

Community Resiliency in Southern Mill Towns: Concord and Eden, NC

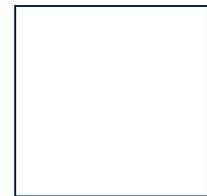
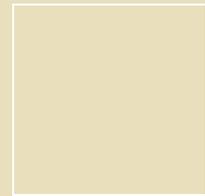
Kimberly Zeuli

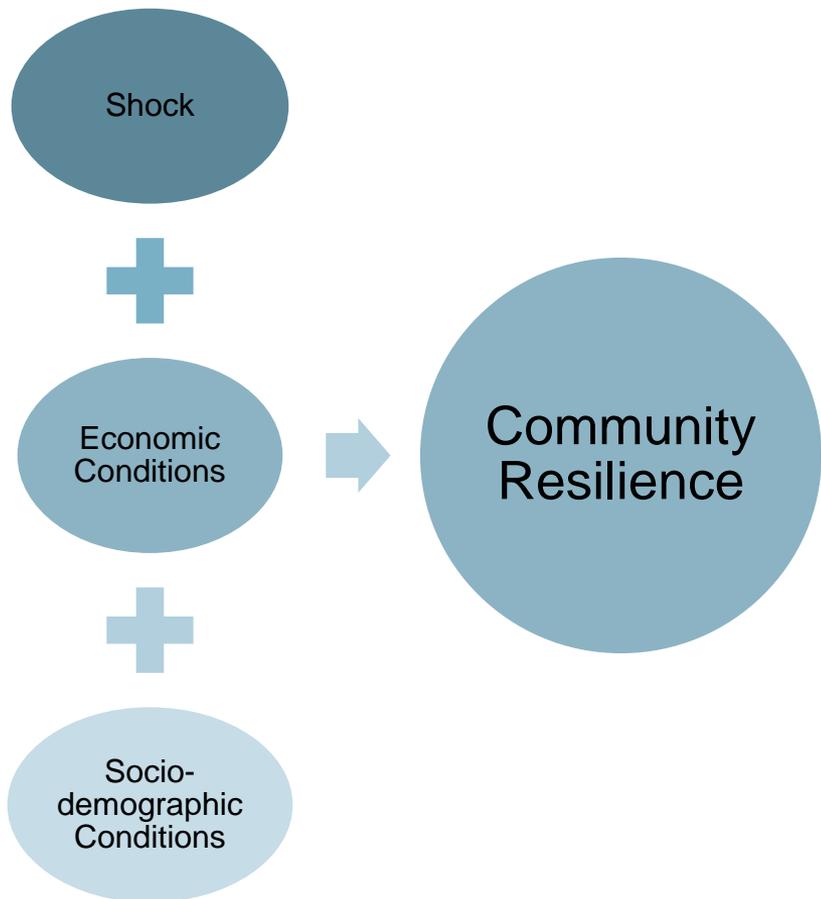
Reinventing Older Communities, May 9, 2012



