

A BLUEPRINT FOR BUILDING A MULTI-GENERATIONAL MOVEMENT FOR SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION IN BOSTON

By
Nene Igietseme

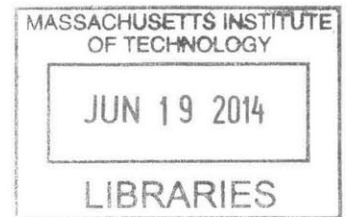
BA in Government
Harvard University
Cambridge, Massachusetts (2009)

Submitted to the Department of Urban Studies and Planning
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master in City Planning

at the
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ABSTRACT

This action research thesis sought to develop recommendations for how to better connect young people to efforts that grassroots community-based organizations are taking to foster economic democracy and transform the political economy of society in Boston. Using a mixed methods approach of participant observations, interviews, and an academic literature review, this thesis explores the overlaps and bridges the gaps between trends and activities in the transformative community economic development, community organizing, and youth development fields.

I first describe the current state of the community economic development field - its failings to provide real material improvements in the lives for low-income people of color in the U.S., particularly in its current iteration. I also posit reasons for this failing – the field’s inability to confront and challenge the underlying system of global capital market distribution. I use the framework of transformative organizing and transformative community economic development, and transformative use of existing systems and resources to describe the ways Boston based organizations are taking on strategies that challenge capitalism in order to meet people’s needs and change our political economy.

Highlighting the presence of youth in these existing social transformation activities, I then offer a framework for further youth engagement and provide recommendations to The City School, the Boston Center for Community Ownership, and the Center for Economic Democracy, for how they could further nurture youth participation in social transformation strategies in Boston.

Supervisor: J. Phillip Thompson
Title: Associate Professor of Urban Studies and Planning, MIT

Reader: Penn Loh
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I was cursed (blessed?) with the need to make everything I do relate to everything else I do. This thesis would have been much easier to write had I scaled it down, not tried to make it as relevant to every aspect of justice, liberation, anti-capitalism, urban planning, youth work, community organizing, and social transformation I was interested in. To say that I failed is an understatement, but it's one that I can live with because it feels close to my truth. Hopefully those who know me will see parts of me reflected in my words here. Hopefully those who do not, will find what I wrote interesting anyway.

Thanks to everyone fighting for liberation and a vision for a better world.

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Introduction

This thesis aims to contribute to the growing movement to transform our economic system by bridging gaps between the new trends in transformative community economic development, community organizing, and youth development fields. At the crux of the paper is an attempt to contextualize the activities and strategies of community organizations in Boston within a theoretical understanding of the impetus for changing our political economic system and the strategies to do so, and to provide a practical analysis and suggestions for efforts to engage young people in the process.

I have done this by first describing the current state of the community economic development field - its failings to provide real material change for low-income people of color in the U.S., particularly in its current iteration. I also posit reasons for this failing – the field’s inability to confront and change the underlying system of capitalist market distribution, which was imbedded in the U.S. Constitution.

Asserting that a departure from private ownership and market distribution is necessary to end poverty and unemployment, I use the framework of transformative organizing and transformative community economic development to describe the necessity of connecting community organizing, alternative economic institution building, and political strategies to change societal systems.

Highlighting the importance of youth engagement in these processes, I then describe the limits and potentials of transformational organizing and transformative community economic development in Boston, specifically as it pertains to youth involvement. Finally, I provide recommendations for how youth engagement in social transformation could happen in Boston with more intentionality and a larger impact.

Methodology

In this section, I provide an overview of the methodological choices I made and explain why. Overall, I chose to use an action research methodology for my thesis in order to produce a document that would be useful to answering questions relevant to being a practitioner in Boston. My research process was grounded by my work as a youth worker prior to attending DUSP, my work in Boston while at DUSP, and directly informs my work after DUSP. This thesis is, therefore, part of a learning process of action and reflection. I drew from Kolb’s (1984) experiential learning theory, which is informed by the Lewinian Experiential Learning Model of “concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract generalisation, and active experimentation (Figure 2.1, 21).” While the cycle is typically thought about or done on smaller scale projects, my cycle encompasses my past actions as a youth worker and community organizer, and uses this thesis as an opportunity for reflection, theorizing, and positing a plan for action.

Participatory Action Research Methodology

Within the action research methodology, I also decided to use a participatory action research method because I wanted to interview partners – people who would both be studied as part of the research, but

could also shape the research as it unfolded. According to a definition given by Fran Baum, Colin MacDougall, and Danielle Smith, participatory action research is different from more traditional research methods in that:

[1] It focuses on research whose purpose is to enable action. Action is achieved through a reflective cycle, whereby participants collect and analyze data, then determine what action should follow... [2] [it] advocate[s] for power to be deliberately shared between the researcher and the researched: blurring the line between them until the researched become the researchers. The researched cease to be objects and become partners in the whole research process: including selecting the research topic, data collection, and analysis and deciding what action should happen as a result of the research findings... and [3] PAR contrasts with less dynamic approaches that remove data and information from their contexts [and] involves people...as “subjects” or “respondents”. PAR advocates that those being researched should be involved in the process actively (Baum et al., 854).

My main partners included Stacey Cordeiro from the Boston Center for Community Ownership; Tara Venkatraman and Ruby Reyes of The City School; and Aaron Tanaka and Penn Loh of the Center for Economic Democracy. These community and organizational leaders have identified cooperative development and education with youth about economic democracy as key components for social transformation, and efforts they would like to engage in. Participatory Action Research allowed me the flexibility to see myself and my interviewees as both researcher and researched – ultimately producing an actionable answer to the my research questions.

Research questions

Through my literature review, I humbly put forth an analytical framework for what components of a comprehensive social transformation strategy believe are necessary. Then, using a participatory action research process, I had a series of conversations and meetings with people who could inform the answer to my questions:

1. How are organizations engaged in social movement building, organizing and economic development in Boston including young people in those efforts?
2. How can these organizations better engage young people in the multiple levels of transformative organizing, community economic development, and the creation of democratic economic institutions, specifically in the creation and practice of worker cooperatives?
3. What might be the best avenue and content for an “economic democracy” training program for marginalized young people in Boston?

For the purposes of this thesis, I consider young people to be between 15 and 25 years old (from about high school age to college aged). I focused specifically on worker cooperative development with young people because that is the current area of specialty for the Boston Center for Community Ownership.

Background in youth work & community organizing

I understand the issues faced by low-income people of color in America to be similar and inextricably linked to the issues faced by poor people across the globe; however, I am focusing on democratic ownership and control in the U.S. - particularly in Boston where I have lived and worked for the past five years. Prior to that, I lived in Cambridge on Harvard's campus as a student for four years. Throughout my time at Harvard I was a youth worker – running summer academic and enrichment camps in Boston neighborhoods. Through that experience I was introduced to important advocacy and organizing fights for youth funding on the state and city levels. The residents of one of the public housing developments in which I worked in Dorchester, MA, were relocated due to redevelopment, which eventually cut 100 units of public housing.

My final year at Harvard, I worked with the youth employment program of the summer camps, which solidified for me the importance of young people organizing and fighting for themselves against the many manifestations of poverty and economic exclusion alongside adult allies and supporters. My work in Boston has primarily been supporting youth organizers in the city through training, popular education, and direct educational and life services and supports. It was through this work that I stumbled upon the field of urban planning. I was searching for answers to the question of why we kept fighting the same fights and losing the same battles, and how could we implement some of the grander visions we had of community support, safety, and flourishing – what were the barriers to this?

My interest in community economic development has been fostered throughout my time in the Department of Urban Studies and Planning. Specifically, I have been exploring the strategies and challenges of democratizing access to capital in the U.S. by studying the history of our political economy and current strategies for social change. I have also been trying to figure out how to connect young people - particularly those already connected to social justice work as well as those disconnected from most system supports - to economic development and fights to change our political economy.

This thesis is a manifestation of my work coming full circle in the form of a program recommendation for young people to learn about concepts in economic development, our political economy, and be engaged in ways to intervene that might be different, but complementary to youth organizing.

I continued my work as a youth worker and organizer while I was in school as a volunteer with the Youth Justice and Power Union, a youth led, adult supported organization fiscally sponsored by The City School, an organization focused on youth social justice education. I got connected to the Center for Economic Democracy and the Boston Center for Community Ownership while I was a student, facilitated because I was connected to Boston organizing. I documented a number of meetings, interviews, and conversations with youth, organizers, youth organizations, worker cooperatives, training programs, and youth entrepreneurial programs, focusing particularly on ones in the Boston area. I also conducted semi-structured interviews with four [adult staff supporters of] youth worker cooperative programs: MECH Creations, Toxic Soil Busters, and the cooperative developers of Syllable and Grassroots Ecology and four youth entrepreneurship programs: National Foundation for Teaching Entrepreneurship, The Possible Project, BUILD, and United Way Youth Ventures.

Limitations of research

I took on this research recognizing that there was a multiplicity of ways I could have approached the analysis of these organizations and the different projects they were working on. My particular focus being youth engagement in transformative efforts helped to limit the scope of my analysis to my findings relating to this question. I also focus in particular on the organizations connected to the Right to the City network. In doing so, I left out many other organizations and coalitions doing social transformation work in the framework I set forth, such as the Green Justice Coalition.

There were further limitations to my research conducted as such. Because I am not from Boston and still attempting to navigate the political dynamics of being a privileged insider/outsider, there were many times when I did not feel comfortable presenting myself as a student-researcher in spaces in order to get more contextual information from the people I was working with. I considered the relationships I was developing to be valuable yet tenuous and did not want to risk disrupting the trust I had been building since I was an undergraduate working in Boston.

While in school, I have also had to scale back my participation in many of the youth efforts I had previously dedicated a lot of time and support to. I did not navigate well the imbalance I perceived in asking for information for my thesis and the work that I was not being directly supportive of. My participant observations, therefore, while valid, could have been more robust.

A Preview

This thesis is organized into roughly three parts: 1) Literature Review, 2) Findings and Discussion related to the literature, and 3) Recommendations. The Literature Review covers the theoretical underpinnings of our political economy and posits why the conventional economic development strategies, particularly Community Development Corporations (CDCs) are ineffective and insufficient to change capitalism's oppressive policies and practices in **The Failings of Conventional Community Economic Development**. I call changing our capitalist political economy "social transformation" according to Erik Olin Wright's (2009) definition, which is: "the breakdown of the societal institutions and structures that keep oppressive policies and practices in place and the creation of new institutional arrangements that allow for people to live to their fullest potentials (p. 174).

I then offer in **A Comprehensive Social Transformation Strategy** a framework for how activities can lead to and achieve social transformation using Transformative Organizing, Transformative Community Economic Development, and Transformative Use of Existing Systems & Resources. I round out the literature with **Youth in Social Transformation Strategies**, which is a synthesis of how young people have engaged in social justice efforts, and I put forth another framework for how young people can further plug into efforts to transform society.

The Findings & Discussion section starts with **Multi-Generational Efforts towards Social Transformation in Boston**, and includes my participant observations of the social transformation framework in action in Boston as well as analysis of how youth are connecting to these activities. After discussing the **Gaps and Limitations** of these efforts, I conclude with a final **Recommendations** section, which is informed by the literature, thesis research, and by the needs of my co-investigators.

The Failings of Conventional Community Economic Development

This section synthesizes the literature of the community economic development¹ field into a critique of Community Development Corporations (CDCs) and their inability to contend with the system that does produces negative outcomes for the majority of people, in particular poor people and people of color in the United States.

Community economic development, which has manifested mostly in the work of Community Development Corporations (CDCs) since the 1960s, has proven to be largely ineffective at addressing the most persistent problems in society – poverty and unemployment in low-income communities and environmental degradation - because CDCs do not tend to use strategies that challenge the fundamental tension in the power of money and wealth to drive political processes. Why does money and wealth have such power to drive political processes? The answer can be found in the U.S. Constitution.

Constitutional Foundations of Inequality

U.S. property relations were built upon the political and economic institutions of colonial land grants, and slavery. Slavery, which as an economic institution regards human beings as property, was a defining feature of wealth generation in the U.S. from its foundation, and the free labor contributed to the ability for the U.S. to emerge as an industrial world power even after slavery was abolished. Further, much of the land in the United States was expropriated from the Native people who resided on it by royal land grants and charters to people and corporations to form colonies and businesses (Zinn, 2004; Nash, 2006). The people who benefited from these institutions were rich, white men, the only people legally able to own and control property. These same men wrote the U.S. Constitution, which codified their “right” to the land and people as private property.

In *Private Property and the Limits of American Constitutionalism*, Nedelsky (1994) argues that the U.S. Constitution actually imbedded and protected unequal power relations in the form of property into U.S. society, excluding the majority of people from participating in both political processes as well as the economic benefits of the nation. The construction of a political system with layers of representation, amongst other institutions like the Senate and Electoral College, “took a fundamental question of society, *distribution*, out of the realm of democratic control by maintaining the control landholding elites had over decision-making (Nedelsky, p. 205, emphasis added).”

Nedelsky (1994) credits decisions made by the Marshall Court with the solidification of private property rights and the removal of market barriers for the deployment of individual property in ways seen fit to owners. The Marshall Court helped to establish limited government – limiting the legislature’s ability to interfere with commerce was a way to protect private property (Nedelsky, 1994). The United States’ impressive record in protecting private property manifested in American politics as an undemocratic

¹ I use community economic development, economic development, and community development interchangeably, implying throughout, the efforts undertaken to reduce poverty, unemployment, provide housing and other services to areas newly or historically distressed by mobile capital, traditionally occupied by low-income people of color.

political regime: “The protection of property requires controlling not possible majorities, but a particular majority: the propertyless [people who do not own property] (Nedelsky, p. 204).” The totality of these political decisions led to an economic system in the U.S. whereby private property is used for production by corporations, and goods and services are distributed according to supply and demand principles, and corporation determine how much to produce and at what price in order to maximize their profits.

Because of the resources required to run for office – in a representative democracy, one must be able to reach many people, it becomes unlikely that poor people will be elected to make policies in their interests. Furthermore, rather than voting in the best interests of their constituents, politicians are influenced by people and entities with money that can support their campaigns (Lessig, 2012). In this way, historically until now, cycles of policies have made redistribution of property, and therefore wealth, through legislative means, improbable. In *Poor People’s Movements*, Pivens and Cloward (1979) point to this structural element as being reason why the poor have typically resorted to protests to change their material conditions – they realize that electoral politics are in control of the wealthy – and protest is their only recourse (p. 3).

