

Stepping Back

Theorizing Diverse and Dynamic Epistemic Communities

By its nature, the metropolis provides what otherwise could be given only by traveling; namely, the strange.

—Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*

One of the great joys of case-study work is the potential for surprise. While we tried to rely on a rigorous combination of quantitative and qualitative reasoning to select the cases (see chapter 3), we did not really know what we would find. Among the unexpected results on our road trip were the Republican-led campaigns to increase taxes and public-sector investment in Oklahoma City; the importance of merging central-city and suburban school districts in Raleigh-Durham; support for drivers' licenses and in-state tuition for undocumented immigrants in Utah; a paternalism gone with diminishing benefits in Charlotte and Grand Rapids; community organizing becoming cross-sector collaboration in San Antonio; a racial chasm in Greensboro so deep that words failed and relationships frayed; a fabled Silicon Valley increasingly unable to deal with sharp inequality; and, finally, a "Seattle process" that pretty much captured everything we were trying to say with our far clumsier concept of a diverse and dynamic epistemic community.

Obviously, spending only three days in any metropolitan region, no matter how much it is backed up by statistical analysis and gathering of secondary material, is not likely to give you a complete understanding of that region's history or current political economy. But while we hope that we have done some justice to the fuller story of these places, our goal was narrower: to learn about tensions and collaborations between diverse constituencies in each region; identify processes of information

sharing and knowledge generation; understand who is involved in those processes and how they shape regional dynamics; and begin to grapple with what are the key relationships, social norms, and institutions that help (or do not help) bind diverse constituencies together with a sense of common destiny in the long-term trajectory of the region.

In this chapter, we step back and talk more analytically about the concept of a diverse and dynamic epistemic community. We suggest that there are distinct social norms in the more successful regions, including a recognition of diverse constituencies with roots in the region, a commitment to maintaining relationships across those diverse constituencies despite conflict, and public discourse involving reasoned arguments informed by facts rather than solely ideology. How do these norms emerge in certain places, and what hinders their development in others? How can they affect decision-making and governance processes? Perhaps most importantly, can they actually shape positive trajectories for growth and equity, and, therefore, what are the implications for a nation seemingly as polarized as the most fragmented of our case studies?

We explore this last crucial question in more detail in the next chapter. Here, we try to elaborate our understanding of how diverse and dynamic epistemic communities develop and how the broad social norms they forge help shape regional governance processes. But we start first at the individual level, sketching how understanding people's economic motivations and transforming our view of the microfoundations of the economy can help us understand the creation of such collective norms. From there we move to a synthetic discussion of how these collective norms seemed to emerge across all our case studies and how they were sustained, and the complex interplay between these epistemic communities and regional governance processes.

INDIVIDUALS AND IDENTITIES

In recent years, the traditional economic assumption of rational but generally disconnected actors has influenced (or infected) the fields of political science and sociology. With a perspective focusing on individual actors, coalitions are understandable—short-term interests can be furthered by linking with others—but the long-term transformative communities that we suggest are present in the knowledge networks in Salt Lake, Seattle, and San Antonio necessarily disappear in the

analysis: they just don't square with atomistic actors, they shouldn't really exist, and they certainly couldn't have an impact on policy.

Bowling Alone?

But is it really reasonable to think of the world as every (economic) man for himself? Economic theory suggests that this is at least a sensible way to approach modeling. Even if maximizing one's own utility is not the central object of life, people's behavior can be understood through that prism. And our preoccupation—or perhaps near-obsession—with individualized actors driving our economic models is further reinforced by (and likely helps reinforce) our national social norms and institutions. Think of everything from the American notions of rugged individualism and personal responsibility, to the institutional barriers to collective bargaining in the labor market, to the broad shift from collective pensions to individual retirement accounts. Individual risk and reward in competitive systems remains a dominant theme across American society.

So why do some regions seem to be able to go against the national grain of individual autonomy toward a more collaborative or interconnected ethos? Are they somehow specially (and randomly) composed of altruistic individuals who see their fates as intertwined with those of others? Or is there perhaps something lacking in an atomistic model of human behavior that fails to take into account real-world processes of constructing identities and, dare we say, solidarities?

We lean toward changing the model to understand the world rather than twisting the world to fit the model. Consider, for example, the findings from experimental economics in which individuals are asked to play the “ultimatum game,” which goes as follows. One of two agents proposes a division of a certain amount of money. If the other agent agrees, the deal is consummated and they each get their agreed-on portion of the total. No agreement, however, and they each get nothing. Simple enough to run, test, and record, and the predictions from economic theory are quite straightforward as well. Deals that are fairly unequal—in which the proposer gets nearly all the money and there's just a bit left over for the other party—are both highly probable (since each party will look out for their own interests) and highly acceptable (since both parties will be a little better off—one will be a lot better off—than they were before).

Research does suggest that economists themselves (or at least their students) are more likely to propose such unequal deals (Carter and Irons 1991). But that might be more a matter of training than of logic. As it turns out, non-economists are likely to propose more equitable deals, mostly because the economist's alternative seems "unfair" to them and thus unacceptable—and, interestingly, the non-economists often close more deals and make more money. Moreover, in an intriguing paper, one set of authors showed that while this "irrational" splitting of the spoils is generally true of humans, the results in a similar game played by chimpanzees are actually consistent with the traditional notion of self-interested and isolated utility maximizers that dominates economic models (Jensen, Call, and Tomasello 2007).

A theory of human action that squares with the behavior of chimps, not people, may not bother traditional economic theorists, but it does bother us. Of course, a model in which "rational choice" is dominant has its appeal. It is amenable to mathematical modeling, statistical testing, and easy predictions (some of which turn out to be true, since people do after all pursue their interests, choose under constraints, and seek to maximize outcomes, *sometimes*). But there is also substantial evidence in a range of fields—including psychology, organizational sociology, political science, and even experimental economics—that many people are in fact more cooperative and behave far less selfishly than most economists and others assume (Ostrom 2000; Ostrom and Walker 2005). There are important examples of cooperative systems that are in fact more stable and more effective than equivalent incentive-based ones (Benkler 2006; Benkler 2011). The traditional theory of utility-maximizing individuals fails to fully capture deep and lasting relationships and how the formation of a sense of a self occurs in the context of those relationships—and it also fails to acknowledge how institutions and broader systems steer individuals to more or less collaborative solutions and how those solutions in turn reinforce or undermine cooperative norms.

