,470</u>	<u>79,590</u>
<u>Electrical & Electronic Engineering</u>	<u>210</u>	<u>34.97</u>	<u>72,750</u>	<u>55,810</u>	<u>67,590</u>	<u>73,960</u>	<u>80,260</u>	<u>86,410</u>
<u>Environmental Engineering Technologists</u>	<u>80</u>	<u>25.03</u>	<u>52,060</u>	<u>34,900</u>	<u>40,500</u>	<u>48,640</u>	<u>63,620</u>	<u>76,800</u>

TABLE #10 -MAY 2020 METROPOLITAN AND NONMETROPOLITAN AREA OCCUPATIONAL EMPLOYMENT AND WAGE ESTIMATES FOR
NON-METROPOLITAN NEVADA - CONTIUNED

Occupation	Est Total	Hourly Mean	Ann. Mean	Ann 10th Pctl	Ann. 25th Pctl	Ann. Median	Ann. 75th Pctl	Ann. 90th Pctl
<u>Surveying and Mapping Technicians</u>	60	25.98	54,040	31,610	35,680	50,420	70,640	79,830
<u>Calibration Technologists and Technicians and Engineering Technologists and Technicians, Except Drafters, All Other</u>	70	36.66	76,260	60,870	68,560	75,570	81,770	89,410
<u>Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations</u>	1,900	33.21	69,070	33,920	49,490	64,000	80,430	103,170
<u>Geoscientists, Except Hydrologists and Geographers</u>	220	45.19	94,000	56,240	69,320	79,650	96,110	125,140
<u>Construction and Extraction Occupations</u>	12,070	27.07	56,310	34,950	42,960	53,530	67,970	80,770
<u>First-Line Supervisors of Construction Trades and Extraction Workers</u>	900	39.14	81,400	52,190	60,900	76,240	98,060	122,580
<u>Operating Engineers and Other Construction Equipment Operators</u>	<u>960</u>	<u>24.05</u>	<u>50,030</u>	<u>35,290</u>	<u>39,670</u>	<u>47,650</u>	<u>57,770</u>	<u>66,640</u>
<u>Electricians</u>	<u>630</u>	<u>30.34</u>	<u>63,100</u>	<u>42,810</u>	<u>50,360</u>	<u>61,520</u>	<u>75,190</u>	<u>86,450</u>
<u>Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters</u>	<u>210</u>	<u>30.05</u>	<u>62,500</u>	<u>44,470</u>	<u>53,330</u>	<u>59,960</u>	<u>67,830</u>	<u>82,730</u>
<u>Excavating and Loading Machine and Dragline Operators, Surface Mining</u>	<u>180</u>	<u>24.02</u>	<u>49,970</u>	<u>36,400</u>	<u>43,520</u>	<u>48,980</u>	<u>57,000</u>	<u>66,330</u>



The Center for Social Innovation provides a credible research voice that spurs civic leadership and policy innovation. Its reputation is built on the key pillars of social science, strategic policy awareness, innovation mindsets, and deep community partnerships. CSI integrates researchers, community organizations, and civic stakeholders in collaborative projects and long-term partnerships that strengthen shared values of resilience, inclusion, sustainability, and equity (RISE). Importantly, the Center seeks to shift away from a “problem” narrative to an “opportunity” narrative for marginalized communities and localities.



Alianza’s mission is to transform the socio-economic conditions of the Coachella Valley so that people in all communities have opportunities to prosper. We envision one vibrant, healthy, and thriving Coachella Valley where people have a seat at the table for decisions that affect their daily lives..

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We the authors remain solely responsible for any and all errors and omissions.