

TOWARDS A MORE TRANSFORMATIVE COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

This collaborative thesis is presented in two parts. Co-authored by Ian Adelman and Emily Earle, Part I introduces the challenges facing the field of community economic development including limited organizational and theoretical alternatives and the constraints of a neoliberal economic context. These challenges are then considered within a multidimensional framework to understand and differentiate between approaches to community economic development. We find that fully transformative community economic development is rare, yet many approaches have transformative dimensions. A possible way forward is to use this framework to strategically align multiple approaches that in sum may lead to a more transformative community economic development. Authored by Ian Adelman, Part II examines food-based, anchor institution approaches to community economic development including worker, procurement focused and new business development focused approaches. These approaches are considered in comparison to one another and within the multidimensional framework presented in Part I.

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Part I:
**Towards a More Transformative Community Economic
Development**

Ian Adelman and Emily Earle

Introduction

The question of developing new and local economic alternatives is being discussed in many cities and communities, whether in relation to good jobs in the green economy, failures of traditional approaches in addressing growing wealth disparities, or in response to long-term economic downturn and dislocation. Across the United States, community organizations and alliances like the Right to the City are reimagining economic development strategies that are community-driven, and go beyond local economic development as usual by seeking to build community wealth and democratize economic participation. The time seems particularly ripe for examining and envisioning new economic possibilities that not only address immediate economic dislocation in the U.S. and abroad but also have the potential for greater systemic change socially, politically, economically, and environmentally.

Here in Boston and Somerville, proposals for Walmart's urban grocery stores provided the starting point for a discussion and search for economic alternatives. As Walmart eyed the Boston area for its urban concept stores, Professor of the Practice Penn Loh brought together community and university partners together for a collaborative research and co-learning initiative, the Practical Visionaries Workshop,¹ which was driven by the following questions:

- While Walmart tries to tap new urban markets such as Roxbury and Somerville, what are the alternatives that we can grow from within our communities?
- What could a new and localized economy look like in Greater Boston's urban neighborhoods?

¹ The 2012 Practical Visionaries Workshop brought together university and community partners for shared learning and research through 8 classroom sessions, a Tufts UEP Field Project, and this thesis project all guided by the steering committee made up of leaders from Alternatives for Community and Environment, Boston Workers Alliance, Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative, Somerville Community Corporation, and Professor Loh.

- What kinds of economic development planning, community-building, and policy change are necessary to germinate the seeds of this new economy?

The classroom and Field Project portion of the Practical Visionaries

Workshop took on these questions directly, looking at the potential of a cooperative grocery store in Somerville and an organic waste recycling facility in Roxbury, but the research steering committee raised a second set of questions. They wanted to understand the differences between various approaches to community economic development as well as the limits and possibilities of those approaches to contributing to wider changes. It is our hope that this thesis project will support the ongoing work of partner organizations as they attempt to answer these questions and envision and build viable economic alternatives with their members, allies and communities.

Chapter 1: The challenges of developing new economic alternatives

We start from the perspective that the dominant paradigm of neoliberalism limits economic possibilities and, ultimately, human flourishing for the vast majority of people. As articulated by Olin Wright (2010), human flourishing means that not only are individuals and communities able to meet their basic needs, but that they also have the opportunity to develop their full capacity to create, produce and determine their own lives. Instead, as currently structured, the market economy reinforces and perpetuates conditions of wealth inequality, poverty, environmental injustice, and health, gender and racial disparities. In order to address these problems, in order to achieve greater social justice, we need a range of economic strategies that build community power and deepen democracy – strategies that challenge this dominant neoliberal paradigm and offer potential for a more equitable, sustainable world. Despite its perceived and real limitations, we believe in the potential of community-based action to be part of a wider transformation of the economy.

In this project, we are interested in the opportunities and challenges of community economic development. It is an arena for local action constrained by neo-liberalism, which results in the predominance of market-based approaches to building community economies. In the development of our joint research around community economy, Harry Smith of the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative discussed the challenge of thinking outside the box when it comes to nonprofit-driven community economic development initiatives – despite organizational

creativity in other arenas. As identified by Mr. Smith and our other Practical Visionaries research partners, this very real dilemma can be seen in the current work of many community development corporations. Community development corporations (CDCs) have done innovative work in revitalizing communities, in challenging the housing market through provision and preservation of affordable housing. Many CDCs pair this physical development work with strong community organizing and policy advocacy. But these same organizations, when faced with economic development, are likely to produce mixed retail development that looks quite similar to that proposed by private developers – with similar, narrowly defined results in creating economic opportunity and building community power. Moving beyond the dominant political narrative is, of course, a long-recognized dilemma, articulated one hundred years ago by Robert Michels as “the iron law of oligarchy” by which social movements are transformed to fit into the dominant political agenda (Michels 1911; Tolbert 2010).

In the face of these challenges, and within the overall work of the Practical Visionaries research project, we are looking actively for community driven and controlled economic alternatives to Walmart. Here we ask: instead of being constrained within a market economy framework, are there approaches to community economic development that challenge neoliberal ideology and offer potential for transformative change? How can we begin to understand the dimensions of this transformative potential?

Through our work, we hope to offer a framework that can be used by practitioners and academics alike in assessing community economic development alternatives. This document is intended as one tool for comparing, contrasting, and

critically evaluating real-world community economic development initiatives and proposed strategies. As Reese and Fassenfest (2004) and others have stated, community economic development strategies too often are analyzed and evaluated in ways that support, rather than challenge, dominant paradigms. This is an attempt to tease out the multiple dimensions of community economic development strategies, whether they are explicit, implicit or under-theorized. And, importantly, it is also an attempt to tease out dimensions of community economic development that offer potential for transformative systemic and social change, dimensions that challenge the dominant paradigm and can serve as building blocks for more just economies.

In reclaiming and re-democratizing the city, the Right to the City Alliance (2011) speaks to the necessity of putting demands on the existing economic system by changing city governance structures while simultaneously building community based and community controlled economic alternatives. Likewise, solidarity economy proponents emphasize the need to pursue multiple routes to creating more just, reciprocal and sustainable economic possibilities while simultaneously and explicitly connecting these varied routes to each other as part of the greater solidarity economy (Miller 2010). In this spirit, our critique is not intended to identify one, or even multiple, specific and promising approaches to community economic development; instead, it is intended to raise up and describe how key dimensions of community economic development can be reshaped in order to have more transformative potential, especially when multiple such strategies are pursued in tandem.

Chapter 2: The neoliberal economy and community economic development

Before we introduce our framework for understanding the various approaches to community economic development, we have to understand the economic setting within which all approaches to community economic development exist, the neoliberal capitalist economy.

Very simply, “the economy is the sphere of social activity in which people interact to produce and distribute goods and services” (Olin Wright 2010, 119). It is the sum of all the diverse ways that people meet their material needs (Miller 2011). However, there is a constant struggle between state, social and economic powers to assert a dominant way in which that “sphere of activity” is organized, the distribution of goods and services is controlled, and our material needs are met (Olin Wright 2010). In general, the struggle in the United States has resulted in a dominant system of private ownership and control of production and distribution, what is commonly referred to as capitalism. But our system is not purely capitalist; there is still significant participation in the economy by the state and civil society. Olin Wright (2010) refers to these variations from pure economic systems – Statism, Socialism, and Capitalism – as hybrids. His typology characterizes our current economic system as “Capitalist Statist Economic Regulation” where “economic regulation is in fact more responsive to the needs and power of capital than to the needs and power generated within civil society” (2010, 135).

David Harvey and others more aptly describe this “hybrid” as neoliberalism, “an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade. The role of the state is to create and preserve an institution

appropriate to such practices” (2005, 2). According to DeFilippis (2004) the state creates and preserves this institutional framework by focusing on “the supply of money in the economy and creating conditions that are favorable for capital investment (like low taxes, a docile labor force, etc)” (19). Furthermore, the state has devolved its responsibility for social welfare to civil society, through the nonprofit and voluntary sector (DeFilippis et al. 2010).

As described by Harvey, DeFilippis and others, neoliberalism is a social, political and economic structure with universal norms. Neoliberalism “values market exchange as ‘an ethic in itself, capable of acting as a guide to all human action’” (Harvey 2005, Pg. 3). Neoliberalism is even described as hegemonic in the tradition of Gramscian theory (Plehwe et al 2007). If neoliberalism is hegemonic, then any ideas hatched within the current system will invariably serve to reinforce the dominance of the system (Cox 1983). In terms of community economic development, the hegemony of neoliberalism means that any approach to community economic development, even ones that are conceived to address the harms created by the devolution of state responsibility, the privatization of production or distribution or any other aspects of neoliberalism will inevitably act to reinforce neoliberalism. Most community economic development perpetuates the idea that, “reliance on *the* market is the way to develop inner cities for the benefit of those living in them” (DeFilippis et al. 2010, 69). Hegemony is also reflected in education reform, criminal justice system, and social welfare policy.

Neoliberalism has limited the capacity of community-based work to bring about change. However, that does not mean community-based efforts should be abandoned. Instead it has highlighted its importance (DeFilippis et al. 2010). The

challenge is to, “raise [our] consciousness, situate [our]selves in the broader social struggles, and understand the underpinning ideologies and analysis, as well as the stakes involved and the contemporary opportunities of the present moment” (DeFilippis et al. 2010, 166). The following framework is our attempt to meet DeFilippis’ challenge with respect to the field of community economic development.

Chapter 3: Our framework for understanding community economic development

We created a multi-dimensional framework in order to (1) understand important differences between various approaches to community economic development in practice and theory and (2) understand the potential for a given approach to community economic development to contribute to a transformation of the wider political economy.

Our framework consists of five dimensions, dimensions that differ substantially across the range of existing approaches to community economic development. As described in more detail below, these key dimensions are:

1. Scale at which economic development is enacted
2. Flow and allocation of economic resources
3. Decision making structures and reasoning
4. Growth and sustainability
5. Conception of community

Before we discuss the details of each dimension, we need to introduce the process and influences responsible for their development. We started by reviewing academic literature, white papers, evaluations and promotional materials discussing specific examples of community economic development initiatives. At first, it seemed like there was a different organization developing a unique approach to community economic development in every community. Even initiatives supported by the same organization carry different names in different communities. For example, the Local Initiatives Support Corporation's Sustainable Communities program is called "Resilient Families, Resilient Communities" in Boston, "Neighbors

United” in Phoenix and the “Olneyville Collaborative” in Providence. But through an iterative process, we isolated and then vetted various dimensions that differed between the various approaches. At times we compared individual initiatives and at other times we compared theories of change from leading development organizations and theorists. We kept the dimensions that were useful in differentiating between several approaches and rejected the ones that were not.

In addition to the literature we cite throughout this thesis, we want to credit the work of Erik Olin Wright, David Schweikart, Michael Albert and Takis Fotopoulos. Their explanations and critiques of our current economy and their proposals for radically new arrangements of production and consumption, allocation of economic resources and participation in economic decisions provided us with important insights. Their work addresses the global economy as a whole including national and global institutions and policies. But when applied to local economic development, their ideas proved to be another tool for differentiating between various approaches.

From Erik Olin Wright’s work (2010) we improved our understanding of the structure of the overall economy. He describes the economy as the result of power relations between three categories of actors or, what he refers to as, three social domains: civil society, the state, and economic actors. The diagram below shows the three social domains and the various ways the power dynamics can manifest.

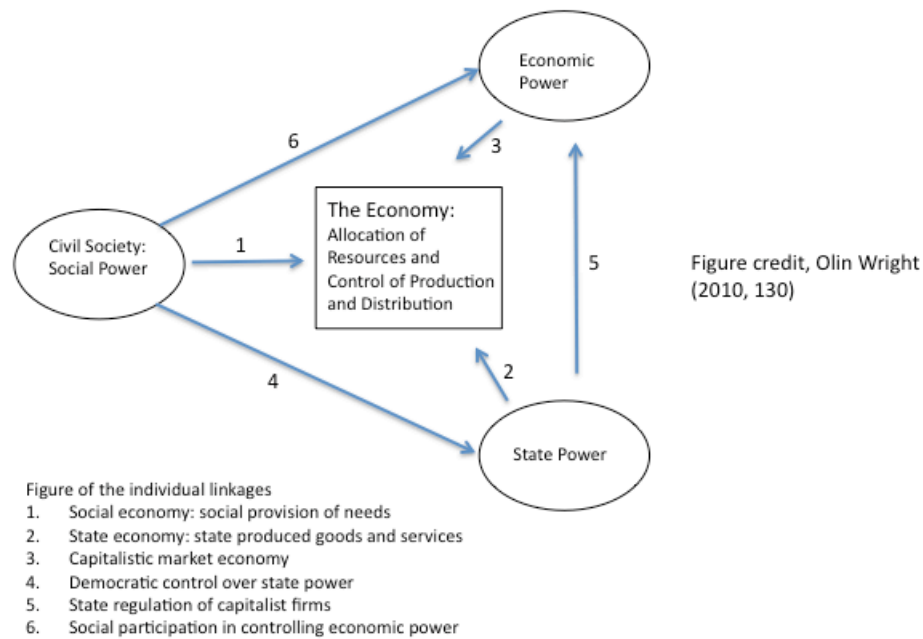


Figure 1: Olin Wright's Three Social Domains

Olin Wright's diagram makes it easy to see the difference between different types of economies. When economic power is the greatest force in determining the allocation of resources and the control of production and distribution, the resulting form is a market based, capitalist economy. When state power is dominant, the result is a form of centrally controlled, statist economy like what we see in China. And if social power were dominant then it would be a social economy. Olin Wright goes on to explain that these "pure" forms of economy are rare if not impossible. Instead most economies are the result of interaction and struggle between all three social domains.

In this research project we are not focused on the order of the entire economy, but Olin Wright's work is important because it can be applied on a smaller

scale to any approach to community economic development. Community economic development involves the same set of social domains—state, civil society, and business (those that wield economic power)—just not necessarily at the same scale. Therefore any approach to community economic can be described, in part, based on the relationships of the social domains involved. As we discuss each of the five dimensions of community economic development, we consider them within this context of social domains.

The other important influences we want to cite are the radical political economy theories developed by David Schweikart, Michael Albert and Takis Fotopoulos. They each propose a different theory of how to construct an alternative economy that will be just and sustainable. Schweikart's theory of Economic Democracy (1992) proposes to abolish capital and labor markets and to build a new system based on democratically controlled worker cooperatives, social control of investment, and a properly regulated market for goods and services. Albert's (2007) Participatory Economics (ParEcon) proposes an even more radically egalitarian system by abolishing all markets and divisions of labor and class. Markets are replaced by participatory planning processes between worker and consumer councils, remuneration is based on effort, and the empowering aspects of work are distributed evenly to all workers through the creation of "balanced job complexes." Fotopoulos' (2003) theory of Inclusive Democracy is less focused on the actual economic structures; instead, it theorizes radical changes to our democratic system. Every political, social and economic decision is democratized through a hierarchy of "demotic" assemblies from local community and local work place assemblies to federal assemblies.

The passionate debate between these theorists over which path will lead us to a sustainable future is of little concern to the specifics of community economic development. However, their radical theories elaborate aspects of the economy that are often overshadowed by a traditional analysis of markets, producers and consumers. They imagine different roles for the various social domains that are not found in our current economy. For example, Economic Democracy introduced the idea of social control of investment where “funds for investment are generated from a capital-assets tax, a flat rate tax imposed on all enterprises” (Albert and Schweickart 2007) which is then distributed to regions on a per capita basis. The taxing is carried out by a national government and then communities, at the regional scale, decide how and where to invest the funds through a democratic process. ParEcon and Inclusive Democracy imagine participatory, democratic processes for determining the needs of society. And all three theories emphasize active participation of society in the creation and control of the economy. Few of these radical ideas are found directly in current approaches to community economic development, yet helped us to consider the potential breadth and depth of the dimensions of community economic development that we discuss below.²

Scale

We propose that the first dimension that can be used to differentiate between different approaches to community economic development is the scale at which each of these social domains is operating in the conception and implementation of community economic development strategies. The idea of scale

² For a more detailed summary of ParEcon and Economic Democracy see Albert, M. and Schweickart, D. (2007). For Inclusive Democracy see Fotopoulos, T. (2003).

also encompasses the geography of place, of where the activities or interventions are taking place.

- *Which scale of state is involved:* municipal government? Regional government? State government? Federal government? Or no state at all?
- *Which scale of business is involved:* Individual investors? Individual businesses? Business sectors? Or business in the abstract, i.e., capital? Or no business actors at all?
- *Which scale of community is involved:* Individuals? Neighborhoods? Whole municipalities? Metropolitan regions? Or all civil society? The community cannot be absent from this because, otherwise, the economic intervention would not be a type of community economic development.
- *Which scale of geography is involved:* The neighborhood? The city? The region? The nation? International and global? Or multiple geographic scales?