Trying to explain our cases with traditional economic microfoundations is at best challenging and at worst impossible. Consider the impact of "Michigan nice," the pride Raleigh took in racial integration, or how the challenge to Anglo power in San Antonio eventually gave way to a broad voter commitment to pre-K education. For our case studies—and the world—to make any sense, we actually need an alternative set of microfoundations in which individuals have a sense of place, are transformed by their interactions with each other, and come to see doing

good and planning for the regional future as simply fitting a set of standards and social norms they hold for themselves and others.

Identity, Norms and Community

So, if rational economic man works in theory, but not in practice, what other microfoundations can we start from? Fortunately, a different theory is possible. Nobel Prize winner George Akerlof and Rachel Kranton (2010) have developed an alternative approach in which individuals are modeled as seeking to construct identities (as well as to maximize utility); because of this, they adhere to norms consistent with those identities, and fairness therefore counts. And it is in this framework of identity formation and social norms that many of the findings of this book begin to make sense.

For example, Akerlof and Kranton specifically suggest that organizations where identity matters can use a flatter wage structure since some of the motivation is internal rather than extrinsic. Similarly, economist Samuel Bowles (2012) has been suggesting that inequality (along with fragmentation) gets in the way of developing a sense of the commons, creating coordination problems that could limit output and efficiency. This is of course exactly what we found in chapter 2, in which regional growth spells were significantly shortened by social distance and inequality. While we did not specifically trace the causal chains there, Bowles's theoretical framing does suggest one avenue in which the growth effect might result.

But the identity-economics frame is perhaps more useful in understanding why epistemic communities can actually change the way actors behave. In this framework, the norms to which people adhere are not handed down from on high but rather developed in the process of conversation and interaction—and how we structure those interactions can encourage either empathy or disdain, collaboration or competition (Benkler 2011). In short, preferences are not exogenous but endogenous—and an epistemic community can help actors see themselves in the “other,” change their motivations and loyalties, and thus be potentially self-reinforcing of cooperative and empathetic behavior in powerful ways. Indeed, as Elinor Ostrom (2000, 147) argues, “a social norm, especially in a setting where there is communication between the parties, can work as well . . . at generating cooperative behavior as an externally imposed set of rules and systems of monitoring and sanctioning.”

In this light, epistemic communities involve *transactions between* actors but they also involve *transformations of* actors. When campaigning for the Metropolitan Area Projects (MAPS) program, the mayor of Oklahoma City tried to persuade tax-adverse seniors by saying, “You may not like it. You may not even be around for it. But aren’t your grandkids?” (Lackmeyer and Money 2006, 127). It is a direct linkage—those are *your* grandkids—but it’s also an appeal to a sense of long-term pride in place and so to one’s identity as a regional resident. Such an appeal was also invoked in San Antonio, and it persuaded voters to tax themselves for the education of kids that were not their own. In Raleigh, the Triple Helix frame is a convenient rhetorical device—but its repetition also changes the very story actors tell themselves and not just others. The opposite dynamic is reflected in areas that are more fragmented and less successful. Fresnoans are not Fresnoans but rather farmworkers, growers, suburbanites, or environmental justice advocates, while leaders in Greensboro are often decamped by color and history, and the commitment to the commons suffers as a result.

The importance of conversation and interaction in structuring identity and social norms may help explain why collaborative epistemic communities may be more likely to develop at a regional scale (or along policy or disciplinary lines) than in national governance processes, especially at a time of rapid change and uncertainty. Formal national government policy decisions may be rooted in face-to-face communication in Washington, DC, but broader involvement in national governance occurs primarily through media channels which at least until recently have been almost exclusively one-way channels of communication, rather than sites of interaction (Castells 2009). The “imagined community” (Anderson 1983) of the nation certainly includes strong elements of common identity and social norms, and these emerge through complex processes of communication. But without face-to-face contact, the sense of a national common destiny is based on symbolic representations of others, rather than direct experience.

This epistemic distance provides a poor repertoire of tools for people to deal with the kinds of rapid demographic, economic, and political changes we’ve experienced in the United States over the past three decades. People understandably base their perceptions of reality on prior beliefs and established patterns of interaction. When these patterns are challenged, and people are faced with new situations, they can hold on to past patterns and beliefs, essentially in an effort to restructure reality to match their imagined community (Castells 1997). But uncertainty

can also lead people to reach out to others to help understand changing circumstances. The face-to-face and interactive dimensions of such knowledge-generation processes are critical for generating a more accurate understanding of social reality and knowledge development (Amin and Cohendet 2004; Brown and Duguid 1998; Maskell and Malmberg 1999; Storper 1997). It doesn't always work—witness the fragmentation of Greensboro and Fresno—but it can be a first step.

Diversity and Dynamism

So, people's identities and motivations can be driven by collective concerns, and conditions of uncertainty can contribute to a search for community. Of course, community-think could be deleterious to the capacity to adapt to changing circumstances, particularly if a group is excessively homogeneous and deviation becomes nearly inconceivable (think the Amish in America or Islamic fundamentalists in the Middle East). But when these knowledge communities are more diverse, they might be epistemically better off. This is true in scientific communities, where taking other viewpoints into account has been shown to yield better results (De Langhe 2014). In the social and political realm, diverse epistemic communities introduce members to difference, raise the possibility of understanding a different set of priorities, or provide a mechanism to see the full potential in other sub-communities and sectors. The impacts of this can be considerable. Think of the rapid evolution of views (and norms) around marriage rights for gays and lesbians in the United States, partly because of conscious efforts to increase awareness of difference (yes, your neighbor—or at least your neighbor on TV—is indeed gay) and commonality (and, yes, he and his partner, televised or not, are raising a child just as delightful as yours).

