

Struggle and the City

Conflict-Informed Collaboration

The past is never dead. It's not even past.

—William Faulkner, *Requiem for a Nun* (1951)

Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will.

—Frederick Douglass

Our case studies thus far have emphasized the power of collaborative processes in which knowledge is developed, shared, and used to inform regional decision-making and governance processes. In our planning-influenced cases in chapter 4, we stressed how planners could drive long-range regional visioning that helps diverse constituencies recognize a common metropolitan destiny. In our regional-stewardship cases in chapter 5, we emphasized the important role of elite-driven leadership networks even as we acknowledged the limitations of such networks in addressing equity-related challenges. In all these cases, there were conflicting values and interests—but the level of open conflict between various interest groups was quite muted, either because mutual interests were being met (for example through MAPS in Oklahoma City or Envision Utah in Salt Lake) or because of a regional culture (i.e., social norms) that stressed conflict avoidance (“Michigan nice” or the “Charlotte Way”).

What happens in cases where there is open conflict? Does this mean that positive regional developments, either in terms of processes or outcomes, are not possible? One hopes that that is not the case, particularly since equity issues are often set aside as afterthoughts by more powerful and traditional regional actors, so community-based advocacy is key to putting social issues squarely on the metropolitan agenda (Bollens 2003; Lester and Reckhow 2013). How does conflict and advocacy fit into collaborative knowledge sharing—and when does it lead to inclusion becoming firmly rooted in the regional decision-making fabric?

In this chapter, we examine three regions where conflict and tension are a central part of the metropolitan dynamic: Greensboro, North Carolina; Fresno, California; and San Antonio, Texas. Two of the cases offer cautionary tales: both Greensboro and Fresno suffered poor economic performance and worsening social equity conditions throughout the 1980–2010 period. San Antonio, on the other hand, has had a somewhat remarkable record of improvements in employment, income levels, and income distribution. And we say remarkable because while there are some important differences, all three cities started from somewhat similar political economies in the early 1970s: an Anglo elite determined to check the power of growing communities of color (predominantly Latino in the cases of Fresno and San Antonio, and predominantly African American in Greensboro); simmering social-movement organizations that were getting primed to facilitate that power shift; and an economy that needed to be reorganized to generate progress.

In Greensboro, that economic shift meant diversifying from textiles, tobacco, and furniture; in Fresno, it meant diversifying away from agriculture; and in San Antonio, it meant adjusting to a sizeable military cutback. In all three places, however, what was fundamentally at stake was the need to forge a development model *not* based on cheap labor—and getting there necessitated empowering those once left behind to become part of the economy still to be born. In each case, the underlying economic struggle also meant a racial rebalancing of power. Greensboro, home to the famous lunch-counter sit-ins of the 1960s, was also a hotbed of the Black Power movement and the scene of the 1979 murder of five activists by Ku Klux Klan and Nazi Party members in what came to be known as the Greensboro Massacre. Conflict was also high in Fresno—where the United Farm Workers led national campaigns targeting Fresno-area employers—and in San Antonio, where a vibrant Alinsky-style organizing federation was targeting area banks and fighting for enhanced political representation for low-income Latino and African American residents.

Yet a visit to these regions today suggests very different trajectories of conflict and collaboration. Greensboro's experience of continued racial discord is well captured by CNN's 2011 headline in a special feature on Defining America: "After 50 years of racial strife: Why is Greensboro still so tense?" (Patterson 2011). Here is just one iconic example of the continued challenges. In the summer of 2013, there was widespread media coverage of the arrest of eleven young Black men from low-income neighborhoods near downtown—a downtown that has begun to see some signs of revitalization because of an influx of

predominantly white young professionals. The incident pushed uncomfortable and simmering issues of race and class onto the front pages, amid conflicts over what downtown will look like and who will be welcome there (Killian 2013).

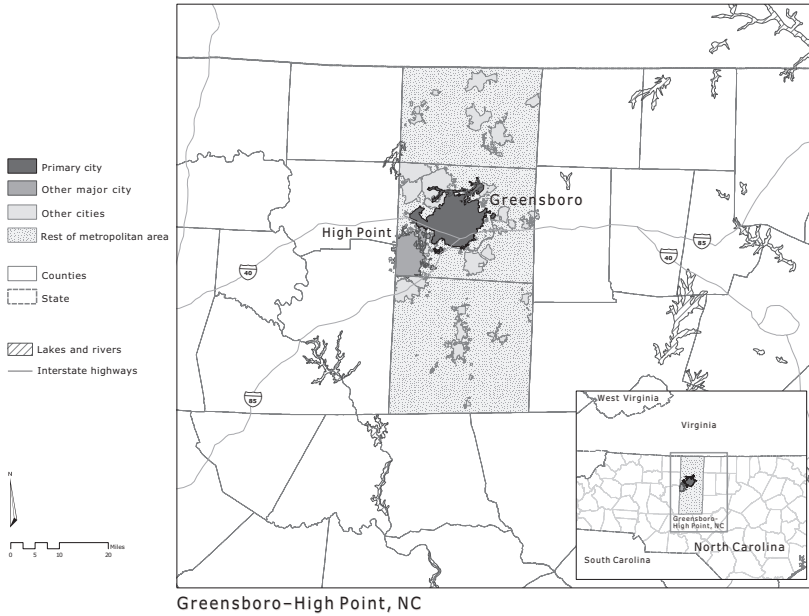
Similarly, in Fresno, environmental justice advocates in the region have all but given up on collaborative policy solutions to addressing the region's worst-in-the-nation air pollution, seeing adversarial lawsuits as the only meaningful pathway forward. Meanwhile, the Chamber of Commerce and local Building Industry Association leaders were strong and vocal opponents of a modest but important effort in 2012 to develop a General Plan that would attempt to revitalize downtown, promote denser development, and halt entrenched development patterns of sprawl that have contributed to inequality in the region.

But in San Antonio, the chatter is all about how well different sectors collaborate (enough to be awarded a Promise Neighborhood, a Choice Neighborhood, a Promise Zone, and a Sustainable Communities Initiative grant from the federal government). In 2012, a majority of residents voted to pass a sales-tax increase that will steer additional resources to pre-K education for the least advantaged kids—with the support not only of a progressive mayor and community groups but also the Chamber of Commerce.

Why did these regions that started with similar political economies (at least in the 1970s) end up so different? Why have key stakeholders in San Antonio been able to find ways to collaborate in the midst of conflict over competing interests and values, while in Greensboro and Fresno, the inability of stakeholders to turn conflict into a productive force has resulted in a sense of deeply rooted division and discouragement? In what follows, we review the experience of each region since the 1970s, focusing on the relationship of conflict, collaboration, and knowledge generation to regional development patterns. While (as usual) structural factors play a role in explaining the different outcomes, we stress how key differences in organizing, the presence (or lack) of key transformational leaders, and certain features of each region's civic life help us understand why Greensboro and Fresno have remained fragmented and conflicted while San Antonio has seemingly embraced collaboration in the midst of diversity.

GREENSBORO

The Greensboro region is located in the heart of North Carolina's Piedmont Triad, and is known most prominently for its manufacturing



MAP 6.1. Greensboro Region.

legacy and its civil rights struggles.¹ Although the formerly booming textile and furniture industries and the lunch-counter sit-in movement are still a source of pride for many in the region, deindustrialization and a history of social distrust and disconnection have contributed to poor performance on both growth and equity.

Economically, the region has struggled to attract or grow significant new industries in the face of a manufacturing decline that started in the 1970s. As of 1990, Greensboro still had nearly a quarter of its workforce in manufacturing, but the loss of these relatively well-paying jobs began to accelerate in the subsequent two decades, and the figure fell to 13 percent by 2010. There has been some growth in new middle- and higher-wage industries, but there has also been a steady and larger growth in low-wage service-sector industries. Overall employment in the region actually declined over the decade of the 2000s, and job growth lagged both the South and US averages for the previous two decades as well. In the 2000s, after two decades of wage growth, average earnings per job declined in real terms. Since 1990 the region has had increasing poverty, and overall income inequality has risen more, compared to either Southern or all US metros.