Flow and allocation of economic resources

All approaches to community economic development are attempts to intervene in the flow and allocation of economic resources between the three social domains of civil society, the state, and business. The way in which community economic development intervenes in the flow of economic resources can be used as a dimension to differentiate between different approaches. This dimension considers the initial flow of economic resources created directly by the intervention—i.e., does the approach create or expand flow of resources from state to community, state to business, or business to community? It also encompasses secondary flow and allocation of economic resources between the three social domains. For example, a local hiring ordinance directly creates a flow of economic resources from business to

community members through wages paid to local residents. But this type of intervention also results in a secondary flow of resources from community to state due to increased tax revenues from rising wages, property values and consumption. Finally, in considering the flow and allocation of resources, we need to consider how economic resources are distributed through community economic development. Do economic resources accumulate to only a few individuals or institutions, or does the approach help to distribute these resources more equitably?

Decision Making

In addition to understanding the actual and potential direction of the flow of economic resources, we also need a dimension that describes the decision making process that determines the flow and allocation of economic resources. The decision making dimension asks who determines the flow of economic resources – state, business, community, or some combination thereof – and what criteria are used in the decision-making process, such as return on investment, social values, or corrections to the market or other systems. The decision making dimension also encompasses the process of deciding. Whether driven by state, business or community, are decisions made democratically or unilaterally? Are the impacted parties authentically and substantively participating in these processes? Additionally, the decision making dimension recognizes that the process of decision-making includes steps that are often made invisible: defining a problem, designing an intervention and establishing criteria for evaluation. Therefore, the decision making dimension also asks who is defining the problems, designing the interventions and setting the criteria for the evaluations?

Sustainability and Economic Growth

Another dimension that differentiates community economic development approaches is the way in which they address ecological limits, community sustainability, and economic growth. Some approaches to community economic development pursue economic growth for the sake of economic growth. This is the idea that growing the whole “economic pie” larger will increase opportunities for all (Porter and Kramer 2011). Others approaches don’t argue for economic growth itself yet depend on leveraging economic growth in order to realize other gains in areas such as public health, socioeconomic equity, environmental sustainability, or regional competitiveness. A third set of approaches aligns with Tim Jackson’s (2009) argument: economic growth itself is not sustainable. It cannot be achieved without increased material throughput (even with gains in efficiency), which contributes to further ecological degradation and subsequent social consequences. These approaches attempt to separate economic growth from definitions of prosperity. Instead, prosperity is about thriving and flourishing; it is the absence of affliction and adversity (Jackson 2009), and this prosperity can be achieved through stability, cooperation, and reciprocity.

Conceptions of Community

Finally, in examining approaches to community economic development, we need a dimension that addresses conceptions of community inherent in these various economic strategies. There are assumptions about the centrality, power, and capacity of communities that are built into community economic development. Are community members viewed as workers or owners? As producers or consumers? As decision makers? As innovators or as self interested? As interchangeable?

Assumptions about communities can be explicit or implicit but are deeply connected to how the other dimensions of community economic development play out. For example, when communities and their members are conceived of as lacking resources and disconnected economically and politically, then proposed community economic development strategies will look very different from proposed strategies that explicitly recognize the assets and expertise of communities and the individuals that make them up.

In the next chapter, we will discuss how these five key dimensions play out in a market economy based approach to community economic development. This discussion of the dimensions within a market based approach lays the ground to explore how changes within any of the five dimensions result in vastly different approaches to community economic development – some of which embody transformative potential.

Chapter 4: Dimensions of market-based community economic development

Market based approaches to community economic development support the dominant political economy, with market activity driven by neoliberal ideology. This dominant political economy is characterized by capital mobility, increasing globalization, and privatization of government (DeFilippis 2004).

In market based community economic development, the scale of economic intervention is at the neighborhood or community level. The scale of the state most closely involved in economic development is local or municipal government. Just as state responsibility and funding for social welfare has been relegated to the local level by the federal government in the United States over the past few decades (O'Connor 1999), this devolution is also reflected in local government's increased involvement in local economic development. Instead of the federal government supporting community economic development by redistributing funds, the trend has been for municipalities to use their own resources to attract economic development. Evidence of this can be seen in 1) the flat or decreasing level of funding through community development block grants (and other federal government resources) for economic development in poor communities (O'Connor 1999; Bonds and Farmer-Hinton 2009), and 2) the increasingly entrepreneurial activities of local governments, as evidenced by local governments becoming direct investors, risk takers, and venture capitalists in economic development (DeFilippis 2004). At the same time, the scale of business has expanded over the past few decades. Business operations and markets are global with increasingly mobile capital, and this mobility allows for rapid investment and de-investment in local economies (DeFilippis 2004). In stark

contrast, in market based economic development, the scale of civil society is reduced to the individual consumer. Communities are conglomerations of individual interests, as indicated by purchasing patterns and preferences. This can be seen in local economic development targeted to building up retail districts, or meeting the purchasing preferences of those with disposable income.

In a perfect market capitalist economy the flow of economic resources is strictly between businesses and community (Olin Wright 2010). The business domain contains producers and the community domain contains consumers. Goods, services, wages and investment are expected to flow freely between businesses and consumers based on market forces of supply and demand. In this context, community economic development would only be concerned with the flow of economic resources between business and community. However, as explained previously, our economy is more accurately described as neoliberal. In neoliberalism there is an active role for the state in the flow and allocation of economic resources. In market based community economic development the local government intervenes directly to bring businesses and capital resources into a community by initiating or increasing the flow of resources to business entities (Cummings 2001). Examples of interventions include Empowerment Zones (Cummings 2001) and Tax Increment Financing, which offer direct grants, tax expenditures or abatements, land grants, or infrastructure improvements to businesses (Briffault 2010). Businesses in turn are expected to provide economic opportunities through more jobs and improve social conditions through greater access to goods and services, and through rising property values (Porter 1995) – the idea of a rising tide lifting all boats. This can be seen as the

creation or increase of a secondary flow and allocation of economic resources to community members.

In market based community economic development, investment and other economic decisions are made by business leaders despite the fact that major economic resources are coming from the municipality, and that communities contain substantial assets that businesses will take advantage of - for example, public education, workforce, consumers, physical infrastructure (Imbroscio 2004). Municipalities may offer tax abatements or even direct development grants, yet it is ultimately up to businesses whether to accept the resources and locate in the municipality. This decision will ultimately be made based on the potential for a return on investment, and leads to competition between municipalities in offering financial incentives to entice businesses into their political boundaries (Basolo 2000). Thus, the decision-making process in market based community economic development is led by those who control capital – whether individuals, businesses, banks, financial institutions, or public entities. Decision-making is privatized; it is based on potential return on investment, which drives where and how capital is invested.

Market based community economic development is primarily concerned with growth – not ecological sustainability or broader definitions of community sustainability. In the market economy, in order to provide greater and greater returns on investment, the exchange of goods and services feeds on constant economic growth, and relies on increasing the efficiency of businesses to provide these goods and services (Lewis and Swinney 2007). The logic of pro-growth is the foundation on which this approach to community economic development is based, with the needs

of big business prioritized over the needs of current and future community members. This logic of pro-growth does not attempt to evaluate the success of economic investment by local government (Reese and Fassenfest 2004); and it often ignores the significant contributions of small businesses, micro-enterprises and other community scale entrepreneurship and economic activity to community economies (Jennings 2011; Borges-Mendez et al 2005). Likewise this logic of pro-growth does not grapple with future dislocation of capital, jobs and economic benefits if and when a large business decides to close its doors or relocate to a new city (DeFilippis 2004), despite substantial and key investments by state and civil society in its local success.

Communities, more specifically poor urban communities of color, are conceived in limited ways within the market based local economic development framework. One dominant concept by which cities govern is through a “city limits” framework, one in which economic smarts are seen as fundamentally incompatible with redistributive policies (Peterson 1981). Cities are seen as being in direct competition with other cities, and local government policies must meet investment criteria and be deemed a good return on investment. Because city success is evaluated at the scale of economic development for the city as a whole, city economic policies cannot be redistributive, in ways that would more fundamentally tackle wealth disparity or poverty. Another dominant idea is that the flight of the white middle-class during earlier decades is the major economic problem in cities, especially in cities’ poorer neighborhoods. Thus, cities need to organize to attract the (white) “creative class” back to the city through local economic development that addresses the needs of this creative class (Florida 2003), rather than the needs of

existing, and less well off, citizens. This downplays the histories and structures that led to job loss, urban poverty and wealth disparity, and disconnection of neighborhoods from resources. It presumes a lack of assets, skills and knowledge in communities and among city residents. Furthermore, this vision does not address what will happen to residents who are not part of the creative class; it is silent on the impacts of gentrification. Instead, in priming the city for economic development and the return of the creative class, continued privatization of public space is seen as necessary to attract capital (Mitchell 1997). This need to attract outside capital is used as an argument to support punitive policies and practices with racialized outcomes: Giuliani’s “broken windows” campaign, or the supposed need for “stop and frisk” tactics by the police. These tactics make clear that “public” city spaces are intended only for certain residents, not all. Finally, underpinning these conceptions of urban communities is a persistent and pervasive narrative that defines, describes, and acts as if poverty is racial and behavioral rather than structural and historical.³

We summarize the dimensions of market based community economic development in the following chart:

Scale	Flow & Allocation	Decision Making	Growth & Sustainability	Conception of Community
Business is global, community and government are local	Government to Business	Controlled by business seeking return on investment	Pro-growth	Limited, isolated, lacking, individual

Figure 2: Five dimensions of market based community economic development

³ We want to thank and credit Professor James Jennings for his presentation to the Practical Visionaries Workshop on 2/14/12, which brought these concepts together for us in a clear, accessible way.

Chapter 5: Exploring the dimensions of community economic development

We venture that the majority of current strategies for local economic development are market-based approaches, and that they exist largely within the boundaries described above. Yet there are approaches to community economic development that make claims on doing business differently. In order to understand how these approaches embody new processes and lead to different outcomes, we now look at what happens when changes are made to key dimensions of community economic development: scale of business, civil society and government engagement; flow and allocation of resources; decision making and decision makers; and the tension between growth and sustainability. These dimensional changes do not exist in a vacuum, so we also look at the theories of change and conceptions of community driving changes within these key dimensions.

“Value-Based” Decision Making: Shared Value, Corporate Social Responsibility

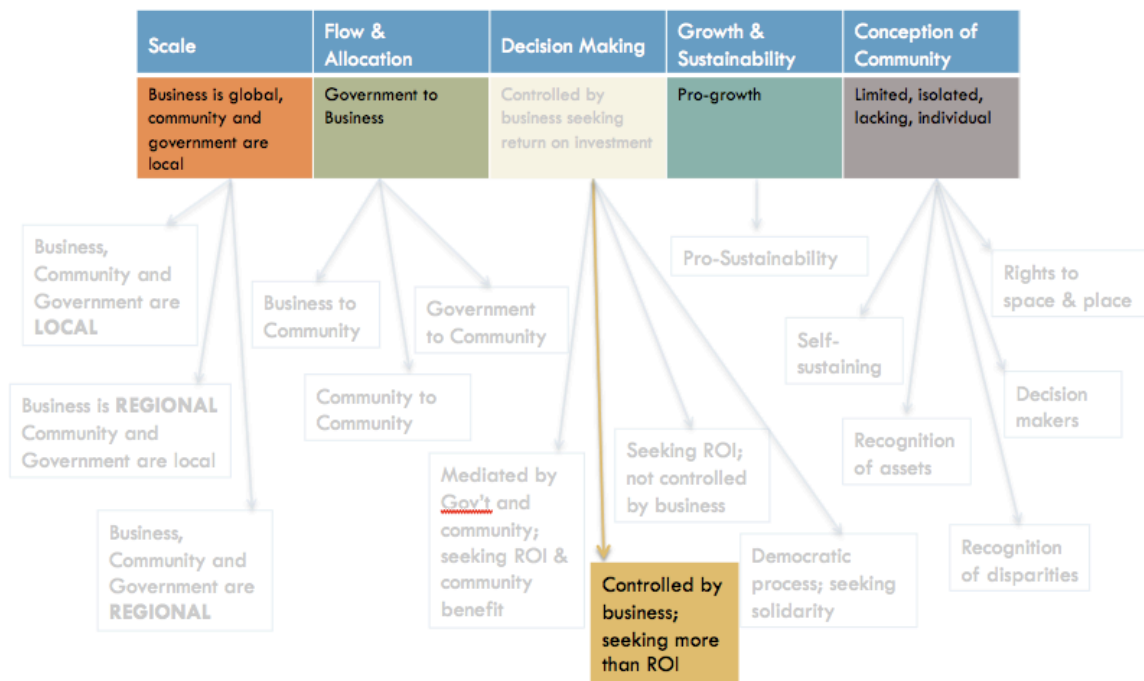


Figure 3: Dimensions of value-based decision making

What if economic investment in communities were driven by social values as well as financial return on investment? In recent years, academics and practitioners in community economic development, and in the business world more generally, have posited that realigning investment with shared social values will lead to better economic outcomes for everyone. This is demonstrated through the increasing visibility of triple bottom line businesses (with social, environmental and economic goals), impact investment, and corporate social responsibility in public discourse (Rangan et al. 2011). In community economic development, this change in the dimension of decision-making is most visible in the work of Michael Porter, with an emphasis on aligning business interests with community interests through “shared value” (Porter and Kramer 2011).

In value-based decision-making, individual businesses choose to meet both economic and social needs, creating a reduced role for both the public sector and the third sector, or nonprofits. Business leaders are asked to develop new skills and knowledge, in order to understand better what societal needs are and how they can be addressed through business operations (Porter and Kramer 2011). Businesses that incorporate and operate on principles of shared value or corporate social responsibility will have the effect of supporting growth and economic development in their host communities (Porter and Kramer 2011). Some of the decision-making process involved entails considering cluster business development, focusing on innovative product production, and supporting productivity of suppliers along the value chain. However, those individuals and corporations with the capital for investment are still ultimately making decisions about when, how and where to target this investment (O'Donohoe et al. 2010).

By improving the efficiency and connectivity of entrepreneurs and businesses along supply chains, by integrating social value into business decision making, the total pool of economic and social value is assumed to increase (Porter and Kramer 2011); this is explicitly not a distributive approach to economic development but about maximizing output for minimum input. Economic growth and development still happens “through private, for-profit initiatives, and investments based on economic self-interest and genuine competitive advantage” (DeFilippis 2004, p. 54) In *The Competitive Advantage of the Inner City* (1995), Michael Porter states: “A sustainable economic base can be created in the inner city, but only as it has been created elsewhere: through private, for profit initiatives and investment based on economic self-interest and genuine competitive advantage [...]” (p. 55-6). The

government's role is to set standards and promote innovation by funding schools, universities, and infrastructure; by enacting fair-competition laws; and by ensuring market transparency. Because of the interdependence of communities and the businesses that exist within them, advocates of a shared value approach stress that government policies should not be overly burdensome – this would undermine competitiveness and drive businesses to relocate (Porter and Kramer 2011). From this, it becomes clear that a shared value approach to community economic development is not something to be legislated or enforced by government or community. Instead, this change in the decision making process for economic investment relies on the enlightened self-interest of businesses.

Within the framework of shared value, economic problems are viewed as concentrated in poor communities rather than being systemic problems within the larger economy, its beneficiaries, and those it leaves behind. There is an assumption of a lack of social and economic connectivity in poor neighborhoods, and of a lack of entrepreneurship amongst poor city residents. In this context, local economic development is intended to address poverty, unemployment, disinvestment, leakage (money leaving the community), and a lack of goods and services through better integrating individuals and communities into the existing global market. Economic investments are intended to fill a void in economic activity, and take advantage of a missed business opportunity (Porter 1995). This is accomplished by aligning business and social values and interests, by pursuing shared value as determined by enlightened business leaders, and by business decisions to make strategic investments in poor communities.