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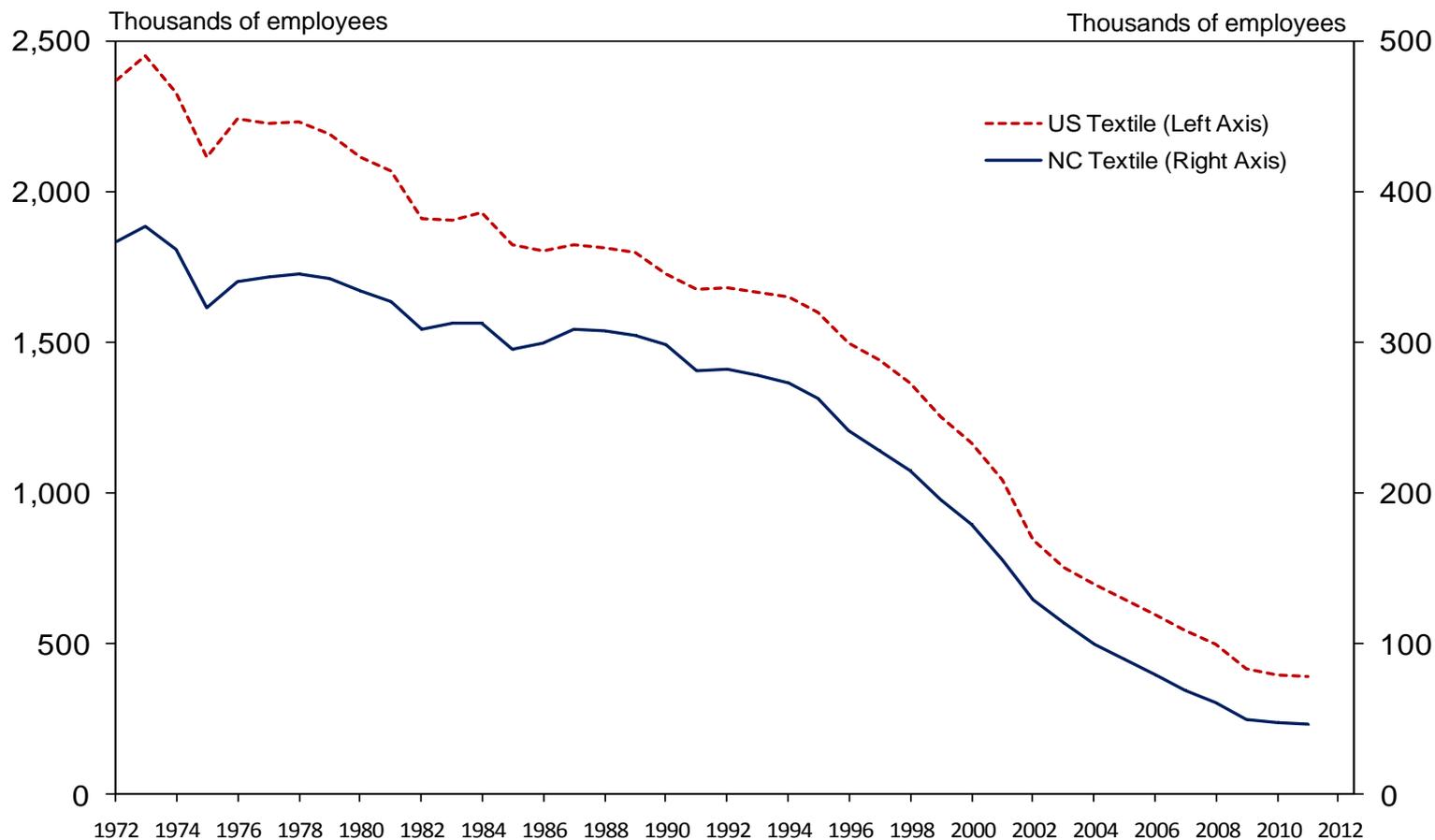
“Everyone was in shock. Everything they ever knew was gone.”

“It was part of our soul.”