Although exogenous factors, such as the global and national downshifts in manufacturing, were acutely felt in the region, Greensboro was certainly not alone in facing these trends. More importantly, external shocks can, as in the case of Oklahoma City, serve to stir civic leadership into action rather than simply distress. But in Greensboro, racial tensions and inequality have impeded the ability of people and institutions in the region to come together to address regional challenges. While there have been flashpoints of open conflict, the tensions have mostly simmered just below the surface. Business leadership in the region has been relatively weak—at least when compared with the strong regional stewardship networks in places like Charlotte and Grand Rapids—and social-equity advocates have remained mostly fragmented or marginalized. The result is a disconnected region with a contested sense even of its own history.

Big Challenges, Tepid Responses

Greensboro's history is strongly rooted in its role as one of the largest textile manufacturing centers in the country. By the early 1830s, seventy-five mills were in operation and cotton material was being exported to neighboring counties and states.² Shortly after, furniture manufacturing would take root in neighboring High Point and the areas westward.³ Both remained central to the local economy and employment for over a century, until the late 1990s, when the US economy shed much of its textile and apparel employment following the implementation of NAFTA (Scott 2003). According to many of our interviewees, the region has been slow to envision a broad, post-industrial future. Weak inter-regional collaboration, competition between cities, and changing leadership and organizational structures have hindered the process.

The ups and downs—and ups—of companies like Cone Denim, the country's oldest operating denim mill, shed light on the regional shifts in textile manufacturing and its role in the region's economic consciousness.⁴ Founded in 1891, the company produces and supplies denim fabric to jeans manufacturers across the United States. In the 1970s, Cone was a regional economic staple, employing 2,800 loom operators, seamstresses, and patternmakers. In the ensuing decades, the company fell into decline, eventually filing for bankruptcy in 2003, as loom technology changed and production shifted to lower-wage countries. Demand has surged, however, for expensive denim, in particular for old-school, weathered-look fabrics, rejuvenating Cone's potential market.

In 2004, the company was purchased and revived by billionaire Wilbur Ross, known for his expertise in leveraged buyouts and restructuring failed companies. Today, Cone operates in a scaled-back, high-end market, producing fabric for high-end jeans using old Draper looms, but employing only 300 workers locally at its White Oak factory, a fraction of its former workforce (Burritt 2012).

Cone Denim's experience is just one example of the many challenges facing a broader business community made up of struggling manufacturing firms with few dynamic firms to replace them. For example, in 2004, cities in the region (and the state) competed heavily for Dell, a computer manufacturer. After securing over \$300 million in subsidies, Dell eventually landed in nearby Winston-Salem, a city outside the official Greensboro metropolitan area but in the broader Piedmont Triad. The politicians who argued for the subsidies estimated that Dell would employ 1,500 people directly and generate another 500 related jobs, translating to a \$24.5 billion economic impact over twenty years. But less than five years after arriving, Dell announced that it was shuttering the plant and laying off the 905 workers employed there (Dalesio 2009). Meanwhile, intra-regional competition, rather than cooperation, has been the practice. Two years after the initial Dell deal, the city of High Point "surprised even cynical observers" by granting incentives to La-Z-Boy to move its regional headquarters from just five miles away, in Greensboro, to within High Point city limits (Brod 2007). Our interviewees described this kind of competition as more typical than inter-regional collaboration.

Interviewees struggled to think of many examples of elite collaboration, beyond a limited number of business and governmental partnerships. Perhaps the most prominent example is the Greensboro Partnership, a multipronged entity providing business, economic, and community development in Greensboro through its member organizations: the Greensboro Economic Development Alliance (GEDA), Action Greensboro, Entrepreneur Connection, and the Greensboro Chamber of Commerce. Formed in 2005—relatively recently compared with similar groups in other regions—the Greensboro Partnership works on quality of life ("livability issues") and economic development, with a focus on downtown redevelopment. Spearheaded by local philanthropy and the public sector, the partnership has helped align the activities and plans of the GEDA and the Chamber of Commerce—and often works in tandem with the local workforce investment board. The GEDA has recently released an economic development strategy in the form of

cluster analysis, which is focused on high-growth, well-paying sectors, such as aviation, the supply chain/logistics industry, the life sciences, and innovative manufacturing.⁵

The partnership has helped elevate the issues of education and training. This is critical since there are several hurdles in the way of realizing a more vibrant regional economy, including skills gaps in older workforces, low retention of recent college graduates, low rates of high school graduation, and poor preparation of children to succeed in school. Action Greensboro, the community development arm of the partnership, has played a role in education policy and program development, especially in the development of Achieve Guilford, a K-12 education advocacy collaborative. The group has come together to create a common educational agenda, which stresses a “cradle to career” approach that lifts up key programs and milestones needed at each educational level.⁶ Action Greensboro is also involved in Opportunity Greensboro (<http://opportunitygreensboro.com>), a higher-education initiative seeking to deepen the connection between businesses and local colleges and universities and leverage the skills, resources, and talents of their 47,000 students to attract and grow industry.

Although the partnership is seeking to align the city’s economic and community development goals, the process of building regional collaboration and transforming the economy is slow, and has come much later than in many other metropolitan regions—in the words of one economic development staffer, it’s about a decade too late. Community groups are not often at the table, and advocacy groups often describe the relationship with business as antagonistic. Funded largely by the city, as of 2014, it wasn’t even clear that the Greensboro Partnership would continue, given some of the continuing frustration about limited impact and the retirement of key executives (Carlock 2014b, 2014a).

Contesting the Past, Distrusting the Present

Greensboro is well known as a central site in the civil rights struggle. In 1960, four North Carolina A&T students asked for coffee at the Woolworth’s whites-only lunch counter and gave birth to the sit-in movement in America. While these actions did result in the desegregation of department-store eateries, by 1968, civil rights organizers in Greensboro were more concerned about issues of job and educational discrimination, political underrepresentation, and poor housing, with the Black Power movement gaining adherents as issues continued to simmer.

The Greensboro Association of Poor People was founded in 1968. Relying more on direct action and confrontation, it would become one of the largest sources of community activism in the city through the mid-1970s.⁷ During this time, some attempts at interracial cooperation and discussion in Greensboro were successful, including peaceful integration of the school system in 1971, the Chamber of Commerce's Community Unity Division sponsoring weekly discussion meetings on racial conciliation between 1966 and 1976, and the city's decision in the late 1970s to no longer pursue urban renewal because of its disparate impact on African Americans.⁸

As integration was taking root, however, the Greensboro Massacre shook the community to its core—and has remained an open wound. The massacre happened at a march against the Ku Klux Klan that was held on November 3, 1979. While the march was organized by the Communist Workers Party (CWP), long-time civil rights activist, founder of the Greensboro Association of Poor People, and CWP member Nelson Johnson was one of the key organizers, as the march was part of broader efforts to link together issues of race and poverty. During the demonstration, Ku Klux Klan and Nazi Party members, who had organized a counter-demonstration, opened fire and killed five protestors. The role of the police in this episode was controversial, since they were known to have anti-CWP sentiment and had only a light presence at the beginning of the march, despite knowing about the potential for violence to erupt. Though 14 KKK members were arrested for murder, a jury trial returned a not-guilty verdict in all cases (Magarrell and Wesley 2010; Waller 2002).⁹

More than two decades later, in an effort to help the region move beyond this ugly history, civil rights advocates in the region pushed for a landmark Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), intended to educate and heal the community while addressing the questions and confusion that remained surrounding the event and the legal proceedings that followed. The process was funded by the Andrus Family Foundation, and a grant was awarded to the Beloved Community Center and the Greensboro Justice Center, which assembled the commission. The process, modeled after the post-apartheid TRC process in South Africa, took two years between 2004 and 2006 examining the context, causes, sequence, and consequences of the event.