For diversity in an epistemic community to pay off, however, it isn't enough for it just to be present. Members of subordinated groups must also be empowered as epistemic agents (Daukas 2011). For this to occur, there must be a commonly understood value or norm in the community that respects differences in perspective, including the ability of people from socially marginalized groups to develop self-confidence in participating in the community, and those from socially privileged groups being appropriately humble. Thus, patterns of inclusion or exclusion in epistemic communities link closely to broader social problems, such as racism, sexism, and so on, and the ability of epistemic communities to

overcome these differences helps contribute to greater epistemic validity (Daukas 2006).

Diversity can also contribute to dynamism—the ability to constantly change and adapt to new circumstances. Epistemic communities are not always dynamic—some come together as relatively ad hoc coalitions around particular policy problems, and their life is limited by the nature of that problem and its solution. Other epistemic communities, however, are more constant and have a more holistic character, engaging a broader range of issues and varied problems. Such constantly evolving epistemic communities seem to come more out of interactions rooted in social struggles, and focus as much on the establishment and perpetuation of beliefs, visions, and dominant social discourses as they do on specific policy solutions (Antoniades 2010). Dynamism has its economic benefits, especially in our contemporary era of continued change and uncertainty. Key to the learning and innovation needed in modern economies is the flexibility to rapidly move between ideas and possibilities, markets and cultures, design and production.

Consider, for example, the ability of several of our case-study regions to respond to a shock and turn things around to restore economic viability and vitality. Facing pressures (such as the threat of fast growth in Salt Lake, the collapse of a major business deal in Oklahoma City, or rising interethnic conflict in San Antonio), certain regions have the capacity to promote a conversation that will allow a regional system to adjust and regain its footing. Key is that such adjustments do not mean a return to previous equilibria—in all three of these cases, a new trajectory emerged, including a more planned Salt Lake, a more vibrant Oklahoma City, and a more inclusive San Antonio. Dynamism is not about equilibrium (or returning to equilibrium) but rather about resilience and adaptation.

JUMP-STARTING COMMUNITY

So if diverse and dynamic epistemic communities can lead to better knowledge and perhaps better adjustment to changing realities, how do such diverse and dynamic epistemic communities actually form? As noted in chapter 1, previous research on epistemic communities suggests that there are a number of conditions that contribute to the formation of such knowledge communities in general. The most important of these seem to be conditions of complexity and uncertainty in a particular subject area that lead people to recognize the value of searching beyond established networks and create a motivation for

interactive processes between people to understand that complexity, interpret changing situations, and respond to unexpected dynamics. Such communities are also built around some level of expertise or specialized knowledge that is needed to effectively interpret the complex information, generally suggesting a small circle of involvement. Finally, epistemic communities tend to develop some set of processes for institutionalizing the interactions and acting on the ideas that emerge from the knowledge-generation process.

While the concept has not generally been applied to regions (as it is here), the fit seems obvious. Regional development in most regions, especially in the past thirty years, is characterized by complex and uncertain change driven by a large array of actors and factors. The result could be fragmentation or collaboration, cacophony or symphony. In some regions, as in Raleigh, knowledge communities develop that become linked by a shared story (Triple Helix over and over again), aligned strategies, and a sense of interwoven destinies (as with Raleigh's commitment to integrating its school system). In other regions, no such binding mechanism develops, and different constituencies and geographies see their futures as separate, not linked. In Fresno, for example, market-driven development contributed to wide gaps between city and suburb, agricultural dependence led to an emphasis on cheap labor, and a reliance on oil has made cleaning up some of the country's worst air pollution (something that would have widespread benefits) a political challenge.

What contributes to the development of an epistemic community focused on regional development, and what contributes to its being more or less diverse and dynamic in its membership, focus, and long-term viability? Our cases suggest at least three triggering factors: economic shocks, collaborative governance structures, and social movements. These factors are not mutually exclusive; in fact, all three may be influential in the same region at the same time, or reinforce each other sequentially (think of how Communities Organized for Public Services pushed San Antonio leaders to be more inclusive, helped shift the electoral system, then teamed with former enemies to respond to an economic downturn), but it helps to look at each factor in turn.

Economic Shocks and Opportunities

Multiple constituencies in a region are linked through the economy, whether they realize it or not. People often commute across jurisdic-

tional boundaries; many live in one city, work in another, and shop in a third. Businesses buy goods and services from each other regardless of jurisdictional boundaries but are often interlocked in regional industrial clusters. And a significant amount of research in the past three decades has documented the increasing importance of regions for driving innovation and economic growth (Acs 2000; Berube 2007; Braczyk, Cooke, and Heidenreich 1998; de la Mothe and Paquet 1998; Katz and Bradley 2013; Scott 1998; Storper 1997).

When there is an explicit shock to the regional economy, this can be the impetus for the development of new efforts to develop and share knowledge. Think about Oklahoma City. While the longer-term economic decline of the 1980s set the background, economic development efforts in the region continued along business-as-usual lines until the shock of not winning the widely expected siting of the new United Airlines maintenance operating center. It appears that this singular event was the catalyst for the development of the MAPS program, as diverse public- and private-sector leaders in the region jointly realized the need for a more comprehensive and diverse approach to economic development.

In Silicon Valley, the economic crisis of the early 1990s was the explicit motivation for the creation of Joint Venture Silicon Valley, a group whose slogan was “collaborating to compete”—that is, working together as a region to be better positioned in the global and national economies. In Sacramento, the loss of three military bases and tens of thousands of military-linked civilian jobs in the early 1990s sparked a collaborative response, including a rethinking of land development patterns that eventually led to the Blueprint process. In Salt Lake City, economic problems in the early 1990s and the resulting out-migration of large numbers of youth stimulated regional leaders to come together in the Coalition for Utah’s Future to try to collectively figure out what was happening to the regional economy and what they could do about it—and out of that grew the much-celebrated Envision Utah.