Change in the Decision-Maker: Nonprofits as Decision-Makers, Comprehensive Community Development

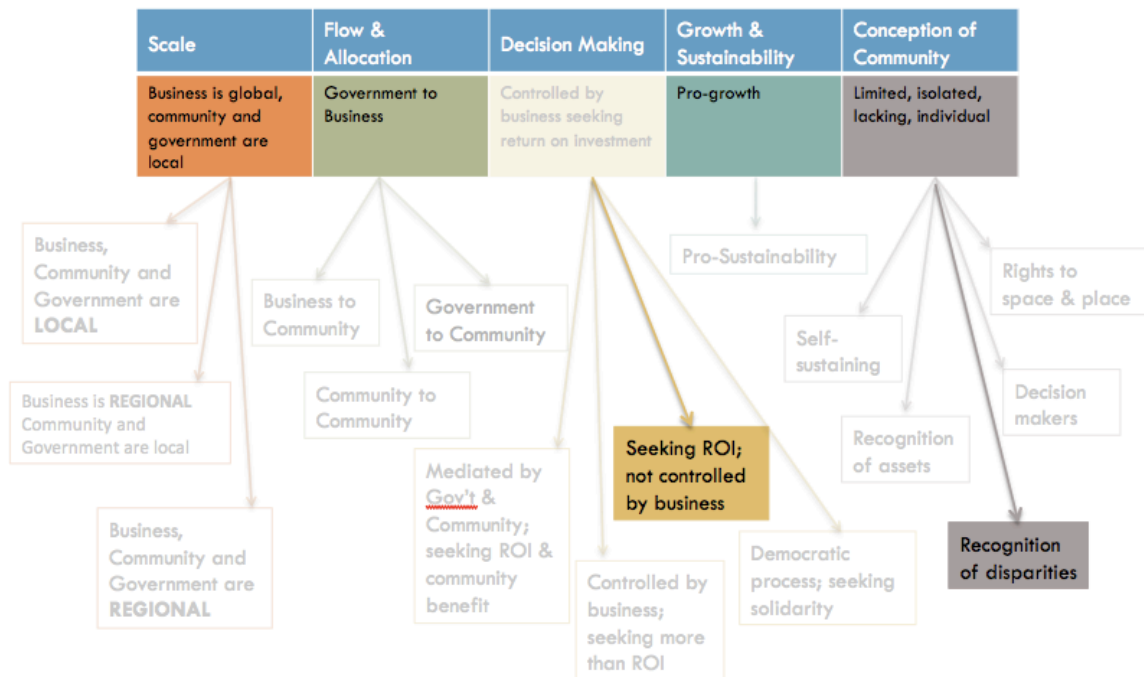


Figure 4: Dimensions with nonprofits as decision-makers

Decision-making is an important dimension of community economic development. Who decides the flow and allocation of economic resources and what criteria they use to make decisions are two of the most important ways of understanding community economic development. In the previous section, we saw that a change in the criteria for decision making in community economic development from simply maximizing return on investment to more complex values of community and environment, community economic development became characterized as either shared value, triple bottom line or impact investing. In this section, we now ask what happens when there is a shift in who the decision makers are? What if community development intermediaries and coalitions of community based organizations make investment decisions rather than business leaders or local government officials?

The decision makers in market based community economic development, including local government, individual businesses, or even individual non-profits with capital to invest, approach community development from a single sector—either education, employment, housing, environment or health. However, when the decision maker is a non-profit intermediary, there is potential for a cross-sector, comprehensive approach to community economic development. Proponents of this approach, including two of the leading intermediaries, Local Initiatives Support Corporation and NeighborWorks, claim intermediary directed funding—with some community input—to a geographical area defined as isolated from the market is the best approach to community revitalization (Walker et al. 2010). The intention of this targeted investment is to improve both physical conditions and social service delivery through a greater inclusion of the community in the market.

Local Initiatives Support Corporation's (LISC) Sustainable Communities program is an example of community economic development that has changed the decision maker from business leaders focused on return on their investment to a non-profit intermediary, also focused on return on investment. The intermediary approach maintains the decision-making criteria from the market-based approach, but the change in decision maker is still significant. An intermediary seeks a return in a different way than a standard business. They choose to invest in inner city neighborhoods that are often overlooked by outside business investors or accept a lower rate of return.

In regard to the other dimensions of community economic development, LISC's Sustainable Communities program reinforces the market-based approach. Business is global, the most important state actor is the local government and the

community is seen as an isolated set of consumers in need of better integration into the market. Furthermore, the program is still focused on increased growth, not addressing ecological limits as the name might suggest—more housing, more jobs, and more development. Specifically, the goals of the program are:

- “Expand investment in housing and other real estate, establishing the preconditions for sustained flows of private investment, while preserving housing and commercial space affordable to lower-income families and entrepreneurs
- Increase family income and wealth, enabling households to achieve modest levels of material well-being, educate themselves and their children, and in some cases, move to better quality housing in comfortable middle-income neighborhoods”
- Stimulate economic activity, expanding the range of retail services, broadening local entrepreneurial opportunities, and connecting people to employment options available throughout the broader economy” (Walker et al. 2010).

Intermediary-led community development claims to have created real improvements in the quality of life of residents. However, the intermediary approach will always be limited by the drive for a return on investment and the limited conception of the community as individuals needing to be better included in the market. For example, the site selection process passes up communities of greatest need; “some, if not most, of Sustainable Communities sites have selected neighborhoods based on the potential development opportunities...because they were adjacent to improving neighborhoods, or along well-travelled transportation

corridors...[or] alongside the new light rail line” (LISC 2010, 21). What about the areas that lack “potential development opportunities”? Furthermore, as evidenced in the program’s goals above, hoping to move people “up and out” of low income neighborhoods does not respect the value and potential of the community itself nor address the underlying causes of the economic conditions of the neighborhood.

Economic Development at the Regional Scale: Investment Regionalism

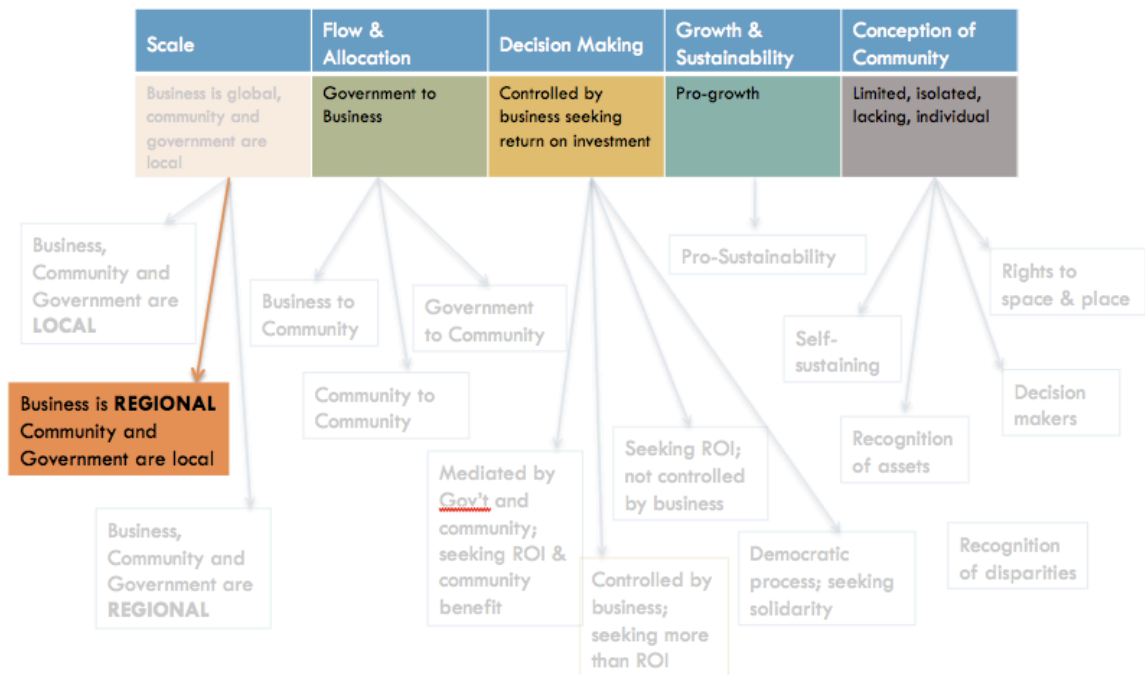


Figure 5: Dimensions of investment regionalism

In implementing economic development, the scale of activity for state, business, and civil society can be adjusted to achieve the goals of these three actors; and this change in scale impacts development efforts and their outcomes. As discussed, in market based community economic development, government interventions are at the local level, while business is operating at a global scale, and considers community members as individual consumers. When the scale of economic development is expanded to encompass a region, most often a metropolitan region, then government interventions are intended to foster regional

competitiveness – rather than the inter-city competitiveness of “city limits.” Instead of focusing on competition between cities, the question becomes: how can the region’s businesses compete effectively against the economies of other regions? This approach to economic development is often called investment regionalism.

From this perspective, strategic investment in a region will make it stronger in comparison to competing regions, allowing for market growth, import substitution, and increased export of goods and services. A strengthened region will be able to attract more businesses and provide more jobs. Guided by government intervention, and private business interests, strategic regional investment could be in specific industries, in clusters of interrelated businesses, or in anchor institutions, with attention paid to the region’s existing economic strengths and weaknesses. Decision-making is guided again by return on investment, and by whether these investments improve the regional economy by attracting more businesses and producing more jobs and a stronger tax base (Clark and Christopher 2009).

At the regional scale, municipal governments must work jointly to enable business competitiveness and economic growth by creating a favorable business climate. This intervention can include providing subsidies to businesses, lowering policy barriers, assisting in real estate development, and supporting industry clusters and regional innovation (Clark and Christopher 2009; Schragger 2009). The government also enacts policies such as tax incentives and low-interest financing that lead to redevelopment of land and, ultimately, increase land value and therefore the regional tax base. Whether through formal cooperation, or through new government institutions, the government is still acting as an entrepreneurial entity, investing public money and seeking return on investment (DeFilippis 2004).

The focus in investment regionalism is on economic growth at the regional scale and business competitiveness within the region, rather than on regional policies that redistribute wealth and opportunity (Clark and Christopher 2009). Within the context of the defined region, wealth generation, job growth, and export growth are used as measures of success in evaluating the effectiveness of strategies to grow the regional economy. These measures do not account for who is building wealth, and who is not, or what types of jobs are being created (Reese and Fassenfest 2004). Likewise, evaluations of investment regionalism do not account for the sustainability of products and services being created and exported from the region. It becomes clear that shifting the scale of economic intervention from the local to the regional does not imply new conceptions of community, nor does a shift to the regional scale change the overall flow of economic resources from government to business. What happens if government policies begin to address the flow and allocation of resources?

Changing Flow of Resources, Broadening Decision-Making: Distributive Policies⁴

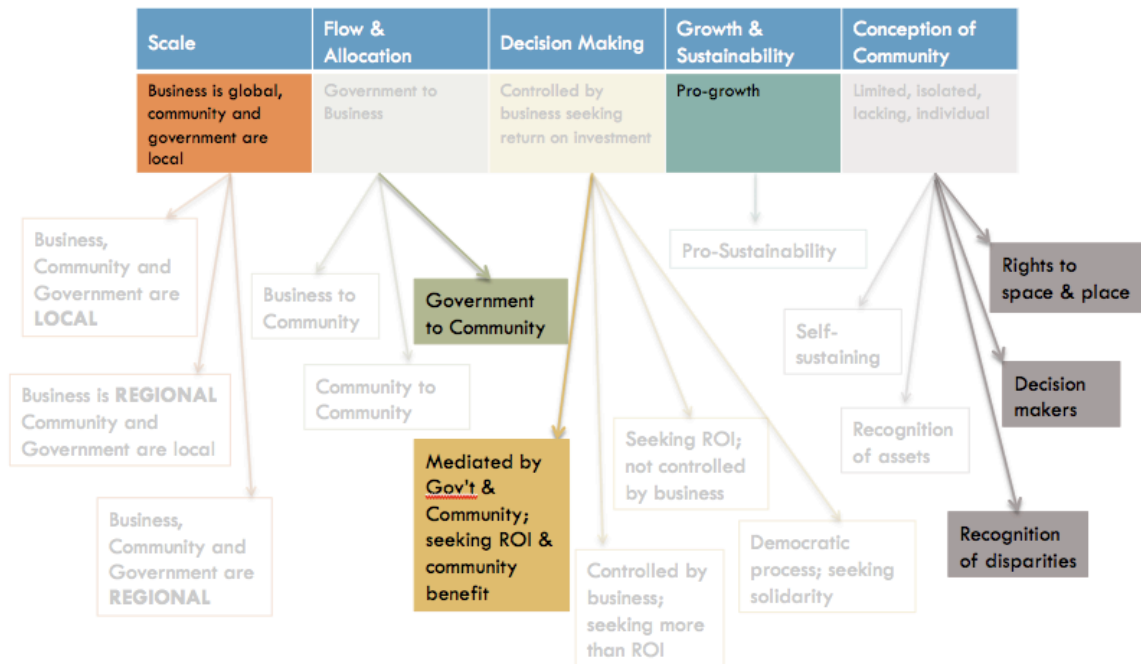


Figure 6: Dimensions of distributive policies

Municipal policies and direct agreements with developers – living wage and local hiring ordinances, and community benefits agreements (CBAs), respectively – have the potential to ensure that communities benefit more from local economic development, that benefits derived from public spending are more equitably distributed, and that communities have more control over the impacts and outcome of development. When fully implemented, these policies shift the key dimensions of decision-making and flow of resources in community economic development. And the community organizing and coalition building that secures project specific policies

⁴ We use the term “distributive” rather than “redistributive” here to emphasize that economic development activities are meant to lead to community-wide rather than narrow benefits, and that these policies help to bring practice closer to theory. We also choose to use distributive because of the ways in which the term “redistributive” has been co-opted to imply that profits are unfairly taken from one party and given to another. These policies are about fair initial distribution of the costs and benefits of development.

like a CBA can lead to broader and long-lasting strategies to secure economic justice (Parks and Warren 2009).

Local governments spend millions on incentives to promote private development. Poor and working city residents often do not benefit significantly from these private projects funded by public dollars, investments can perpetuate existing racial and social inequality, and communities are often negatively impacted by physical development, while having limited control over these projects and their outcomes. Community economic development that is modified by distributive policies is still driven by those with capital; developers and their investors are still deciding when and where to make investments. However, distributive policies contain provisions that allow decision-making in the development process to be moderated and modified by community members and/or local government, creating a potentially strong level of community control over impacts, outcomes and benefits (Loh et al., 2011). This has the potential to redirect flow and allocation of resources in more equitable ways. For example, living wage ordinances are achieved through negotiations between government, workers, community groups, and employers – and then made into binding law, often for specific sectors of business that benefit from government purchasing or incentives (Bernstein 2004). More than half of living wage ordinances are pegged to cost of living increases, so workers benefit from their effects after the initial negotiation of the ordinance.

Distributive policies are strategies that leverage economic or physical development in order to create and sustain developer or government commitments to local employment, local job quality, improvements to neighborhood infrastructure and open space, and other potential community benefits. Community benefits

agreements have the power to reduce local environmental impacts of development or provide affordable housing to decrease displacement of community members (Gross et al. 2005), but do not make claims on greater systems change. This is a community economic development strategy that uses growth to achieve its aims. Yet, distributive policies – as their name implies – do create an environment where the benefits and impacts of growth are distributed more equitably among individuals and between communities. Beyond ensuring that jobs generated by development go to community residents, local hiring ordinances or community benefits agreements often contain specific targets for hiring women and people of color, although these hiring targets are not always binding (Gross et al. 2005).

As with market based local economic development, municipal government plays a major role in enacting, monitoring and enforcing the policies and agreements that moderate the impacts and outcomes of economic development. Distributive policies are often specifically linked to economic development projects or businesses to which the government has committed public funding through city purchasing, tax abatements or incentives, or direct government contracting (Bernstein 2004). Yet, especially in the case of community benefit agreements, government and community-based entities and community members play a joint role in developing policies, and then in ensuring that policies are binding and obeyed by the businesses, developers or developments to which they apply. This represents a shift in who decision makers are, expanding the role of civil society, and in how decisions are made: explicitly taking into account community benefits and community demands. It also represents a shift in the conception of community – that existing communities and community members have rights to space and place, that they should benefit

from publicly funded economic and physical development, and that civil society has an important role to play in decision-making around economic development (Perera 2007).

It should be noted, however, that the success of negotiating binding community benefits agreements and living wage agreements has been mixed (Parks and Warren 2009). Success depends on the formation of a diverse coalition of actors in opposition to development; on this coalition being able to align its values and goals; and on good faith negotiation on the part of developers (CBAs) or elected officials (living wage ordinances). What sometimes begins as a broad and united coalition can be splintered by conflicting goals, or benefits of the CBA or living wage ordinance can be narrowed to a point where they are not broadly beneficial to community members or community economic development. As CBAs have taken off as a strategy, there have been several cases where CBAs that seemed legally binding were, in fact, not (Loh et. al. 2011; Gross 2007/2008).