Exacerbation of Neoliberalism and Globalization

Propertied individuals and the corporations they formed have dominated the productive capacity in society and, in exchange for cheap labor, have provided menial wages to workers, while creating more capital for themselves. The system is not a stable one, however, and it is within this context that poor people and people of color have struggled to assert their right to self determination and control over land and their labor. Perhaps had exclusion not been a feature of American democracy as Nedelsky (1994) argues, then the legacy of inequality could have been mitigated by the “reformulation of property rights [which is a] basic social process (p. 209).”

As mentioned, the system is unstable. For example, the unchecked capitalism, industrialization, and speculation of the 1800s led to a Great Depression in the 1930s (Harvey, 2011). As Ira Katznelson (2013) argues in *Fear Itself*, the New Deal helped the many Americans through the crisis, as did World War II, however at the cost of keeping Jim Crow laws in the South intact in order to maintain a cheap labor force. Subsequent neoliberal policies and globalization in the 1970s led to rampant de-industrialization, which devastated many cities and communities by shifting manufacturing jobs from urban neighborhoods in the U.S., first to the South, and finally out of the U.S. all together (DeFilippis, 2004).

Throughout history, without power over either the “means of production” in society, or the decision-making bodies in society, working people have attempted to stem the impacts of capitalists’ quest for more profits. In *Inequality and Institutions in 20th Century America*, authors Levy and Temin (2007) note that the modern Labor Movement, which arose from the Industrial Revolution, pushed for and won alliances between (white) workers, businesses, and the government which enabled working people to capture more of the surplus generated from economic activity (Levy and Temin, 2007). Gradually, economic institutions have come to include more white males, particularly after World War II with the passage of the GI bill for college access and the introduction of the mortgage instrument for buying housing. Debt, particularly through mortgages became a wealth builder for certain segments of the previously poor, white population. People of color, however, were often still denied access to these

material gains through institutions like Jim Crow, redlining, and institutionalized and interpersonal racism.

Even with the expansion of some economic benefits to citizens who weren't not allowed to own property when the U.S. was being founded, the political institutions reified by the Constitution still maintained the uneven power relationship between the elites in society – now the banks and corporations – and the rest of society, by not disrupting the process by which decisions are made. The bailout of financial institutions and banks by the federal government, while working people suffered massive losses of their jobs and housing across the country, in the aftermath of the Financial Crisis and the Foreclosure Crisis of the late 2000s, crystallizes the results of our inability to change this relationship (Lessig, 2012). Efforts to change the material conditions faced by working people have either not attempted to change this relationship, and serve to further embed the fates of working people in the market capitalist system, or have, and been met with hostility, repression, or co-optation. As we shall explore in the section, CDCs are a key example of efforts that started out with the goal of transforming society being co-opted by neoliberal and capitalist powers.

The Modern Community Economic Development Field

The modern community economic development field rose from the Civil Rights and Black Power movements, as citizen-led attempts to control planning and development in their neighborhoods. While first focused on job creation and workforce development in the late 1960s (Stoecker, 1996), the CDCs that formed in protest of redlining and displacement from urban renewal in the 1970s (Stoecker, 1996) also focused on housing development and, now since the 1980s also provide many human services in response to government cuts to social programs. Many scholars are critical of the performance of CDCs as vehicles for community empowerment and control.

Central to many of the critiques is the inability of CDCs to stem the rising gentrification and displacement as more investment for redevelopment comes into cities, as well as their contribution to such displacement. CDCs are unable to undertake development projects that do not rely on capital from the government, foundations, and the private sector and therefore their activities are constrained and dictated by powers outside of the community. According to James DeFilippis, author of *Unmaking Goliath: Community Control in the Face of Global Capital*, the reduction of the power and control of people external to communities, and the restructuring of the economic system were original underpinnings of the rise of community development corporations in the 1960s Civil Rights movements. However, he reports that due to the lack of a “clear, unifying underlying rationale of the economic component of the community control movement” and the 501(c)(3) tax exempt status for non-profits, the goal of restructuring the economic system was distorted into goals that simply reproduced capitalism by failing to challenge where capital was held and the mechanisms by which it is distributed (DeFilippis, 2004).

In a critique of the social science and social policy fields and their contributions, or lack thereof, to community economic development field over time, Alice O'Connor (2002) argues in *Poverty Knowledge* that part of the problem is that there was a shift from poverty being thought of as a structural issue, a “labor problem” during the Progressive Era, post Great Depression, to poverty being theorized as self-perpetuating, and existing outside of the realm of government action on the economy. Stoecker (1996)

summarizes the critique well in *The Community Development Corporation Model of Urban Redevelopment: A Political Economy Critique and an Alternative*, writing:

“The CDC model originally attempted to correct three market failures: 1) The inability of potential investors to see opportunities in the neighborhood; 2) profit maximization that prevented socially conscious investing; 3) social/legal restrictions on investment such as zoning laws. However, as government finances disappeared, CDCs had to give up even this moderate “directed capitalism” and “accommodate themselves to, rather than redirect, the course of the free market.” (Marquez, 1993:289). The goal is not to transform society but to “extend the benefits of the American economic mainstream...to [those] that are left out.” (Peirce and Steinbach, 1990:33). Supply-side approaches of attracting capital are emphasized over demand-side approaches and political action (Kane and Sand, 1988:162; Lenz, 1988; Taub, 1990). At best, poor neighborhoods are seen as “weak markets” (Vidal, 1992) requiring reinvestment rather than as oppressed communities requiring mobilization, leading CDCs to work within the existing economic rules (Madison, 1995).” (The CDC Model section, para. 10)

In her dissertation for the Department of Urban Studies and Planning at MIT examining the community economic development field in Tremé after Hurricane Katrina, Leigh Graham (2010) offers that CDCs are both incapable of addressing the structural issues of capitalism and complicit in further entrenching capitalism and neoliberal market practices in communities devastated by these phenomenon. She found a structural conflict of interest imbedded in the fact that CDCs use the investments they provide to low-income neighborhoods for development as their major funding source as well. This lack of neutrality about investment opportunities has proven to be harmful to communities over time – often producing gentrification and displacement.

Stoecker (1996) and O’Connor (2001) both note the role that outside funding and capital has played in directing the activities of community development agencies. O’Connor (2001) says that “the poverty research industry had developed a dependency problem...a capacity, that is, to conform and respond to the shifting political agenda of the agencies it relied on for funding, but not to establish and gain support for an independent policy agenda for dealing with poverty at its roots (p. 291).” CDCs are development engines - their sustained existence largely depends on tax credits and foundations (O’Connor, 2001). These funding constraints for CDCs makes the expectation for CDCs to address the structural determinants of inequality, as well as the projects that meet people’s immediate needs, unreasonable. The critique here is not so much that CDCs are not doing things that they should be able to, but rather that they are an inadequate response to a structural problem.

While the critiques of the community economic development field, and CDCs, has existed for years, since the Financial Crisis and the Foreclosure Crises of the late 2000s there is renewed energy in examining the community economic development field - its activities and strategies - for how it is tackling the larger issues driving inequality in society. This is particularly urgent given the rising gentrification and displacement occurring across cities in the U.S. (Wyly and Hamell, 2004; Madden, 2013).

The next section dives into and synthesizes literature that offers strategies for how to change our political economy in ways the conventional community economic development strategies, namely CDCs, have not.

A Comprehensive Social Transformation Strategy

First, the social transformation literature offers that in addition to the fundamental characteristics of capitalism – private ownership, profit maximization, market distribution, etc. (Center for Economic Democracy, 2014) – there are ideological barriers both to understanding the role that capitalism plays in negative life outcomes, and to even considering that the system of capitalism can be changed. A comprehensive social transformation strategy must address both the structural and ideological components of the current system.

It has not escaped notice of people disparately impacted by the crises of capitalism—low-income workers, black workers and other workers of color, as well as women—that the foundations of the U.S. economy, private property and market distribution, are critical areas of struggle. In an article titled *Workers' Cooperatives and Social Enterprise: A Forgotten Route to Social Equity and Democracy* Professor Joyce Rothschild (2009) offers: “political democracy and economic democracy are inextricably linked [and] a denial of voice in one realm leads to its denial in the other (p. 1023).” She continues, “The inverse is also true. The opportunity for voice in either realm can whet the appetite for participation and develop in individuals an increased capacity for dialogue and democratic decision-making (p. 1023). Throughout the history, accompanying struggles for a greater share of capitalists’ surplus (profits) through policies that protect workers’ rights and provide a social safety net, were attempts to carve out spaces of community control and democratic decision-making, as well as struggles to change the system altogether.

Analytical Framework for Social Transformation

I offer as an analytical framework for social transformation, the combination of “Transformative Organizing (Mann, 2010),” “Transformative Community Economic Development (Feinberg, 2014),” and “Transformative Use of Existing Systems (including politics, services, and education) (Wright, 2009).” These broad areas fall roughly in line with Erik Olin Wright’s (2009) strategies for social transformation, respectively: ruptural, interstitial, and symbiotic. Ruptural strategies involve explicitly fighting to change the system and tactics include direct action and civil disobedience; interstitial strategies are institutions and practices that can be created in the cracks and contradictions of the capitalist system, like starting worker cooperatives, land trusts, and community gardens; and symbiotic strategies involve working within the system for change – providing direct services and supports and doing insider politics with policy makers and targets.

Together, I believe these elements provide the ingredients with which to transform society. Next, I will describe each element in depth. But first, I will touch upon the ideological underpinning of our political economy.

Challenging Dominant Narratives

The system of neoliberal market capitalism that we live in is not only structurally embedded in the U.S. Constitution and in laws and policies, but also by cultural and ideological narratives and practices about commodification, individualism, self-interest, and 'The American Dream' that normalize the system (Polanyi, 1944; Wright, 2009). Therefore, the goal of transformative strategies should be to get people to open their eyes to the dominant narratives operating, figure out the ones that are untrue or no longer useful, craft alternative narratives, and ultimately change the system.

In *The Great Transformation*, political economist Karl Polanyi (1944) argues that a capitalist market economy can only exist when embedded within a market society, which he says is one that has "subordinated the substance of society itself to the laws of the market (p. 71)," that is, made resources, goods, and services, into commodities: "objects produced for sale on the market (p. 72)." Polanyi (1944) argues that the acceptance and use of labor and land as commodities, when they actually exist and are useful beyond their market values, "supplies a vital organizing principle in regard to the whole of society (p. 73)" making it difficult for activities that do not similarly commodify land and labor to exist in society (Polanyi, 1944).

Polanyi (1944) further argues that the reduction of human life and social relations to commodities and the subordination of natural human activities and nature to the market, results in the current painful "physical, psychological, and moral (p. 73)" reality that our actions and creativity are constrained and degraded. This pain, however, is acceptable because we buy into the fiction that normalizes these relationships. The market becomes the key to economic growth and the attainment of the American Dream becomes the key to happiness.

In *Envisioning Real Utopias*, sociologists Erik Olin Wright (2009) uses the term "social reproduction" to refer to the "processes that reproduce the underlying structure of social relations and institutions in society (p. 274)." That is, social reproduction describes how these ideas embedded in the capitalist market society are maintained through the institutions, ideas, and structures of society. Wright (2009) describes the way that social reproduction occurs as being both passive – embedded in the actions and everyday routines of people that are natural and taken for granted (p. 274) and active – found in institutions and structures designed by or for society (p. 274). Reinsborough and Canning (2010)², Wright (2009), Gaventa (1982), Pivens and Cloward (1979), and Williams (1973) all agree that capitalism is extremely effective at maintaining the acquiescence of impacted people through dominant narratives and ideologies that normalize commodification and oppression.

Social reproduction is cemented by dominant narratives that allow the middle class to protect the institutions and structures, both the coercive institutions and the rules that govern them, that they believe serve their material interests. Some of these may, in fact, impact their material interest negatively, but the dominant narratives blind them to these facts. The goal of social transformation is to end the cycle of social reproduction that reinforces the commodification of human activity and land and allow people to thrive in relationship to each other and nature. New institutional arrangements and a complete

² Patrick Reinsborough and Doyle Canning co-founded the Center for Story-based Strategy (formerly *smartMeme*) in 2003 to support the efforts of grassroots organizations to conduct narrative power analyses and to design campaigns that challenge dominant narratives and ideologies.

transformation of society is needed in order to allow people to cast aside the painful, reductionist reality faced by the commodification of labor and realize their fullest potentials, as well as to save the environment from being “reduced it its elements (Polanyi, 1944, p. 73)” and decimated. We need to rid society of these fictitious narratives in order to thrive and develop sustainable eco-social interactions.

According to Professor Otto Scharmar and Katrin Kaufer (2013), authors of *Leading from the Emerging Future*, we now have the aspiration, desperation, and the technology to bring about this transformation of society. This liberation can only be won, however, by committing to processes that challenge the dominant narratives embedded in the current capitalist market economy, fostering new narratives, and as we ask and answer the questions of what it will look like, creating the institutions and practices that embody ideals of liberty, trust, and love.

Only people engaging in a combination of strategies in Transformative Organizing, Transformative Community Economic Development, and Transformative Use of Existing Systems and Resources has the power to tackle the dominant narratives and structural fallacies of market capitalism and change society. As Professor Penn Loh (2014) writes, “For those who aspire to address the structural underpinnings of persistent poverty, increasing inequalities, and environmental unsustainabilities, there are the challenges of both overcoming the mental handcuffs of neoliberalism and developing vision for possibilities that go beyond capitalism as we know it (Loh, 2014).”

Transformative Organizing

Transformative organizing is a concept used by the Labor Community Strategy Center to distinguish between campaign organizing that seeks concessions from the dominant power structures, and organizing that includes a robust understanding of the structural and institutional roots of poverty in the U.S. and links it to international and ecological understandings of the need for solidarity and transformation of the economy. As LCSC Director, Eric Mann (2010) writes, “During the heyday of the multiracial New Left movement, the word ‘organizer’ was synonymous with Black militant, anti-war, pro-socialist, and anti-imperialist politics,”³ suggesting the multi-dimensional analysis organizers had of the root causes of issues, and their ability to articulate their connections. It is only this kind of organizing that has the power to change the systems that produce inequality, rather than just respond to it.