Sacramento and Salt Lake City also point to how *positive* economic shocks can trigger epistemic communities. In both cases, the economic downturn of the early 1990s was replaced by rapidly growing, and sprawling, development patterns that threatened residents’ understanding of what was good about their region. In Salt Lake City, the issue was the way in which increasing sprawl ate up farmland on the urban periphery and increasingly threatened recreation areas in the foothills; this became the immediate challenge that the long-range planning under Envision Utah was intended to address. Similarly, in Sacramento,

residents throughout the region became worried about growing air pollution, loss of farmland, and shrinking green space on the urban periphery; addressing this challenge became the root motivation for people coming together under the Blueprint process.

A final key point for our analysis is that it seems that shocks or opportunities that are particular to the region—the loss of military bases in Sacramento, the failure to land a United Airlines facility for Oklahoma City, or worries about the drift of younger residents out of Raleigh and Salt Lake—help sharpen attention more than sudden downturns or upswings associated with the national economy. These latter sorts of economic shocks can seem purely external (and perhaps temporary) and offer a less clear reason why coming together in a regional context is important.

Collaborative Regional Governance

Many regions have faced economic restructuring not so much as an economic shock but as more of a long-term shift. And while shock might trigger change, simmering crisis might just trigger, well, more simmering. Consider Fresno, where urban sprawl and uncontrolled growth have undermined quality of life in the region and consumed farmland on the urban periphery—but with the pressures slowly building and the constituencies very divided, little has been done to address the dilemma. On the other hand, both Raleigh and Charlotte took advantage of potential opportunities, both finding regional mechanisms (in one case through a small group of civic leaders, and in the other through a more widespread implantation of the Triple Helix in the regional DNA) to generate a consensus about how to become stellar economic examples of the New South.

So when do regional challenges (or opportunities) translate into collaborative regional governance? This partly depends on the structure of governments and governance, with the latter often influenced by regional culture. By *government*, we mean formal regional institutional arrangements or practices, whether in the form of city–county mergers or aggressive annexation policies of central cities. Clearly, the fragmented nature of metropolitan regions like Detroit and Cleveland has fostered a sense of economic isolation for both the poor and the wealthy of those regions, while the regionally integrated structures of places like Oklahoma City, Nashville, and Jacksonville have helped facilitate interconnections among different constituencies in the region.

In San Antonio, simply the size of the city relative to the region is important: moving policy and politics in the central city there is essentially moving policy and politics in the region, and that makes a single municipal government an important platform for the metro as a whole.

But beyond the formal mechanisms of government is a role for *governance*, that is, the deliberate collaborative efforts, often driven by particular individuals or groups of individuals, that help shape regional decision-making processes and development patterns. In Grand Rapids, for example, business leaders—along with the encouragement and support of the city and public officials that was eventually institutionalized in Grand Action—were critical in pulling together to revitalize downtown. In Raleigh, the Triple Helix is found in no particular location, but people are stitched together nonetheless—and a unified school district was not an accident of history but a conscious decision based in the desire to more peacefully integrate. In Salt Lake, Envision Utah has no real power other than the power of persuasion—and it has been highly persuasive.

And if governance matters, there is an important role for regional culture and norms. Again, in Grand Rapids, the efforts to consult with local homeless shelters that might be affected by development, or to put in place local hiring provisions as part of building a new arena, seemed driven more by moral values and a broad culture of “doing the right thing” than by a sense of crisis or conflict. We have also argued that the inclusive and future-looking processes in Salt Lake were rooted in a number of cultural elements, particularly the role of the Mormon Church. In Seattle, there is also a deeply rooted egalitarian streak that permeates leadership. When coupled with the aversion to conflict that also seems to be there (the region also has its own “Seattle nice”), this can result in a “Seattle process” that produces both the nation’s highest minimum wage and a long-delayed road tunneling project. A simple consideration of economic interests or political structures cannot explain why conflict happens in some locations and cooperation in others; culture and the proclivity for collaborative governance matter.

Social Movements

Cooperation may also evolve from conflict, particularly if marginalized populations find that their only way to the table is by raising uncomfortable issues in uncomfortable ways. San Antonio is our most obvious

example where this occurred. Organizing by COPS was a critical part of opening up opportunity structures in the regional power elite *and* of shifting regional business strategies away from a classic reliance on tax breaks and cheap labor toward a deeper investment in skills development, workforce upgrading, and a more diversified economic development strategy. The early days of conflict were later moderated, and collaboration was institutionalized in specific initiatives like Project QUEST and the San Antonio Educational Partnership, both of which brought together social-movement activists with regional private- and public-sector leadership around specific education and economic-development objectives.

There are certainly cases where social-movement activities have *not* led to the development of diverse epistemic communities. In Detroit, for example, equity advocates in the union movement, which has been dominated by the United Auto Workers, tended to focus more on holding on to whatever wage and benefit premiums they could derive from the auto industry and less on broader debates about regional development patterns. African American political activists—both those engaged in formal electoral processes and those in community organizing—have tended to focus on dynamics in the city of Detroit itself, rather than challenge white flight or organize for regional tax-base sharing, for example (Pastor and Benner 2008).¹ For social-movement activism to stimulate the development of diverse epistemic communities probably also requires some level of governance opportunity or champion to help translate between the worldviews of activists and elite leadership, a role Henry Cisneros played in San Antonio with great impact.

And while the recent shifts in Seattle have something to do with the generalized culture we refer to above, there has also been a long history there of social justice struggle (think the Four Amigos) and some brilliant strategies by labor and its allies to elect sympathetic officials and develop a new sort of collective bargaining that goes beyond union members (Rolf 2014). Against the backdrop of rising inequality in the United States, a paralyzed national political system, and emerging opportunities at the regional level, we expect far more from social-movement actors in the future. The trick will be balancing power-mapping and power-building with the sort of cooperative approach needed to grow the regional economy; the struggle to strike that balance is likely to generate discussions by activists and articles by academics for years to come.