Unlike the TRC process in South Africa, however, the commission was not supported by government. Greensboro's City Council voted 6–3 against endorsing the work, with the mayor at the time, Jim Melvin,

also rejecting the need for a commission; the three dissenting votes were cast by African American council members. The TRC successfully completed its work and released a final report in 2006, but assessments of the ultimate impact of the process are quite mixed. Of course, original expectations of the process spanned a full spectrum, from supporters hoping that “peace and harmony should blossom in Greensboro, while at the other end of the spectrum critics foresaw greater division and dissension” (Magarrell and Wesley 2010, 2017). A key goal of the TRC, as in the South African process it was modeled after, was to humanize the “other,” and analysts have argued that the process went some significant way toward achieving this goal in terms of decreasing polarization in competing narratives of the events (Cunningham, Nugent, and Slodden 2010; Inwood 2012; Magarrell and Wesley 2010). Yet reactions to the TRC process shed light on the tensions that remain in the community around race and that make it difficult to come to a shared understanding of a painful past.

Overall, it seems that two key elements of regional cooperation and collaboration—trust and social capital—are in short supply in the region (Brod 2007). When asked about the culture of collaboration in Greensboro, interviewees were quick to point to high levels of distrust, and the region performs poorly on measures of social capital. Two separate Social Capital Community Benchmark Surveys were conducted by Robert Putnam of the Saguaro Institute at Harvard, one in 2000 and a follow-up study in 2006. The survey found that although residents have increasingly racially diverse personal social circles, they are not particularly trusting of others once they move beyond their immediate social circles. Also, when compared with the national sample, Greensboro residents were less trusting, and levels of trust actually declined between 2000 and 2006. And race is an important part of the story. While Blacks in the region feel strongly about what is past but not passed, whites we interviewed sometimes wondered aloud why people in the region couldn’t just “get over it.”

A Fragmented Future?

There are some hopeful signs that collaborative solutions to the region’s challenges may be gaining more traction than in the past. The Greensboro Partnership has made some progress in developing a coordinated regional approach since its founding in 2005, and our interviewees also spoke with pride about the Downtown Greenway project

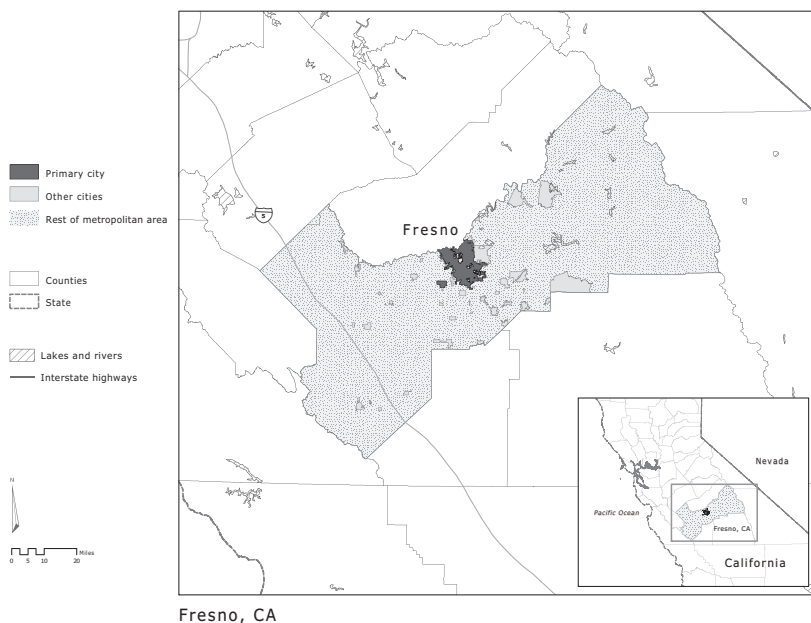
(<http://downtowngreenway.org>), a public-private partnership between Action Greensboro and the City of Greensboro that includes a strong public process and a wide range of partners across multiple sectors, from the business community, to arts, nonprofits, and government. Once complete, the Downtown Greenway Project will be a four-mile pedestrian and bike trail encircling downtown Greensboro, connecting wealthier, Westside neighborhoods with poorer, Eastside areas in need of economic revitalization.

But despite some positive signs in recent years, Greensboro is still quite striking in its low level of collaboration across the region. It is not just that the regional epistemic community is not particularly diverse; it's that there is no such community. Some of the reasons for this are conditions that exist in many other regions: interjurisdictional economic competition, fragmented government structures, and unequal spatial distribution of poverty and economic opportunity. In Greensboro, however, these all-too-typical divides seem to be underpinned by significant racial tensions that often remain just below the surface of public discourse but are never far away.

It's hard to meet an uncertain future when the region's very history is so contested and divisive. In the context of fragmented experiences and without a common identity—are we a sleepy southern town about to stage a downtown renaissance, or a pit of racial tension that has exploded in sit-ins, a Black Power movement, and an infamous massacre?—efforts at building collaborative efforts throughout the region have been episodic and weak at best. Partly as a result, the region continues to struggle to effectively address the substantial economic challenges of the past thirty years, including persistent poverty and inequality.

FRESNO

Despite Fresno being the country's most fruitful region—literally, it is the most agriculturally productive county in the United States—it has become nationally known for its high levels of poverty and unemployment.¹⁰ Perhaps the most striking evidence of that came when the Brookings Institution issued a post-Hurricane Katrina study trying to explain the seemingly disparate impacts by race of the storm and its aftermath. In a comparison of concentrated poverty—or the proportion of all poor people in a city who live in extreme-poverty neighborhoods—in the largest fifty cities in the United States, New Orleans was naturally quite high on the list, hitting number two. In first place: Fresno (Berube and Katz 2005, 10).



MAP 6.2. Fresno Region.

Our own data analysis confirms Fresno's reputation. While the western United States (as designated by the US Census) experienced a 45-percent increase in poverty between 1980 and 2010—about twelve percentage points more than the nation as a whole—Fresno's rate nearly doubled, from about 14 to 27 percent of residents living below the poverty level. Not surprisingly, the income gap between the 20th percentile of earners and the 80th percentile increased by nearly one-fifth during the same period. Economic growth indicators are just as dismal. While both jobs and earnings did rise, these increases happened at much lower rates in Fresno than in most US regions. The number of jobs in the West increased 73 percent between 1980 and 2010, but Fresno had less than 55-percent employment growth during that time. Similarly, while other western regions experienced a 20-percent increase in earnings per job, Fresno's workers only saw a 10-percent increase.

Despite the hardships, the region's population has grown, largely due to low-cost housing. Between 1980 and 2010, Fresno County's population nearly doubled (81 percent), bringing it to nearly a million. With this growth have come major demographic shifts. In 1980, non-Hispanic whites made up 62 percent of the region, but by 2010, they made

up only one-third. Since 2000, Fresno's Latino population has grown by a third, the Asian and Pacific Islander population by nearly 40 percent, and the Black population by 12 percent; in contrast, during the same period, the region's non-Hispanic white population fell by 4 percent. By 2040, people of color will make up 75 percent of the region's total population.

It is these communities of color, however, who have suffered the most from the region's economic stagnation and skyrocketing inequality. Fresno's disparities are not just between rich and poor but between whites and people of color, too. As of 2010, the median income for Black households was only 44 percent of the median income for white households. Similarly, the median income for Latino households was only 58 percent of white households, and the median income of Asian and Pacific Islander households was 88 percent of white households, a striking finding given that Asian and Pacific Islander household income often tops that of non-Hispanic whites.