Residents of Eden, NC
recalling the closure of
Pillowtex in 2003

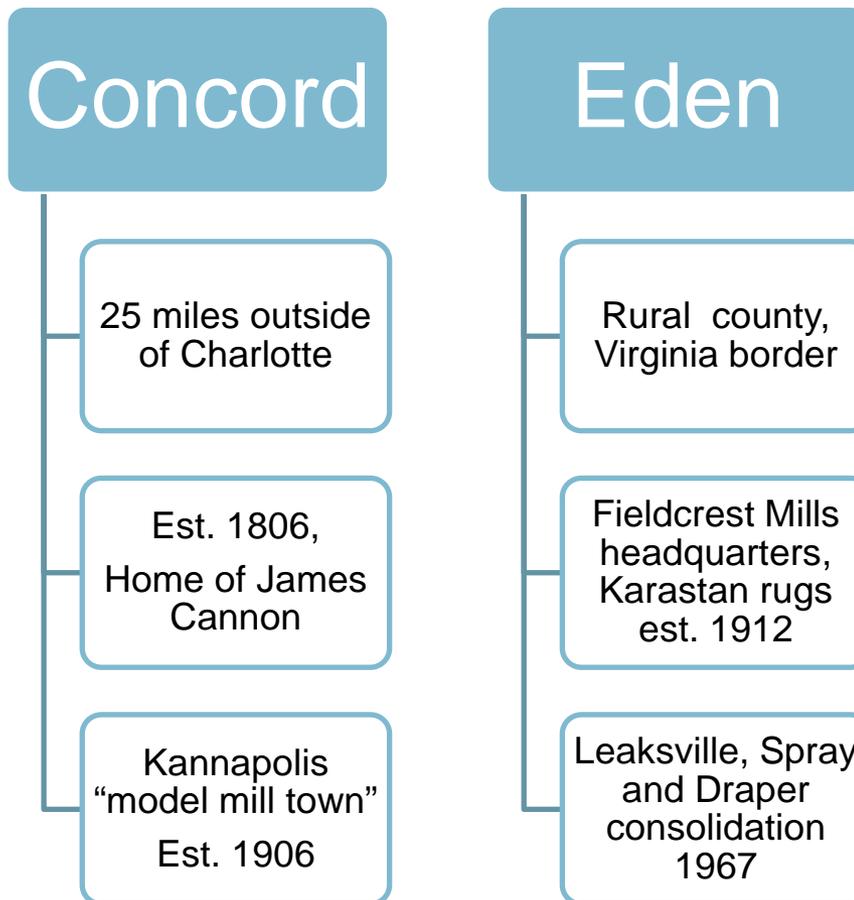


Textile Industry Decline 1972-2011





Historic Mill Towns





Economic Variables 1990

Textile dependency

- 14.6% Concord
- 32.4% Eden

Unemployment

- 4.1% Concord
- 4.9% Eden

Per Capita Income

- \$22,443 Concord
- \$18,409 Eden

Median Income

- \$42,498 Concord
- \$35,258 Eden





Socio-demographic Variables 1990

Population

- 27,347 Concord
- 15,238 Eden

Working age

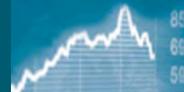
- 83.2% Concord
- 80.8% Eden

Bachelor degree

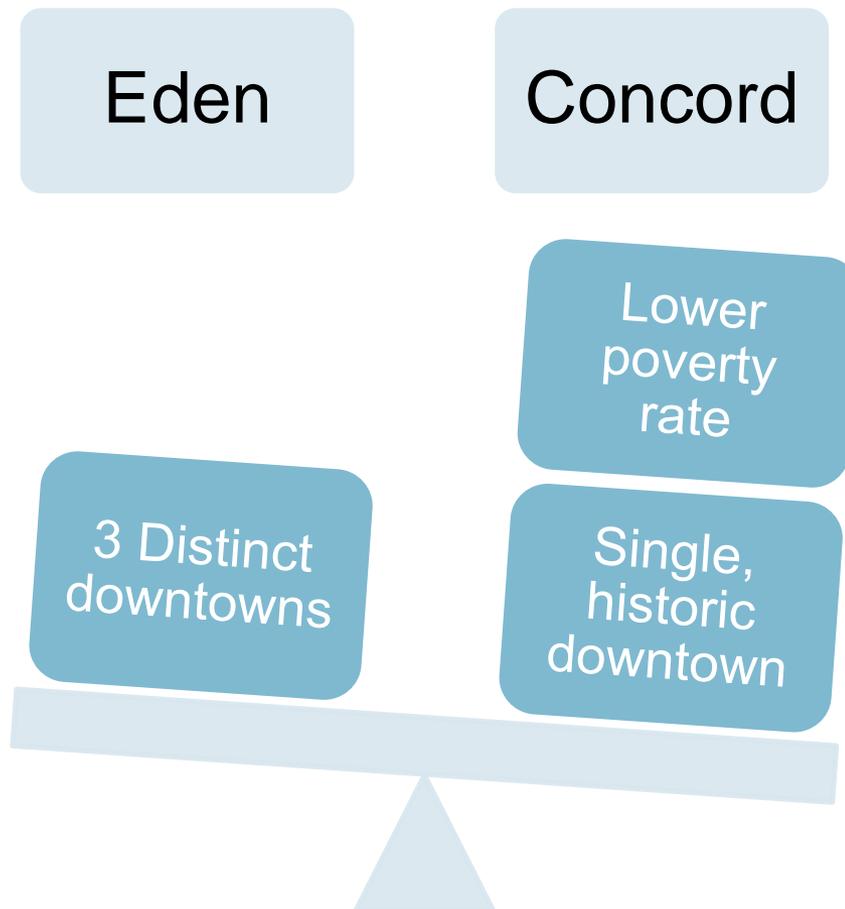
- 6.9% Concord
- 4.2% Eden

“If you could get on at the mill...you were set for life. You didn’t need a high school degree.”