Regional Scale and More Equitable Distribution of Resources: Regional Equity

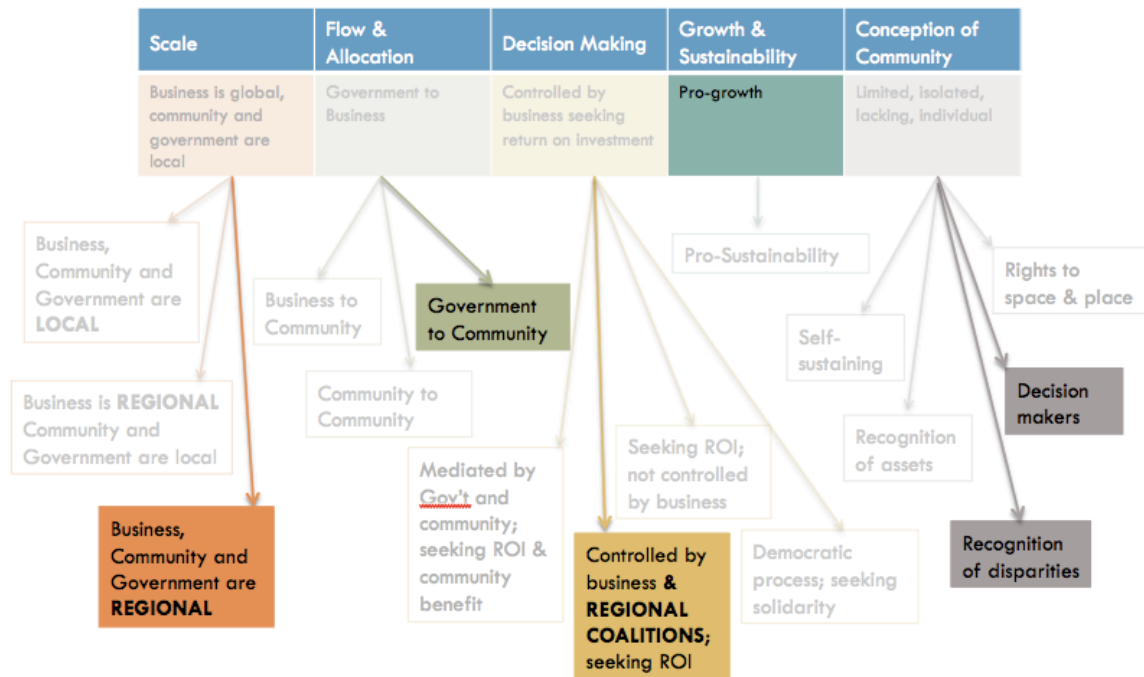


Figure 7: Dimensions within regional equity approaches

As seen in an earlier section, the shift to regional scale in terms of business, community and government significantly changes community economic development. However, regional scale community economic development still gives business leaders decision-making power over the flow and allocation of economic resources. Their focus may be on developing competitive regions, but investment decisions are still based on maximizing return on investment.

What if an approach went beyond changing the scale of community economic development to the region? What would community economic development look like if government intervention steered shared economic resources toward civil society rather than business? In market-based community economic development and an investment regional approach to community economic development, economic resources flow from the state to business through tax

abatements, grants, and land deals (Schragger 2009). Instead, community economic development can focus on economic resources flowing from the state to the community in an equitable manner such as transit infrastructure projects that hire local, disadvantaged populations and provide direct benefits to community members through increased public transportation.

According to proponents of Regional Equity (Pastor et al. 2011; Brenner and Kennedy 2011), a regional focus and a state to community economic flow would create a prosperous region. Regional equity links the growth of the region with the equitable distribution of resources and access within the region, “Equity is not only a matter of social justice or morality: It is an economic necessity...Equity matters to our economic recovery and our economic future. Equity is the superior growth model” (Pastor et al 2011, p. 5).

Focusing on the regional scale and directing public investment equitably to community members has the potential to significantly improve the well being of all within the region. Shifting the conception of community by focusing on the current and historic racial, gender and economic disparities is also important in improving equity. This approach also has the potential to make the same changes to who the decision makers are as we saw in distributive policies but at the regional level. Brenner and Kennedy (2011) call for “coalitions among unlikely partners” (p. 3); those unlikely partners are sometimes labor and community organization, but they can also be between community and business constituents. These coalitions and partnerships, however, do not necessarily change who the decision makers are. Brenner and Kennedy suggests equity oriented groups need to stop opposing business interests and instead team up with them: “regional equity proponents have

sought to move beyond oppositional protest politics, looking for opportunities to build unlikely alliances across multiple constituencies” (2011, p. 3). Pastor et al. (2011) concede that, “ultimately, the private sector must take the lead in producing economic growth that is truly inclusive. But leaders in the public and community sectors need to set up the right framework of policies, investments, incentives and strategies to guide that growth” (p. 20).

Regional equity and similar efforts are also limited because they continue the pro-growth logic of market based community economic development. As stated before, this is a “growth model.” Issues of equity are explicitly highlighted and potentially addressed, but only through leveraging continuous growth, which will ultimately lead to a different set of equity and health issues.

Scale, Flow and Decision Making Dimensional Change: Local Self-Reliance

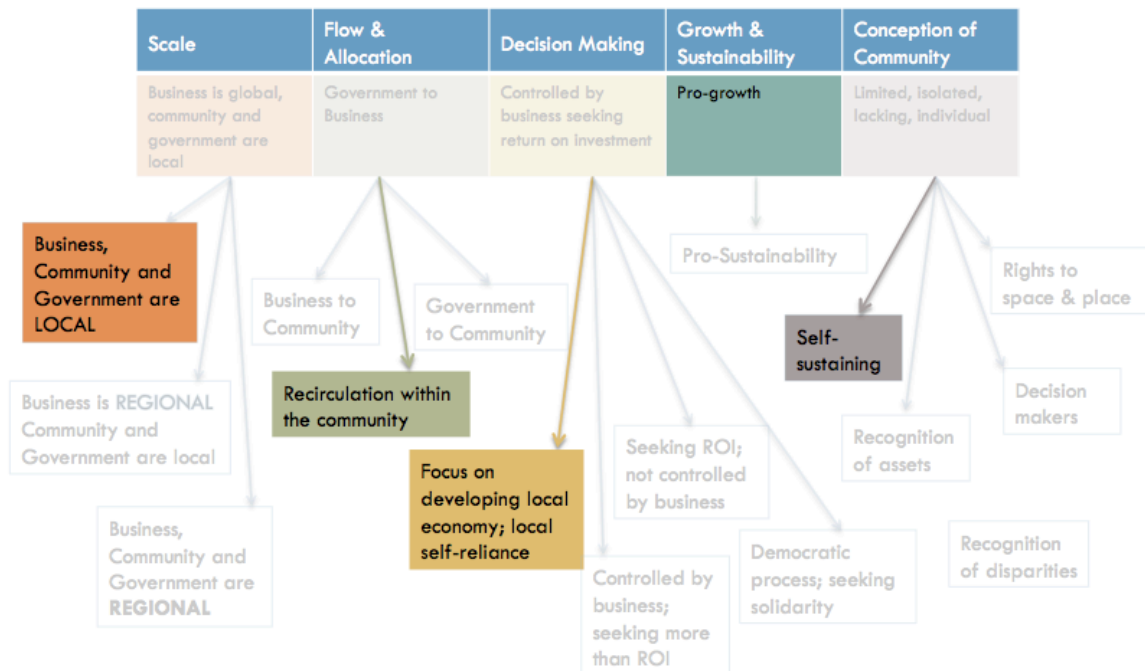


Figure 8: Dimensions of local self-reliance strategies

Instead of broadening the scale of community and state to the region and hoping business will follow as in the investment regional approach, or broadening the scale and having economic resources flow from state to community as we saw in regional equity, what would happen if community economic development focused on reigning in the global scale of business to the local scale? Such efforts are often referred to as Local Self-Reliance, which proposes that through endogenous development and internalizing and localizing resource flow (e.g. import substitution, growth of exports, resource conservation and increasing local investment) communities can maintain control of their destiny in a world of capital mobility and globalization (Imbroscio 1995, Talberth et al. 2006).

Localizing the scale of business does not necessarily remove business leaders from their lead role in decision making; however, the criteria for decision making has shifted from simply return on investment to endogenous development. Local government has not become the dominant decision maker, but its tactics are no longer exclusively geared towards attracting new business as in the market-based approach. Instead, according to Imbroscio (1995), local government is guided by two fundamental principles, “[the] pursuit of indigenous economic development...[and]...strong focus on a city’s resource flows” (p 841). Growing businesses within the locality is equally or, perhaps, more important than attracting new business. Policies that reduce the import of natural resources or that maximize the efficient use of current resources would create new opportunities for current businesses but not necessarily attract new business due to potentially higher costs.

Policies that internalize resource flows and reduce total resource use create a third dimensional shift. The pro-growth logic has been replaced by an emphasis on sustainability. Recognizing and respecting ecological limits is both an indirect outcome of an endogenous development agenda as well as a reason to pursue endogenous development.

Ideas of self-reliance also shift the conception of community from one in need of outside investment to one capable of meeting its own needs. Through interdependence, interconnectedness and a sense of shared fate, the community has the capacity develop and thrive.

Local self-reliance has the potential to create localities with the autonomy to determine their economic future. However, it is still a limited approach to community economic development; not all localities possess the internal resources to realize local self-reliance. Furthermore, local self-reliance does not guarantee that the same oppression, disparity and exclusion created by a global economy will not be repeated in a local economy (DeFilippis et al. 2010).

Democratizing Allocation of Resources and Economic Decision Making, Reducing Scale of Business: Collective Ownership

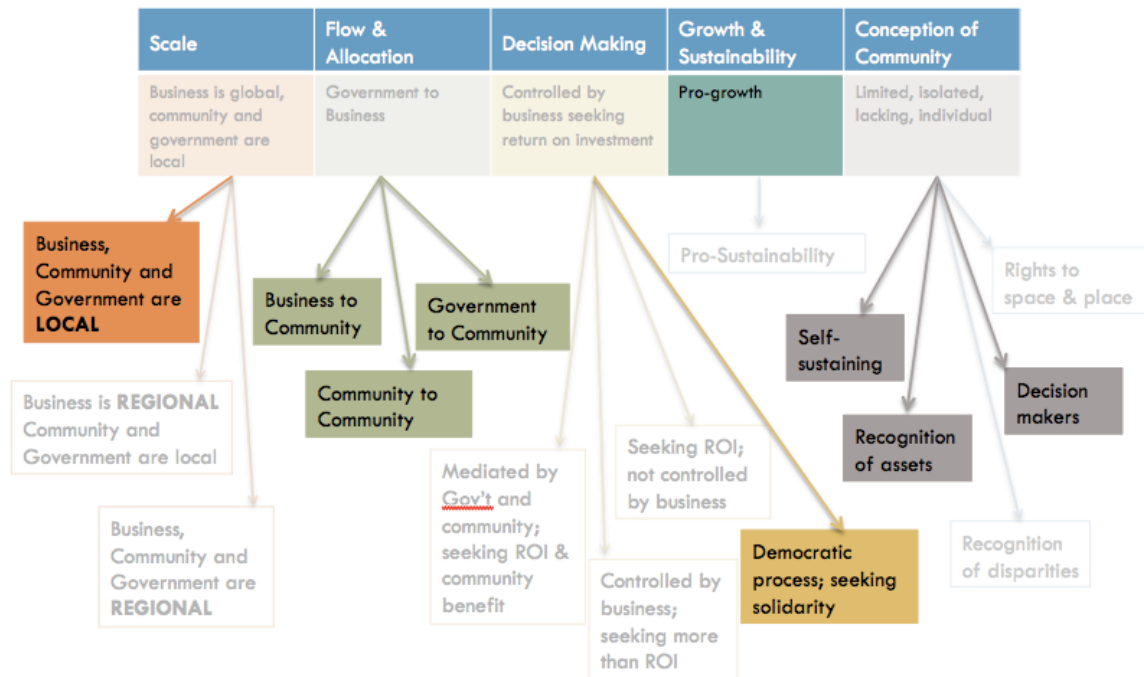


Figure 9: Dimensions of collective ownership

While distributive policy can be one route to more equitable allocation of resources, and shifts in decision-making around local economic development, we also wanted to look at ways of reorganizing business entities themselves that give rise to more equitable allocation of resources and more democratic decision-making. Worker-owned cooperative business models embody a democratization of the dimensions of resource allocation and decision-making; cooperatives also re-circulate economic resources within a community, as worker-ownership shifts the scale of business from the global scale to the local.

In models of collective ownership, which include worker-owned cooperatives but also cooperative models of housing and finance, members make decisions collectively and democratically (DeFilippis 2004; Kelly 2009). In smaller

worker-owned cooperatives this means that there is one vote for each member in making decisions; in larger worker-owned cooperatives, this can become representative democracy with elected boards making decisions (Olin Wright 2010). This collective decision-making drives the same business decisions that more hierarchical entities make: how to operate the business day-to-day; when and where to reinvest profits; how much each worker-owner will make as salary and how much equity worker-owners will build over time.

When compared to the types of jobs that result from market community economic development, often short-term construction and long-term retail jobs, cooperatives outperform these jobs in providing worker-owners with long-term job stability and living wages. Worker-owners make equitable and living wages, with salary differentiation between individual workers greatly reduced as compared to other types of businesses (Wright 2010). Within a cooperative institution, there is increased distribution of wealth and power. Shared ownership of work means that worker-owners are earning equal shares of the money that their business makes as they make shared decisions about their work. Surplus earnings are distributed evenly to worker-owners or reinvested in the business for mutual gain (Iuvienne et al 2010). As a single enterprise, the cooperative business has the capacity to improve the financial wellbeing of its membership, and through changes to wellbeing of worker-owners, it has the potential to increase the stability of the community in which the cooperative is located (DeFilippis 2004; Wright 2010). When workers took over their factories that had gone bankrupt and shut down during Argentina's fiscal crisis, the continued operation of factories by workers – now in mutually supportive decision-

making roles – helped to stabilize local economy for the people hit most hard by economic dislocation, factory workers and their families (Corragio and Arroyo 2009).

Business is global, and capital is highly mobile, and the rapid movement of capital has the potential to alter communities whether disinvested or invested. Collective ownership anchors capital in place, allowing for increased stability and sustainability of the local economy (DeFilippis 2004). This pulls the scale and activities of business and civil society closer together. Worker-owners are invested in communities not only by providing labor, capital and leadership within the businesses they own, but also as community members with ties to place that go beyond business success and failure. Individual worker-owners may decide to move and divest from a cooperative, but because of shared ownership, the business itself will not relocate. We want to note that networks of hundreds of cooperative enterprises – for example, Mondragon in Spain and La Lega in Emilia-Romagno, Italy – have the capacity to overcome local scale and achieve broader impact because of their interconnectedness (Smith 2003). In both these cases, the scale of the impact of economic activity and development has moved from the local to the regional, and beyond; but the cooperative model of each individual business continues to root its impacts in place.

When community economic development includes a focus on shared ownership, the conception of community is one that recognizes the assets, abilities and potential of communities and their members. Community residents are not conceived of simply as individual consumers or as sources of labor, but as producers, owners, entrepreneurs, and interconnected, interdependent members of the local economy that have the capacity to lead, innovate and make economic decisions. The

launching of networked worker-owned cooperatives as a community economic development strategy is gaining momentum in several places including Cleveland, Ohio – where the Evergreen Cooperatives are being supported as they start up through coordinated purchasing agreements with Cleveland’s largest institutions (Alperovitz 2011); and in Springfield, Massachusetts, and the Bronx, New York – two new collaborative efforts that will be discussed later in this thesis.