Why has Fresno—especially in its communities of color—fared so poorly over the last three decades? Many of those we interviewed point to lack of diversity in the local economy and few opportunities to move up the ladder. Others point to the deeply entrenched laissez-faire politics and policies that have allowed unfettered sprawl and hence a sharp physical separation between the rich and the poor, and between whites and people of color. Others note that economic polarization and a lack of cohesion among Fresno's various neighborhoods has left little room for marginalized communities to influence decision-making, which remains in the hands of the few business elite working with elected officials, often behind closed doors. Taken together, these regional dynamics—a highly polarized economy and region, a top-heavy political power structure perpetuating a hands-off governance approach, and a lack of collaboration (or even interaction) among diverse communities—have led to the dismal conditions we see in Fresno today.

Fresno's "Poverty-Industrial Complex"

One community organizer described Fresno as "DOA," the medical term for a patient who is found to be already clinically dead upon the arrival of professional medical assistance. But in this context, the acronym has a second—and more diagnostic—meaning. The reason for Fresno's depressed social and economic conditions, the organizer suggested, has everything to do with the overwhelming political power of

business elites in Development, Oil, and Agriculture. The argument, according to activists, is that these particular (and powerful) constituencies benefit from the current arrangements and so stand in the way of reworking the economy to better serve a broad range of interests.

To understand the dynamics between these business elites and everyone else, it is important to understand how widespread and truly dominant these three industries are in Fresno's regional economy. First, development. Over the last three decades, Fresno experienced a massive real estate boom as many people priced out of California's coastal markets came to the area in search of low-cost housing. The Building Industry Association of Fresno and Madera Counties—representing builders, developers, subcontractors, and other companies related to the building industry in the two adjacent counties and referred to locally as BIA—is one of the most powerful lobbies in the region, if not *the* most powerful. For example, until recently, it was the norm for the BIA and a few of the largest developers to work directly with government staff and elected officials, behind closed doors, on local land-use planning that cleared the way for residential development on land originally zoned for agriculture. This practice resulted in unbridled suburban sprawl and the abandonment of Fresno's urban core (Arax 2009; Zuk 2013).

Second, the oil industry. Oil was first discovered in the San Joaquin Valley in the late 1800s, and more than a century later, the region still produces a vast amount. In the nearby Kern County part of the Valley, there are nearly 42,000 active wells, providing nearly 75 percent of the oil produced in California. In 2009, Fresno County had the third-highest number of active wells of any county (Los Angeles was second), with another 2,000 active wells. Fresno County is home of the Coalinga Oil Field, which was discovered in 1890 and is the eight-largest in the state in terms of cumulative production since discovery (Miller 2010).

The elephant in the room (and the A in DOA) is agriculture. As noted earlier, Fresno is the most agriculturally productive county in the nation. In 2011, Fresno's total agricultural sales were \$6.9 billion, with a major focus in grapes, almonds, tomatoes, milk, and livestock. Moreover, Fresno is located at the center of one of the world's most productive agricultural hubs: the San Joaquin Valley, which has an annual gross value of more than \$25 billion in agricultural production (US Environmental Protection Agency 2013). The Southern San Joaquin Valley alone—consisting of Fresno, Tulare, Kings, and Kern Counties—accounted for over 40 percent of California's total agricultural production of \$43.5 billion in 2011 (California Department of Food and

Agriculture 2012), up from about a quarter in the 1970s (Bardacke 2012). Much of the production occurs on large-scale industrial agriculture enterprises. Land monopoly has characterized the San Joaquin Valley since the late 1800s (Pisani 1991). The nearly 1000-square-mile Westlands Water District in the southwest part of the valley has recently been described as “dominated by a few pioneer dynastic families” (Carter 2009, 6).

Though agricultural interests are rarely directly represented in the city of Fresno’s politics, they fundamentally shape social and political dynamics in the region. Agriculture brings in large amounts of revenue, and directly provides 11 percent of the county’s jobs—yet the industry predominantly provides only seasonal employment with sub-poverty wages. In 2008, for example, the western valley’s 20th Congressional District had the distinction of being the poorest district in the country (Carter 2009, 7).¹¹ Though labor laws exist to protect the workers, many sources claim that these rules are largely ignored. Farm workers receive sub-minimum wages and experience dangerous working conditions in which they are expected to work long days in some of the country’s hottest temperatures. Moreover, it is estimated that about half the agricultural workforce in California’s Central Valley—of which the San Joaquin Valley is a part—are undocumented, and thus are subject to harsh levels of exploitation with no protections (National Public Radio 2002; Pastor and Marcelli 2013).

To advance a more broad-based economy, the city of Fresno and the surrounding region need to diversify and support industry clusters that pay higher wages. While there have been some sector initiatives along these lines, focusing on logistics, water technology and related manufacturing technologies, energy, and jobs related to health care, the resulting job growth has been modest at best (Chapple 2005; Montana and Nenide 2008). While this may be partly due to structural factors, such as low levels of education and inadequate systems of workforce development, some equity advocates suggest that the main economic actors in the region are so interested in cheap land (development), loose regulations (oil), and cheap labor (agriculture) that there is scant leadership for a “high road” strategy. The result is a “poverty–industrial complex”—inequity is baked right in to economic growth.

Moreover, while in Grand Rapids, Charlotte, and Oklahoma City private-sector interests set the regional agenda but seem to keep some focus on improving conditions for all, in Fresno the industrial elites seem less interested in addressing community well-being in a way that

would potentially erode what they see as their competitive advantages. There are some exceptions to this generalization. The Fresno Business Council, an organization started by a few business leaders concerned about high levels of crime and blight in the early 1990s, does research on community indicators and promotes initiatives to spur community transformation through stewardship, for example efforts around school reform. Generally, however, the traditionally marginalized groups remain marginalized from most planning processes, and there is little to no room for systematic pushback against the DOA agenda.

The overall political mix has been reinforced by sprawl, a residential pattern made possible by cheap land and pushed into being by developer interests. For example, in the 1974 update to the city of Fresno's General Plan, a General Plan Citizens Committee was formed to meet the community-participation requirement for continued funding for redevelopment from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development. After due deliberation, it recommended densification strategies like urban infill to benefit the existing residents in downtown and South Fresno. In response, the Planning Commission voted to adopt a developer-supported alternative plan, channeling growth to sparsely populated North Fresno (Zuk 2013). This decision helped institutionalize sprawl as the city's planning strategy moving forward.

Corruption also played a role in accelerating northward growth over the last three decades. In the 1980s and 1990s, bribery and fraud to initiate and streamline rezoning processes that converted agricultural land to residential became widespread. In the early 1990s, a local real estate developer publicly revealed that a city councilmember in Clovis—an affluent white suburb in northeast Fresno County, and a direct byproduct of unbridled northward sprawl—had requested a campaign contribution in exchange for a rezoning permit. During a six-and-a-half-year investigation that began in 1994, the FBI uncovered a rampant practice of developers ducking local zoning requirements and environmental regulations by buying off politicians. It was so deeply entrenched as a normal business practice that one Department of Justice official speculated that it had been occurring over “decades, if not generations” (Arax 1995). In the end, Operation REZONE—named after the personalized license plate of a Fresno-based land-use consultant long suspected of working in cahoots with politicians and developers—resulted in the conviction of sixteen city council members, developers, and lobbyists in both Fresno and Clovis for “fraud, racketeering, extortion, money laundering, mail fraud and income tax violations” (Zuk 2013, 53).