For example, the National Right to the City Coalition with other affordable housing advocates launched a “Homes for All” campaign in 2013 which called for the Federal Housing Financing Agency to reduce the principle owed on all homes in foreclosure to the amounts they were worth after the market crashed. They plan to use tactics of “marches, direct actions protecting apartment buildings slated for demolition, neighborhood tours, rallies, and more (Homes for All, para. 1).” In their first press release, however, they also state that their goal is a truly affordable housing plan on the national level (Homes for All, 2013). Further, The Right to the City National platform, includes the demand for “the right to land and housing that is free from market speculation and that serves the interests of community building, sustainable economies, and cultural and political space (Right to the City, para. 1). By being explicit about their greater goal for the end of speculation and housing commodification as they advocate for concrete shifts in housing policy, like principle reduction, Right to the City practices transformative organizing.

³ <http://reimagerpe.org/17-2/mann>

In the aftermath of the Foreclosure Crisis, more community organizations are practicing transformative organizing and are looking for transformative community economic development strategies - strategies that democratize access and control of capital, in addition to their campaign organizing, direct services, and political strategies.

Transformative Community Economic Development

In contrast to the previously described community economic development system, transformative economic development, similar to transformative organizing, connects poverty to its root causes of capital accumulation, private ownership, profit maximization, and commodification, and takes on economic development projects that challenge these practices and values.

The increasingly popular Social and Solidarity Economy framework provides principles that can guide transformative community economic development by evaluating activities against a loosely defined framework that asserts that people are interdependent, people can balance collective and individual interests as acts of solidarity, people should have self-determination and agency over the conditions that impact their lives, and that people exchange and meet their needs in a variety of diverse ways that can all be explored (Loh and Shear, 2014). I think Feinberg (2014), and Loh and Shear (2014), describe SSE as transformative community economic development best when they write:

“Solidarity Economy is a fundamentally different way of approaching economic projects and possibilities within the dominant context that, if successful, can change participants’ economic location, influence the logic and practice of the dominant economy, and most importantly grow in its role as a guiding hermeneutic for envisioning and developing a future economy rooted in the values (Feinberg, 2014, p. 51)” and

“SE [Solidarity Economy] can help reframe and relocate community development efforts away from isolated initiatives that are constrained and suppressed by capitalist ideology and move them onto the global stage as part of a movement that is transforming the very nature of economy (Loh and Shear, 2014).”

The proponents of the Social and Solidarity Economy see the principles as a way to guide economic development activities such that they challenge that narrative of corporate control and market distribution. Similarly, In *Reclaiming Public Ownership*, Andrew Cumbers (2012) also offers a list of principles to guide transformative community economic development: 1) Reconstitute/democratize who contributes to the production of the surplus, who directly appropriates the surplus, and who determines at a broader level how the surplus is distributed, 2) Develop distributed and dispersed forms of economic decision making, though not all decentralized, 3) Build coalitions among different traditions of collective and public ownership, 4) Respect and rely on multiple forms of knowledge creation, particular those deriving from local innovations and 5) Commit to fostering a diversity of economic forms, ownerships and distributive mechanisms, so one cannot dominate.

Transformative Community Economic Development therefore, is community economic development that builds the wealth of low-income communities by fostering collective ownership and democratic decision-making over resources. Use of Transformative Community Economic Development strategies build the

capacities of people to do things differently through practice. People have become accustomed to treating labor and land as commodities and buy into many narratives supporting this commodity fiction. Interstitial strategies are the most difficult because they requires more than a commitment to the idea of anti-commodification, but in addition, real imagination and vision about arrangement systems and structures guiding the relationship between production for human needs, human activities, and nature. The literature on worker cooperatives, a potential form of transformative community economic development, continuously points to the notion that political and social organizing alone will not reverse trends of disinvestment and underdevelopment in communities (Nembhard, 2004). It suggests that one must both challenge the political and social power relations in society, as well as the economic arrangements these political and social dynamics reify and exacerbate. As the next section will expound upon, Transformative Community Economic Development strategies, when done with the explicit intention of contesting for the power that markets and corporations have over production and distribution, have the potential to disrupt and change the political economy of capitalism.

Alternative Versus Oppositional Economic Development Strategies

As part of challenging the economic arrangements in society, it is important that Transformative Community Economic Development strategies are oppositional rather than just being alternative to the dominant capitalist system. In her Ph.D. dissertation in MIT's Department of Urban Studies and Planning, which was on post Great Depression rural electrification efforts, Abby Spinak (2014) explores the relationship between practices and institutions that are "alternative" and those that are "oppositional" as developed by Raymond Williams (1973) in "Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory." Spinak (2014) writes, "Williams introduces the idea of alternative versus oppositional practices in a discussion of how 'emergent' cultural forms take hold in the deeply embedded 'body of practices and expectations' that constitute structural hegemony (p. 17)." Williams (1973) describes the distinction as the difference between "someone who simply finds a different way to live and wishes to be left alone with it, and someone who finds a different way to live and wants to change the society in its light (p. 11)."

Spinak (2014) continues, writing, "Part of the sophistication of maintaining hegemony, however, is an ongoing process to incorporate emergent phenomena into mainstream practice before they have the opportunity to develop into oppositional phenomena (p. 17)." Spinak (2014) argues that the development of energy consumer cooperatives in rural America in the 1930s had, through "innovations in energy ownership" the potential to be "transformative for society (Spinak, 2014, p. 17)." However that, "because they failed to be fully oppositional to the inequitable relations they were in theory founded to contest" they lost their power to transform society (Spinak, 2014, p. 17).

In *Poor People's Movements*, Frances Fox Piven and Richard Cloward (1979) argue that relying on organizations to foster movements is flawed because "it is not possible to compel concession from elites that can be used as resources to sustain oppositional organizing (transformative organizing) over time (p. xxi)." This is an important reminder of the necessity to work both within and outside of the non-profit system. Arguably, CDCs, with resident boards, and community organizing, were an attempt to create an alternative planning and community control system that was coopted before they truly became oppositional to the capitalist market system, as described in a previous section.

As Stoecker (1996) notes, Transformative Community Economic Development cannot happen without Transformative Organizing. He writes: “Some CDCs will argue that development itself is empowering. But renting a shoebox apartment from a CDC is no more empowering than renting it from any responsible landlord. Co-ops can be empowering, employee- owned businesses can be empowering, and other community- controlled economic and housing alternatives can be empowering. But “developing” those alternatives cannot happen without organizing community, because those alternatives threaten the power of capitalists, and thus depend on community cooperation and collective action (Stoecker, 1996).” In his Master’s thesis for the Tufts Urban and Environmental Policy and Planning Program, Jon Feinberg (2014) comes to a similar finding through his research about the New Lynn Coalition, which is organizing residents around the demand for development revenue to go towards job training and workforce development, and, in particular, worker cooperative development.

Throughout history, social movements have attempted to organize around transformative demands and create spaces of resistance to dominant economic practices. Actually working towards building a cooperative, or any economic institution, should be combined with broader aims of organizing – both in the policy arena, and against the system. Development of a cohesive strategy is critical. Interstitial strategies cannot develop the oppositional capacity to contend with the dominant system and the narratives that uphold it, without the use of ruptural strategies as well. Wright offers that “the trajectory of change through interstitial strateg[ies]...will be marked by periods in which limits of possibility are encountered and transformation is severely impeded (Wright, p. 244).” Here, either a rupture with the current system must occur, or more advanced interstitial strategies must continuously be developed until eventually; there are no more limitations. Either way, without preparation for the limits of possibility, and a vision for how to surpass them, interstitial strategies risk simply being pressure release valves for the current system. Transformative organizing provides this context to the demands of transformational community economic development.

Transformative Use of Existing Systems and Resources

The final element of a cohesive social transformation strategy is the transformative use of existing systems and resources. While transformative organizing and economic development are important, alone, they risk alienating people who cannot immediately participate in the activities due to constraints often imposed by the capitalism system. It is important to provide direct services to meet those needs as well. In *To Die for the People*, a collection of Black Panther founder and leader Huey Newton’s essays and speeches edited by Toni Morrison, we read Huey Newton’s words about the Black Panther Party’s Survival Programs. For the Panthers, this was a key strategy in transforming the economic system. Newton (2009) writes:

“We recognized that in order to bring the people to the level of consciousness where they would seize the time, it would be necessary to serve their interests in survival by developing programs which would help them to meet their daily needs...Now we not only have a breakfast program for schoolchildren, we have clothing programs, we have health clinics which provide free medical and dental services, we have programs for prisoners and their families, and we are opening clothing and shoe factories to provide for more of the needs of the community...All these programs satisfy the deep needs of the community

but they are not solutions to our problems. That is why we call them survival programs, meaning survival pending revolution.” (p. 102)

Newton believed these programs were crucial to building the “political machine (p. 108)” that would bring down capitalism by providing the space for political education of the people. He writes: “There must be a total transformation [of the capitalist system]. But until we can achieve that total transformation, we must exist. In order to exist, we must survive; therefore, we need a survival kit (p. 21).” Meeting the daily material needs of the people who are expected to organize and create for the social transformation is important, as is connecting them to transformative organizing and community economic development strategies.

The principle also applies to attempts to use the political system by running for office or using the non-profit tax-exempt structure. Both institutions are firmly embedded in and reliant upon the connections between money and power in the U.S (INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence, 2012). However, they can, if deployed subversively, connected to transformative organizing to keep such efforts accountable to a larger vision, and connected to oppositional institutions to provide alternative that people can shift to using, contribute to social transformation.

In *Republic, Lost: How Money Corrupts Congress--and a Plan to Stop It*, Lawrence Lessig (2012) argues that we need a Constitutional Convention and to run non-politicians in Congressional races and for President in order to enact campaign contribution limits and reform the campaign finance system - what he determines to be the major culprit of inequality.

An Interconnected and Interdependent Strategy

Building and fostering social movements for social transformation requires multi-level strategizing. The literature on social movement organizing notes that these strategies typically involve direct confrontation of the system, building alternatives to the system, and/or working within the system to transform it (Wright, 2009). Wright names these strategies transformative ruptural, interstitial, and symbiotic, respectively and notes most revolutions and transformations have occurred due to a combination of all three. It is therefore important to stress that Transformative Organizing, Transformative Community Economic Development, and Transformative Use of Existing Systems are interrelated and overlapping strategies for social transformation. The interplay of these actions: calling for a transformation of the system, developing alternative/oppositional spaces, and working within the system has happened repeatedly throughout the history of the U.S. in response to the domination of capitalists and it is the strategies together that are needed to change society. As Wright (2009) eloquently states, while:

“we don’t know what system-challenges and transformative possibilities there will be in the future: interstitial strategies [transformational community economic development] today can strengthen popular understandings that another world is possible and contribute to moving along some of the pathways of social empowerment; symbiotic strategies [leveraging existing systems] can potentially open up greater spaces for interstitial strategies to work; and the cumulative effect of such institution building around expanded forms of social empowerment could be to render ruptural transformations possible under unexpected future historical conditions [transformational organizing]. (p. 264)

Given this analysis, it is no surprise that most movements for social justice – especially those led by low-wage workers, black people, etc., have had strands that also pushed for the complete transformation of the U.S. economy while pushing for the creation of alternative economic institutions. Cooperatives, for example, have a long history in the United States – seeing their first major raise between the 1840s and 1880s (Rothschild, 2009). Since then, they have followed a pattern of receding and reemerging in times of economic crises such as post-Great Depression during the New Deal (Krishna, 2012).

In an article titled “Cooperatives as Progressive Lawyering,” cooperative developer Gowri Krishna (2012) mentions the rise of the labor organization Knights of Labor in the 1880s, which contributed to the over 300 worker cooperatives that started in that decade. The Knights of Labor “organized cooperatives in an effort to exert democratic control over the entire economic system, [and to transform] the country into a ‘Cooperative Commonwealth’ (Krishna, p. 79).”

However, Krishna (2012) writes: “Creating democratic worker cooperatives in a capitalist context proved to be difficult. Capitalists attacked union co-ops, denied investment capital and limited their access to markets (p. 79).” Rather, while there are those who have called for cooperative development as a means to social transformation – including those from within the black liberation movement (Ransby, 2003) - cooperatives have and do function in the current system without challenging the overall dominance of capital over labor and planet (Krishna, 2012).

African-Americans, wanting a share of the early gains of the labor movement, have also historically clamored for social, political, and economic rights, while advocating for transformative community economic development strategies. One of the co-founders of the Democracy Collaborative, Jessica Gordon Nembhard (2002; 2004; 2006; 2008), writes prolifically about the connection that early black advocates for civil rights made between their civil and political rights, and the economic conditions they were fighting against. In *Alternative Economics - A Missing Component in the African American Studies Curriculum: Teaching Public Policy and Democratic Community Economics to Black Undergraduate Students*, Nembhard (2008) writes, “Although there is no official or unofficial agreement on the final economic vision of equality or the road to it, many African Americans have proposed radical economic agendas, including W.E.B. Du Bois, Harold Cruse, James Forman, Robert Browne, Manning Marable, Martin Delany, Thomas Fortune, Jesse Jackson, and even Marcus Garvey and Booker T. Washington (p. 763).”

According to Nembhard (2008), “scholars such as W.E.B. Du Bois, E. Franklin Frazier, and John Hope II; activists such as A. Philip Randolph, Ella Jo Baker, and George Schuyler; and entrepreneurs such as Nannie Burroughs all supported and promoted cooperative business ownership among African Americans as a strategy for economic stability and empowerment (p. 763).” She continues: “James Reddix (1974), an early cooperative developer in the 1930s and then president of Jackson State College (now University), concluded that a ‘nationwide system of [African American] cooperative businesses’ ‘could lift the burden of economic exploitation’ from the backs of African Americans (p. 119)’ (p. 764).” Additionally, she reports that William Fletcher and Eugene Newport argued that a “Black Agenda” must include industrial cooperation and community control of land development (p. 764).”

While he is typically unmentioned in Civil Rights history notes due to his conservatism, George Schuyler advocated that black people build capital in their communities by forming cooperatives. Nembhard (2004) quotes him writing: ““As I have pointed out again and again ... there is only one thing that can immediately get the Negro group out of the barrel and that is consumers’ cooperation, the building up of a Negro co-operative democracy within the shell of our present capitalist system of production and distribution (1930: 9)’ (p. 2).”