SUSTAINING DIVERSE AND DYNAMIC EPISTEMIC COMMUNITIES

We've argued that understanding our diverse and dynamic epistemic communities requires a microfoundation that recognizes that people can be collectively motivated. We've also suggested that epistemic communities can be stimulated into formation through a range of processes, including economic shocks, regional governance opportunities, and social-movement pressures. But once they are formed, how do they evolve over time, manage to maintain a commitment to collective action and inclusion, and through those processes shift exchanges between actors toward more transformative relationships rather than simply transactional interactions? In analyzing our case studies, we have identified five specific mechanisms that seem to play a role: shared knowledge generation and agenda setting; inclusionary issue framing; collaborative leadership development; coordinated action; and demonstrating success (and hence a reason to perpetuate the knowledge community). We take these up in turn below.

Shared Knowledge Generation and Agenda Setting

The first step in agenda setting often involves the recognition of a common challenge—pressing population growth in Salt Lake, a rising Latino electorate in San Antonio, the need to retain young graduates in Raleigh, the loss of a major business opportunity in Oklahoma City, economic shifts in the Silicon Valley. Knowledge generation and interpretation—indicator projects, planning exercises, and outreach about regional data—are often used to get various actors “on the same page.” In this sense, the participation is as important as the product: the data is used to facilitate a conversation that brings together unexpected interests and allies.

Perhaps the most obvious example of shared knowledge development and agenda setting in our case studies is Salt Lake City, with the work of Envision Utah. As we described in chapter 4, the explicit goal of the initiative was not to develop a detailed general plan for how the region should develop but rather to help identify the key values shared by a broad swath of Salt Lake City's population and translate that into more specific goals designed to guide regional development. The seven goals that emerged from this process—improving air quality, promoting housing options, creating transportation choices, encouraging water conservation, preserving critical lands, supporting efficient infrastructure, and exploring community development—are not particularly surprising or transformative in

themselves. What is critical is that they did not come from professional planners but instead emerged from a broad consultative, knowledge-generation process that included more than 2,000 people in fifty public workshops and more than 17,000 responses to Internet and newspaper surveys. This process helped ensure that priorities for development in the region were rooted in the lived experiences and values of diverse communities and were broadly shared by leaders throughout the region.

A similar process was evident in Oklahoma City around the development of the first MAPS program. Here, the regional priorities developed in the original program were driven by more of a top-down process than in Salt Lake City, developed initially by the Chamber of Commerce and later fleshed out by city-appointed task forces operating primarily behind closed doors. However, the specific projects that were included in the original MAPS proposal were developed over a nine-month period in 1992 by a mayor-appointed Metro Area Projects Task Force consisting primarily of a range of public officials, but with project ideas also developed by various other committees consisting of city council members and civic leaders. The mayor also created a City Council committee to review the task force's work, and appointed as head of this committee the council member he thought would be the strongest *opponent* of the whole initiative. Why? In the mayor's words: "I don't want to ignore her. I'll make her top gun, and then work her through the process" (Lackmeyer and Money 2006, 112).

Initial polls showed little support for new taxes, and quite uneven support for the different project ideas being considered. Thus, a critical design component of the initiative was to develop a range of projects that met the priorities of a range of interests and then make it a single vote for all the projects so that people would be forced to consider their own priorities in light of priorities developed by other interests. In advocating new taxes to fund the package, Mayor Norick emphasized the multiple beneficiaries of the projects and the importance of focusing on the city as a whole, asking arts patrons, "Are you willing to defeat your symphony because you don't like baseball?" (Lackmeyer and Money 2006, 127).

We do not mean to exaggerate the inclusivity of the MAPS process. One of the groups opposed to the original vote, for example, was the NAACP, because of concerns that minority communities in the region would not benefit adequately from the projects. But this gap was addressed to a certain extent in the next round of increased tax funding for schools, in which the first school renovated was in the heart of Oklahoma City's African American neighborhood. The basic point here is

that one way to build a community of support is through shared agenda setting.

In contrast, when a common set of regional priorities is absent, or when the priorities are developed in narrow, fragmented, or “siloeed” processes, the region is not really being stitched together. In Fresno, for example, development has been primarily driven through unplanned sprawl and backroom deals between developers and elected officials (Zuk 2013). In Greensboro, the inability to even agree on how to interpret the past led to tension that held back the capacity to cooperate on the future. In both cases, a region’s fragmentation has led to suboptimal outcomes, even with respect to many things on which various actors might actually agree.

Finally, the presence of a comprehensive plan does not always mean that inclusion is in the mix. For example, the efforts of the Sacramento Area Council of Governments toward long-range collaborative planning, starting first in the early 2000s with the Blueprint process and extending to more recent efforts around the Sustainable Community Strategy, have been strongest in their attention to economic growth, environmental concerns, and smart-growth principles. Social equity advocates in the region have had an uneasy relationship with these efforts, participating primarily from an outsider-advocacy position rather than from a position of full incorporation (Pastor and Benner 2011).

The gap was even manifested in the governing consortium SACOG created in 2010 to oversee implementation of its Sustainable Community Strategy participatory planning process, which received a \$1.5 million grant from HUD. The consortium failed to include direct representation from either the private sector (whose interests were indirectly represented by Valley Vision, a nonprofit regional convener) or social equity advocates (whose interests were indirectly represented by the Center for Regional Change at the University of California, Davis, which included the work of one of the authors of this book). Partly as a result, when a prominent economic development initiative was launched in the following year by the Metro Chamber, the Sacramento Area Commerce and Trade Organization, and the Sacramento Area Regional Technology Association, together with Valley Vision, equity concerns—and representatives—were almost entirely absent from an effort billed as trying to build a robust strategic economic development plan for the region. SACOG is doing better than it was, but the basic lesson is that to really create community, a shared agenda must reach out to all sectors.