Explosive residential development may have been facilitated by corruption, but it was made possible by booming population growth starting in the mid-1970s. Between 1980 and 2010, Fresno County's population nearly doubled, from a little less than 515,000 to over 930,000. As noted earlier, this was accompanied by dramatic demographic changes, including a sharp increase in the share of Latinos and Asians (including the arrival of Hmong refugees in the 1980s). With demographics changing and suburbs developing, Fresno's white residents flocked to North Fresno—and a single east-west street, Shaw Avenue, is now widely recognized as the dividing line between the affluent white residents in the north and low-income communities of color in the south. The concentration of poverty in South Fresno (part of which is physically cut off from the rest of the city by Highway 99) hinders wealth building and career advancement because of low property values and limited employment opportunities (Cytron 2009; Kneebone, Nadeau, and Berube 2011).

One interviewee described the situation as a “tale of two cities,” in which the city is so segregated that rich Fresnoans do not even see the poor ones, despite the region's extremely high poverty rate (George 2013). And it's not just the city but the region. Fresno's northeastern suburb of Clovis is majority-white, with a median household income of \$63,983, while Huron City, in the heart of the agricultural lands to the southwest of town, is 98.5 percent Latino, with a median household income of only \$21,041 and a 46-percent poverty rate.¹² The divide between rich and poor, white and non-white, north and south, exacerbates the downward spiral of economic polarization and stagnation the region has been experiencing for decades. The farther apart people grow, the less likely they are to see the value of investing in one another's communities—and the more likely it is that conflict will not help produce new understandings, only new tensions.

Fighting for Change

The entrenched poverty and striking inequality in Fresno have not gone unchallenged. Indeed, some of the most important and precedent-setting activism and organizing for workers' rights in the country has occurred in the Fresno region. The early 1970s, for example, saw a growing Chicano social movement, originally rooted in the organizing efforts of the Community Service Organization (CSO) and the subsequent labor organizing of a well-known CSO-trained organizer, Cesar Chavez. The

CSO was founded in 1947 in Los Angeles, and its first paid organizer was Fred Ross, West Coast director of the Industrial Areas Foundation, founded by Saul Alinsky. By 1954, Fresno had a CSO chapter, and Fred Ross, along with Gene Laury, was organizing in the Mexican community on Fresno's west side. Their work focused on increasing civic engagement through voter registration and citizenship classes.

The CSO played a critical role in shaping the evolution of the United Farm Workers (UFW) union as well. Cesar Chavez spent ten years organizing for the CSO, starting in 1952 and becoming executive director in 1959, before founding the National Farm Workers Association (NFWA), which eventually evolved into the UFW. In the spring of 1962, Chavez set up in Delano, which is about seventy-five miles south of Fresno, and in September of that year, the first convention of what was then called simply the Farm Workers Association was held in Fresno (Bardacke 2012; Ganz 2009). While much of the organizing was in the surrounding smaller farmworker towns, Fresno was an important regional hub and frequent site of NFWA and UFW meetings.

The year 1973 was a particularly important turning point in the UFW's history, and Fresno was at the center of the struggle. With a series of contracts expiring, and growers, including thirty fruit orchards outside Fresno, seeking to not renew contracts with the UFW, the union seemed to be facing a coordinated challenge to its strength. Its response was to try to make the Central Valley's agricultural economy ungovernable and to lay the ground for another boycott. Strikes that summer began on July 4th, and as the days wore on, strikers started turning to civil disobedience—on July 19th and 20th, more than 400 people were arrested each day. On August 3rd, at a rally in a Fresno city park, Chavez declared that the UFW would make Fresno another Selma, Alabama (or maybe Greensboro, North Carolina?) and urged allies across the country to come to Fresno and take part in mass arrests. Clergy across the state and country responded, in what Father Eugene Boyle of San Francisco later called “the largest group of religious persons ever arrested and jailed in this country” (Bardacke 2012, kindle location 9779). Polarization, albeit for a good cause, was the order of the day.

Ultimately, the strike failed, but its legacy lingered. The region has continued to experience significant organizing around immigrants' rights and other critical issues, including through a range of faith-based initiatives affiliated with PICO California.¹³ In recent decades, however, the environment has become an area of significant concern and organizing. Many factors contribute to the environmental problems:

agriculture-linked industrial processes, automobiles traversing the valley between Northern and Southern California, heavy-duty diesel-fueled trucks transporting agricultural products out of the region, pesticides entering the air after use, and emissions from oil and gas fields. The resulting toxic soup has substantial health and welfare impacts (Alexeeff et al. 2012; Huang and London 2012; London, Huang, and Zagofsky 2011; Sadd et al. 2011). Indeed, in a statewide analysis of environmental burden and vulnerabilities conducted in 2013 by the California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment, three of the state's five worst zip codes were in Fresno.

A range of environmental justice groups has emerged over the past two decades to try to change these dynamics. In 2004, more than seventy organizations throughout the broader region came together to form the Central Valley Air Quality Coalition (www.calcleanair.org). Despite this level of coordination, as well as extensive advocacy and litigation, the San Joaquin Air Pollution Control District and related agencies have achieved limited success in improving air quality in the region. Activists in the region attribute this to the heavy influence that dominant industrial interests have on the Air Pollution Control District's board, which is an appointed body and has historically been resistant to popular pressure.

In our interviews, environmental justice activists said that, in the face of this intransigence, their most promising path forward at this point is through adversarial lawsuits rather than collaborative policy development. This is hardly the happy stuff of a diverse and dynamic epistemic community in which clearly documented data about a problem—pollution—is shared and new solutions are collaboratively generated. Instead, tension begets tension, poverty begets poverty, and fighting for change becomes what seems to be a losing battle against contemporary political, economic, and residential landscapes characterized by polarization and inequality.

Hope Springs Eternal—but Dimly

When one considers the polarization of the regional economy, the concentration of political power in the hands of a few elites, and the lack of collaboration (or even interaction) among diverse communities, it is perhaps not surprising that traditionally disadvantaged communities have little political representation or voice in decision-making processes in Fresno. Despite the region's being 50 percent Latino and only 33 percent white in 2010, the city of Fresno has never elected a person

of color as mayor. While district elections have helped ensure that both Latinos and Asians have some representation on the City Council, the city has a strong-mayor structure, and local politics are still largely driven by a relatively well-entrenched white elite and a traditionally conservative Chamber of Commerce. As a result, the region's clear problems of sprawl, segregation, and growing inequality have often been largely absent from regional conversations.

However, the tide may be turning in Fresno. In 2012, efforts that had coalesced around sustainable growth helped pushed the city to deviate from business as usual and develop a General Plan that prioritized urban infill over suburban sprawl. Called Alternative A, the plan envisioned concentrating new developments along existing major corridors and in a series of mixed-use centers surrounded by higher-density housing, while also prioritizing revitalization of the still dilapidated downtown core. Many (at least partially) credit this challenge to the region's long-standing and deeply entrenched pattern of unmitigated sprawl to the fact that South Fresno—the poorest part of town—was chosen to be a part of the California Endowment's Building Healthy Communities initiative, a ten-year place-based community development strategy in fourteen sites across the state.

Launched in 2010, the initiative seeks to build local capacity to advocate for healthier communities, with part of this strategy involving the redistribution of power through organizing communities and building their capacities to engage in decision-making (Zuk 2013). Residents came together with local agencies, community-based organizations, faith-based groups, and other leaders to suggest that one way to address health disparities was to invest in urban redevelopment rather than sprawl. These groups worked closely with staff at the city's Planning and Development Department and Downtown and Community Revitalization Department to develop expertise and share knowledge—the cornerstone of building epistemic communities—primarily through mapping demographic data and land-use scenarios to see how their city was changing and how they could direct that growth.