In her biography of Ella Baker, *Ella Baker & the Black Freedom Movement: A Radical Democratic Vision*, Barbara Ransby (2003) writes that Baker and the other members of the Young Negroes Cooperative League were “clear that cooperative economics was a tool or strategy of a larger movement - toward the elimination of economic exploitation and the transition to a new social order (p. 86).” Finally, as mentioned above, at the end of the Civil Rights and Black Power Movements, communities were creating institutions to meet their needs - such as the Black Panthers’ breakfast program- as they were also advocating for control in their communities. Even more contemporary examples, such as the creation of the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative’s community land trust to keep housing affordable and in community control in the 1980s, show the constant connections being made between organizing, alternative economic institution building, and politics.

Unfortunately, the history of the cooperative movement in the United States, has not led to an overthrow of the capitalist system. Still, the movements of the 1940s-1970s were pointing us in a particular direction before being stymied by a combination of the 501(c)(3), neoliberal cuts to public services, a lack of solidarity, and devastating blows to the leadership of the movements.

Having now provided an overview of the Community Economic Development field and highlighted the potential for Social Transformation through Transformative Organizing, Transformative Community Economic Development, and Transformative Use of Existing Systems and Resources, I now turn to the role young people have and can play in these transformative efforts.

Youth in Social Transformation Strategies

While the issues in society are deeper than unemployment, as a standard in a wage labor economic system, the health of the labor force is indicative of the ability of people to care for themselves and their families. Globally, youth unemployment trends are predicted to rise for both countries with industrialized, market economies, and those with more agricultural based economies. These trends are troubling because in our society, youth employment is critical to future adult employment. As Gianni Rosas, coordinator of the ILO Youth Employment Programme and co-author of the Global Employment Trends for Youth 2013 report, noted “young people, especially those who are low-skilled, those who are exposed to long-term unemployment or, those who are stuck in what we call the informal economy where work is low paid and unprotected, face more difficulties in the labor market (International Labour Organization, 2013, 00:30).”

Unfortunately, unemployed young people are not getting the skills and work experience that will need in order to engage meaningfully in the wage labor economic system that dominates society. Further of note is that this issue disproportionately impacts youth of color as most developing countries are countries with

a majority people of color and youth of color in advanced economies are more likely to not have access to the formal labor market.

Think tanks and foundations like the Anne E. Casey Foundation have documented nationwide upward trends in youth unemployment and poverty in the United States. Their 2012 report entitled *Youth and Work: Restoring Teen and Young Adult Connections to Opportunity* focuses on the scale of the challenges facing young people, ages 16-24, particularly “disconnected youth” (youth who are out of school and out of work and suggests policies to address the gaps. The number totals over 6 million youth in the United States who are out of school and out of work (The Annie e. Casey Foundation, 2012)⁴.

In Massachusetts, a report entitled *The Continued Crisis in Teen Employment* prepared by Andrew Sum, Don Gillis, and Sheila Palma from the Center for Labor Market Studies at Northeastern University and the Massachusetts Workforce Association Board (2012), asserts that “youth from minority backgrounds, low income families, one parent households, and high poverty and high unemployment areas are finding it increasingly difficult to find any type of work, [and] employed teens are being increasingly confined to jobs in a smaller subset of industries and occupations (p. 7).”

What’s more, for low-income young people of color, their health and educational outcomes due to racism, policing and surveillance, poverty, and pervasive violence, are drastically different from their peers of higher socio-economic status (Ginwright & James, 2002). Investing in young people is critical because youth are, quite literally, the future. As Delgado and Staples (2007) write in *Youth-led Community Organizing*: “A nation that systematically neglects its youth must be prepared to invest considerable sums of money in remedial services and correctional supervision, both now and in the future (p. 3).” He continues: “The true cost [that a nation pays for not constructively engaging and supporting its youth] cannot be measured simply in monetary standards...the social and political consequences far exceed any financial costs (Jenkins 2001; Rizzini, Barker, and Cassaniga 2002) (p. 3).”

The framework that I presented earlier for Social Transformation: Transformative Organizing, Transformative Community Economic Development, and Strategic Use of Existing Systems and Resources, maps to a “social justice youth development” framework (see Table 1) proposed by Shawn Ginwright and Taj James (2002) in their article: *From Assets to Agents of Change: Social Justice, Organizing, and Youth Development*. The principles they outline serve as a blueprint for youth development organizations to work from as they engage young people in social justice work: 1) Analyze power in social relationships, 2) Make identity central, 3) Promote systemic social change, 4) Encourage collective action, and 5) Embrace youth culture. They also include a range of practices and outcomes for youth that follow from the principles.

While there are gaps in the principles and practices they outline for social justice youth development, I believe these gaps stem from what is missing across the spectrum of youth activities: social justice activities are not linked to actions and activities in social transformation. For example, analysis seems to be limited to the realm of social oppression and there is no explicit mention of economic oppression. Connecting the social justice youth development principles, with the elements of social transformation

⁴ It is unclear from the report whether this number includes or excludes youth who are undocumented or incarcerated.

explored above, we get a framework through which we can analyze young peoples' roles in social transformation and evaluate ways adults can support them (see Table 2). I present Youth Organizing, Youth Initiative and Enterprise, and Youth Development as frameworks to understand the ways young people can contribute to movements for social transformation.

Principles of Social Justice Youth Development

Principles	Practices	Outcomes
Analyzes power in social relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political education • Political strategizing • Identifying power holders • Reflecting about power in one's own life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social problematizing, critical thinking, asking and answering questions related to community and social problems • Development of sociopolitical awareness • Youth transforming arrangements in public and private institutions by sharing power with adults
Makes identity central	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joining support groups and organizations that support identity development • Reading material where one's identity is central and celebrated • Critiquing stereotypes regarding one's identities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of pride regarding one's identity • Awareness of how sociopolitical forces influence identity • Feeling of being a part of something meaningful and productive • The capacity to build solidarity with others who share common struggles and have shared interests
Promotes systemic social change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working to end social inequality (such as racism and sexism) • Refraining from activities and behaviors that are oppressive to others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sense of life purpose, empathy for the suffering of others, optimism about social change • Liberation by ending various forms of social oppression
Encourages collective action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involving oneself in collective action and strategies that challenge and change local and national systems and institutions • Community organizing • Rallies and marches • Boycotts and hunger strikes • Walkouts • Electoral strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity to change personal community, and social conditions • Empowerment and positive orientation toward life circumstances and events • Healing from personal trauma brought on from oppression
Embraces youth culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Celebrating youth culture in organizational culture (Language, Personnel, Recruitment strategies) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authentic youth engagement • Youth-run and youth-led organizations • Effective recruitment strategies • Effective external communications • Engagement of extremely marginalized youth

Table 1: Principles of Social Justice Youth Development (Ginwright and James, 2002)

Youth in Social Transformation Strategies

Social Transformation Framework	Social Justice Youth Development principles	<i>Additional principles for a Youth in Social Transformation Framework</i>	<i>Youth in Social Transformation Framework</i>
Transformative Organizing	Analyzes power in social relationships Embraces youth culture Promotes systemic social change	<i>Analyzes the connection between social, political, economic and ideological power</i>	<i>Youth Organizing</i>
Transformative Community Economic Development	Encourages collective action	<i>Practices democratic decision making and collective ownership</i>	<i>Youth Initiative & Enterprise</i>
Strategic Use of Existing Systems & Resources	Makes identity central	<i>Connects “youth issues” to all social justice issues</i> <i>Skill-building</i>	<i>Youth Development</i>

Table 2: Principles for Youth in Social Transformation

Youth Development

Leveraging existing systems and resources requires us to connect direct services and politics to an overall strategy for social transformation. The youth development field abounds with programs and services for young people. The field of youth development argues that youth need inputs in five developmental areas in order to develop into strong, healthy, and contributing adults in society. This may look different for different youth, but the key developmental areas are the same: social/emotional, moral/spiritual, civic, vocational, physical, cognitive and personal/cultural (Pittman et al, 2003).

Youth, primarily youth under 18 years old, can typically get these inputs at afterschool programs, arts programs, sports teams, church group, work co-op programs, or community service programs, to name a few. Most also include an academic component and mentorship. Older youth, 18-25 years old must typically look to community colleges and workforce development programs which strive to meet the specific academic and financial needs of older youth as they age out of youth programs (Kane & Rouse, 1999).

Some argue, however, that conventional youth-oriented programs can fail youth, especially those who are traditionally marginalized by virtue of their identity and find themselves disconnected from key institutions and social systems, “because of the depoliticized nature of the services and activities rendered, as well as an inability or unwillingness to confront the forces of oppression in the lives of these youth (Roach, Sullivan, and Wheeler, 1999).”

As experts in youth engagement and social justice, Professor Shawn Ginwright and Professor Julio Cammarota (2007) argue, “although policymakers express concern about the future of young people, few have actually taken steps to address the economic, political, and social conditions that shape young people's lives. This is particularly true in working-class communities of color, where punitive public policies exacerbate rather than ameliorate community problems. The failure of current policy to address important quality-of-life issues for youth of color remains a substantial barrier to their full civic participation, educational achievement, and healthy adulthood (Hart and Atkins, 2002) (Ginwright and Cammarota, 2007, p. 24).”

Ginwright and Cammarota (2007) offer that, “policy directed at youth must shift from the current focus on control and containment to proactive methods to increase their participation in democracy (p. 25).” This is particularly true for marginalized young people living in urban communities. These young people typically have substandard schools and underfunded out of school time programming, if they are engaged at all (Ginwright et al., 2005). These young people at the margins of society are the true litmus test of societal progress.

Youth development programs for youth in urban centers have sprung up to meet this challenge: incorporating social justice themes and principles to programs ranging from digital arts and media, construction, tutoring younger kids, etc. Making the identity of these young people central to the ways youth programming interacts with them, helps develop their social justice leadership capacity. In addition to issues of identity, youth development recognizes the importance of civic engagement that goes beyond community service projects and accomplishes this through popular and political education. Often this leads to youth organizing, which is seen by many experts in the youth development field as an effective tool for youth development. By engaging them in youth organizing, the goal is not just youth development, but also “build[ing] a more equitable society through the engagement of critically conscious citizens (Ginwright and James, 2002, p. 3).”

When strategists leverage existing systems and resources, they are connecting conventional actions like direct services or politics to more transformative ends. Youth service, skill building, and development programs can and should be similarly leveraged towards more transformative ends.

Youth Organizing

Youth organizing takes many forms. Young people obviously self-organize around issues of importance to them. According to Shawn Ginwright and Taj James (2002), youth respond to marginalization by creatively organizing, developing political education, and identity development. The youth organizing movement highlights young people's role in fighting injustice across many issues – students in the peace, environmental, and civil rights movements are lauded as having been crucial to the major wins these movements gained. In *Youth-Led Community Organizing*, Melvin Delgado and Lee Staples (2007), mention Phillip Hoose, the author of *We Were There Too!: Young People in U.S. History*, and Professor of History Denoral Davis, writing: “Hoose argues that young people's conscience, energy, and courage helped shaped American history. Davis, when chronicling the early civil rights movement in Mississippi, notes the central role played by youth (junior and senior high school students) in moving forward a social justice agenda in that state (p. 55).”

The organizing field has recognized the value in developing youth leadership in social justice movements through youth organizations. According to Delgado and Staples (2007), “A youth-development or youth-led paradigm has emerged [from the field of youth services], effectively transforming young people from their traditional roles as consumers, victims, perpetrators, and needy clients to positive assets who are quite capable of being major contributors within their respective communities (p. 6).”

As a youth development exercise, youth organizing is increasingly important to creating relevant and engaging youth programming, particularly for urban youth. The literature on the development of youth as leaders in organizing comes from “the belief that youth must play an active and meaningful role (decision making) in shaping their own destiny has been very influential in grounding these [social] policy interventions in a set of values that are participatory and empowering in nature (Delgado and Staples, 2007, p. 6).” Delgado adds, however, that “youth participation or youth-led interventions can occur in a variety of ways, including but not limited to youth-led research, social enterprises, health education campaigns, philanthropy, planning and program development, and school reform (Delgado and Staples, 2007, p. 7).”

In Transformative Organizing organizers connect the everyday issues they are fighting for through campaigns and advocacy, to larger systemic root causes. Through youth organizing, youth are given opportunities to connect address issues they are facing in school, in their neighborhoods, because of their identity, etc. to each other and figure out a way to make changes for themselves and for their peers (Ginwright and Cammarota, 2007; Roach, Sullivan, and Wheeler, 1999). Youth organizing focuses its efforts on making genuine changes to the system.

Youth Initiative and Enterprise

Transformative Community Economic Development is about taking on development projects that connected to Transformative Organizing and that challenged the status quo of the capitalist system. This involves strategies like worker cooperatives, land trusts, time banks, and restorative justice. For young people encouraging collective action usually looks like youth organizing as described above, but it could also look like youth participation and leadership in all aspects of community economic development: worker cooperatives and entrepreneurship, urban farming, participatory budgeting, etc.

For example, Professor Jessica Gordon-Nembhard (2008) raises key questions with regards to the engagement of young people in cooperative development. She asks: “Who will develop these new paradigms and a new economic ideology? Who will mentor students to become paradigm changers and scholar activists? How will they learn about and understand the attempts in the past, the past models of success, and the lessons of the failures (Nembhard, 2008, p. 767)?”

Historically, both people on the left and the right within the black community agreed that cooperative development was crucial and called on African American youth to lead the movement (Nembhard, 2008). Nembhard (2008) advocates strongly for targeting cooperative development and the development of alternative institutions towards young people. Most young people are not exposed to concepts of alternative and/or oppositional economics (Nembhard, 2008). She writes in *Alternative Economics - A Missing Component in the African American Studies Curriculum: Teaching Public Policy and Democratic Community Economics to Black Undergraduate Students*, “The first missed opportunity for

training African American students in economics is in high school...The economic education guidelines reflect mainstream economic thought and focus on concepts of scarcity, competition, and rationality (Nembhard, 2008).”

Nembhard (2008) argues for using collective entrepreneurship experiences and cooperative development with high school students to help motivate them to continue in school and to be activists. This idea is consistent with youth entrepreneurship literature which cites youth employment, innovation resiliency, cultural and social identity as main benefits of supporting young people to undertake endeavors in which they apply enterprising qualities and skills (i.e., initiative, creativity, risk-taking, etc.) to working in start-up and/or self-employment (Chigunta, 2002).” Globally, the International Labor Organization has called for governments to support youth entrepreneurship and enterprise in response to the youth employment crisis (ILO, 2013).