Chapter 6: Shifting all dimensions of community economic development

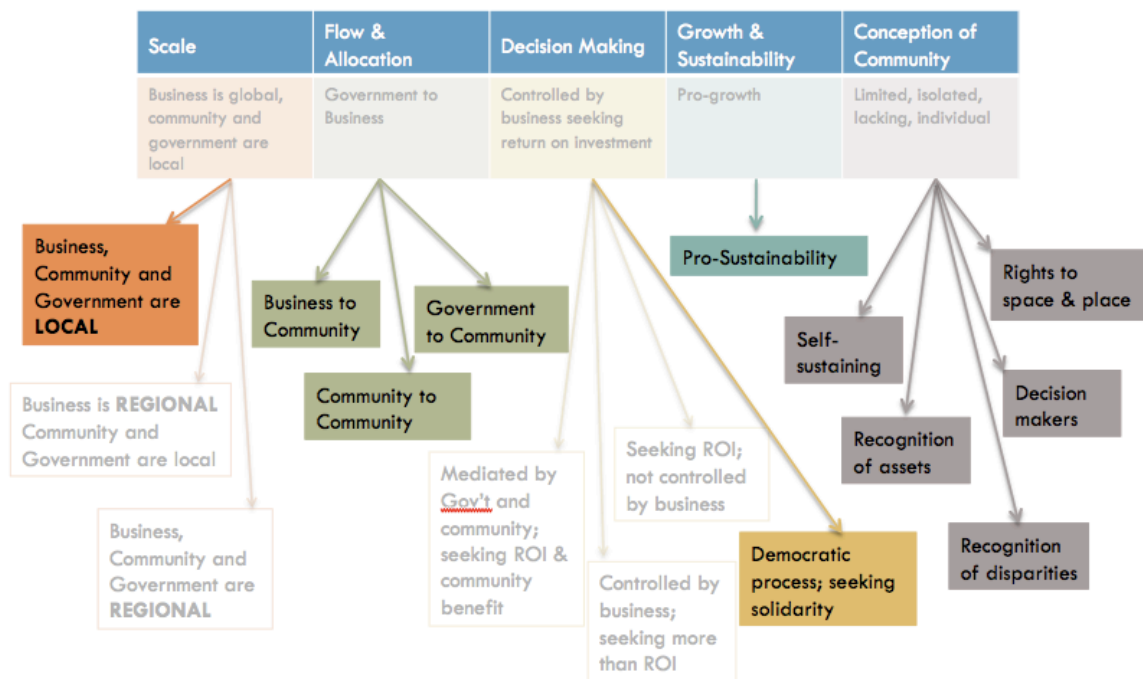


Figure 9: Dimensions within the solidarity economy

Having considered how shifting the dimensions of community economic development can lead to changes in community economic processes and outcomes, we want to consider what it looks like when all of our dimensions – scale, flow and allocation of resources, decision making, growth and sustainability, and conception of community – are fundamentally different from the ways that they operate in market based approaches to community economic development. To do this, we turn towards a powerful and transformative reframing of the economy – the solidarity economy.

The solidarity economy is a social movement that identifies and connects all of the diverse way that human needs are met (Miller 2010). Solidarity economies are economies that meet human needs sustainably, mutually, equitably, democratically,

cooperatively, and pluralistically. Without access to financial capital and without legitimate democratic engagement in economic processes, many people do not benefit from market-based approaches to community economic development, and economic stratification persists. In contrast, the solidarity economy strives for economic and social justice, and sustainability, through democratic economic processes, shared ownership, mutuality, fair distribution, and sustainable production and consumption. Solidarity economy principles can be applied to each part of the economy: creation, production, exchange/transfer, consumption/use, surplus allocation – and the overall governance of the economy (Miller 2010). The solidarity economy is not a single community economic development initiative, but instead the pluralistic conglomeration of worldwide economic activities that share a set of core values.

Briefly, the five dimensions that we have been discussing look like this in the solidarity economy:

- 1) The domains of business, civil society and the state operate at the same scale through increased mutual accountability and interconnectedness, whether considering local or global economic activities.
- 2) The flow of resources is circular and re-circulating, while the allocation of resources is equitably distributed between individuals and communities.
- 3) Decision-making is democratic, engaging all three social domains – business, state, and civil society – and is based on principles of mutuality, cooperation, and equity in sustaining livelihoods.
- 4) Sustainability is prioritized over growth, with a focus on increasing economic equity and stability within recognized ecological limits.

- 5) Community is conceived as empowered, and community collectively determines the roles, functions and processes of government and business.

The solidarity economy is highly local because democratized economic activities such as worker cooperatives, housing cooperatives, and local currencies are projects of local communities. However, solidarity economy proponents are actively connecting local initiatives into a larger global movement. Bringing it to global scale and global visibility is a matter of “raising up” and connecting existing community economies that already embody solidarity economy principles (Miller 2011). At its core, the solidarity economy works to align business, state, and civil society goals and interests. Because decision-making is deeply democratic, as we discuss more below, community members become economic decision makers at every level of government intervention and business investment. Lewis and Swinney (2007) place the solidarity economy at the convergence of business, state and civil society. The solidarity economy does not yet fully encompass all sectors of the economy, but all sectors are a part of the solidarity economy. As more economic activities incorporate the values of solidarity, the solidarity economy will encompass more of the three sectors. See Figure 10 next page.

Diagram 2: Reframing the Debate

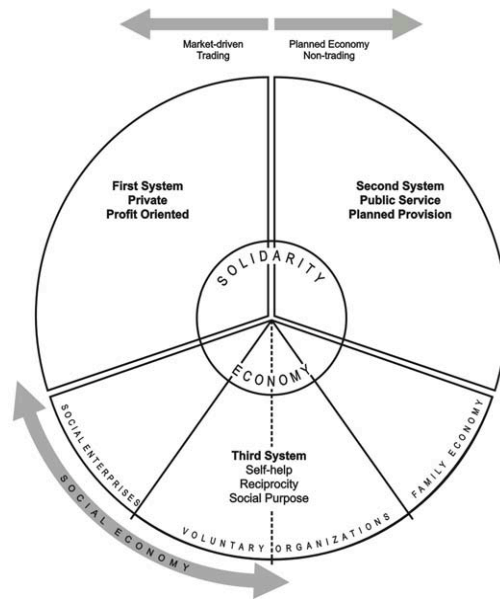


Figure 10: Lewis and Swinney's three systems of the economy

The solidarity economy is one that redistributes resources, wealth and power in equitable and mutually beneficial ways. This is encompassed in the idea of solidarity itself, that a more broadly defined economy is one that is centered around meeting all people's needs and on creating livelihoods, rather than profits, together (Miller 2010). In this broadened conception, there is affirmation of existing economic activities that meet basic community needs, like subsistence farming, and economic activities that promote increased mutuality and justice, like fair trade (Pyles and Berk-Clark 2011). Structures and systems within the solidarity economy are built to be redistributive and to re-circulate money within local economies: this includes formation of worker and purchasing cooperatives, participatory budgeting to share surplus collected by governments through taxes, and valuing of the non-market activities mentioned above. And, importantly, decision-making is built on principles of mutuality and shared benefit, rather than individual gain and accumulation of profit.

The solidarity principle of reciprocity means that economic decision-making rests on social justice, on mutual support and mutual gain (Lewis and Swinney 2007). These values are used as the criteria for decision-making rather than return on investment. Solidarity economy demands a change in who makes economic decisions. Redefining the economy to include all the ways in which we meet our daily needs elevates the voices of those outside of the market economy and not in control of capital as legitimate decision makers in the economy. Instead of being centralized or privatized, economic decision-making is democratic and intentionally oriented towards increasing shared responsibility (Miller 2010). Democratic decision-making in the solidarity economy is pluralistic – there is not one democratic institution that makes economic decisions or guides economic planning. Instead, among many other formations, direct democratic decision-making is found in worker-owned businesses that produce goods, governments that invest money into the community through participatory budgeting processes, or purchasing cooperatives that help families provide for their daily needs. The government does not simply provide space and structure for the solidarity economy to thrive; it is expected to incorporate and become part of the solidarity economy. The solidarity economy bridges the divide between private, public (government), and social spaces; it requires reimagining of the state itself, its roles and the ways it functions (Miller 2010). This is evidenced in places where government has committed itself to democratic economic planning, one example being the long-term commitment of Porto Alegre in Brazil to participatory budgeting and allocation of city funds directly by citizens.

In the solidarity economy, sustainability is prioritized over growth; distribution is prioritized over accumulation. The focus is on individual and

community livelihood, on achieving stability and living sustainably within ecological limits, rather than on rapid economic growth. Solidarity economy principles reject growth addicted, environmental and socially destructive economic activities for balanced, ecologically sustainable and mutually beneficial economic activities (Lewis and Swinney 2007). Solidarity economy redefines the economy as, “all of the diverse ways that human communities meet their needs and create livelihoods together” (Miller 2010, 1). The solidarity economy movement broadens the definition of the economy beyond growth oriented market economics to include other activities and relationships as part of the economy, relationships related to livelihood such as bartering, self-reliance, mutual assistance, child and elder care. It recognizes the importance of these nonmarket activities in achieving community sustainability.

The solidarity economy aspires to “build strong linkages across multiple sectors of society and economy, to build coordinated social movements in which opposition to injustice is intimately bound up with the creation of practical and inspiring alternatives” (Miller 2010). The solidarity economy is underpinned with a commitment to social justice, and this commitment to social justice is built into the solidarity economy’s practices, aspirations and activities. Community is central to the solidarity economy, and the conception of community is of interconnected and empowered community members. Civil society is not just working at the edges of government and business in the economy; community members are collectively making decisions about the role, function and processes of the state and business. Both state and business are conceived as extensions of community, embodying the principles of the solidarity economy.

	Scale	Flow & Allocation	Decision Making	Growth	Conception of Community
Market Based	Business is Global Community is Local Government is Local	Government to Business	Controlled by business seeking return on investment	Pro-growth	Limited, isolated, lacking, individualized
Value Based	Business is global Community is local Government is local	Government to business	Controlled by business, driven by return on investment and social values, as determined by business leaders	Pro-growth	Limited, isolated, lacking, individualized
Comprehensive Community Development	Business is Global Community is Local Government is Local	Government to Business	Controlled by non-profits & intermediaries seeking return on investment	Pro-growth	Limited, isolated, lacking, individualized
Investment Regionalism	Business is global Community is local Government is regional	Government to business	Controlled by business, driven by return on investment and development of region	Pro-growth	Limited, isolated, lacking, individualized
Distributive Policies	Business is global Community is local Government is local	Government to business; government to community; more equitably allocated	Business, moderated by government and community ; return on investment and community benefit	Pro-growth	Rights to space and place; role as decision makers
Regional Equity	Business is Regional Community is Regional Government is Regional	Government to Community	Controlled by businesses and regional coalitions seeking return on investment	Pro-growth	Historic, structural discrimination recognized and explicitly addressed; potential for involvement in development
Local Self-Reliance	Business is Local Community is Local Government is Local	Recirculation within the community; endogenous development	Government focus on developing local economy, local self-reliance	Sufficiency	Potential to be self-sustaining
Collective Ownership	Business is local Community is local Government is local	Business to community; re-circulates; more equitably allocated	Democratic, by worker-owners; return on investment and mutual gain	Pro-growth, increased stability	Recognizes assets, capabilities of community members
Solidarity Economy	Business, community, and government aligned at same scale	Circular and re-circulating; equitable allocation	Democratic, engaging business, state, civil society; driven by principles of mutuality	Sustainability is prioritized over growth	Empowered

Figure 11: Five dimensions of community economic development, considered across the full range of approaches to building community economies

Chapter 7: Towards transformative community economic development

The process of developing this framework for community economic development has allowed us to look more critically at the dimensions of economic development propositions, and helped us to identify opportunities within these dimensions for a more transformative approach to community economic development. Rooted in the dimensions we have discussed, there are five exploratory and evaluative questions that can be asked of any community economic development initiative:

- At what scale is economic development pursued, and who are the key actors from business, state, and civil society?
- What is the nature of flow and allocation of resources produced by this effort?
- Who are decision makers and what criteria inform their decisions?
- How is the tension between growth and sustainability addressed?
- What are the underlying ideas about community that inform this effort?

By parsing out the dimensions of community economic development in this way, by asking more critical questions of its processes and outcomes, we can start to have clarity around whether “new” approaches actually change the key dimensions of development efforts. As we applied this dimensional lens to multiple approaches and strategies in community economic development, we began to see that some strategies have more potential than others to make stronger demands on economy and government, and produce more equitable community economies. We also began to see that change along multiple dimensions, rather than only one dimension, added up

to more transformative community economic development. Regional equity approaches, which reform both the scale of economic intervention and the distribution of economic resources, have the power to be more transformative than approaches that address scale of intervention alone, such as investment regionalism.

For community based organizations thinking about their engagement in community economic development, an evaluation of the dimensions of particular initiatives could help in assessing where more work is needed; in considering whether to pursue or support new community economy initiatives; and in aligning current economic development work with the work of other organizations. The dimensional framework, too, is a way to understand the limitations of community economic development, especially in its current formation.

If multiple community economic development strategies were enacted in one place, this could build towards transformative change. Each strategy with transformative potential should not be seen as competing with others because each may transform different dimensions of community economic development. This is the power of working in coalition and identifying the multiple levels at which the economy can be shifted. This is the orientation of the Right to the City movement. It recognizes and is grappling with the importance of changing policy and the governance of the economy, at the same time that member organizations are committed to trying out new models of community enterprise and community economy. And, like proponents of the solidarity economy, the Right to the City Alliance is connecting local efforts for economic change and economic democracy through national coalition.

Given the five key dimensions that we have discussed, and the questions that they help us to ask about community economic development, what then does transformative community economic development mean to us? We venture that it means community economic development strategies that shift the power relations of Olin Wright's social domains – the power relations of civil society, the state and business – so that civil society has a stronger voice and role in determining the goals and outcomes of community economic development. It also means community economic development strategies that are both local and global, that recognize the expertise and contributions of communities, that enable a more equitable allocation of resources, that promote sustainability, and that engage in decision-making that is democratic, pluralistic, and inclusive.

Afterword: A Collaborative Thesis Process

As this was a collaborative thesis, we want to document the iterative process that informed our thesis work, encompassing our research methodology but also looking at why we chose to engage in a collaborative thesis. In the hope that other students will choose to pursue collaborative thesis projects, we want to reflect on what it means to approach thesis in a different way while still meeting the standards of Tufts University and the Department of Urban and Environmental Policy and Planning.

Last year's Practical Visionaries collaboration happened primarily within the workshop, where emerging nonprofit leaders and UEP students came together for co-learning and joint projects on just and sustainable community development. It was from these joint projects that the theme of this year's collaboration, and the focus of our thesis project, emerged. This year's collaboration around community economy included a second iteration of the workshop but also engaged a steering committee made up of leaders from Alternatives for Community and Environment, Boston Workers Alliance, Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative, Somerville Community Corporation, and Tufts UEP that helped to guide the workshop; a UEP Field Projects team, and the development of our thesis project. Here we focus on the collaborative development of our thesis project, but we want to note that it was only one thread within this broader collaboration, one with many moving parts.

The overarching research orientation and the central aim of the 2011/2012 Practical Visionaries collaboration was as follows:

In the midst of both a prolonged global economic downturn and ecological crises, communities are faced with the challenge of addressing both at a local scale. Alternative visions and experiments

in developing new and localized economies are emerging that can build community wealth and health and contribute to meeting the climate change challenge. In Cleveland, the Evergreen Cooperatives are building a network of worker-owned green businesses (styled after the Mondragon in Spain) that aim to employ up to 500 people. In Springfield, MA, the Alliance to Develop Power is building what they call their community economy, anchored by tenant ownership of four affordable housing developments. The national Right to the City Alliance has just put out a strategy for 21st Century Cities, in which communities are not only making demands of the old economy, but developing their own “productive economic relationships based on the principles of mutual aid, shared resourcing, and local control of the means of production,” such as worker-owned businesses and housing cooperatives.

Each of these efforts (and more) may contain the seeds of a new economy that localizes production, builds shared wealth, and meets local community needs while helping to sustain ecological integrity. The Spring 2012 Workshop will explore both theory and practice and further the work towards new and localized economies here in the Boston area. Some of the driving questions for our inquiry and research include:

- While Walmart tries to tap new urban markets such as Roxbury and Somerville, what are the alternatives that we can grow from within our communities?
- What could a new and localized economy look like in Greater Boston’s urban neighborhoods?
- What kinds of economic development planning, community-building, and policy change are necessary to germinate the seeds of this new economy?

As the objective of our thesis work was to provide useful research for base building organizations in the Boston area, the research steering committee met monthly and helped to form the agenda for the Practical Visionaries Workshop and to provide input for our thesis research. We began our thesis process assuming the research steering committee would provide us with direct research questions to pursue, but quickly we realized the process would be less direct. The organizations were only beginning to consider new strategies for community economic development, therefore they did not have neatly crafted research needs to translate

into a thesis. Instead, we used the steering committee meetings as a constructive space for the community leaders to share personal as well as organizational concerns, curiosities, reflections, and perspectives regarding the field of community economic development. We added our thesis ideas to the general discussion and used the partners as a sounding board to see which directions resonated and which did not. Had the steering committee been comprised of leaders from a single organization we might have been able to arrive at a more specific research project, but having a variety of stakeholders in the room with varying constituencies and organizational capacities and interests, we headed toward a broad analysis of community economic development as it relates to the non-profit sector in general.