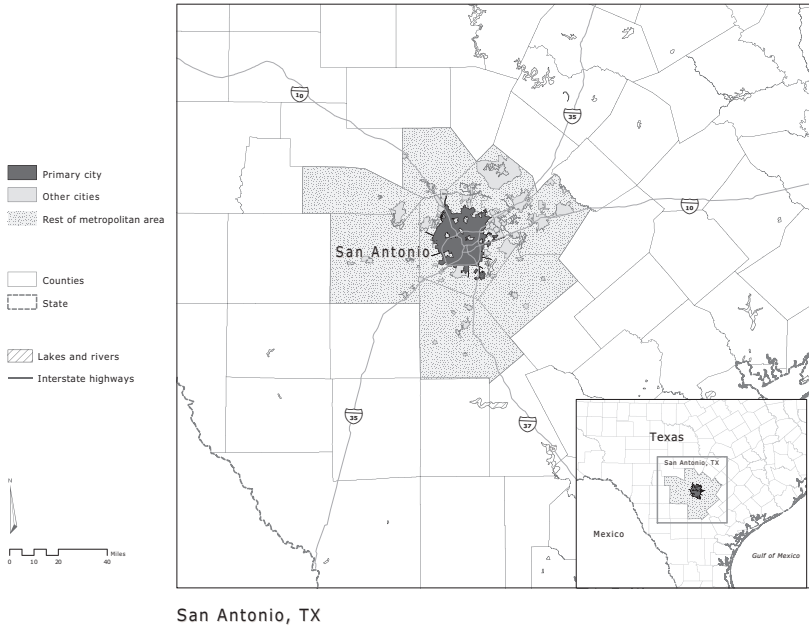
In the nearly two years of organizing and community participation leading up to the final vote on the city's General Plan, the majority of Building Healthy Communities funding was linked in one way or another to pushing for Alternative A—and it paid off. At the April 5, 2012, meeting for the final consideration of the different scenarios in the General Plan, the city council chambers were filled beyond capacity, with more than 350 people. A diverse group of more than 80 speakers—including

Latino children, Hmong grandmothers, neighborhood activists, farmers, pastors, doctors, public health professionals, air quality advocates, conservation groups, business representatives, developers, members of the League of Women Voters, and more—spoke in favor of the plan (Bergthold 2012). Even though the plan was opposed by the Chamber of Commerce, major local land developers, and the local Building Industry Association, it passed 5 to 2 in the council—a stark shift from the behind-closed-doors decision-making processes to which Fresno has become accustomed.

Also significant was that members of the region's farming community came out publicly in support of Alternative A—a move that made intuitive sense since rezoning has allowed suburban housing development to swallow up agricultural land over the last few decades. While this did not necessarily bridge deeply entrenched divides—namely, between industry and community—it brought together allies that had not previously worked together around a rather innovative plan for smart growth in one of the nation's capitals of sprawl. Also, as one city staffer described, this process has perhaps laid the groundwork for building a civic engagement infrastructure in Fresno to shift the status quo—something that has sorely been missing for decades.

There is also a glimmer of hope in the recent development of the Fresno Community Scorecard (www.fresnocommunityscorecard.org). Launched in the summer of 2014, this is a website presented by the Fresno Business Council and Valley Public Television that allows users to explore an array of community characteristics and see where the city stands in relation to statewide and national averages. In the spirit of creating epistemic communities, the intention of the website is to establish a central place for Fresno's stakeholders to find data and perhaps inspire collaboration among these stakeholders in identifying the solutions to the often intersecting obstacles the community faces. As a local community activist, quoted in the newspaper, put it: "Shining light and gathering data does change behavior" (Sheehan 2014).

We do not mean to exaggerate the significance of these recent efforts. The Planning Commission's decision in the 1970s to ignore citizen input in approving the General Plan paved the way (pun intended) for the subsequent three decades of urban sprawl and growing inequality. The current efforts are admirable, but it will take a decade or more of sustained collaborative efforts to turn things around. Conflict in Fresno has remained largely in a zero-sum and antagonistic framework. Business leaders have largely stuck to well-trod paths rooted in low-wage,



MAP 6.3. San Antonio Region.

cost-driven strategies or largely unregulated sprawl, while equity advocates have seen little reason to move from an adversarial approach. Social and economic fragmentation is reinforced by a spatial separation, and Fresno seems to lack the level of transformative leadership that is able to both maintain credibility in their own constituency while also building ties among constituencies with conflicting values and interests. A divided and fragmented region, Fresno has a level of conflict and intransigence that led many of our interviewees to be pessimistic about the future.

SAN ANTONIO

If you talk to civic leaders in San Antonio today, they proudly boast of an increasingly multifaceted economy that has been able to move beyond reliance on military spending and now boasts of vibrant tourism, medical, energy, manufacturing, and professional-services sectors.¹⁴ They attribute that success—evident in jobs, earnings, and relative improvement in median household income and poverty—to a spirit of collaboration among government, business, universities, and community groups that has become part of the regional DNA (Benner and Pastor 2014).

What has been the record? From 1980 to 2010, jobs in the San Antonio region increased by 112 percent, and average earnings increased by 21 percent in inflation-adjusted dollars, both outperforming the averages for the top 192 metros. Part of the performance has been good fortune—or, shall we say, good energy. San Antonio is the headquarters of Tesoro and Valero, both Fortune 500 oil companies, and a range of oil-related firms have grown in recent years due to the fracking-related boom (though total oil output in Texas remains below its early 1970s peak). But San Antonio has seen employment growth across a range of other industries too, including bioscience, health care, financial services, call centers, tourism, and automobile-related manufacturing. Despite a decline in military-base employment with the closing of two of four Air Force bases in the region, military spending is still important for the region's substantial IT/cybersecurity and aerospace clusters, also significant contributors to economic dynamism (Hernandez 2011; Thomas 2013).¹⁵

In contrast to this current picture, San Antonio started the 1980s with a higher overall poverty level than most metro regions, and poverty worsened in that decade. But in the most recent two decades, trends in poverty in San Antonio have actually outperformed other metro regions, falling by nearly a quarter in the 1990s, and rising in the 2000s by only 8 percent (from 15.1 percent to 16.3 percent of the population), while the average increase for the top 192 metros was 30 percent over the same period (from 12.0 percent to 15.6 percent). Similarly, the region saw growing inequality in the 1980s, as the 80/20 household income ratio increased by 5 percent (from 4.19 to 4.42), compared to an average 1-percent decline for the top 192 metros (from 4.17 to 4.13). But between 1990 and 2010, the rise in that inequality measure was less than half of the average increase for the top 192 metros, a striking performance given the poor starting point.

Both the overall performance and the contemporary spirit of collaboration are far cries from where San Antonio was three decades ago. Then, the city and the region were the site of one of the country's most intense struggles to challenge stark racism in the allocation of public resources and to confront a business elite who seemed committed to marketing the region based on cheap labor (indeed, they had a plan prepared on this basis). The challenge to racism was remarkably concrete in both its subject and its strategies: working-class Latinos living on the city's poorer West Side were impacted by inadequate drainage systems that sent water and debris flowing into the streets following torrential rainstorms (Rogers 1990; Rosales 2000). As a result, the first

powerful organizing efforts were focused largely on infrastructure, but the broader struggle was about tipping the political power that would be necessary to achieve change.

In short, San Antonio was an awful lot like Greensboro and Fresno. But over the past four decades, San Antonio has moved from conflict to collaboration, from stark racism and poverty to incorporation and income mobility. How has the region been able to evolve in this way? The culture of collaboration was built slowly, and often unsteadily. Conflict played an important key role in surfacing issues of equity and inclusion, but in contrast to Fresno and Greensboro, regional stakeholders were able to prevent conflict from getting in the way of continued engagement. Over time—and facilitated through the deliberate efforts of a few key bridge-building individuals—this continued engagement evolved to a growing sense of common destiny, and the broad culture and social norms of collaboration that characterize the region today.

Making Change in San Antonio

Today, the San Antonio region is nearly two-thirds people of color. The region's demographic shift was already well underway in the 1970s. San Antonio was one of the nation's first majority-minority cities (Miller 2011); by 1980, Latinos alone were 44 percent of the population. Despite popular perception, Latino growth was mainly homegrown. Even today, the share of foreign-born in San Antonio is actually lower than it is in the country as a whole. However, these US-born second- and third-generation citizens were living on the city's poorer West and South Sides, and their interests were largely ignored by long-standing Anglo elites.