The importance here is the practice of collective ownership and democratic decision making with youth – whether it is a program facilitated to provide such opportunities for youth, or supporting young people to create the entities themselves. Below, we will take a look at work in Boston on Social Transformation and ways young people have connected to them, and created their own, using the Youth in Social Transformation framework.

Findings & Discussion

The findings and discussion here are the result of my observations as a participant in various efforts towards social transformation in Boston. First, I describe the ways different organizations I observed are using aspects of the framework – mostly transformational organizing and leveraging existing systems and resources, while moving into the transformational community economic development arena. Throughout, I discuss the areas of youth engagement in the strategies, highlighting the aspects that fall in line with the framework for youth engagement in social transformation. I also discuss ways youth organizations are taking on aspects of the framework themselves. I conclude by including some of the gaps and limitations of these efforts.

Multi-Generational Efforts towards Social Transformation in Boston

There are many organizations using a combination of the social transformational strategies in their organizing, community development, political, and direct service work. To varying extents, young people are incorporated into these efforts.

After the U.S. Foreclosure Crisis and the subsequent global Economic Crisis, Right to the City (RTTC) emerged as both a framework and an organizational structure to unify a range of issues faced by low-income people of color in urban centers. From foreclosures to gentrification, to unemployment and policing, grassroots community organizations came together to assert their David Harvey (2013) deemed “right to the city.” These organizations call for an economy that serves all people by linking racial, economic, and environmental justice issues to capitalism. As mentioned, the National Right to the City Coalition launched a “Homes for All” campaign calling for the Federal Housing Financing Agency to

reduce the principle owned on all homes in foreclosure to the amounts they were worth after the market crashed. The Boston-regional Right to the City network is comprised of four membership-based organizations – Chinese Progressive Association (CPA), Boston Workers Alliance (BWA), City Life/Vida Urbana (CL/VU), and Alternatives for Community and Environment (ACE).

Right to the City - Boston

As a whole, Right to the City - Boston, engaged in electoral politics by creating Right to the City Vote, which endorsed John Barros as their candidate for Mayor in 2013. Each member organizations engaged their members and residents in the development of the Right to the City platform which candidates were asked to support. The platform's major points were 1) The Right to Remain in a Stable Community, 2) The Right to Economic Justice and Good Jobs, 3) The Right to Democratic Participation, 4) The Right to the Public Good, and 5) The Right to a Healthy Environment (<http://rtcvotebos.tumblr.com>). Each item in the platform contains the broad transformative vision for communities in Boston as well as a concrete and specific organizing goal such as "City subsidies such as tax breaks or zoning relief must only support development projects which have a majority of neighborhood resident support, have an enforceable Community Benefits Agreement and provide living wage jobs (<http://rtcvotebos.tumblr.com>)." This work, combined with some of the work individual RTTC-Boston organizations are doing paint a picture of social transformation strategies being deployed to change the system of capitalism that impacts RTTC's constituent communities.

Boston Workers Alliance

The Boston Workers Alliance, a community organization led by mostly by unemployed and underemployed black workers from Roxbury, Dorchester, and Mattapan, for example, brought organizations and people together to end CORI (Criminal Offender Record Information) discrimination by employers. Their efforts were grounded in the rhetoric of access to jobs and full employment for communities of color in Boston. BWA also started the Boston Staffing Alliance in 2010 in order to link their members to temporary work opportunities. Around the same time, a couple of their members launched a worker-owned cooperative called Roxbury Green Power, which collected cooking oil from restaurants and resold it for reprocessing as biodiesel fuel (Cordeiro, personal conversations). After undergoing what cooperative developer Stacey Cordeiro called "the peoples' feasibility study,"⁵ the business ultimately failed, but BWA did not abandon their worker cooperative development aspect of their overall vision and strategy (Cordeiro, personal conversations).

In 2012, BWA reengaged Stacy Cordeiro of the Boston Center for Community Ownership, and partnered with workers from MassCOSH, to form another worker-cooperative. After undergoing a "Coop Academy"⁶ six of their members formed CERO (Cooperative Energy, Recycling & Organics/Cooperativa para Energia, Reciclaje, & Organicos) - a recycling and organic waste cooperative which built upon Roxbury Green Power's strategy.

⁵ A term that Stacey uses to describe businesses that just start running without doing the typical market analysis and business planning.

⁶ Coop Academies are an innovative cooperative development structure piloted by Green Worker Coops in the Bronx, NY that provides a mixture of training and strategic guidance for groups who want to start worker cooperatives. The goal is to have a business plan by the end of the course which can last anywhere from 12-16 weeks.

Here we see a transformative organizing strategy – fighting for CORO reform with the rhetoric of full employment – combined with transformative economic development in the form of green worker cooperative development – and transformative services through a staffing agency. Unfortunately, BWA does not have any notable explicit ties to youth organizations beyond outreach for their rallies and events.

City Life/Vida Urbana

Another RTTC coalition member, City Life/Vida Urbana, is a housing justice organization in Jamaica Plain, which has been supporting tenant organizing to preserve housing affordability and resisting displacement in Boston since 1973. Since the foreclosure crisis post-2007, CL/VU has worked with tenants and homeowners facing eviction and foreclosure to help them stay in their homes. Their three campaigns: 1) the Anti-Investor Campaign, stopping and exposing the many foreclosed properties are being bought up en masse by investors looking to sell their properties when land values would eventually rise again so they could turn a profit or charge higher rents; 2) the Anti-Gentrification Campaign, fighting against gentrification in the most vulnerable neighborhoods in Boston, and 3) the Post-Foreclosure Eviction Defense Campaign, to keep former homeowners in their homes past foreclosure with the goal of creating a long-term and sustainable solution (Hill, Civic Media Co-Design studio, 10/31/13). They use a “sword and shield” strategy of direct action, like eviction blockades; and legal proceedings, like individual case management support, to keep people in their homes (Meacham, Civic Media Co-Design studio, 10/31/13).

City Life/Vida Urbana has also been working with the Coalition for Occupied Homes in Foreclosure (COHIF) to preserve housing affordability by working with developers and non-profits to buy properties that are in foreclosure, rehab them, and then figure out how to keep the residents in the home long term while maintaining the housing’s affordability (Hill, Civic Media, 10/31/13). This may mean, “property is kept as rental housing and owned by the non-profit or that it is converted into cooperative housing. There is also a possibility that some homeowners or tenants might be eligible to re-purchase the house, or that the home is sold to another eligible homebuyer who is willing to occupy the unit and uphold the COHIF lease-terms for the occupants (Coalition for Occupied Homes in Foreclosure, 11/29/13, retrieved from <http://www.cohif.org/pilot.html>). ”

Youth development – connecting “youth issues” to housing rights

CL/VU partnered with The City School, a youth social justice education organization, in the summer of 2013 to introduce their innovative “sword & shield” organizing and advocacy model to young people as well as their analysis about the housing market. Youth attended eviction blockades, heard from CL/VU members, and planned their own action at the end of the summer (Peters, personal conversation, 2/14/14). This partnership is slated to continue in the summer of 2014.

This effort falls in line with youth development as the goal was to help young people connect the social justice issues they were learning about (racism, sexism, classism, and heterosexism) to larger issues of poverty and housing insecurity through popular and political education.

Alternatives for Community and Environment

Alternatives for Community and Environment is an environmental justice organization focusing on

organizing in low income communities and communities of color, in Boston and throughout New England against environmental hazards that threaten the health and sustainability of these communities. Their campaigns have ranged from fighting the siting of a fossil fuel power plant in Brockton and West Bridgewater to fighting against service cuts and fare hikes on the MBTA.

Their transit justice campaigns – led by their program group, the T Riders Union (TRU) – emphasize not only the need for safe, affordable, and reliable transportation options in areas most underserved by the MBTA, but also the need for sustainable transportation options for the environment. ACE is also part of the Climate Justice Alliance – a national campaign of organizations that are connecting local struggles for community control over resources and development to the larger battle against corporate destruction of natural resources and control over the economy.

ACE's work provides examples of transformative organizing and transformative use of the legal system. Interestingly enough, ACE's connection to transformative community economic development happens through their youth program – the Roxbury Environmental Empowerment Project (REEP).

Youth initiative & enterprise – Building and managing community gardens

REEP recently started a food justice campaign called 'Grow or Die.' In partnership with the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative and The Food Project, a youth summer employment program for burgeoning farmers, they are developing a strategy to create the "Dudley Real Food Hub." REEP's Grow or Die strategy includes taking over vacant lots, building gardens, and organizing community members to tend to them. The opportunity to practice meeting community food needs collectively is a great example of youth initiative and enterprise.

Youth organizing & youth development – Youth-led transit justice campaign

Also, TRU, in connection with ACE's youth program REEP, the Boston-area Youth Organizing Project, and a coalition of over 30 other youth organizations across the city, is fighting for a youth pass for young people to be able to afford to ride the MBTA. Under the slogan of Opportuni(T), the Youth Affordability Coalition is demanding that the city and the state support young people by providing a \$10 youth pass for all young people 12-21, regardless of school status and with no restrictions (<http://youthwayonthembta.org/YAC>). Their strategies have included collecting data from their peers about ridership, rallies and marches, as well as meetings with MBTA officials. By partnering with TRU, the youth in the campaign reflect a deep understanding of how transit issues impact people across low-income communities of color (not just young people).

Chinese Progressive Association

CPA has typically engaged in anti-gentrification work - fighting developers who are building luxury housing in Chinatown and displacing long-time residents. They also have worker center type support for Chinese workers who are organizing in particular workplaces.

Their current campaign - the Chinatown Stabilization Campaign focuses on community control over housing and jobs and is an effort to link their many efforts in Chinatown together. They are fighting for planning to be separate from development and for community control over the planning that happens in Chinatown. For jobs, they are meeting with and rallying against Millennium - one of the largest

developers in Chinatown - and other developers about their construction contracts and aiming for 51% jobs for local people, 51% jobs for people of color, and 15% jobs for women. CPA has a particularly interest in making these construction jobs accessible to people who are not fluent in English.

CPA tried to start a mailing house cooperative, but it failed as the pressure and attention required to be a good business competed with the organizing goals of the organization (Lowe, CED Meeting, 1/7/14). As they explore supporting industry organizing such as food service, hotel, and home care workers) they are still exploring worker cooperative development as a strategy. Specifically, they thinking about creating permanent, wealth generating jobs through a cleaning cooperative for any Millennium property with a guarantee of bilingual teams (Lowe, CED Meeting, 1/7/14). For affordable housing, they are exploring the idea of using Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative's land trust to preserve the affordability of some of the row houses in Chinatown. They are also interested in the possibilities of worker cooperative creation with Tufts Medical Center as an anchor institution.

Similar to the other Right to the City organizations, CPA is using a combination of transformative organizing linked to direct services. They are also exploring transformative community economic development strategies like worker cooperatives and community land trusts.

Youth organizing & youth development – Chinatown Library Campaign

CPA has a youth program, the Chinese Youth Initiative, which is part of the Youth Affordability Coalition, and has also been fighting for a public library branch in Chinatown. This youth development program includes political education about worker's rights, immigrant rights, and gentrification (<http://cpaboston.org/en/programs/chinese-youth-initiative>).

The Dudley "Read Food" Hub

All over Boston, attempts are being made to create structures in the social and solidarity economy - allowing for democratic control and governance, equitable distribution of surplus, and taking care of community needs. Penn Loh recently documented the emergence of a food system grounded by SSE in an article he co-wrote with Glynn Lloyd, the founder of City Growers. The Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative's land trust provides affordable access to land, which organizations like ACE, The Food Project, and City Growers use to build urban farms and community gardens. Organizations like Crop Circle Kitchens, which is a food business incubator, uses the fresh produce and provides distribution and production services to food stores and cafes like the start-up worker/consumer cooperative - Dorchester Community Food Cooperative. Finally, the existence of CERO as a zero waste organics recycle cooperative rounds out the potential of this industry to provide wealth generating enterprises and restore control over land and labor to provide the community with much needed healthy food options (Loh & Lloyd, 2013).⁷

As these organizations individually pursue efforts to connect transformational organizing, transformational community economic development, and provide services in connect to the other strategies, organizations in Boston are rising to support the work of these membership based organization,

⁷ <http://pennloh.wordpress.com/2013/12/20/the-emerging-just-and-sustainable-food-economy-in-boston/>

specifically in their transformational community economic development work and in the ways they are connecting their strategies to each other.

The Center for Economic Democracy

The Center for Economic Democracy was formed in 2012 as a way to connect grassroots mobilization for social justice issues such as no-fault evictions and good jobs, to new economic institution building such as worker cooperatives and land trusts. The Right to the City-Boston organizations also form the core of the Center for Economic Democracy and Aaron Tanaka, the co-founder and former Executive Director of the Boston Workers Alliance, serves as the project director. The Center for Economic Democracy seeks to bring grassroots organizations and funders together to explore innovative ways to achieve economic democracy.

Their first project has been the Boston Jobs Coalition. The coalition of about 40 community partners and organizations, including Neighbors United for a Better East Boston (NUBE) and the Black Economic Justice Institute, in line with the Right to the City platform, is demanding their fair share of the jobs created by construction and development in the city. Most developers are not complying with the required 50% jobs for Boston residents, 25% jobs for minorities, and 10% jobs for women set forth by the Boston Residents Jobs Policy (BRJP) (Tanaka, personal communications, 2/11/14). The BJC argues that these developers receive massive tax breaks and are using public land, therefore the benefits of the efforts should accrue to the public good. The successes of the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative in holding the developers of the Kroc Center accountable to 51%, 51%, 15% standard (Gaining Ground, 2013) has made that the goal, along with a City-wide Community Benefits Agreement, and permanent jobs.

CED is intentionally grounding transformational community economic development in a transformational organizing campaign. As Aaron Tanaka noted, “if our members don’t have jobs, they can’t do the other stuff.” (Tanaka, CED Meeting, 4/25/14). CED plans to conduct monitoring of development sites. One of their demands is that any sites not in compliance be fined and the money put into a fund to support transformative community economic development projects.

Part of CED’s work is supporting organizations and their membership to make the connection between transformative organizing, which they do well, and transformative community economic development. With limited resources available to non-profit organizations, CED attempts to provide the much needed capacity to organizations to develop the political will of their memberships and residents to take on these projects. To that end, they conducted a political education workshop for the Chinese Progressive Association on the root causes of gentrification on March 17th, 2014 (to which CPA invited their young people from CYI). They also convened a group of about 40 activists, organizers, and students on April 18th, 2014 for a workshop entitled “From Crisis to Transformation: Organizing for a More Democratic and Just Economy.” CED will also begin a community financing/banking study group series for organizers across the city at the end of May 2014.