Inclusionary Issue Framing

As we have learned from the work of George Lakoff and others, the way issues are framed makes a significant difference in how people understand the world and how they act (Bolman and Deal 2013; Lakoff 2004; Lakoff and Johnson 2008). We are most definitely not experts on cognitive linguistics, but we were struck in our case studies by the different ways people framed issues of conflict and collaboration in their work in the region. In some places, issues were framed around a respect for difference and a sense of a common future together; in others, the frame was more about immediate interests and frustrations about lack of influence or impact.

Salt Lake City provides a number of illustrative examples of the more positive framing. In many parts of the United States, undocumented immigrants are viewed as an unwelcome alien invasion. One might expect that to be the case in Utah, one of the country's reddest (politically) and, until recently, whitest (demographically) states. However, Utah has formally allowed undocumented immigrants to have driving privileges since 1999, and undocumented students have been able to pay in-state tuition at state universities since 2002. In the words of one Mexican immigrant, "I've lived in California. I've lived in Las Vegas. No place is like this. Here, they don't think just because we don't have papers we aren't human beings" (Riley 2006). Partly because of the Mormon faith, partly because of the stress on family, and partly because of an appreciation of markets and hard work, immigrants are seen as part of the overall fabric of the state—and that framing has had a real impact on policy.

But it's not just immigration. The welfare policy of the LDS Church of providing "a hand up, not a handout" may sound like the promotion of individual responsibility and self-efficacy, but in practice it seems to also be about helping integrate suffering individuals and families into a broader long-term community. In reviewing a conflict with environmentalists over a major construction project, the head of the building trades labor council described having to figure out an agreeable solution, since both organizations are likely to be still around in the region for at least the next couple of decades. This reflects and embodies not a winner-take-all approach but rather the acknowledgement of a common future.

We see a similar framing in Oklahoma City, where mayor Mick Cornett—reelected in 2014 to an unprecedented fourth term (Crum 2014)—frequently defends the major public-sector investments made

through the MAPS program, and especially through MAPS 3 under his administration, as being about creating a city where “our kids and grandkids want to live.” This framing immediately connects across generations and also connects regional development to a common—almost family—destiny. Meanwhile, in San Antonio, great pride is taken in how sectors that once engaged in seeming wars of attrition are now engaged in projects of rebuilding; “collaboration” rolled off nearly every interviewee’s tongue, almost to a repetitive fault, and was clearly an embedded social norm. And certainly Seattle, which seems to be trying to reconcile its egalitarian history and ethos with its current reliance on a set of high-tech industries that are driving inequality, stands out in how its government structures, including King County, stress that the “sum total of decisions” should point in the direction of social equity.

Of course, framing is not static, something that can be seen in the case of Silicon Valley. In the early 1990s, Joint Venture Silicon Valley emerged out of a process in which the first task was to diagnose the problems facing the region’s economy at the time. That diagnostic process required combining “pre-existing economic data, original research . . . over 100 interviews with CEOs and civic leaders, and a broad-scale community survey” (JVSVN 1992, 3). The central storyline involved a region that was “in balance” from much of the 1950s through the 1980s but was showing warning signs of imbalance in the 1990s. A key phrase came at the end of the document—“Silicon Valley did not have to organize in the past, but today competition is too great”—and so Joint Venture called for the development of a “business plan for the regional economy” (69).

You don’t generally find more explicit framing for collective action. And while Joint Venture was clearly not interested in economic inequality or poverty—in fact the word *poverty* does not appear even once in the 100-page document, and the only reference to *equity* is in relation to business concerns about the unfairness of county taxes—the group did acknowledge the problems of growing conflict in the region. For example, describing the situation at the end of the 1980s, they wrote:

The region became increasingly filled with conflicts. Community groups identified toxic-waste hazards posed by what were thought to be “clean” high-tech industries. Resolution of those issues were expensive for all sides. Growth priorities of communities ceased to be the same as those of developers. Transportation and housing problems became a high priority for

businesses. The region's overall economic infrastructure swung from being a highly supportive asset for the region's economic engine to being a mixed blessing with uncertain prospects. (18)

As a result, Joint Venture reconciled collaboration and conflict by invoking the phrase “collaborating to compete,” and stressed that the only way to come up with the right solutions was through the “community coming together.”

Of course, implicit in its worldview was the notion that a recovering economy would largely do the trick in terms of creating opportunity. But by 2013, inequality in the region had worsened to the point that our interviewees framed the pressing challenges in terms of a “tale of two valleys” (the haves and the have-nots) and the isolation of the high-tech industry from the rest of the region. Interestingly, a more inclusionary frame emerged in the introduction to the 2014 version of the annual *Silicon Valley Index*, in which Joint Venture CEO Russell Hancock joined with the CEO and President of the Silicon Valley Community Foundation, Emmett Carson, to point out:

The Index is troubling . . . because our prosperity is not widely shared. . . . The gaps and disparities are more pronounced than ever. These are the hard facts: our income gains are limited to those with ultra-high-end skills. Median wages for low- and middle-skilled workers are relatively stagnant and the share of households with mid-level incomes has fallen in Silicon Valley more than in the state and nation. Disparities by race are more persistent than ever. We also saw a sharp increase in homelessness. While job growth is important, it can never be the single measure of our region's health when it is confined to a limited number of sectors. (Massaro and Najera 2014, 3)

This is a remarkable shift in the story, and it could have a positive impact on future developments. What is also clear is that the absence of inclusionary framing in places like Fresno—where a number of respondents suggested that the problems are too large and the public too divided to actually work through solutions—can stand in the way of working together. Many in that region think that progress on equity can only be made by “standing up” to entrenched interests. That may well be, but “entrenched” also means “not going away.” Eventually, conflict will need to shift to collaboration, as occurred in San Antonio, if there is to be significant impact on actual economic and social outcomes. The challenge is how to balance highlighting and challenging sharp divides in terms of income and power, *and* working to build a common regional community over the long haul.