The most immediate issue that surfaced as a conflict was infrastructure. The region is known for its ranches and its military bases, but also for its torrential rainstorms (Rosales 2000). In the 1970s, the resulting flooding affected all the neighborhoods, to be certain, but the downpours impacted the poor and working-class Latino neighborhoods of West San Antonio hardest, where inadequate drainage systems resulted in flooding that ruined homes and impacted public safety. When it came to infrastructure, the schools were not so hot either—literally. Many West Side schools lacked heat and proper insulation, and parents fretted about sending their kids off to a cold classroom in the winter (Rogers 1990).

These conditions in the mid-1970s provided a base for a remarkable shift over the next two decades, as a combination of broad-based

community organizing and shifting electoral politics helped transform the city's fortunes. And it was two neighborhood kids from the West Side that were particularly prominent in these shifting politics: Ernesto Cortes and Henry Cisneros.

Ernie Cortes, who would become one of the country's preeminent organizers, returned home to San Antonio in the early 1970s, after gaining experience organizing with the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF) in the Midwest. Cortes began organizing in San Antonio's West Side parishes, and in 1974 founded Communities Organized for Public Services (COPS), an IAF affiliate organization made up of faith-based leaders and their members. COPS ultimately became probably the strongest community-based organization in the IAF network, and the core of a network of seventeen affiliates working throughout the Southwest. COPS worked especially closely with a sister organization, Metro Alliance, which worked throughout the San Antonio metro area, and Cortes and other COPS leaders helped launch a Texas statewide network with a founding convention in 1990 that drew over 10,000 people (Warren 1998).

In addition to an institution-led, values-based approach, the IAF was well known for its creative direct-action tactics. COPS personified this approach. One of its early campaigns, for example, involved trying to get the City Council to pass a budget proposal that included a \$100 million investment in infrastructure and increased services in poor, predominantly Latino neighborhoods. As part of the campaign, COPS activists worked to disrupt the normal operations of prominent businesses in the city, and urged business leaders to bring support of their campaign to the City Council. At Frost National Bank, a leading local institution, COPS members halted normal banking activities by exchanging dollars for pennies (and then pennies for dollars) all day long. Similarly, at Joske's department store, the women of COPS disrupted business by trying on clothes, all day long, *en masse*. In both cases, their message was the same: we will continue to throw a wrench into your day-to-day business activities until our communities' basic needs are addressed.

This disruptive and confrontational approach ultimately pushed local leadership to secure significant resources for COPS's neighborhoods, including \$86 million in Community Development Block Grants between 1974 and 1981 (Marquez 1990, 360). Indeed, over its first twenty-five years, COPS reportedly directed over \$1 billion in resources to the neighborhoods it represented (Warren 1998, 80). The Alinsky-inspired organizing was responsible not only for shifting significant

resources within the city but also for shifting the overall economic development strategy of the region. In the early 1980s, the San Antonio Economic Development Foundation's primary strategy was attracting outside business and investment by promoting the city's low wages and unorganized labor force (Marquez 1990). Because of a major COPS-led protest of these policies, the foundation moderated its approach and worked with the city to identify other economic development strategies.

While Cortes initially took a confrontational approach, another West Side native son, Henry Cisneros, emerged to help build bridges between the disparate worlds of San Antonio's power elite and its poor Latino residents. With a strong family commitment to education, Cisneros garnered degrees from Texas A&M and Harvard, and eventually a Doctor of Public Administration from George Washington University in 1976, with doctoral research at MIT along the way. He returned to San Antonio in 1974, and in 1975, at the age of twenty-seven, was elected the youngest city councilman in the city's history. In 1981 he was elected mayor, only the second Latino mayor of a large city in the country, and he was eventually reelected another three times, serving as mayor until 1989.

Charismatic and articulate, Cisneros was comfortable straddling multiple worlds. His ability to appeal to both an Anglo old guard and the growing Latino population is perhaps best exemplified by the fact that he was initially elected as part of the (perhaps ironically titled) Good Government League slate supported by San Antonio's narrow business elite. San Antonio's elections were at-large, a system that allowed a unified city interest like business to better exercise power and control. That said, the Good Government League was aware of bubbling resentment, so it made sure to have at least one Latino and one African American on its slate, and Cisneros took one of those spots. And while that strategy reflected at least a token attempt at incorporation, the underrepresentation of minority groups in city politics led to federal pressure from the Justice Department, and in 1977 the council moved from at-large to council districts. District governments secured additional seats for Latinos, partially dismantling the structures supporting the city's Anglo power elite and paving the way for a broadening of policies, ideas, and investments.

Cisneros continued to thrive under the new system and essentially served as a transitional and transformational figure linking pro-growth business interests and the underrepresented Mexican-American community. An early supporter of COPS, Cisneros further elevated the

organization's work while in office, paying attention to the neglected West Side community where he grew up (and still lives). Eventually, many members of the regional business community who had initially seen COPS as an obstructionist organization came to view it as a valued partner in the region's economic development ecosystem. Most emblematic, after suffering through COPS members' disrupting activities at his bank, Frost Bank CEO Tom Frost had bought a case of Saul Alinsky's book *Rules for Radicals* and distributed them to the power elite in San Antonio to help them be more prepared to deal with their adversaries (Warren, Defilippis, and Saegert 2008). But as he learned more about the organization, and as COPS moved out of doing only direct-action organizing to more collaborative workforce development, Frost ultimately became chair of a major COPS-initiated workforce development organization called Project QUEST.

Shocked into Collaboration

In fact, Project QUEST is a sort of poster child for the shift from conflict to collaboration, and it shows how economic shock can sometimes (as in Oklahoma City) lead to a fundamental transformation in regional governance. It was prompted by the sudden closure of San Antonio's Levi Strauss factory in 1990, a place that had employed 1,000 workers, mostly Latina women. In direct response to the closure (and against the backdrop of the other economic trends, including defense cuts that threatened civilian jobs at local military bases), Project QUEST (Quality Employment through Skills Training) was formed. Begun in 1993, the program was spearheaded by COPS and Metro Alliance, whose membership included many workers displaced from manufacturing. Importantly, QUEST brought together a diverse group: from workers to businesses and employers, the regional Private Industry Council, the governor, and the Texas Employment Commission.

Project QUEST was designed to upgrade and reskill disadvantaged workers for good jobs in high-demand occupations. It does so by targeting a cluster of in-demand, well-paying, and growing occupations, and works with the community college system to develop degree and certificate programs suited to these occupations. Unlike many workforce development programs, Project QUEST requires that participants demonstrate economic need, defined as earning less than 50 percent of the area's median household income. The organization links low-income individuals to training, but also links employers to its graduates. During

the past twenty-one years, more than 80 percent of its entrants have graduated from the program, and 86 percent of those who graduated were placed into higher-paying occupations (Rodriguez 2013). Graduates enter the program with annual earnings hovering around \$10,000, and leave earning on average \$39,300 per year. In 2012, graduates earned an average hourly wage of \$19.65.¹⁶

While QUEST is worthy of a long discussion (and many articles and reports have chronicled its structure and outcomes), for our purposes the important aspect of its evolution is that it highlighted the power of collaboration and also won over some leaders who were initially skeptical of COPS. But the value of paying attention to equity and collaborating for success was already being planted in the San Antonio soil. For example, the San Antonio Education Partnership (www.saedpartnership.org), formed in 1988 in a citywide effort led by then-mayor Henry Cisneros, brings together the leading Chambers of Commerce and multiple companies, COPS and Metro Alliance, and local universities, colleges, schools, and school districts. The partnership's goal was—and is—to help students graduate from high school, enroll in college, and graduate with a certificate or degree. It celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary in 2013, and interviewees suggested that it has been an important forum not just for closing the graduation gap in underserved communities but also for coalescing disparate interests. It hasn't always been easy—respondents noted moments in which fingers were pointed and blame was cast—but the partnership moved forward, worked through challenging questions, and stayed focused on the goals of creating opportunities for all of the region's youth.