Another part of the collaboration that informed our thesis project was participation in a reading group that brought together partner organization senior leadership around some of the theory that we discussed as we were developing our thesis. This was an opportunity to talk about alternative economic theory in the context of how it relates to organizational practice, goals, and social movement building. It was invaluable to be part of a conversation with experienced nonprofit leaders. Then, as we began to tease out the five dimensions of community economic development that we discuss in our thesis, it was also helpful to present our ideas and framework to the participants in the Practical Visionaries Workshop on two occasions. This experience helped us to refine our articulation of different types of community economic development, to ground the theoretical literature in practice, and to question and defend the direction that we were taking with our work.

Collaborating on our thesis allowed us to reach a deeper level of understanding of theory and other literature, as we were able to read the same pieces

of writing, then share and critique the literature together. We both recognized that this helped us in better analyzing what we were reading, and pushed us to take our critique further by generating new ideas. Sometimes this collaboration involved simply reading the literature closely and then setting time aside for discussion, but evolved to include diagramming out the connections between what we were reading. Visualizing connections, similarities and differences between approaches to community economic development became important as we linked theory to current and potential practice in the field, and began to tease out the dimensions of a more transformative community economic development. Of course, this process intersected with the various other opportunities within the Practical Visionaries collaboration – whether discussion with organizational leaders, workshop readings and reflections, or presentations of our evolving framework – to push our joint analysis further. In other words, there were plenty of reality checks and ways to test our thinking along the way, whether from each other, our advisor, or the broader Practical Visionaries research group.

Undertaking a collaborative thesis also required us to develop our own co-writing and co-editing process. We did not simply attempt to divide the work of one thesis between the two of us, nor did we try to merge two separate, independent theses into one. We sought to engage in a collaborative learning and research project that resulted in a co-written and co-edited work. There were challenges to the collaborative process, but none were insurmountable or detracted from our final product. At times the best way to communicate our ideas was to both independently write the same section, knowing that when we brought the work together some was going to be discarded as redundant. This challenge and others were addressed

through good communication and planning, resulting in a co-written and co-edited final product that we feel is more than simply the doubling of either of our individual efforts. By sharing some details from our process we hope to encourage and aide future students interested in a collaborative thesis.

Our collaborative process usually manifested in one of two ways. We either divided up sections, each of us independently taking on a specific topic or section and any related literature. Or we worked on the same section together, reviewing the same literature, discussing the arguments and then passing a shared document back and forth until the section was complete. In the first way, the collaborative advantage was being able to discuss how seemingly disparate sections should come together, how to transition between them, and collectively determine what should be included. In the second way, the collaborative advantage was being able to begin the writing process with a discussion or, at times, a debate over how to interpret an author's ideas or a contentious claim by a development initiative. In an independent thesis, the final product may be your first entry into a discussion relating to the topic, but in the collaborative thesis the final product is the culmination of an ongoing discussion.

Initially, we assumed that our joint work around the dimensions of community economic development would be a small, though crucial, piece of our respective thesis projects. We imagined it as an expanded literature review, rather than a critical analysis. However, we soon realized that this joint analysis would involve a larger commitment of our time, critical thinking, and creativity. This realization came through our desire to understand and analyze the proliferation of community economic development alternatives, and because of the desire of the Practical Visionaries research team members (us included) to pinpoint what better

alternatives to 'business as usual' might be and *why* they were better than business as usual. How can we weigh opportunities for community economic development against one another in a meaningful and systematic way? A framework for a more transformative community economic development then, grounded in shared principles, became one way of analyzing and evaluating potential opportunities and pitfalls in building local economic alternatives. The process that we went through in developing this framework, in identifying and describing dimensions of a more transformative community economic development, really laid the groundwork for the second, independent part of our respective thesis projects.

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Part II:
**Community Economic Development in the Food
Economy**

**The transformative potential of worker organizing,
procurement practices, and new business development**

Ian Adelman

Introduction to Part II

In Part I of this thesis project we developed a framework for exploring and evaluating the transformative potential of any approach to community economic development. We identified five key critical questions that should be asked of any community economic development initiative:

- At what scale is economic development pursued, and who are the key actors from business, state, and civil society?
- What is the nature of flow and allocation of resources produced by this effort?
- Who are the decision makers and what criteria inform their decisions?
- How is the tension between growth and sustainability addressed?
- What are the underlying ideas about community that inform this effort?

In Part II of this thesis I apply this evaluation method to the Real Food Challenge, UNITE HERE's Real Food. Real Jobs. campaign, and the Green City Growers Cooperative initiative. Each of these initiatives represents a different type of anchor institution, food-based, approach to community economic development. But, before I analyze these specific approaches, I first provide an introduction to anchor institutions as prominent actors in community economic development, then summarize what I see as the three types of anchored, food-based, community economic development strategies. The analysis shows that these three types of strategies are limited on their own but collectively have transformative potential. In the final chapter I propose some starting points for a food-based approach to

community economic development at Tufts University based on the analysis in the preceding chapters and some preliminary data from Tufts Dining Services. In addition to introducing new ways of approaching food-based community economic development, I find that for pragmatic reasons the three types of approaches should be pursued in conjunction.

Subsequent researchers or community-based organizations can use this thesis as an introduction to and a justification for focusing on anchored, food-based, community economic development strategies. Hopefully I have provided new insights into how to begin. If you take the time to become familiar with the work and believe it to be a fruitful strategy in the wider struggle for economic, environmental and social justice, I invite you to pick up where I left off.

Chapter 1: Anchor institutions and Community Economic Development

The term “anchor institution” refers to universities, hospitals, museums, stadiums, military bases and other significant institutions that cannot quickly pack up and leave town. Economically, socially, and culturally, these institutions are closely connected with their host communities. Charles Rutheiser, a senior Fellow at The Annie E. Casey Foundation, credits Harvard Business School professor Michael Porter with coining the term “Anchor Institution” in the 2002 paper “Leveraging Colleges and Universities for Urban Economic Revitalization.” In the paper, universities and colleges are described as “well positioned to spur economic revitalization of our inner cities, in great part because they are sizeable businesses anchored in their current locations” (ICIC 2002, p. 2). But well before Porter and other contemporary community revitalizers turned their attention toward the “eds and meds,” the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), starting in 1994, had been leveraging universities to advance the well being of cities by funding university-community partnerships (HUD 2005). Others see the university-community partnership having roots in the Progressive Era. Universities and students played key roles in staffing and partnering with settlement houses (Axelroth and Dubb 2010).

Currently there is a resurgence of interest in the role of anchor institutions in community economic development. In 2007 the University of Pennsylvania hosted a national conference, “Urban Anchors in the 21st Century: A commitment to Place, Growth and Community.” Then, in 2008, Penn’s Netter Center for Community Partnerships published the *Anchor Institution Toolkit*. In 2011 Michael Porter and his

think tank, Initiative for a Competitive Inner City, published “Anchor Institutions and Urban Economic Development,” a paper strikingly similar to its 2002 paper (ICIC 2011). Perhaps the prominence of anchor institutions in economic development is correlated to downward cycles in the economy when the institutions seem to offer the last bastion of resources in struggling communities. Gaffikin and Perry (2012) agree that anchor institutions have become defining features of a city, but, however, seem to think their centrality is merely a product of contemporary economic and political conditions. They say, “in a time of globalized fluidity and mobility, the rootedness of such bodies contrasts with the increased flows of people and capital; volatility of property value and availability; neoliberal attention to individual rights and a concomitant erosion of collective entitlement, expressed in a hallowing out and rescaling of state responsibility to a decentered and individuated policy of localism; and a related fragmenting of urban politics and policy” (p 17).

Impact of Anchors

No matter the novelty of the concept, the economic impact of these anchor institutions is still significant. In the inner city, “Eds and Meds” are often the largest employers. In 2008 they held \$100 billion in real estate and spent \$200 billion on goods, services and payroll (ICIC 2011). In about two thirds of the country’s largest cities, the top employer is a university or a hospital (Living Cities 2012).

Furthermore, it is argued that the shifting of the economy from manufacturing based to service and information based has increased the importance of anchors (Living Cities 2012). The growth of Eds and Meds actually made up for the decline of manufacturing in cities like Boston (Murphy 2011). Anchors also have the potential

to create unity among disparate economic actors and planning agencies (Murphy 2011).

The University of Pennsylvania is often cited as the most prominent example of the impact an anchor can have on its community. In 2010 the University and its health system's expenditures totaled \$9.5 billion within Philadelphia, which supported 56,200 jobs. The University itself employs 31,000 workers directly with an annual payroll of \$2.3 billion. Even during the recession, the university increased spending (U Penn 2010).

Why act like an Anchor?

As exemplified by the University of Pennsylvania, an anchor institution can have significant economic impact on its community, but why should it? Syracuse University Chancellor Nancy Cantor attracted criticism for her initiatives that focus university resources on revitalizing the city of Syracuse. Her critics said she was inappropriately using university resources for non-academic uses and causing the school to slip in the national rankings (Wilson 2011). Cantor and other like-minded institutional leaders argue that universities have a mission to address the problems facing society and cannot do so without engaging with their surrounding communities. Nationally and globally there are organizations leading efforts to fulfill and strengthen the civic roles and purposes of higher education. For example, Campus Compact is a coalition of over 1,000 colleges and universities working to fulfill the civic purposes of higher education in the U.S. The Talloires Network is a coalition of universities from over 60 different countries committed to similar goals.⁵

⁵ More information can be found at www.compact.org and www.talloiresnetwork.tufts.edu

Webber and Karstrom (2009) make an even more straightforward argument for why institutions should act like an anchor: it is in their self-interest. They believe that the benefits simply outweigh the costs. Anchor strategies that combat local issues of crime and safety can pay dividends by making the institution more attractive for talent or capital. Anchors own significant amounts of property; therefore, investing in the local community may increase the value of those real estate holdings. Initiative for a Competitive Inner City seems to agree with this argument, but complicates it by saying institutions should take on anchor roles because it creates “shared value” (ICIC 2011). They argue that spending locally or building community infrastructure or realizing any of the other five anchor roles (see Chapter 2) creates value for both the institution and the community. The two are interdependent.

Institutions are also acting like anchors due to outside pressure from community organizations and local governments. Community members and local governments that are suffering from unemployment and a fiscal crisis look at the wealth of anchor institutions and make demands. Since most anchors are tax-exempt entities, many local governments and community groups are demanding payments in lieu of taxes (PILOTS). For example, Community Labor United studied Boston’s academic medical centers—a highly regarded cluster of non-profit anchor institutions—and found that they fail to pay their fair share for municipal services, nor do they “provide an adequate level of charity care to the poor, one of the core purposes underpinning their nonprofit status” (Smith 2008, p 6).

Chapter 2: Towards Transformative Community Economic Development?

Clearly anchor institutions can be important actors in community economic development and can claim a variety of reasons for doing so. But, to what extent, is anchor based community economic development transformative? Specifically, what is the transformative potential of anchor based community economic development in the food economy? With regard to anchor-based approaches in general (I will address the food specific approaches in the subsequent chapters), it is very difficult to determine their transformative potential. Each institution is unique, with its own approach. Initiative for a Competitive Inner City, however, presented what they believe is a generalized “framework” for understanding anchor institution community revitalization (ICIC 2011). They propose seven roles through which an anchor institution can impact its host community: Purchaser; Employer; Workforce Developer; Cluster Anchor; Community Infrastructure Builder; Core Product or Service Provider; and Real Estate Developer. “Community and Economic Vitality” will be realized when all seven of these roles are developed (ICIC 2011). See chart below:

THE ROLE OF ANCHORS IN COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION: STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK



Figure 1: Initiative for a Competitive Inner City Strategic Framework (ICIC 2011)

As stated before, this framework depicts a hypothetical, generalized and idealized approach to anchor based community economic development. I consider its transformative potential along our five dimensions of community economic development not to draw conclusions, but to provide a starting point for considering specific, on-the-ground approaches in later chapters.

First, recall the dimensions of a market-based approach to community economic development summarized in the chart below:

Scale	Flow & Allocation	Decision Making	Growth & Sustainability	Conception of Community
Business is global, community and government are local	Government to Business	Controlled by business seeking return on investment	Pro-growth	Limited, isolated, lacking, individual

Figure 2: Five dimensions of community economic development

The question is, to what extent does the anchor-based approach, as proposed by ICIC (2011) shift the five dimensions? First, with regard to scale, anchor based approaches are an attempt to localize business. Central to the anchor strategy is using anchor purchasing to support local businesses as explained in the “purchaser” role. The local purchasing is also part of a strategy to develop a local cluster of related businesses—again supporting the importance of local business as opposed to the market based approach of attracting global businesses from outside the community. So there is a noticeable shift in scale.

In terms of flow and allocation of economic resources, anchor strategies are explicit efforts to create or strengthen a flow of economic resources from an anchor institution to the local community or businesses. In ICIC’s framework, this flow is referred to as building “community infrastructure,” training and employing local residents, or, as mentioned before, purchasing locally. So, again, this is a shift from the market based approach.

It is less clear, however, if there is a significant shift along the decision-making dimension. ICIC argues for a shift in the criteria by which institutions should make decisions. Instead of basing decisions exclusively on the financial well being of the institutions, they should make decisions based on “shared value,” opportunities

to create value for both the institutions and the host community (ICIC 2011; Porter and Kramer 2011). Despite this shift in criteria, there is no shift in who the decision maker is. It is the institution that decides to engage in any of the seven roles and leads in the creation of shared value.

In terms of the growth and sustainability dimension, anchor strategies are about leveraging anchor resources to grow the local economy. There may be specific efforts to create businesses that address environmental issues within the community or the anchor institution, but the overall goal appears to be growth.

There is change, however, along the conception of community dimension. The community may still be seen as limited, isolated or lacking, but it is no longer perceived as simply a set of individual customers or clients. Instead, anchor strategies acknowledge the well-being of the institution itself as interdependent with the well-being of the surrounding community. These changes are summarized in the chart below:

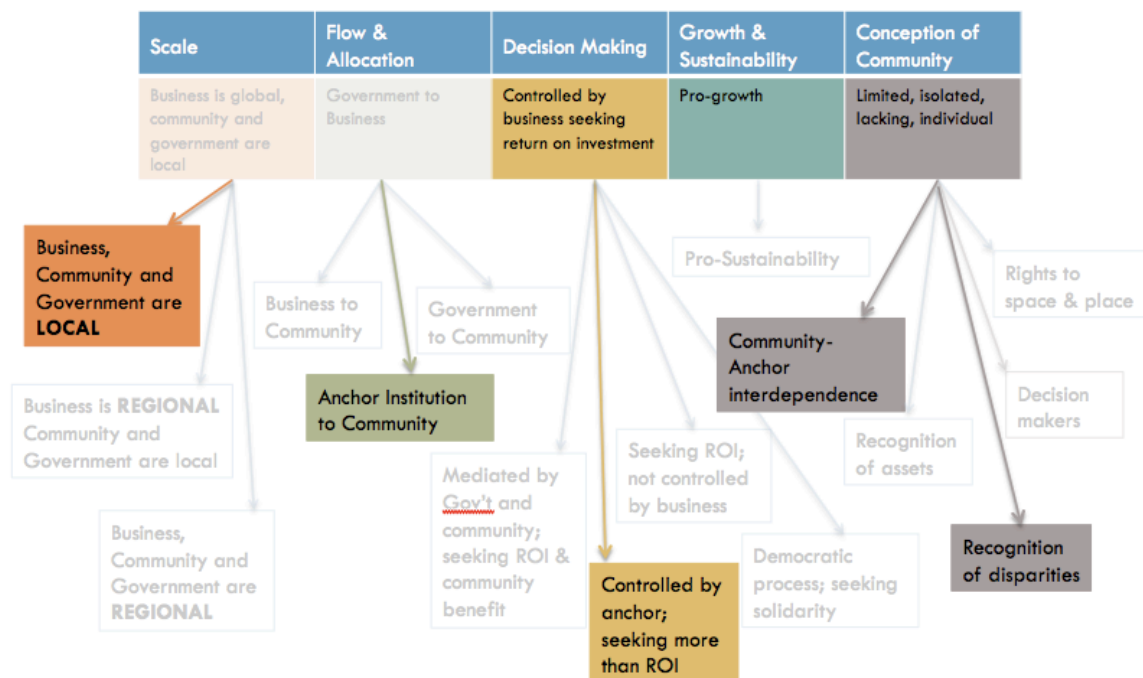


Figure 3: Dimensions of ICIC's Strategic Framework

This analysis reveals that anchor based approaches as proposed by ICIC, even in their most ideal form, still have limited transformative potential. What, then, is the transformative potential of food-based, anchor institution approaches, such as the Real Food Challenge, Real Food. Real Jobs, and Green City Growers Cooperative? Do these initiatives also shift the scale, the flow and allocation, the conception of community, the criteria for decision-making? Can they overcome the limitations of the ICIC framework by shifting who the decision maker is and addressing the tension between growth and sustainability? In Chapter 3 food based and anchor supported community economic development initiatives in general are introduced. Then in Chapter 4 three specific initiatives are analyzed along the five dimensions.