Youth Development – Connecting “youth jobs” to all jobs/unemployment

The Boston Jobs Coalition partnered with the Youth Justice and Power Union, which does youth jobs organizing in the city, to host a series of Mayoral Forum in the historic 2013 election for Boston city Mayor after Thomas Menino announced he would not be running again after a 20 year service. The

groups co-created questions for each candidate and the agenda for the Forums. The connection between the groups represented a shift from youth and adults thinking about youth jobs as a program or project of the city, but rather a connected political economy issue of poverty and unemployment.

Youth Development/Youth Initiative & Enterprise – “Youth-Led” Participatory Budgeting process

The Center for Economic Democracy is also supporting Boston’s effort at being the first youth participatory budgeting process in the country in 2013-2014. The process includes 30 youth organizations that form the steering committee and make decisions about the process. While the budget is small - \$1 million, and can only be used for capital projects, the opportunity represents a critical learning space for youth across the city, as well as potential for an expanded participatory budgeting process for the city.

The Boston Center for Community Ownership

The Boston Center for Community Ownership was founded in 2012 to support grassroots efforts to start cooperative businesses. Existing at the intersection of grassroots organizing, co-op business development, and community economic development, BCCO provides education and training, facilitation, and consulting services to startup and existing cooperatives.

BCCO is still a startup organization, expanding cooperative developer Stacey Cordeiro’s private co-op development consultancy into a transformative community economic development organization. BCCO coaches cooperatives and innovative community investment strategies in a larger grassroots strategy for community-driven economic development.

BCCO aims to serve primarily low-income people of color in Boston. People and workers with barriers to employment, including women, youth, immigrants, and former prisoners are the priority for BCCO’s support services, consulting, and training/education programs. According to Stacey, while the cooperative movement is growing, they have found that it is people who traditionally have had access to most forms of capital who are taking advantage of the community and personal wealth generating benefits of cooperatives. This might ultimately further marginalize people who traditionally face barriers of access to capital and finance. As Krishna (2012) notes, “Specific factors related to organizing low-wage, immigrant workers make incubators, in particular community-based, service-providing incubators, crucial for creating a successful worker cooperative (p. 86).”

As mentioned, BCCO helped to launch CERO Coop – a recycling and organic waste worker cooperative. Its members come from the Boston Workers Alliance and MassCOSH, two community organizing and workers rights organizations in Boston. After leading them through a “Coop Academy” which helped them write their business plan, Stacey now meets with them weekly to support their execution of the plan (Cordeiro, interview, 4/8/14). Lor Holmes, CERO’s business manager, contends that the worker-owners already having a history of activism through their organizations, contributed to their dedication to the worker cooperative project (Holmes, interview, 2/11/14)

The financing for the Coop will use an innovative strategy called a Direct Public Offering, where (non-voting) shares of the cooperative will be owned by community members. The use of financing outside of the traditional banking institutions, such as DPOs reinforces the transformative nature of this worker cooperative endeavor. CERO will be accountable to its owners and its community. BCCO also provides

cooperative development support to Hummingbird Coop, a Brazilian women's cleaning coop, and Dorchester Community Food Coop (Cordeiro, interview, 4/8/14). BCCO is also part of the Center for Economic Democracy's community banking/financing study group.

BCCO thinks it is critical for young people to be engaged in developing working cooperatives and other economic democracy projects and Stacey, in particular, encouraged the study of youth in worker cooperative development through this thesis. At the Coop Academy BCCO led for Worcester Roots, there were two multi-generation worker cooperatives attempting to start up, and Stacey supported their exploration of legal options.

The Boston Impact Initiative

Many of the endeavors in transformative community economic development are being funded or financed in some way by The Boston Impact Initiative. BII is a new Boston-based investment, lending and giving fund. Their goal is to support a variety of organizations and initiatives to help build wealth in Boston's low-income communities of color. The Initiative incubates new worker cooperatives, finances micro enterprises, and invests in community businesses.

Local business incubation is popular right now. Taken from the huge investments made in Innovation hubs, organizations are applying the incubation and business plan model to support business creation in low-income communities. Future Boston, for example, runs a business plan competition for enterprises that support creativity in Boston, which BII funds. The Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative is partnering with The Family Independence Initiative to support residents as they work together to meet their goals- whether it be for homeownership, college savings, or to start a business. The Local Initiative Support Corporation has a program called Resilient Communities/Resilient Families, which provides local small business financing support to entrepreneurs.

Gaps and Limitations

Taken together, these strategies suggest an understanding of the ways political and economic community organizing are linked, and the importance of building alternative/oppositional institutions while demanding redistribution from the current system internally and externally. The connection to youth, however, is tenuous. For example, in conversations with youth who were part of the participatory budgeting process, the sentiment seems to be that there isn't enough money on the table (\$1 million) for the process to be important. There isn't deep understanding of the potential for this process to be expanded and connected to an overall shift in the way budgetary decisions are made in the city.

Even within the youth organizations that are most connected to campaign organizing around social and political issues, a robust understanding of the system of capitalism does not yet exist very deeply. The youth at The City School, for example, discuss social justice as related but separate realms of racism, sexism, heterosexism, and classism. They even take on issues such as prison abolition and gender liberation. However, discussing with one of the youth leaders about the potential to connect more deeply to economic transformation, they thought that the youth at The City School "aren't ready for that." Ruby, the co-director of The City School, wants youth in the organization to take on revenue generating activities that would be democratic and collective (Reyes, interview, 1/15/14). However, as a youth driven

organization, the efforts must come from young people, which requires them to have a deeper understanding of the economy themselves.

The youth workers from REEP and The Food Project have approached The Center for Economic Democracy for workshops and trainings that connect the food and land work they are doing with young people to a deeper understanding of industrial food production and the corporatization of the basic needs and land (Jenkins, Practical Visionaries Workshop gathering, 12/12/13; Evering-Rowe, personal communication, 5/8/14). This suggests a disconnection in the ways youth understand the practice-based work they are doing in relation to the larger system.

In rhetoric and in theory, RTTC-Boston has accomplished the task of combining political and social justice organization with an analysis of the failings of our economic system. However, particularly because the campaigns Right to the City has been waging have encompassed the campaigns the organizations were already working on, this analysis exists mainly at the staff and strategy level of the organization and coalitions involved. The members of the organizations need popular education, and it should extend to youth organizations that are also partners.

Popular and political education is meant to spur the action of oppressed people by dismantling the dominant narratives and ideologies that produce fear and inaction. By providing space to collectively theorize about individual experiences, people often come to identify the systemic and structural forces that cause the harm in their lives. Further, by learning the history of struggles and the origins of contemporary issues, people can make decisions about how to act strategically for their benefit in the future. Education connects all of the areas of the framework to each other, and provides the knowledge for action within each area. Education, whether it be through workshops or training, coaching, or scaffolding, plays a crucial role in moving from social justice youth development to youth in social transformation. Without popular education, activities in organizing and leadership develop are simply youth development activities. As cooperative lawyer Gowri Krishna (2012) writes, “Peer-led, participatory, and popular education strategies”; “education about historical, political, and economic inequalities”; & collective visioning to “think...[about] ways they might create change” (p.98-99) helps to connect individual strategies to larger movement building ones.

Further, limitations of time and capacity, as with most non-profit organizations, abound with these organizations. The City School and REEP are two of six leading youth-led social justice organizing organization in the city. The Boston-area Youth Organizing Project does city and nation-wide educational justice organizing, Project HIP-HOP uses the arts to connect people to social justice issues, Beantown Society focuses on violence prevention in Jamaica Plain, and Reflect and Strengthen was a young women’s collective focused on changing the juvenile justice system. While many of these organizations are doing important youth organizing and have analysis of “the system” they do not have the time or capacity to engage in efforts to foster youth initiative and enterprises connected to these fights.

To name the gaps explicitly, youth development in the form of popular and political education is missing, as well as more opportunities to practice democracy and collectivity through youth enterprises and initiatives – specifically worker cooperative development.

Recommendations

The recommendations I make are to my co-collaborators: The Boston Center for Community Ownership, The City School, and the Center for Economic Democracy. They are based on the two major gaps identified from the research connecting youth to social transformation in Boston. They are: 1) Provide more popular and political education about “the Economy” and economics to young people and 2) Provide opportunities to practice democracy and collectivity by supporting Youth Enterprises and Initiatives.

Specific Recommendations

1. Currently, worker cooperative development is the specialty of the Boston Center for Community Ownership (BCCO). To that end, they should reach out to build partnerships with Bunker Hill Community College’s Center for Community Entrepreneurship and Roxbury Community College to offer Cooperative 101s (Coop 101s), Coop Academies, and technical assistance in concert with the regular entrepreneurship support these community college provide for their students.

2. Boston Center for Community Ownership should also offer Coop 101s to youth skill building program such as Press Pass TV, Youth Build, and the Fab Lab in the South End Technology Center. Furthermore, a Coop Academy focused on attracting graduates from these programs would be a key way to combine transformative economic development with youth development. These programs in particular already have somewhat social justice foundations.

3. BCCO could also offer to provide customized sessions or support about worker cooperatives to youth entrepreneurship programs. They should also partner with adult entrepreneurship programs led by organizations such as Resilient Communities, Resilient Families. BCCO could also run a youth worker cooperative business plan competition with support from the Boston Impact Initiative.

4. Finally, BCCO and The Center for Economic Democracy should develop youth specific workshops and curriculum to offer to youth organizations. Specifically, they could partner to offer an internship program and seminar in Economics and Cooperatives to youth who participate in The City School’s Summer Leadership Program.

Political and Popular Education Strategies

As Paulo Freire (2000) offers in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* “Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity or it becomes the practice of freedom, the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world (p. 34).” If we broaden Gowri Krishna’s recommendations for connecting worker-cooperative development to larger social/political change work, we find that all strategies for transformative economic development – from campaign organizing to land trusts – needs popular education in order to foster the development of both ensure that residents will take on the strategies and to ensure that they connect them to social movement building. This need is even greater in order to connect youth to these strategies.

The developers of the Bronx Cooperative Development Institute Economic Democracy Training Series, for example, emphasized to me the importance of community residents understanding the multiple aspects

of our current economic system including markets, economic base theory, forms of government, etc. The effort to connect alternative strategies to campaign organizing is rooted in the popular and political education of the members, bases, and residents of the organizations that comprise BCDI. Two of BCDI's constituent organizations include youth programs (Nunez & Iuviene, personal communications).

There is already capacity and interest in developing more popular and political education curriculum materials amongst TCS, CED, and BCCO. CED has provided popular education workshops to organizations that are attempting to unify their campaigns through an understanding of the current economic system and also do leadership development with their member-organizers so that they can be prepared to participate in conversations about economic transformation and BCCO has provided "Coop 101" sessions to the public at large, as well as Coop Academies mostly to low-income people of color. The City School's flagship program – the Summer Leadership Program – is primarily about political education in many social justice areas for youth between ages 14-19.

Many organizations throughout the U.S. have great political and popular education resources for specific issue areas. The following are resources to connect to a deeper understanding of "the economy."

Political and Popular Education curricular resources for social transformation:

Food and Land: Movement Generation Justice & Ecology Project/Climate Justice Alliance	Land and Housing: City Life/Vida Urbana
Labor and Jobs: TESA; Boston Center for Community Ownership; Labor Unions;	Neoliberalism and the Economy: School of Unity and Liberation (SOUL), Center for Popular Economics
History of the Cooperative Movement: Jessica Gordon Nembhard	Economic Development/Urban Planning: Bronx Cooperative Development Initiative
Transformative Organizing: Movement Generation, RTTC Member organizations (CL/VU)	Dominant Narratives/Ideological power: Theater of the Oppressed; Center for Story-based Strategy
Diverse Economies: Bronx Cooperative Development Initiative/Diverse Economies Framework	Prison Abolition: The Juvenile Justice Taskforce on Racial Disparities

Table 3: Political and Popular Education resources

Youth Initiatives and Enterprises

Because BCCO was most interested in how youth could engage in worker cooperative development, I explored four efforts outside of Boston where young people are engaged in enterprises and initiatives that foster democratic decision-making and collectivity in the form of worker cooperatives. I also interviewed staff from four youth entrepreneurship and enterprise initiatives (National Foundation for Teaching Entrepreneurship, The Possible Project, BUILD, and United Way Youth Ventures) to gain insights on their program structures and curriculum.

Youth entrepreneurship and enterprise programs⁸

⁸ Information derived from interviews conducted with staff at BUILD, The Possible Project, NFTE, and Youth Ventures; for more details on some of the programs, see Appendix D

Most of the youth entrepreneurship programs are run with the explicit purpose of engaging young people in academics and/or post-secondary education planning. These programs believe that entrepreneurship – the process of building and launching businesses – is an effective mechanism for engaging young people and teaching them success skills such as resilience, self-confidence, and teamwork. Consistent across all programs was an emphasis youth development and the programs all have well thought-out service delivery programs.

After introducing the idea of focusing on worker cooperative entrepreneurship as a way to explore poverty and economic development with students, most of the youth entrepreneurship programs conceded that their program often lacked discussion of issues of social justice in their curriculum. These programs do not discuss the economic system, often focusing on personal achievement, college access, and school success. The programs split between being afterschool programs and teacher-training programs. BUILD and The Possible Project have wonderful “makers” spaces that they offer to their young people for use in their product design and prototyping.

These programs are primarily funded by foundations and by corporate partners. The funds include staff and operations, as well as seed grants and financing for youth enterprises, and prize money for business plan competitions.

The major takeaway from the research on youth entrepreneurship programs is the effectiveness of having a financing strategy for the youth initiatives – this provided youth people with an incentive to work on their project. A financing vehicle like the Boston Impact Initiative could potentially provide the incentive young people need to participate.

Youth worker cooperatives⁹

After talking to people involved with the Toxic Soil Busters of the Worcester Roots Project in Worcester, MA; MECH Creations of Manufacturing Renaissance in Chicago; Grassroots Ecology of the Center for Workplace Democracy also in Chicago, and Syllable of Green Worker Cooperatives in the Bronx, NY. I discovered that it is extremely difficult to develop viable youth worker cooperatives. All of the coops are relatively new and none of them are viable, self-sustaining businesses yet.