Perhaps most telling of San Antonio's collaborative progress and future orientation was the 2012 effort to pass a sales-tax increase to fund pre-K education in San Antonio's underserved communities. In addition to support from the usual suspects—the school district, the city of San Antonio, and nonprofit groups—the Chamber of Commerce joined in, not only supporting the increase but championing it as an investment in preparing a local workforce for the future economy. While the alliance of seeming odd bedfellows was striking, just as moving was the fact that the results of pre-K programming will only be revealed twenty years from now, and that the investments being made today are explicitly oriented to low-income kids whose parents are not likely to pay the bulk of the expenses. To cultivate both a long-term view and an embrace of the “other” was striking, and the tax increase passed, with 54 percent of the vote.

The region is also committed to crafting a shared vision of future regional prosperity. SA2020 is a regional visioning exercise and plan created with strong public participation (not unlike Envision Utah).¹⁷ The visioning process was led by the Jacksonville Community Council—a nonprofit group that works on developing vision and indicators documents for several regions, including Jacksonville, Florida, and Nashville, Tennessee. Both of these regions were profiled as strong performers on growth and equity in Benner and Pastor (2012), and the Jacksonville Community Council was praised for its role in creating knowledge networks across leadership silos. The city spearheaded the initiative, but foundations, businesses, and nonprofits have also adopted the principles. Out of this long public process, the city decided to focus on several areas—education, employment, environment, and health—and the city’s planning department is orienting its redevelopment plans around some of SA2020’s key goals.

This is not meant to paint too rosy a picture of the San Antonio situation. For example, the business community is proud of a public–private effort to attract a Toyota manufacturing facility in the mid-2000s, which reinvigorated the regional economy and was sited relatively close to lower-income neighborhoods. But some have criticized the significant tax abatements and fee waivers, as well as the relatively secretive nature of the negotiations with the company (Morton 2013). This was indeed a case in which cards were held close to the chest (perhaps an appropriate metaphor for a Texas deal), and respondents in our interviews, including those intimately involved in the Toyota negotiations, acknowledge that a different approach might have been better.

Getting Challenged but Getting Along

Collaboration has, in some ways, become so embedded in San Antonio that for many young leaders and organizations it is a *modus operandi*—they report that “it’s just how we do things here.” The community-organizing efforts, hard-won battles, and bargains spearheaded by COPS are now viewed somewhat romantically and with a sense of nostalgia. But collaboration in San Antonio has come about only through the activities of social movements unafraid of sparking conflict and controversy, including highlighting the need for political representation of the region’s significant and growing Latino community.

Particular leaders played an important role. It is a tribute to both Ernie Cortes and Tom Frost that these former adversaries could move from

confrontation to collaboration, and it is clear that no story of modern-day San Antonio could be told without highlighting the way that Henry Cisneros bridged old elites and a rising new electorate. But it wasn't only these key leaders who learned that getting challenged did not preclude getting along. In contrast to the regional planning processes of Salt Lake City and Sacramento, San Antonio did not have a single unified forum in which a common future vision for the region was developed. The process in San Antonio was much messier—resembling a series of skirmishes, around multiple different issues in a variety of contexts, more than a unified process (Lester and Reckhow 2013). And yet, through repeated interactions in these multiple forums, civic leaders learned to neither patronize nor demonize the “other,” and instead recognized the importance of collaborative knowledge generation and sharing.

Regional collaboration is a living and constantly changing process, and part of what makes San Antonio impressive has been its ability to continually adapt over time. But there are also signs that the current emphasis on collaboration may be leading to a sort of amnesia—forgetting that it was organizing (and conflict) that may have gotten the region to where it is. Some interviewees, for example, suggested that the poorest are being left behind and that an influx of new people masks continued challenges to mobility; others say that, even given the progress, there is still much more to be done. Unfortunately, COPS's role as an advocate and agitator has waned. Its members have, in many ways, become so thoroughly incorporated into the power structure that their role as outside agitators has lessened. COPS is also struggling to connect with and engage new constituents—young families and activists—around current issues. Likewise, Project QUEST was beset by financial mismanagement and is also struggling to find its footing. These challenges aside, San Antonio's experience clearly demonstrates that conflict indeed *can* lead eventually to collaboration and that social-movement organizing can play a critically important role in highlighting equity challenges that might otherwise be ignored by a more elite-driven process.

BEYOND “WIN-WIN”: CONFLICT AND COLLABORATION

For much of the last two decades, both individually and collectively, our research has explored different aspects of regional equity and social movement building. We have been strong proponents of the important role social movements can play in shifting unequal power relationships,

addressing inequality, and lifting up broader social issues that undermine the economy as a whole. But we have also stressed the need for regional collaboration and bridge-building, and the very notion that guides this particular volume—the importance of creating diverse and dynamic epistemic communities—might seem to suggest that conflict should be eschewed in favor of polite conversations, planning charrettes, and “win-win” chatter.

This chapter has tried to suggest that although conflict often remains just conflict, it can also lead to uncomfortable issues being raised and addressed in a more collaborative framework. The key question that emerges is: When does a region get stuck in entrenched differences—as in Greensboro and to some degree in Fresno—and when is it able to move forward, as in San Antonio, to address both persistent issues (such as an undereducated populace and uneven infrastructure) and economic shocks (such as plant closures and defense cutbacks)?

In our view, one key feature of the San Antonio success story is the presence of bridge-builders—those organizations and individuals who have enough credibility on multiple sides of a conflict to help ensure ongoing communication, rather than closed minds and hardened positions. But there was also a sort of rootedness in the region—a “place pride”—that seems to have anchored commitments, including the Chamber’s more recent support for a sales tax to fund pre-K. And there was also the evolution of multiple forums, including Project QUEST and now SA2020, where key actors could come together, learn to understand the “other,” and find some room for common ground. These repeated interactions, often in the realm of regional knowledge generation and interpretation, are exactly what we mean by epistemic communities.

While we celebrate what has occurred in San Antonio, we do not mean to imply that conflict must shift to collaboration to achieve positive outcomes. After all, social movements for inclusion involve conflict, almost by definition. They involve groups of people making collective claims at least in part outside institutionalized channels of political and social voice. And sometimes conditions are so stark—think of the Jim Crow South—that challenge is the only path forward. Surely, in the current American moment—in which income inequality has risen dramatically, incarceration rates are racially disparate, and certain neighborhoods face a dangerous mix of inadequate employment and excessive pollution—it’s right to fight.

But what we were particularly struck by in the San Antonio case is related not so much to the *balance* between conflict and collaboration but

rather to a shift in *how* groups conflict, with greater efforts to develop and promote what we call *principled conflict* (Benner and Pastor 2015). In using this term, we are referring not to conflicts over principles but rather to the principles of (or norms governing) conflict: that struggles should be waged with integrity and that it is possible to directly address real conflicts in goals, objectives, and values in a way that also recognizes the need to sustain long-term relationships. The alternative is a war of attrition that can sap all sides, and the stasis in Greensboro and Fresno is suggestive of the limits of that approach.

Indeed, the very depth of the epistemic separation in those conflict-ridden regions—in which some think that Greensboro Blacks should just “get over it” or that all Fresno’s problems can be swept away by moving one’s family to a northern suburb—prevents a recognition that although there may be many interests, there is often but one shared destiny. But how is that sense of a shared future cultivated (or not) in those regions that are leading in America’s new “knowledge economy”—and what does this point to for the nation as a whole? This is the topic to which we now turn.