Chapter 3: Community Economic Development and the Food Economy

The recent trend in the U.S. economy has been the loss of manufacturing jobs overseas and the growth of various service jobs back home. The food sector, which employs nearly 20 million workers and sells over \$1.8 trillion in goods and services (13% of U.S. GDP), is contributing to the growth of service jobs (Food Chain 2012). Job growth in food retail and service has outpaced other private sector job growth (Food Chain 2012). There is particularly strong growth in urban areas. “Millions of jobs, many within the reach of most urban residents, exist in food processing, manufacturing and distribution chains and the food service divisions of the many huge urban institutions” (Astor et al. 2012, p2). Given the strength of the food sector it makes sense to explore the potential of food based community economic development. However, the challenges facing food chain workers need to also be kept in mind.

The Food Chain Workers Alliance conducted a study, “The Hands That Feed Us”, which lays out the challenges facing food chain workers. According to the study, most food chain workers are paid incredibly low wages; the median wage for 86% of food sector workers is \$18,900. Their survey of front line food chain workers also found that 23% of workers were paid subminimum wages and 37.6% were paid poverty wages. Only 13.5% were paid a living wage. Furthermore, workers have limited mobility or opportunities for advancement and are often subject to wage theft and abuse (Food Chain Workers 2012).

Anchors and the food economy

Anchor institutions are major purchasers and distributors of food and employers of food service workers. “Institutions represent nearly ¼ of all food spending” (ICIC Food Cluster Webinar p14). Universities and colleges generated over \$19 billion in food service revenue. Primary and secondary schools generated \$12.84 billion, hospitals and nursing homes generated over \$21 billion, and recreation and sports centers generated \$5.48 billion (Miller and Associates 2011).

See chart below:

NONCOMMERCIAL RESTAURANT SERVICES

(Businesses, educational, governmental, or institutional organizations which operate their own restaurant services)

• Hospitals (includes voluntary, proprietary hospitals, long-term general, TB, nervous and mental hospitals, state and local short-term hospitals, and federal hospitals):	\$ 16.25 billion (4.1%)
• Clubs, sporting, and recreational camps:	\$ 9.21 billion (2.4%)
• Nursing homes (includes homes for the aged, blind, orphaned, and the mentally and physically disabled):	\$ 7.76 billion (3.5%)
• Public and parochial elementary, secondary schools:	\$ 6.42 billion (2.9%)
• Colleges and universities:	\$ 6.70 billion (2.4%)
• Community centers:	\$ 2.23 billion (3.3%)
• Transportation:	\$ 1.97 billion (6.6%)
• Employee restaurant services:	\$ 417 million (2.9%)
• Total:	\$ 50.98 billion (3.4%)

FOODSERVICE CONTRACTOR-MANAGED SERVICES

• Colleges and universities:	\$ 13.69 billion (4.6%)
• Manufacturing and industrial plants:	\$ 6.90 billion (2.6%)
• Primary and secondary schools:	\$ 6.02 billion (4.8%)
• Recreation and sports centers:	\$ 5.48 billion (4.6%)
• Hospitals and nursing homes:	\$ 5.18 billion (5.5%)
• Commercial and office buildings:	\$ 2.61 billion (2.6%)
• In-transit foodservice (airlines):	\$ 2.16 billion (4.0%)
• Total:	\$ 42.08 billion (4.3%)

Figure 4: Anchors in the food economy, credit Miller and Associates 2011

Given the scale of anchor institution food spending, it is obvious why they have been the focus of a spectrum of strategies aimed at changing the food economy. To further investigate specific cases, I divided the strategies for community economic development in the food sector into three areas: worker focused strategies, procurement focused strategies and local food business strategies. Each of these strategies is elaborated on below. Within each of these categories I found a specific example that, in the next chapter, I analyze to see to what extent the initiative can move towards transformative community economic development.

Worker Focus

The first category of strategies focuses on the food service workers themselves. As detailed previously, most food service jobs are low wage, low skill, and disempowering. The industrialization of the food economy has removed as much skilled, well-paid labor as possible so as to create a contingent, replaceable, inexpensive workforce (Food Chain Workers 2012). According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (as cited in Schafer and O'Donnell, 2011) the annual median wage for food workers on campus in 2010 was \$17,176. Most food service work has been reduced to simply heating and serving a meal. Other worker issues include: lack of skills and training, lack of career ladder, demeaning work, and contingent work (no work over the summer/winter break) (Yen Liu 2012).

Worker focused strategies attempt to address these issues through unionizing workers, ending or negotiating contracts with outside dining service providers, bringing dining service operations in-house (i.e. ending a contract with an outside food service provider, and hiring in-house dining service staff), or instituting fair

labor standards such as living wage requirements. In the analysis section I will look more closely at a specific worker focused initiative, UNITE HERE!’s Real Food. Real Jobs. campaign.

Procurement Focus

Another way that food and community economic development has come together is through strategic procurement policies and practices. In some cases this refers to what an institution purchases—is it local? Do food vendors pay living wages? For example the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education created the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment and Rating System (STARS), which includes a “Dining Services” subcategory (AASHE 2012). “This subcategory seeks to recognize institutions that are supporting a sustainable food system [...] Institutions can use their food purchases to support their local economies; encourage safe, environmentally-friendly farming methods; and help alleviate poverty for farmers.” STARS gives credit for “prioritizing the purchase of local, organic, fair trade, and sustainably harvested food and beverage items” (local is defined as grown and processed within 250 miles of the institution) (p 113). Additionally, there are many institutions with their own specific purchasing policies or guidelines that include stipulations for sustainable, healthy or local food items, such as Yale University (Yale Sustainable Food Project 2008) and the Los Angeles Unified School District (Martinez 2012).

In terms of spurring community economic development, it is the buy local criteria that have been given the most attention. A study of 16 counties in Northeast Ohio suggests that meeting 25% of local demand for food with local production

could create 27,664 new jobs (Masi et al. 2010). In the Central Puget Sound region in Washington, another study found that “a shift of 20% of [the region’s] food dollars into locally directed spending would result in nearly half billion dollar annual income increase in King County alone and double that in the Central Puget Sound region” (Sonntag 2008 p. vii).

But it is not always *what* an institution purchases that can have community economic development impact; *how* an institution purchases food can be equally important. Most anchor institutions demand consistent, low-cost, preprocessed and prepared products in very large quantities. In order for small, local businesses to become suppliers, institutions have to change how they interface with vendors. They have to make their purchasing criteria and processes available. They have to be willing to manage the logistics of working with individual vendors directly instead of just large distributors and to accommodate more frequent, low volume deliveries. Furthermore, in order to buy directly from local agriculture ventures, institutions have to have the capacity to prepare and serve whole foods. In the analysis section I look at the Real Food Challenge, which lays out a comprehensive procurement strategy covering both the *what* and the *how*.

Local Food Business Focus

After years of corporate consolidation, a few large companies have come to dominate the food economy. Three companies process 70 percent of all beef, 10 percent of U.S. farms collected 74 percent of all federal subsidies, and Walmart controls 33 percent of the grocery market (Food Chain Workers 2012). But much of the current food movement includes efforts to buck this trend by developing small,

local food businesses. The third way in which institutions are getting involved in the food economy is through their support of, or collaboration with, the development of these local food businesses. Many universities or hospitals are so large that their individual demands for certain products can be sufficient to support the start up of a business. In addition to being a major customer, institutions can also support local food business startups by providing seed capital or financing, offering below market leases for retail space, processing space or agricultural land, by providing technical assistance, or a combination of all of the above.

One agriculture example comes from a small-scale commercial farming initiative in Philadelphia, where, surprisingly, the anchor is the Philadelphia Water Department, which leased land surrounding their facilities to farmers for \$1.00 (Urban Partners 2007). In Western Massachusetts, local institutions partnered with Franklin County Community Development Corporation's commercial kitchen to pilot a regional produce processing and freezing project. The CDC managed the process of sourcing, processing and delivering the produce, and the institutions supported the process by agreeing to purchase a flexible quantity at a pre-determined price (Fitzsimmons 2010). At Tufts University, the Agriculture, Food, and Environment Program created the New Entry Sustainable Farming Project, which assists people with limited resources to start small-scale commercial farms. The project helps farmers with, "locating farmland, education, training, business/enterprise development, and production and marketing assistance" (New Entry Sustainable Farming Project). But the most anticipated example is the Green City Growers Cooperative (GCGC) in Cleveland, which is developing a commercial

scale greenhouse to provide produce for local institutions. It is the focus of my food business analysis in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4: Three Approaches to Food-based Development: Worker Focused, Procurement Focused and New Business Development Focused

Worker Focus: UNITE HERE! Real Food. Real Jobs. campaign

UNITE HERE! is a union representing workers in the hotel, gaming, food service, manufacturing, textile, distribution, laundry and airport industries. Their members have fought to make “traditionally low-wage jobs into good, family-sustaining, middle class jobs” (UNITE HERE!). Of interest to this research project is the food service division, which organizes workers in K-12 schools, university, corporate and government cafeterias, airport concessions and event center concessions—all potential types of anchor institutions—to fight for better pay, better conditions, and respect.

Recently UNITE HERE! launched the Real Food. Real Jobs. campaign to address the poor conditions for food service workers at universities and colleges across the U.S. The campaign is unique because it is an effort to link the food movement and the labor movement, to make it clear that labor issues are food issues (Shafer and O'Donnell 2011). UNITE HERE! believes workers want to cook again, that they play an important role in food safety and share an interest in food system transparency. The campaign is an attempt to reverse the trend of deskilling and devaluing the “craft of cooking,” to empower and protect workers so they can speak out about food quality and safety issues, and supply the public with information about food production and worker conditions so consumers can make informed food choices. Furthermore, a central part of the food crisis is improving the economic conditions of those working in the food system so that they too can afford

to enjoy the benefits of healthy, local, sustainable food (Schafer and O'Donnell 2011).

UNITE HERE! has a successful history of organizing university food service workers into their union then partnering with student groups fighting for sustainable campus food. Union members were integral to Yale University's effort to shift 40% of food purchases to sustainable sources by 2013 (Schafer and O'Donnell 2011). In April of 2012, food service workers at Northeastern, who are employees of food service contractor Chartwells, voted to form a union and join UNITE HERE (UNITE HERE!).

Real Food. Real Jobs along the five dimensions

Scale: Non-union food service workers are individuals struggling to get by on inadequate wages, few or no benefits and minimal prospects for improvement. In terms of our multi-dimensional framework, we would say that community, in the business as usual market-based, approach has been reduced down to the individual worker, where as business operates at the national or even global scale with regard to multi-nationals like Aramark and Sodexo. The Real Food. Real Jobs. (RFRJ) campaign's efforts to organize workers into the UNITE HERE union dramatically shifts the scale of community from local to regional. Workers are able to bargain collectively and protest collectively at each worksite. They are also part of a national organization that has joined forces with the food movement to fight for systemic changes to the food economy. "Justice and fairness for workers is not just a labor 'issue', but is fundamentally a food issue" (Schafer and O'Donnell 2011).

Flow and Allocation: In its current state, university food service is an opportunity for institutions to benefit from and food service contractors to profit off of low-wage labor and cheap food. Food service workers wages are so low that many workers are on Medicaid, receive SNAP benefits, or have children that participate in free and reduced cost meals at their schools (Schafer and O'Donnell 2011). Yet, "in 2010 university food service programs had an estimated operating profit of \$1 billion" (UNITE HERE).⁶ Clearly, the market-based approach has created a flow and allocation of economic resources that is moving away from workers and away from the government, towards the institutions and the food service corporations. Unionizing food service workers via the RFRJ campaign is a significant intervention in this flow and allocation. According to the Department of Labor (as cited by Schafer and O'Donnell 2011), "workers represented by unions in the food service industry earn 26% more in wages than non-union workers, or approximately \$5,512 more a year," have a higher rate of health insurance, retirement, and paid-leave benefits. These improvements make sure that more of the profits are allocated to the workers.

Decision Making: Unionization empowers workers to participate in more decisions over working conditions and remuneration as part of collective bargaining agreements. Unionization also has the power to shift decision-making in the overall food system by protecting workers so that they can voice their concerns. This provides consumers and purchasers important, and sometimes controversial,

⁶ Most schools are nonprofits so they never realize any 'profits.' However, they could use surplus revenues from dining services to cover deficits in other areas of operation

information about food safety, quality and working conditions, which can influence their food choices.

Sustainability and Growth: It is less clear how the Real Food. Real Jobs. campaign will address the tension between sustainability and growth. There is no explicit connection between unionized workers and more sustainable food. However, enabling food workers to prepare and cook again, as opposed to simply heating and serving, as the RFRJ campaign calls for, implies a shift towards more environmentally sustainable food. Campus dining services would, once again, have the capacity to purchase whole foods directly from farms instead of the highly processed, pre-made meals that make up the bulk of food purchases.

Conception of Community: Reiterating what was seen along the scale dimension, there is a clear shift in the conception of community; workers are no longer powerless individuals. They are organized and united with a voice and demands. The campaign also stresses that food service workers should be respected, skilled professionals with a career path and an important role in ensuring food safety and quality (Schaffer and O'Donnell 2011).

Procurement Focus: The Real Food Challenge

The Real Food Challenge is both an organization and a campaign. The Real Food Challenge sees its work as similar to the President's Climate Commitment; it is a way to enable colleges and universities to codify their dedication to sustainable food through a nationally recognizable pledge (Real Food Challenge). The campaign

is an effort to shift college and university food spending away from industrial agriculture to “real food.” Real Food is defined as food that is local or community-based, fair, ecologically sound and humane (Real Food Commitment). The goal is to shift \$1 billion of annual college food purchases to Real Food by 2020. The organization works to support the individual campus campaigns by providing resources, a strategy and a general framework.

Each campaign is unique, but all share some basic components. Student organizers work to get their university president or chancellor to sign a Campus Commitment, which includes a commitment to meeting or exceeding 20% Real Food purchases by 2020. The commitment also mandates the creation of a Food Systems Working Group led by students but also including professors, dining administrators, food service workers and any other relevant university administrators. The Working Group is then charged with developing a Real Food Policy and a multi-year Food Action Plan. The policy and plan lay out the details for how the school is going to increase its purchase of real food. The organization also provides student organizers with a Real Food Calculator, which is an assessment tool for tracking institutional purchasing over time. The Working Group is expected to use the calculator to conduct a baseline assessment of food purchases shortly after signing the Commitment to see what percentage of current purchases are Real Food. Assessments are then conducted annually to track progress, with the findings available to the public.

So far the Real Food Challenge has successfully secured \$48.5 million worth of pledges to purchase more local, fair, ecologically sound and humane food (Real Food Challenge). Schools that have signed the commitment include St. Mary’s

College, Drew University, Western State College, University of Vermont, University of California, Santa Cruz, College of the Atlantic, Macalester College and Wesleyan University. Another 25 schools, including Brown University, University of California, Berkley, and the University of Iowa have completed a Real Food Calculator Pilot and may soon sign the commitment.

Taken together, all of the pieces of the Real Food Challenge add up to a comprehensive procurement plan that addresses the *what* and the *how* of university food purchasing, which can then be assessed for its transformative potential in the next section.

Real Food Challenge along the five dimensions

Scale: Traditional food movement initiatives have focused on the individual scale—shifting the purchases of individual consumers (Yen Liu 2012). Changing the food purchases of entire colleges and universities, however, is an effective way to scale up change to the food economy. As was made clear in Chapter 3, anchors have massive food budgets. Tufts University’s main campus spends over \$6 million on food every year (Denaro 2012). The Real Food Challenge is clearly increasing the scale of the food movement by uniting students across the country to work collectively to shift their university and college food spending.

Flow and Allocation: Change along the flow and allocation dimension, however, is limited. The Real Food Challenge’s Real Food Calculator includes criteria addressing wages, working conditions, and fair trade, which attempt to address the lopsided flow and allocation of economic resources toward industrial scale food businesses

(Real Food Challenge). But by only requiring that food purchases meet one of these criteria, there may be little shift away from the same industrial scale food businesses towards new local businesses.