Collaborative Leadership Development

Leaders are crucial. It's hard to understand the transformation of San Antonio without highlighting the roles of Henry Cisneros and Ernie Cortes, to fully appreciate the commitment to racial equity in Seattle without acknowledging the Four Amigos or King County Executive Ron Sims, or to recognize the skillful navigation of Envision Utah without talking about the graceful leadership of Robert Grow. But one of the keys to creating diverse and dynamic epistemic communities is to understand that although some leaders are born, many others can be made.

In our book, *Just Growth*, we cited Leadership Nashville and the Jacksonville Community Council as examples of formal programs that deliberately brought diverse constituencies together in information-sharing and knowledge-generation processes that also emphasized processes of leadership development and the resolution of differences in productive ways. In the case of the Jacksonville Community Council, this was achieved through having participants come to consensus on recommendations on how the region could solve a particular critical social and economic problem. In Leadership Nashville's case, participants told us it was the neutral learning space and the careful attention to selecting diverse cohorts that facilitated new insights and new relationships.

There are similar formal leadership programs in many of the regions we examine in this book. In Grand Rapids, for instance, the Chamber of Commerce runs a number of leadership programs, including a nine-month Leadership Grand Rapids program that is quite similar to Leadership Nashville in its structure and orientation. It has a specific emphasis on recruiting diverse participants, focusing on business, government, and nonprofits (though its representation from labor is notably much weaker than in Nashville), and giving them a more comprehensive understanding of community challenges and opportunities. In Sacramento, Charlotte, and Silicon Valley, there are strong chapters of the American Leadership Forum, a training program whose key principles include building trust and networks among diverse leaders; exploring the interconnectedness of communities, nations, and the world; and exploring, understanding, and valuing diversity. Critically, selection of participants for each cohort includes attention to bringing together leaders from constituencies that might in other contexts be at odds.

One particularly striking example of this mixing and matching—and the impact it can have—occurred in Silicon Valley in 2000, when the head of the Central Labor Council reached out to a number of key executives

of prominent corporations in the region whom she had met in large part through her involvement in the American Leadership Forum. She wanted them to support unionization efforts in the region's janitorial workforce. Executives from Hewlett-Packard, Genentech, and Cisco all made public statements supporting the janitors, but the most striking intervention was by Eric Benhamou, then Chairman and CEO of 3Com, who wrote a particularly compelling editorial in the *San Jose Mercury News*, arguing that Silicon Valley was underpaying an intolerably high percentage of the population, and appealing for support of the janitors' case in part as an opportunity to make clear "which kind of a Silicon Valley we stand for" (Benhamou 2000; see also Pastor, Benner, and Matsuoka 2009, 185).

In several of our case studies, we did not find formal leadership programs, but it was clear that certain regional leaders and processes had helped generalize strong capacities in bridge-building. In San Antonio, Henry Cisneros was particularly visible and important. With roots in poor West Side communities, but reaching the highest levels of political influence in the city, he was able to garner trust and support from both sides of this divide and help strengthen a culture of collaboration that was later institutionalized even after he left the mayor's office. In Salt Lake City, we did not find a formal program to develop collaborative leadership, but the impressive success of Envision Utah's broad participatory planning processes, and the multiple constituencies involved in developing the Utah Compact, suggest cross-constituency understandings in cases where there was significant potential for heated conflict.

Collaborative leadership networks can develop in many different ways, and we have not yet developed a simple quantitative metric for assessing the strength and depth of collaborative leadership (that's our next project!). Still, we found that in regions seemingly stuck in long-range patterns of inequality and fragmentation, interviewees tended to frame power-building in us-versus-them or at least non-collaborative frameworks. In Fresno, environmental justice organizers described collaborative efforts at shifting air quality standards in the region as essentially hopeless and instead depended primarily on lawsuits and other legal channels for pursuing their goals. In Greensboro, one of the stronger and most celebrated social justice organizations in the African American community, the Beloved Community Center, has developed a reputation in the region of working largely independently rather than in collaborative efforts, even as business and other civic leaders we interviewed seemed to hope that the scars of racism would just sort of heal all on their own.

Sometimes you have to fight—and fight hard—to make sure an issue makes its way to the table. San Antonio would not be where it is today without the fierce battles and creative tactics of COPS. But making the pivot to collaborative leadership is one part of developing a diverse and dynamic epistemic community. It involves understanding that wisdom is in multiple locations, and that the role of leadership is to build bridges between diverse constituencies, identify and reconcile conflicting values and interests, and work to ensure that spirited skirmishes over policy build a base for future joint action rather than destructive and persistent conflict.

Coordinating Action

With their ability to build ties across constituencies, diverse and dynamic epistemic communities can also influence regional governance processes by facilitating coordination among different actors in the region. This goes beyond formal agreements such as those developed through institutionalized public–private partnerships or through specific collaborative initiatives like the Sustainable Community Strategy process in Sacramento or the specific planning efforts of Envision Utah. It also extends to more informal collaborative efforts that become embedded in local culture.

One of the most specific examples of this in our case studies was in Grand Rapids, where there was widespread agreement about the value of coordination by the “four-legged stool” in shaping the region’s economic development trajectories: (1) Grand Action was the formal public–private partnership driving local investment and pursuing downtown revitalization efforts; (2) the Chamber of Commerce was critical in a range of leadership development, policy advocacy, and economic development initiatives; (3) The Right Place was a regional marketing entity focused on business recruitment, but also providing research, data, and indicators on regional development; and (4) Experience Grand Rapids was focused on expanding the tourism industry and marketing for conventions and related events. Even without formal collaborative agreements between these various entities, they complement each other, and with the regular sharing of information and knowledge that characterized their relationships, they all were moving in complementary directions in their programmatic work.

The Sacramento region also has a similar dynamic of coordinating action across multiple organizations in the economic development arena.