Grassroots Ecology, and Toxic Soil Busters are both based in non-profit, community organizing organizations, and were both founded in part to provide an environmental service to the community, as well as to engage young people in economic democracy. MECH Creations was founded explicitly to train young people in the reemerging industry of manufacturing. MECH Creations and Syllable are both based in schools – as courses or electives with outside partners providing technical assistance, curriculum, and training – and both produce a product for which the schools can provide an easy market. Toxic Soil Busters, the oldest cooperative, recently made the decision not to transition away from the umbrella of the Worcester Roots Project, instead choosing to remain a youth development program.

⁹ Information derived from interviews conducted with staff at Manufacturing Renaissance, Green Worker Cooperatives, Toxic Soil Busters, and the Center for Workplace Democracy; for more details on some of the programs, see Appendix D

What is most interesting about the youth worker cooperatives I profiled is that for all except one (Grassroots Ecology), the adult staff who provide the cooperative training noted that while changing the economic system eventually became part of the conversation, it was not the lead into the work with young people. Other things – building a skill, being their own bosses, having a job, solving a problem, etc. – were more effective introductory pieces to the work in youth initiatives and enterprise. This suggests that there can be multiple angles that can connect youth to social transformation strategies. They all agreed that young people were learning important lessons in consensus building and democratic decision-making.

The programs are mainly sustained through youth jobs funding in their various cities. The youth jobs funding represents an interesting way to leverage existing systems in innovative ways to provide opportunities for youth to participate in democratic organizations. However, MECH Creations and Syllable are actively interested in ways to manage their tenuous relationships with their respective school sponsors and become genuine youth worker cooperatives. Dennis Kelleher of the Center for Workplace Democracy notes that in order for these youth initiatives to become self-sufficient cooperative businesses, they have to see the cooperative as more than “just a project” and young people must have a deeper understanding of the power that the model could have for them – stable jobs, building wealth for themselves, their families, and their communities (Kelleher, interview, 5/9/14).

Omar Freilla of Green Worker Cooperatives has a slightly different perspective on the goal of youth enterprise and initiatives. He isn’t sure that cooperatives exclusive by and for young people are necessarily the best thing (due to their lack of experience) but he is invested in young people have control and say in decision-making. He says there is “space lacking in society for young people to have a say and practice having a say in their own lives - a space to practice democracy and get to say how things go (Freilla, interview, 5/6/14).” Whether it is a worker cooperative, the structure of a school, or an afterschool program he feels it is important. Further, having a space that is exclusively young people makes it easier to have the space for youth control over decision-making.

Omar and Dennis slightly disagreed about whether youth already involved in social justice work were more easily convinced by the concept of worker cooperatives or the idea of economic democracy. Dennis’s experience with Grassroots Ecology primed him to say yes – because they were a social justice organization and had already been working as a collective, he thought their transition to being an official worker cooperative was relatively smooth. Omar’s experience is more similar to my own. He didn’t think it would be more or less difficult to work on worker cooperatives with young people already engaged in social justice. Erica Swinney, who worked with MECH Creations agreed with that sentiment. Erica has found that the conversation about worker cooperatives really resonates with all of the young people because “it’s based on what is fair [workers capturing the surplus] and it helps community.” Further, it is easy to get the young people excited about worker cooperatives because it makes them “feel empowered.”

The major takeaways from the research on youth worker cooperatives is 1) connect the project to a tangible need that needs to be filled in the community, 2) invest in supporting young people to learn the skills of collective and collaborative decision-making, and 3) be prepared to continuously come back to the question of economic democracy and connect the project to social justice fights for social transformation.

A Potential Program Structure and Curriculum

In addition to the work that organizations should do to connect multiple moving building strategies and integrate an economic analysis into social justice work, these organizations and programs should connect youth engaged in social justice analysis to opportunities to build institutions that reflect a deeper analysis. On the other hand, organizations focused on cooperative development and economic institution building should support and foster the development of youth initiatives in enterprise, collectives, and cooperatives. One of the biggest challenges outside of the policy and financial considerations is the practical challenge of practicing democracy with each other. In order to build a sustained movement for social justice, young people have to start practicing democracy – economic democracy - now. Similar to how youth organizing produces both real systems change due to the organizing and youth development outcomes using support and scaffolding, youth programs can and should provide space for youth enterprises to be learning spaces.

Applying the literature and practice of the youth led community-organizing field to the prior analysis of connecting social and political organizing to economic institution building leads to two kinds of recommendations 1) for a youth program that is educational, practical, and effective – a program that delves into the possible and allows for innovation and experimentation through practice and 2) a case for cooperative development efforts that include a strong social justice analysis, links to transformative organizing, and deliberately engaging youth to support their community. Taken together, the most effective program will be grounded in a social, political, and economic understanding of the system. It will link strategies like community organizing and policy development to alternative economic institution building, and it will support a multi-generational, radical movement for social justice by building the skills and capacities of youth of color in the work. Ultimately, the program should contribute to the challenging of dominant narratives that exist in society – particularly “there are no alternatives [to capitalism].

The City School (TCS) runs a Summer Leadership Program (SLP) for about 100 young people between the ages of 14-19 each summer. SLP introduces youth (primarily young people of color from Boston’s low-income neighborhoods) to social justice concepts (racism, classism, etc.). The format of the program is full group and classroom time on Mondays, Wednesday, and Fridays and then internships on Tuesdays and Thursdays where youth are partnered with community organizations. After talking to Cathy Statz of the Wisconsin Farmers Union about cooperative education, I realized a good format might be to use the entire summer to engage young people around one cooperative program, as she does.

The Boston Center for Community Ownership and The Center for Economic Democracy could bring an economic democracy to youth in SLP through:

1. An internship on Tuesdays/Thursdays where a smaller group of youth (5-7 youth) will learn about economic democracy and community ownership through speakers and activities. Their primary activity will be planning and running a cooperative project for the rest of their peers (i.e., running a cooperative store).
2. A full group (100 youth) cooperative experience on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays led by the youth from the internship. This will include brief popular education activities designed to engage the group in thinking about the merits and challenges of cooperative ownership and how it applies to their own lives.

Table 4: Potential SLP internship structure and curriculum guide

Week	Curriculum/Activities	Resources	Project
Week 1	Diverse Economies: The Iceberg Capitalism, Neoliberalism, and the Economy: Walmart in the Hood; Cycle of Crisis; Circle of Capital(ism)	Bronx Cooperative Development Initiative/Diverse Economies Framework School of Unity and Liberation (SOUL), Center for Popular Economics	Conduct a community needs and assets map; decide what project to do with the full group (i.e., a worker/consumer cooperative snack store); map out the rest of the summer
Week 2	Labor and Jobs: Wage Exploitation History of the Cooperative Movement: Jessica Gordon Nembhard	SOUL Labor Unions; TESA; Boston Center for Community Ownership; CERO Coop	Design and execute a popular education workshop for SLP participants; begin operations of project
Week 3	Dominant Narratives/Ideological power: Wheel of Power; Cop in the Head; Battle of the Story	Theater of the Oppressed; Center for Story-based Strategy	Reflection about the connect between what they have learned and the project; continue operations of the project; begin designing end of summer teach back
Week 4	Transformational Organizing: 3 Circles	Movement Generation	Continue operations of the project; research real examples of their projects
Week 5	Land and Housing: Chinatown Public Hearing Food and Land:	Center for Economic Democracy; City Life/Vida Urbana Movement Generation Justice & Ecology Project/Climate Justice Alliance	Design and execute a popular education workshop for SLP participants; continue operations of the project
Week 6	Economic Development/Urban Planning: Lego Activity; Economic Base Theory	Bronx Cooperative Development Initiative	Wrap up operations of project; conduct analysis of their work
Week 7	Reflection	Theater of the Oppressed	Report back – saving, money earned, comparisons

Conclusions and Implications for the Future

Stemming the tide of the global crisis we are facing sometimes seems too massive a task to tackle. Massive unemployment, poverty, and environmental destruction - all of this amidst seemingly endless financial growth, technological innovation, and lightning speed communication makes grappling with solutions for these problem seem easy, and yet we find that comprehensive solutions are unreachable. Unfortunately, the most impacted people by the ecological, economical, and ideological crisis we are facing are also the most vulnerable people - young people - children and those coming of age in society.

The public sector, which could also provide jobs, tends to invest in the private sector because they have most of the productive capacity in society. This is no accident. Because the United States' system of resource distribution does not allow for the redistribution of property, the unequal economic power relations - particularly property ownership - that were in place when the U.S. Constitution was written were embedded in society. This has had disastrous impacts on communities of black people and other people of color, as well as poor people in general. While formal franchisement has come in waves since the writing of the Constitution, the inability to legislate a more equal distribution of resources has kept material conditions unequal. This political system enabled the Great Depression, made Jim Crow possible, and led to the Great Recession and Foreclosure Crisis of late 2000s. It has led to exportation of jobs abroad without concurrent inclusion of low-income people in education for the "knowledge based" economy. The modern Community Economic Development field, including CDCs, has been ineffective at stopping these trends.

However, even if training and education for access to these new jobs occurred, the question remains: could we prevent this from happening again? Without owning and controlling the means of producing the goods and services needed to survive, people in communities will always be consumers of services and dependent on those who do for wage labor jobs. The answer, therefore, is a movement towards democratizing ownership and control of resources in society. Traditional community economic development strategies have not asked these questions, however, and have not come up with this answer. The late 1960s movement for community control over planning quickly became coopted by corporate interests and finance due to perverse incentive structures and lack of funding. The real question is: what are the mechanisms through which we can accomplish the economic transformation that is needed?

The environmental impacts of the industrial capitalist system we are engaged in will eventually force a transition from our oil and fossil fuel dependent economy to one that uses renewable energy and more local production and energy sources. What is uncertain is whether people and communities of color will suffer disproportionately the remaining environmental disasters (like Hurricane Katrina in Southwest U.S. or Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines) before that transition occurs, or whether people of color will be at the bottom of the new economic system that gets created as they are now (Movement Generation, 5/16-5/18/14). To prevent that we must engage now in organizing and institution building that prepares communities of color - in particular the youth in communities of color - to engage in the industries that will be at the forefront of a new economy, with the type of decision making and control that keeps resources in the hands of communities for their use. This thesis attempts to put forth a plan and a strategy to doing that important work.

The solidarity economic literature emphasizes “diverse” economies – offering that while there is one hegemonic “economy,” in actuality, there are a multitude of practices, organizational types, and economic activity that does not fit into the dominant “economy.” Part of movement building must highlight and amplify these efforts, which increase their capacity to challenge the hegemony by combining Transformative Organizing, Transformative Community Economic Development, and Transformative Use of Existing Systems and Resources. Of key importance are young people, they should be engaged in this level of understanding of the community economic development and be given opportunities to engage in alternative institution building.

The recommendations I provided are contextualized in my experiences in and knowledge of Boston. As such, there are surely gaps that I’ve missed, interesting solutions yet to be explored. To that end, some questions for further research include:

- How are young people most deeply experiencing the negative impacts of capitalism? Is it food insecurity, unemployment, high costs of goods and services?
- In what ways can we best support youth to identify these impacts and come up with ways to intervene on behalf of themselves and their peers?
- Is worker cooperative creation the best model if we want youth to connect the transformative community development activities they are participating in to transformative organizing?

Appendices

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Appendix B: List of Activities

1. Boston Center for Community Ownership (BCCO) Steering Committee: Spring 2013 - present
2. Worcester Roots Coop Academy: Fall 2013
3. MIT Community Innovators Lab's Bronx Cooperative Development Initiative Economic Democracy Intern: Spring 2012 – present
4. Civic Media Co-design Studio with City Life/Vida Urbana: Fall 2013
5. Center for Economic Democracy Intern: Fall 2013 – present
6. Youth Justice and Power Union (formerly Youth Jobs Coalition-Boston), Leadership team member/adult ally: Winter 2011 – present
7. Movement Generation Training and Strategy Retreat – March & May 2014
8. Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative practicum: Spring 2014
9. Practical Visionaries Workshop: Spring 2012
10. Special Program in Urban and Regional Studies (SPURS), Research Assistant for SPURS/RCC collaboration: Fall 2013 – present

Appendix C: List of Interview, Meetings, and Conversations

Name	Organization	Title	Interviews/Meetings
Curdina Hill	City Life/Vida Urbana	Executive Director	Monthly CED Meetings; Civic Media Co-design Studio
Steve Meacham	City Life/Vida Urbana	Organizing Director	Civic Media Co-design Studio
Mike Leyba	City Life/Vida Urbana	Communications Organizer	Civic Media Co-design Studio
Zoe Peters	The City School/City Life	Youth Worker	2/14/14
Tara Venkatraman	The City School	Youth Worker	Monthly YJPU Meetings
Ruby Reyes	The City School	Co-Director	1/14/14
Lydia Lowe	Chinese Progressive Association	Executive Director	Monthly CED Meetings, CED/CPA Popular Education Meetings
Karen Chen	Chinese Progressive Association	Organizing Director	CED/CPA Popular Education Mtg
Dave Jenkins	Alternatives for Community and Environment	REEP Director	ACE Membership Meetings; PVW gathering, 12/12/13
Aaron Tanaka	Center for Economic Democracy	Director	
Stacey Cordeiro	Boston Center for Community Ownership	Founder, Coop Developer	4/8/14; Coop Academy
Penn Loh	Practical Visionaries Workshop, Tufts University	Professor of the Practice	Practical Visionaries Workshop; CED/CPA Popular Education
Matt Feinstein	Worcester Roots Project/TSB	Director	1/30/14; Coop Academy
Shane Capra	Worcester Roots Project/TSB		1/30/14; Coop Academy
Melissa Hoover	U.S. Federation of Worker Cooperatives	Director	12/18/13
Lor Holmes	CERO Coop		2/11/14
Pamela King	The Fab Lab		2/12/14
Nitita	BUILD	College Access Program Manager	3/12/14
Pongsanarakul			
Caitlin Robillard	The Possible Project	Senior Manager of Operations	1/24/14
Jennifer Green	National Foundation for Teaching Entrepreneurship, New England	Executive Director	1/27/14
Cathy Statz	Wisconsin Famers Union	Education Director	3/19/14
Omar Freilla	Green Worker Cooperatives	Director	5/6/14; BCDI
Melissa Jones	Local Initiatives Support Corporation	Resilient Communities, Resilient Families & Economic Opportunity Senior Program Officer	3/20/14
Shirronda Almeida	Massachusetts Association of CDCs	Director of Membership Initiatives	2/24/14
Erica Swinney	Manufacturing Renaissance	Director	5/1/14
Dennis Kelleher	Center for Workplace Democracy	Director	5/9/14
Katherine Evering-Rowe	The Food Project	Youth Programs Coordinator	5/8/14
Gopal Dayaneni	Movement Generation Justice & Ecology Project	Core Collective Member	Movement Generation Training and Strategy Retreats
Nick Iuviene	CoLab, Bronx Cooperative Development Initiative	Just Urban Economies, Program Director	BCDI internship
Yorman Nunez	CoLab, Bronx Cooperative Development Initiative	BCDI Program Coordinator	BCDI internship
Natasha Noel	United Way Youth Ventures	United Way Director of Community Impact	1/28/14
Jose Alicea	Roxbury Community College	Dean of Academic Affairs	SPURS/RCC Collaboration

Appendix D: More Detailed Information on Selected Youth Initiative and Enterprise Programs

Toxic Soil Busters

I had a conversation with Matt Feinstein and Shane Capra of Toxic Soil Busters about TSB's curriculum, the way it started, and how it was connected to the organizing work Worcester Roots started out doing.