Decision-Making: There are some changes with regard to decision-making. The Real Food Challenge is “designed to engage a wide variety of stakeholders at the decision-making table and to empower them throughout the process” (Real Food Challenge, Campus Commitment p2). Students organize, create and lead a Food Systems Working group, which is responsible for drafting the Real Food Policy and Real Food Action Plan. The Real Food Calculator establishes a new set of criteria for food purchase decision-making. But there are limitations: the university still maintains the ultimate decision-making power. Food purchases must still conform to budget constraints.

Growth and Sustainability: The Real Food Challenge includes obvious stipulations about sustainability as stated in the definition of real food as “local or community-based, fair, ecologically sound and humane.”

Conception of community: There is a subtle change in the conception of community; students are seen as active parts of the food economy and included in university decision-making as members of the Food Systems Working Group. There are also efforts to recognize the food service workers as an important part of the food system, not just low-skilled laborers.

Local Business Development Focus: Green City Growers Cooperative

The Green City Growers Cooperative is an effort to build a 3.25-acre commercial scale greenhouse in an urban neighborhood of Cleveland, Ohio. The greenhouse will use large-scale hydroponic techniques to grow approximately three million heads of lettuce a year, along with 300,000 pounds of herbs. The project broke ground in the fall of 2011 and hopes to harvest its first crop in the winter of 2012 (Evergreen Cooperative Initiative and Dubb 2012).

It should also be noted that GCGC is just one enterprise within the wider Evergreen Cooperative Initiative, which was created by a coalition of Cleveland's biggest anchor institutions including hospitals, universities, a community foundation and local nonprofits. The plan is to launch as many as 10 worker-owned cooperatives employing up to 500 residents. Evergreen supports the startups with financing, technical assistance and institutional purchasing commitments. For example, local institutions have already committed to purchase 1.9 million heads of lettuce from GCGC.

Green City Growers Cooperative along the five dimensions

Scale: In the market based approach to community economic development the focus is to attract global businesses and their highly mobile capital to local communities. The Green City Growers Cooperative, on the other hand, attempts to build a local business from the community's own assets—the anchor institutions and local

residents. By leveraging the huge food demands of local institutions and through replicating the model in other cities, GCGC is also able to scale up a community-based effort into one having regional and potentially national impact. GCGC hopes to employ 42 local residents as worker-owners, have \$3 million in annual sales and replicate similar efforts in Atlanta (Dubb 2012).

Flow and allocation: Worker-owned cooperatives are designed specifically to change the flow and allocation of economic resources. Instead of profits flowing to distant or absent shareholders and investors, the profits are controlled by the worker-owners and are either reinvested in the business or distributed to the members (for more details see “Collective Ownership” in Part I). GCGC is no different. Instead of large, out of town corporations and their shareholders extracting profits from institutional food purchases, the profits are distributed to local worker-owners who in turn continue to circulate the money in the local economy.

Decision-Making: Again, the cooperative structure of the business inherently demands a shift in the decision-making. Cooperative businesses allow each worker-owner to have a say in the operation and management of the business. But, beyond the business itself, there is little shift in the decision making of the wider food economy. It is still the institutions that have the power to enter into contracts, deciding which businesses to support and actually leading all of the cooperative development. Furthermore, institutions still decide what to buy based on cost. GCGC is not an effort to change institutional purchasing criteria; they are trying to provide a product

that complies with the institutional cost requirements, hence the massive scale of the operation.

Growth and sustainability: GCGC claims to use “sustainable growing practices,” (Evergreen Cooperative Initiative) yet it employs hydroponic techniques and year-round production in a cold climate, both of which are usually energy intensive practices. They also intend to serve clients within a 150-mile radius of Cleveland, not just the local institutions. But at this regional scale, there are reductions in long-range transportation emissions when compared to produce from further locales, such as California or Mexico. Furthermore, the intention is to be cost competitive with other major producers. There may be some incremental improvements to sustainability, but ultimately this is a project rooted in the same pro-growth model as other businesses in the food economy.

Conception of community: These types of initiatives perceive the community as capable of participating in the food economy but not necessarily as in charge of identifying the challenges and determining the solutions. The process for determining what type of business to develop was based on institutional needs and economic feasibility (Dubb 2012), neither of which take into account the needs and wants of the community.

Summary

The analysis of each of these strategies shows that good work is happening in a variety of ways. Each initiative found ways to shift multiple dimensions. The Real

Food. Real Jobs. campaign strength was shifting the scale and conception of community with regard to food service workers. The Real Food Challenge's strength is in shifting the decision-making process and criteria for campus dining services. The biggest success of the Green City Growers Cooperative is shifting the flow and allocation of economic resources in the food economy away from major food corporations and toward community based enterprises. Yet, no single initiative was able to significantly shift all five dimensions.

Just as we found in Part I, transformative community economic development requires the alignment of multiple strategies. In order to take advantage of a shift to sustainable food choices, as advanced in the Real Food Challenge, an institution would need to shift its perception of food service workers as skilled cooks, capable of preparing whole foods into quality meals, as advanced in the Real Food. Real Jobs. campaign. And if either strategy hopes to significantly change who the economic resources of the food economy flow between, then they need to align with an effort to create new food businesses like the Green City Growers Cooperative.

We also need to contrast these three initiatives with the Initiative for a Competitive City's framework from Chapter 2. Recall that the multidimensional analysis found the ICIC framework to still be significantly lacking in its ability to shift the decision making dimension and the growth/sustainability dimension. Taken collectively, these three food-based initiatives appear able to shift all five dimensions; therefore we would say they have more transformative potential than the ICIC framework. This may be due to the fact that these initiatives begin outside the institution and therefore are free to directly confront the practices and policies of the institution. Having institutional leadership on board with these food-based

community economic development initiatives will likely increase their success, but in order to move towards transformative community economic development, we cannot wait for institutions to lead the way.

Chapter 5: Tufts University: Opportunities for Transformative Development

By analyzing food based community economic development initiatives, I found that we need to join up worker, procurement and business development strategies. The question for further research is how do you bring together these three types of strategies at one institution? I believe this question is deserving of another entire thesis project or more. However, in this final chapter I will attempt to lay out some of the starting points as well as potential barriers for each type of strategy—worker focused, procurement focused and business development focused—based on my analysis of current strategies as well as some preliminary data I have collected from Tufts Dining Services.

Worker Focused Strategies at Tufts

Tufts Dining Services is an in-house operation, i.e. the dining service employees are employees of the school, not an outside contractor. However, there is no reason to assume the food workers are paid living wages and benefits, treated with dignity and respect or provided training and a career path. A worker focused strategy at Tufts would need to begin with a survey of food workers to determine wages, benefits, fulltime status versus part time status, training programs, career advancement opportunities, job satisfaction and more in order to establish an

understanding of current conditions and highlight issues of particular concern. This would likely be the starting point for a union organizing strategy, but it could also be carried out by student or community researchers.

Surveying the food service workers is important for understanding the baseline conditions and making informed demands, but it also needs to be conducted in a way to highlight any potential barriers or opportunities to coordinated procurement and business development strategies. The survey needs to determine whether food service workers have the skills to process whole foods, to cook from scratch, or to alter menus based on season. Without these types of skills, efforts to purchase local, seasonal, whole foods will face many challenges. A lack of these skills could identify the need for training programs, and an abundance of these skills could identify an opportunity for potential cost savings by replacing expensive prepared meals with less expensive whole foods.

Procurement Focused Strategies at Tufts

The Real Food Challenge provides a good starting point for a procurement focused strategy at Tufts. This is not the place to try and walk through each step of their process; instead I want to point out some of the barriers and opportunities specific to Tufts that the Real Food Challenge or similar procurement strategies might encounter, as well as point out ways in which the procurement strategy could align itself with the other two types of strategies based on my preliminary research.

Before getting to the Tufts specific barriers, it is important to note the biggest barrier facing all institutions: cost. Purchasing food that is ecologically sound, fair, humane and local and that supports better working conditions is likely to cost

more. Spending more on food costs at a school or hospital potentially means spending less on education or care. Furthermore, institutions themselves are not the final consumer of food. They purchase food as a commodity; they are concerned with price, availability, consistency, and quantity—all of which might conflict with the new criteria.

Tufts' Medford campus, the main campus, spends approximately \$6 million on food each academic year (Denaro 2012). However, nearly \$4 million is spent with just two distributors.⁷ Having approximately two thirds of the purchases consolidated to two distributors raises specific challenges and opportunities. Simply focusing on what Tufts purchases from these two distributors can lead to significant change; however, they may not supply food products that meet the desired criteria. Bringing in new vendors that do meet the desired criteria might be a challenge. Tufts has made efforts to reduce the number of deliveries to the school to reduce costs and emissions (Denaro 2012). Therefore any new deliveries will need to be of significant quantity to justify their cost and emissions.

The Real Food Challenge and many other procurement strategies set across the board goals, 20% Real Food by 2020 for example or 25% local in the Northeast Ohio study (Massi et al. 2010), but many of these important criteria, such as organic or local will not necessarily lead to new jobs or improvement of current food service jobs. Focusing on changing specific purchases, however, might allow procurement strategies to better align with worker and business development strategies. For example, Tufts spends approximately \$60,000 a year on prepared frozen foods from

⁷ Tufts Dining Services provided me with a list of purchases from Costa Fruit and Produce and U.S. Foods from July 1, 2011 to December 31, 2011. For my analysis I assume Tufts purchases the same amount of a given item for the period January 1 to June 30.

its U.S. Foods distributor. These foods require minimal preparation from Tufts food service workers, simply heat and serve. What if Tufts instead spent \$30,000 on the ingredients to make the foods and \$30,000 on wages for a new employee or \$30,000 on a training program and increased wages for current employees to prepare and cook the ingredients into a similar quantity of food?

Another opportunity may be in the disproportionate amount spent on meat and meat products. Out of a total of approximately \$2.8 million annually spent with U.S. Foods, over \$1 million is spent on meats (including seafood). What if meat purchases were offset with more purchases of high protein vegetables? For example, Tufts spent \$21,218 for 4880 pounds of beef tips for a price per pound of \$4.34. Similarly, Tufts spent \$20,218 for 5376 pounds of guacamole for a price per pound of \$3.76. If Tufts served burritos full of guacamole instead of steak tip sandwiches (i.e. replaced its purchase of steak tips with an equal quantity of guacamole), the school could provide a healthy, potentially more ecologically sound and humane option, and have \$2,830 extra to pay a food service worker a higher wage. I recognize these are simplifications of a complex procurement process, but it represents a different line of analysis necessary to find opportunities where procurement focused strategies could possibly align with worker focused strategies. We need to ask how can we purchase food in a way that improves the conditions or opportunities for food service workers in addition to meeting criteria for Real Food.

Another way to potentially achieve job creation goals in a food procurement strategy would be to use a “job creation” criteria. For example, as a university’s food budget grows to meet an increase in the number of students, new food purchases could be tied to job creation. Hypothetically, we could require every \$100,000

increase in food spending to correlate with the creation of a new job. \$100,000 spent with a major food corporation like Tysons will have no impact on their hiring, but opening a new, \$100,000 account with a local butcher would likely require them to hire more staff. Obviously, the accounting would present a whole other set of challenges, but this is the kind of research that is necessary. We need to ask how do we create a metric that ties spending to job creation or job improvement?

Business Development Focused Strategies at Tufts

The business development strategy example from Chapter 4, Green City Growers Cooperative, showed how the purchasing power of multiple institutions could be used to support the development of a commercial scale greenhouse. Tufts University, with its \$6 million food budget would never be able to support an operation on the same scale (remember GCGC will be selling three million heads of lettuce and 300,000 pounds of herbs a year). But the Boston area is home to numerous universities and hospitals, likely more than Cleveland. An initial step for Tufts could be an assessment of the cumulative purchasing of the region's institutions to see what businesses a coalition of institutions could support.

While waiting for a regional coalition of institutions to develop, Tufts could still attempt to unilaterally support business development with its purchasing. One model Tufts could follow that demonstrated the potential link between small-scale agriculture and job creation was the initiative in Philadelphia mentioned in Chapter 3. They showed how using the SPIN⁸ farming technique (Small Plot INTensive farming) where the grower concentrates on producing highly profitable crops in a small space,

⁸ See <http://spinfarming.com> for more details on the concept and examples of SPIN farms

close to the point of sale (Satzewich and Chstensen 2011), can support new jobs in an urban region (Hartling 2007). In the Philadelphia study they demonstrated that a collection of small-scale farms using SPIN methods with \$1.2 million in aggregate sales could support 30 jobs, i.e. 1 job for every \$40,000 in sales (Hartling 2007). We can use this rough calculation to estimate the potential job creation if a portion of Tufts produce were grown locally using the SPIN farming method.

To do the calculation I isolated some of the produce items Tufts purchases that SPIN has categorized as Extremely High-Value, Very High-Value and High-Value. These crops can be grown profitably in small spaces because they require few inputs, can be grown successively and sell for a high price (Satzewich and Chstensen 2011). A preliminary search found that Tufts purchases at least \$195,149.52 worth of high value crops (see chart below for details). If local SPIN farms supplied this demand, Tufts purchases could support nearly five new farmers. If Tufts were to shift current purchases away from frozen, pre-processed produce towards the fresh, high value items conducive to SPIN farming, the same budget could support even more jobs. But this would require a coordinated effort across all strategies—worker focused strategies to improve knife skills and cooking skills and procurement focused strategies to accommodate new delivery schedules or new vendors.

Tufts Produce Purchases, Highest Value Crops⁹

Spinach	\$28,505.42
Head Lettuce	\$59,085.18
Broccoli	\$33,881.06
Peeled Onions	\$25,428.40
Peeled Onions, red	\$13,312.80
Carrots	\$34,936.66
Total	\$195,149.52

Figure 6: Tufts high value produce purchases

This kind of back-of-the-envelope analysis is not sufficient to build a business plan around, but a more exhaustive review of Tufts produce purchases with regard to farm job creation could provide the necessary starting point for a campaign to use Tufts purchasing to support local job creation. Furthermore, Tufts is already engaged in supporting new farmers in Massachusetts through the New Entry Sustainable Farming Program I mentioned in Chapter 3. The University could support these farms further by agreeing to purchase their produce.

Conclusion

With only a preliminary analysis of an incomplete data set for Tufts food purchases I was still able to find ways a limited food budget could support the coordination of multiple strategies for transformative community economic development. Purchases of high cost, unsustainable food items can be shifted to

⁹ Credit: Data obtained from Tufts Dining Services, Costa Fruit and Produce Sales, 2011

lower cost, more sustainable items. The savings can be used to increase wages and provide additional training for food service workers. Job creation metrics can be created and linked to new purchases or current purchases of highly profitable food items can be leveraged to create new business opportunities for local farmers and entrepreneurs.

In terms of food-based community economic development in general, the multidimensional analysis in Chapter 4 showed that focusing on only one type of strategy is not likely transformative; all three must be pursued simultaneously to see change across all five dimensions. Walking through hypothetical strategies at Tufts showed that focusing on a single strategy is also not practical. For logistical reasons, successful procurement strategies need to be paired with worker strategies and visa versa. Furthermore, successful business development strategies need to be paired with both worker and procurement strategies.

My analysis also makes it clear that data from Tufts Dining Services, along with all other institutional dining services in the Boston area, needs to be made publicly available. We cannot afford to wait for institutions to make incremental changes on their own or to realize their role as an anchor for community economic development. Researchers and the community need access to what institutions purchase and how in order to put forth a vision, make demands and move theories of transformative community economic development into practice.

This conclusion section is also a chance to briefly bring together the findings of both Part I and Part II of this thesis project. In Part I we found that by parsing out the dimensions of community economic development, by asking more critical questions of its processes and outcomes, we can start to have clarity around whether

“new” approaches actually change the key dimensions of development efforts. In Part II I was able to apply the dimensional lens to three new approaches as well as use the lens to inform my own proposal for transformative community economic development at Tufts University. My analysis and proposal in Part II came to the same conclusions as in Part I. No single strategy is able to shift all dimensions of community economic development; transformative community economic development depends on the strategic joining up of multiple strategies, which, together, shift the power relations of civil society, the state and business – so that civil society has a stronger voice and role in determining the goals and outcomes of community economic development. It also depends on a combination of strategies that are both local and global, that recognize the expertise and contributions of communities, that enable a more equitable allocation of resources, that promote sustainability, and that engage in decision-making that is democratic, pluralistic, and inclusive.

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