Community Cohesion

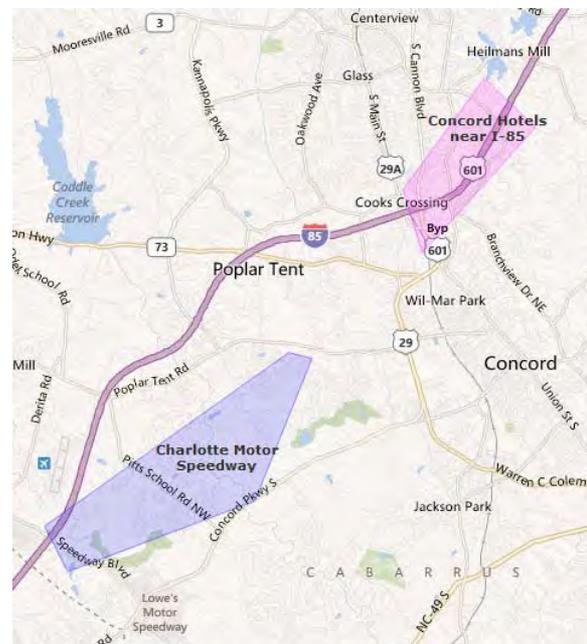




Other Factors



“They had the courage to go against conventional wisdom at the time...you don’t put all of your eggs in one basket.”





Shocking Death of an Industry

Concord

- Textile employment 14.6% → 4%
- 1,700+ layoffs in textile industry
- Pillowtex loss of 4,300 jobs in area, but...
- “The town had already moved on and the new generation was looking for other types of jobs.”