TSB started in 2006 with a specific set of problems that needed to be solved - soil remediation in a low-income section of Worcester and youth employment. The founders, Janice and Sam, had been involved with The Worcester Roots Project and were looking for employment opportunities because they were going to be ageing out of the traditional government sponsored youth jobs program that Worcester Roots (and many youth programs across the state and country) used to support youth engagement. They, in particular, wanted to continue the environmental justice work they had been doing and had become committed to through Worcester Roots. They eventually decided on a soil testing and remediation service.

Although they initially hoped that Toxic Soil Busters could spin off into a viable independent youth-run business, in 2010, they decide that it was not feasible and TSB would remain a program of Worcester Roots. It could provide an avenue for social justice youth education and development. The goal now is for Toxic Soil Busters to be less grant dependent. Worcester Roots uses materials gathered from the Boston Center for Cooperative Ownership's Coop 101s, the U.S. Federation of Worker Cooperatives, and the Center for Workplace Democracy to train their young people. There are also materials on best practice consensus building processes that they look to for training and tools. The Worcester Youth Center and Green Worker Cooperatives in the Bronx provide some youth entrepreneurship and business practices training as well. Finally they create many of their own materials based on the collective knowledge of the adults in the group working with young people to design sessions. The angle when introducing the idea of a worker cooperative to young people is the opportunity for "no bosses."

Worcester Roots exists at the intersection of worker cooperative development and community organizing. In the summer of 2010, they developed a social justice curriculum around community organizing training called "We got the Power" to introduce concepts of social, economic, and environmental justice to the community. They have engaged lawyers in the Bay area to answer the questions connected to youth worker cooperatives: what does youth cooperative development look like, particularly when connected to non-profit organizations.

MECH Creations¹⁰

While the people at Manufacturing Renaissance fundamentally believe in it, the concept of economic democracy is not the lead-in to this work. The focus is creating jobs. The adult training program, which uses the equipment in the Austin Polytechnic School, channels people into jobs. Manufacturing Renaissance does not want to have a conversation about worker cooperatives without it being grounded in a deep strategy for economic development - like manufacturing. For Erica, the Program Director of Manufacturing Renaissance, the question then becomes "How do we intentionally integrate cooperative

¹⁰ Information derived from interview conducted with Manufacturing Renaissance Program Director, Erica Swinney

learning, generate interest, and engage people in on-going education [about worker cooperatives, employee ownership, and economic democracy].”

Looking for a product to manufacture, they were serendipitous, as Erica puts it, to find that Pablo Varela, a Manufacturing Renaissance staff member, who also serves as a teacher in Austin Polytechnic, was also an avid trumpet player. Tinkering around with the machinery, he created three innovative new designs of trumpet mouthpieces (patents pending) and taught students how to make them and the tools to create the mouthpieces as well. MECH Creations now had a product.

The group, which started out with 4-5 dedicated students, created the name and now has 10-12 committed students who have taken hold of idea, consider themselves members, and are meeting pretty much everyday. They are focused on the production process (how much to produce, when and how). Their plan is to make and sell 50 mouthpieces by the end of the 2013-2014 school year.

MECH Creations created a profit sharing Memorandum of Understanding with Pablo to share the invention of the mouthpieces. The other logistics of the cooperative are yet to be determined. Erica knows there are big questions - what does profit sharing look like with students; Manufacturing Renaissance has been the number one investor today (with a \$10,000 investment over the years) - is that a loan, a grant, or something else? All of these questions are transparently on the table for students and staff members to grapple with and figure out together - which is ultimately part of the learning process for students.

She noted that with youth programming, particularly for poor or marginalized youth, there is a tendency to just meet their needs - “address issues of food or poverty.” However, she has realized that going beyond that is important, “When you present what is possible, they take to it” and she is amazed by their “capacity to be moved by a vision for something positive.” She has typically framed the conversation around Mondragon, discussing ownership and control, and deliberating how that could fit in with the work they are doing.

The hardest part of doing worker cooperative development with young people, Erica thinks, is building the culture of cooperation, administrative practices, discipline, and conflict management. She told the story of a student coming to her one day and announcing “I’m quitting [the cooperative]!” Moments later, other student members approached her saying, “We’re going to vote him out!” Laughing, she explained to me, “That’s not how it works!”

The partnership with Chicago Public Schools has made the integration of cooperative principles largely up to Manufacturing Renaissance and the Center for Workplace Democracy. Ideally, the cooperative aspect would be better integrated into the work that teachers did with students on a day-to-day basis. They hope that by starting to work with younger students (sophomores and juniors) the program culture of workplace democracy in manufacturing will be established.

Austin Polytechnic was started before national discussion about importance of manufacturing and there is still more work to be done to reestablish the value of manufacturing to the U.S. economy. Still, Erica believes the conversation about economic democracy can start now because the program is more

established and manufacturing has become more visible as an economic development strategy in recent years.

Grassroots Ecology¹¹

Grassroots Ecology is part of a Chicago area non-profit organization “Let’s Go!” which is focused on environmental sustainability. Let’s Go! approached the Center for Workplace Democracy, which also provided the technical assistance for MECH Creations, because they wanted to start a youth led cooperative around work they were already doing (storm water management). According to Dennis Kelleher, their cooperative developer from CWD, Grassroots Ecology had already been working as a collective when they approached him to help them develop the business element.

Like Toxic Soil Busters, they organized around a specific problem in their community that they could solve. In Rogers Park, IL, there is a terrible basement flooding problem because the downspouts on houses are hooked into sewer system. So when there is a lot of rain, the downspouts get overwhelmed and water back into the houses. The youth came up with a solution – they unhook downspouts from sewer; hook them up to rain barrels so that homeowners can then use the water to water their lawns, etc. Their thinking has expanding to creating other business opportunities from services their community needs. For example, they benefit from using people’s waste by selling or giving away compost barrels to homeowners and then offer them the service of collecting and spreading mulch on their lawns.

Syllable¹²

After attempting to do cooperative development with young people twice before to no avail, Green Worker Cooperatives finally offered a class at a high school in the Bronx that wanted to engage its student in worker cooperatives. The school liked idea of being an incubator for student run coops and they wanted to be a major contractor/client for the businesses. GWC started a yearlong class and supported 10 students create a coop to print student uniforms for the school. The class was open to any students who wanted to participate and they met once a week.

The students decided on uniform printing because the school has silk screen equipment and they were interested in fashion. So far, they have one order; printing and selling at a school concert. They haven’t yet fulfilled an order with the school. So far, their major question is the basis of ownership within a youth coop since people under 18 do not have legal standing; looking into how to structure the business so that it could be a coop in its truest sense. Further, to what extent could young people be owners of the surplus and decision-making.

Typically with GWC, their work, intention, and focus for adult cooperatives in Coop Academy is that they hit the ground running - shoot for the stars, make it happen, because typically, *that is the only option for adults – full investment*. With Syllable, they are still figuring out the systems for accountability and motivation. The expectation that they go out and line up contracts and do the kinds of things that anyone who was invested fully as their business would [Omar wondered aloud whether they should raise their expectations].

¹¹ Information derived from interview conducted with Dennis Kelleher of the Center for Workplace Democracy

¹² Information derived from interview conducted with Omar Freilla, the Director of Green Worker Cooperatives

As far as the curriculum, GWC also did not approach the development of Syllable from an ideological end. The young people liked the idea of starting a business, particularly a fashion business. They tried, in the very beginning to lay out what a worker cooperative was - how it compares to a traditional business, who gets to say what, and when. They tried to connect and compare it to how much control and power they have over forces in their own lives. What they realized was that “over the course of a month it [the information/analysis] goes in one ear and out the other.”

While Omar noted that it “would be nice to say we talked about capitalism, the role of labor, the rights of workers, etc.” it was just “not their experience, [because they] haven’t been in working world.” By the beginning of the semester, Omar and his co-teacher, a teacher from the school, realized that they needed to retool about how they were running class. They needed to make it more hands-on, have dedicated time to make sure people on the design team were actually drawing, people on website team were working on it, etc. Otherwise, it was not going to happen.

The Possible Project¹³

The Possible Project was founded in 2010 and works with high school students across three high schools in Cambridge, MA. The Possible Project’s mission is to “*The Possible Project utilizes entrepreneurship to inspire young people who have untapped potential, empowering them with the skills required to achieve enduring personal and professional success. We guide our students through a novel dynamic curriculum, hands-on work experience, and assistance with entrepreneurial endeavors and career goals. We strive to have all our students use their skills to move through a high-level career path and improve their communities while remaining committed to the principle that ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE.*”

The program accepts nominations from teachers, administrators, and youth workers for students in their second year of high school (sophomores). In each year there are two levels, 12-weeks each. The levels are progressive and involve increasing levels of career and educational counseling as students advance through school and the program.

The Possible Project’s Program Model

Grade	Level	Theme	Duration	Weekly Commitment
Learn 10 th grade	I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Concept • Business Planning • Pathways: Career Awareness 	12 weeks; 60 hours	2 days; 5 hours
	II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Skills • Business Communication • Pathways: Career Awareness 	12 weeks; 60 hours	2 days; 5 hours
Learn 11 th grade	III	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Operations • Business Knowledge • Pathways: Career Advising 	12 weeks; 60 hours	2 days; 5 hours
	IV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Operations • Business Knowledge • Pathways: Career Advising 	12 weeks; 30 hours	1 day; 2 ½ hours
Lead 12 th	V	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advanced Business Operations • TPP Leadership Education and Development opportunities 	12 weeks; 30 hours	1 day; 2 ½ hours

¹³ Information derived from interview conducted with Caitlin Robillard of the Possible Project

grade		(LEAD)		
	VI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pathways: Career Planning • Advanced Business Operations • TPP Leadership Education and Development opportunities (LEAD) • Pathways: Career Planning 	12 weeks; 30 hours	1 day; 2 ½ hours

Table 5: The Possible Project Program Model (recreated from program materials)

BUILD¹⁴

BUILD is a national program that in the past three years opened an office in Boston. They are considered the “innovative” site due to their corporate and university partnership. They emphasize that while entrepreneurship is the hook, BUID is really an academic, college prep program. Their mission is: “*We use entrepreneurship to propel disadvantaged, disengaged youth through high school to college success.*”

The BUILD program model involves getting MIT Sloan and Northeastern’s social entrepreneurship program gives business skills workshops to their 9th graders and also to sponsor an “idea storm” for business ideas. BUILD hires a teacher in each of the schools they work in to work with their 9th graders.

The teams are divided into teams of about 5 students. Each student has a role: CEO, COO At the end of the year, 9th graders participate in a Business Plan Competition where they give a 5-8 minute pitch on their idea, including question and answers. The judges – CEOs from corporations and angel investors – advance 4-5 teams to round two based on the presentation, their knowledge on the sector. Winners get \$1,500 to launch their projects. The staff raises money so that moving into their 2nd year each team can have at least \$500 of seed funding. This money is considered a loan and factored in to the payout they receive in the end.

Each team is paired with a mentor who makes a 1-year commitment to support their team.

BUILD’s Program Model

	9 th Grade	10 th Grade	11 th Grade	12 th Grade
	5 days/week			
Business	Market Research Demographics Business Planning Business Plan Competition	Manufacturing Product Design Financing Selling	Selling Negotiating Goal Setting Networking	Self-Marketing 21 st Century Skills
Academics		21 st Century Skills Academic Advising Tutoring & Credit Recovery	SAT/ACT Prep 21 st Century Skills Academic Advising Tutoring & Credit Recovery	College Selection College Application Financial Aid Process/Assistance Family Support for Financial Aid Academic Support
	Essay Writing Oral Presentation			

Table 6: BUILD Program Model (recreated from program materials)

¹⁴ Information derived from interview conducted with Nitita Pongsanarakul of BUILD

Wisconsin Farmers Union

The Wisconsin Farmers Union, along with many other Farmers Unions across the Midwest, has since the 1930s run a cooperative summer camp for young people across the country. Through the primary lens of agriculture, WFU engages participants in a summer of cooperative games and activities designed to introduce “little c” cooperation, teamwork, and cooperative philosophy. Youth can start attending the camp when they are 8 and many return through high school.

Because young people come back year after year, the curriculum for camp is not formalized. Counselors, who are often graduates of the program themselves, and are now in college, gather together before the program starts each year to develop innovative program materials.

The camp does not focus on the business side of cooperatives, but introduces students to cooperative principles, teamwork, and a ‘high-level’ understanding of the benefits of cooperatives. At the beginning of the summer, participants gather together for a conversation about starting a ‘snack shop’ that would run throughout camp.

According to Cathy Statz, some of the young people she has worked with leave, and after having gone to college and taken a business class, come back surprised that there was nothing about cooperative business in the curriculum.

Part of the success of the WFU summer camps is that WFU is a cooperative itself – a set of family farms that came together to support cooperative education for their youth. Noting the relationship between cooperative resurgence in popularity and economic crisis, Cathy herself is committed to seeing cooperatives business be seen as a viable option in times of crisis and otherwise.

On the first day of camp, young people are engaged in a process of discussion the benefits of cooperatives, forming a student run store cooperative for the camp, and selecting the volunteer board who will run the camp.

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