The Sacramento Area Commerce and Trade Organization focuses on external recruitment and marketing. The Metro Chamber of Commerce has focused more on internal business development and policy advocacy. Since 2001, the Sacramento Area Regional Technology Association has played a critical role in accelerating technology development in the region. And Valley Vision has been a catalyst for a number of regional economic initiatives, including the Green Capital Alliance (focusing on clean tech industries) and The Next Economy (a region-wide effort to diversify the economic base of the region). The Center for Strategic Economic Research provides critical economic data, research, and analysis of the Sacramento region's economy. In conversations with leaders from all of these organizations, it is clear that informal information sharing and communication help coordinate their actions, even when they are not involved in formal collaborative initiatives.

Similar dynamics can be seen in the ways the long-range planning efforts in Sacramento and Salt Lake City shape regional development patterns. In both cases, the entities driving the collaborative planning processes (SACOG and Envision Utah) have no statutory authority to enforce these plans (although SACOG can impact transportation funding to local jurisdictions). Instead, implementation relies on the actions of the local jurisdictions in the area, and the work of a range of other regional actors. But by creating a common knowledge base and set of principles for future work, these initiatives help coordinate action in the region toward common goals, even if undertaken in the silos that characterize regional government.

In short, diverse and dynamic epistemic communities are aimed at regional governance, not regional government—they are not about creating new Portland Metros (the elected regional council there) but about filling in the spaces so regional actors work collaboratively rather than at cross purposes. Where such spaces are not occupied, fragmentation is the order of the day. In Fresno, for example, the inability of the city and the county of Fresno to coordinate their efforts in proposing a site for a new campus of the University of California system contributed to its being established in Merced rather than Fresno, even though Fresno is by far the largest city in the San Joaquin Valley and was in many ways a much more likely home (Bender and Parman 2005). More recently, the city of Fresno's post-2012 efforts to promote downtown revitalization and reduce sprawl were being actively undermined by the county's efforts to promote new developments in surrounding unincorporated county land.

Demonstrating Success

Nothing succeeds like success—and having a real impact can shore up the confidence and continuity of knowledge communities. In Oklahoma City, for example, three different Republican mayors, in collaboration with a conservative Chamber of Commerce, have managed to convince a majority of the relatively conservative population to vote three successive times for increased taxes for major public-sector development initiatives. The result has been a transformation in Oklahoma City in a remarkably short period of time that helps reinforce the idea that stakeholder processes and civic engagement actually do make a difference. San Antonio provides another example in which cooperation has begat economic progress has begat more cooperation, including around the pre-K initiative we mentioned earlier.

But it's also the case that the power of collaboration can be demonstrated when cooperation is the path not taken. In Davis County, just north of the Salt Lake City metro, for example, development of the Legacy Parkway was pushed by the governor and the Utah Department of Transportation without collaborating with environmentalists or transit advocates. According to one of our informants, the governor and the secretary of transportation actually had a specific conversation about whether they should go through a process of consultation or simply try to go ahead with the project. The decision was to go ahead, based on an assessment of their own political strength.

What was the result? A \$200 million lawsuit and nearly two years of delay on the project after it had started. Ultimately, the Sierra Club (on behalf of numerous groups opposing the parkway) signed an agreement with the state that included no trucks, no billboards, a 55 mph speed limit, and commitment to fund work to expand the transit system in the region. In contrast, along the same highway network in Salt Lake County, the Mountain View Corridor was built after extended negotiation between the Utah Department of Transportation and the Sierra Club and other environmentalists. The result was a substantial redesign of the project to include more green landscaping, expanded frontage roads with bike lanes and trails, and signalized intersections, including a new radar-activated bike turn signal to facilitate both bike and car traffic in the corridor. Oh, and no lawsuit.

In divided regions, there seem to be far fewer policies that actually get passed, and those that do are much more modest in their impact. In Fresno, for example, our informants had no problem describing multiple

cases of conflict in the region with negative policy consequences. Nearly fifty years of conflict over the Darling rendering facility, for example, including tensions between environmental justice groups and the union representing workers in the plant, have failed to resolve what all agree is a noxious site near residential communities. Conflict can breed political dysfunction and policy failure—which can in turn breed further conflict.

ROOTS, RELATIONSHIPS, AND REASON

In this chapter, we have stepped back from the data and the cases to look at how diverse and dynamic epistemic communities are formed and sustained, and how they shape regional norms and behaviors. The first lesson is simple. Our findings, as interesting and surprising as they may be—Utah welcomes immigrants? Oklahoma City has rebuilt its central city? San Antonio went from cleavages as deep as the Alamo to incessant collaboration?—are not easily understood by traditional models of self-interested and individualist actors. Instead, we need a set of microfoundations in which repeated interactions, particularly around knowledge generation and interpretation, help actors recognize the “other,” develop a set of social norms about regional stewardship, and find new ways to cooperate that can maximize communication and transformation.

This development of a diverse and dynamic epistemic community—one which includes multiple sectors and can adjust to change over time—can be triggered by a series of key factors, including economic shocks, governance structures and opportunity, and even social-movement forces raising issues of inclusion. We have explored the specific activities that can help build and sustain community, including shared knowledge development and agenda setting, issue framing, leadership development, coordinating action, and demonstrating success. We are not suggesting that these processes paper over conflicts, or erase key differences in priorities, values, or interests. What we are suggesting is that such processes steer participants away from a winner-take-all view in which opponents are to be vanquished and their concerns ignored, and toward a regional culture in which conflicts play out against a backdrop of long-term and repeated interactions in an interdependent world.

Our cases have suggested that leadership in building such epistemic communities and regional social norms can come from many sources: planners as in the cases of Sacramento and Utah, business as in the cases of Grand Rapids, Charlotte, Oklahoma City, and Silicon Valley,

movements for justice as in the case of San Antonio, and multiple sectors as in the case of Seattle and Raleigh. In each of these cases, we have seen a tremendous pride of place—a sense of roots in the region that leads actors to believe that an investment in downtown development or pre-K education will rebound in ways that go beyond immediate interests. In some sense, it is the combination of roots in the region and relationships that are developed over time that leads to a more reasonable conversation about the metropolitan future. What difference that conversation can make for actual outcomes—and what the lessons might be for a nation where relations are strained and reason is in short supply—are the topics of our concluding chapter.