Eden

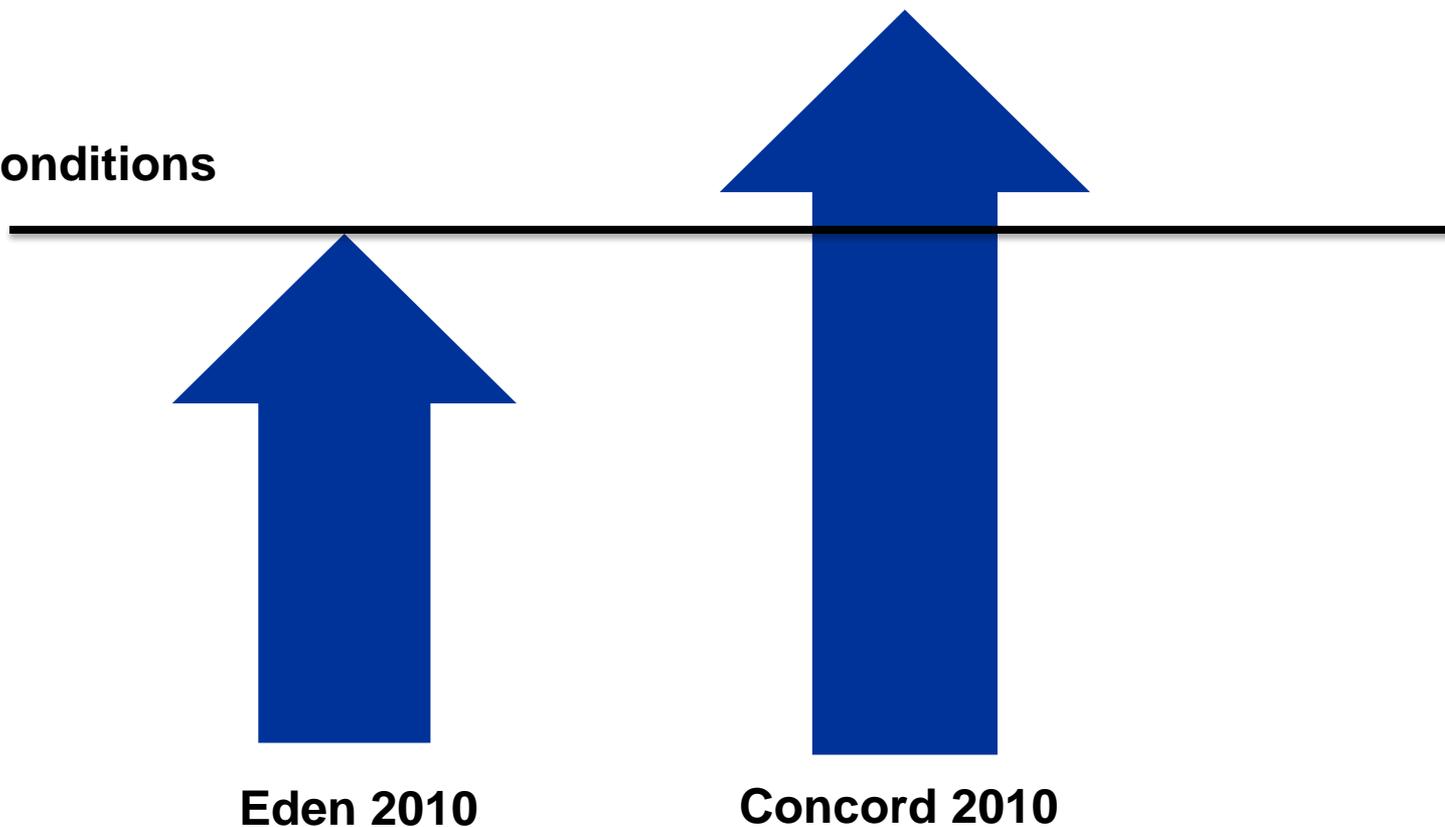
- Textile employment 32.4% → 17.4%
- 3,500 layoffs in textile industry
- Pillowtex loss of 450 jobs, but...
- “It was like a death.”





Back on Track ?

1990 Conditions





Resiliency Summarized

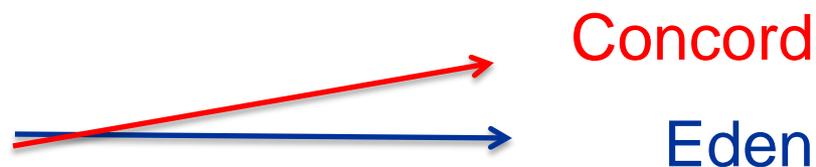
- Diversify economic base
 - Understand industry mix—systemic risk
- Leadership that will go against conventional wisdom
- Educated workforce
 - May be more important if economic base is constrained
- Leverage resource endowments
- Resilience depends on type of economic shock
 - Is Concord as resilient to motorsports downturn?



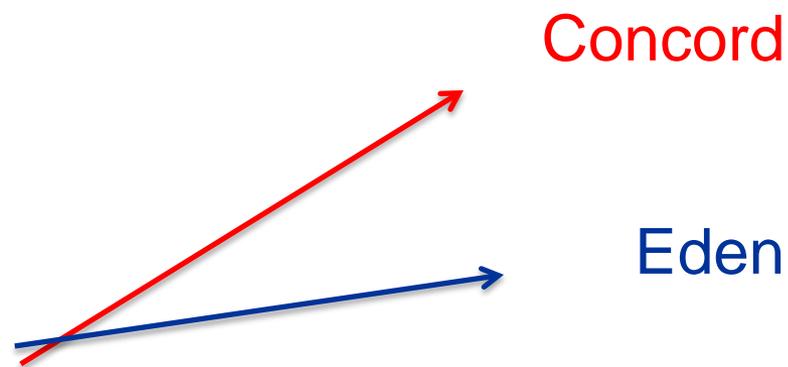


The Role of Location?

Trajectories with the shock



Trajectories without the shock?





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