



# Urban food sharing and the emerging Boston food solidarity economy

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## ABSTRACT

A food solidarity economy has been sprouting in Boston's lower income neighborhoods and communities of color, rooted in struggles for control over the food system itself. Though not centrally coordinated, this movement encompasses a varied network of nonprofits, social enterprises, and cooperatives, operating in all parts of the food system, from stewarding land and growing to processing, consumption, and composting. They span a range of urban food sharing practices: sharing stuff, spaces, and skills via collecting, gifting, and selling. They have taken collective ownership of land, created shared growing spaces, developed shared facilities for food businesses, opened a community cafe, and launched a worker-owned food recycling cooperative. They are driven by desires for transformation and are decommodifying the food system and increasing the urban food commons.

This paper offers a critical, but hopeful, examination of the transformational potential of this growing food solidarity economy by viewing it as a local social movement. We draw on the theory and practice of solidarity economy and diverse community economies to highlight the possibilities for encouraging economies that go beyond the constraints of capitalism. But we also use an urban political ecology lens to foreground the challenges of neoliberalism to a food solidarity economy. We assess the trajectories of transformation in three dimensions: ideological, political, and economic. We conclude that transformation will likely require reforming neoliberalized policies and institutions, while at the same time building noncapitalist practices. A network approach to building scale seems promising, including building the movement's own solidarity financing vehicles.

## 1. Introduction

A food solidarity economy has been sprouting in Boston's lower income neighborhoods and communities of color. These efforts are rooted in struggles, not just for equal access to food but for control over the food system itself. In the adjoining neighborhoods of Roxbury and Dorchester, residents have been organizing for decades for community control of land and development. They have taken collective ownership of land, created shared growing spaces, developed shared facilities for food businesses, opened a community cafe, and launched a worker-owned composting cooperative. Though not centrally coordinated, these efforts include nonprofits, social enterprises, and cooperatives, operating in all parts of the food system, from stewarding land and growing to processing, consumption, and composting.

Their practices span the range of Davies et al.'s (2017) urban food sharing typology: sharing stuff, spaces, and skills via collecting, gifting, and selling (not-for-profit and for profit). They are driven by desires for transformation – from the current exploitive, extractive, and structurally unequal food system to a more just, sustainable, and democratic local food economy. They represent efforts to decommodify the constituent components of the food system (food, land, labor, kitchen

space, etc.) – in short, to increase the urban food commons.

Yet, progress towards transformation is not even and is challenged by the constraints of neoliberalism. For example, an innovative program for transferring city land to urban farmers decommodifies land through ownership by a Community Land Trust. However, to make a decent living, farmers sell produce to high-end markets and restaurants that are rarely affordable for low-income neighbors. In another case, a shared kitchen incubator facility is processing surplus tomatoes from local farms into sauce for local university food services. But they are competing with less expensive conventionally produced sauce supplied by large distributors and struggling to develop a viable business model for this farm-to-institution product.

In this paper, we offer a critical, but hopeful, examination of the transformational potential of Boston's growing food solidarity economy and its food sharing practices. It builds on our previous work (Loh and Agyeman, 2017) to make visible these initiatives and in doing so, foregrounds some possibilities for building and strengthening non-capitalist food economies. We assess the transformative potential of these food sharing practices by viewing the collective work of these entities as not just diverse economic practices, but more broadly as elements of a social movement (Diani, 1992). This case is an instructive example of a

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cooperative alternative food network (Anderson et al., 2014) and of a food justice and sovereignty movement that has been challenging the global corporate industrialized food system (McClintock, 2014, Agyeman and McEntee, 2014; Holt Gimenez, 2011).

We draw on the theory and practice of solidarity economy (Amin, 2009; Kawano, 2013; Miller, 2010, 2013; Utting, 2015) and diverse community economies (Gibson-Graham, 1996, 2006) to show the possibilities for these food projects to enact and grow economies that go beyond the constraints of neoliberal capitalism. Gibson-Graham's diverse economies approach decenters capitalocentric notions of economy and opens space to see actually existing non-capitalistic practices, including those based on solidarity and ethical relations. But we also use an urban political ecology lens (Agyeman and McEntee, 2014; Heynen et al., 2012; Swyngedouw and Heynen, 2003) to foreground the structural challenges and constraints of neoliberalism to food solidarity economies. Through this lens we analyze the political, economic, and ideological processes that produce and reproduce injustice over time and across space. These processes are not fixed but are subject to transformation. Thus, we assess the transformative potential of Boston's emerging food solidarity economy through the lens of a social movement attempting to build economic alternatives, change power relations, and shift consciousness.

This paper engages theory, grounded in empirical research and our own critical practice. Both authors are engaged scholars, conducting research, teaching, and practice with most of the efforts described in this paper. One author was also previously a practitioner in these Boston neighborhoods for more than thirteen years. The empirical data is drawn from secondary sources and qualitative interviews, as well as our own direct engagement with practitioners and projects. Our assessment framework is based on dialogue with the literature (urban political ecology, solidarity economy, and diverse community economies) and social movement actors in Boston and beyond.

We begin with an explanation of our approach to theorizing food solidarity economy. We situate our case in relation to urban food sharing and food justice. We then lay out our framework for seeing solidarity economy as a social movement in order to assess its transformative potential. In the second half of the paper, we describe how a food solidarity economy and movement is emerging in Boston, with an emphasis on opportunities for transformation. We then assess the challenges, unpacking the tensions this growing movement encounters within the current neoliberal landscape. We look at how these challenges play out in the ideological, political, and economic dimensions. Finally, we discuss how some of these constraints might be addressed, with an emphasis on shifting power relations and consciousness to open up more space and resources for solidarity economy and taking a network approach to building scale. We conclude that transformation will likely require reforming neoliberalized policies and institutions, while at the same time building noncapitalist practices. By examining both the possibilities and constraints, we hope to support activists, practitioners, policy makers, and researchers in Boston and beyond to further transformative solidarity economy movements.

## 2. Performing and critiquing solidarity economy as engaged scholars

Our goal in this paper is two-fold: (1) to make visible non-capitalist economic practices in the food sector in Boston and (2) to critically assess the opportunities and constraints on these practices to transform the neoliberal landscape of food in the region. By framing them collectively as solidarity economy, we hope to contribute to the formation and strengthening of these practices. Yet, we also offer a critical examination of the constraints of neoliberal capitalism that these efforts encounter and operate within.

Making visible these practices follows the diverse economies research inspired by Gibson-Graham. Gibson-Graham (1996, 2006) posited that structural critiques of capitalism and its dominance

unwittingly contribute to a “capitalocentrism”, where everything is defined and subsumed by capitalism. Burke and Shear (2014) note that “research that attempts to understand and describe what already exists, even with the intention of changing it, can have unintended *performative* effects” (135, emphasis in original). Like Burke and Shear (2014), we seek “to use our scholarship as a form of cultural and social/material politics that makes visible, creates, and supports non-capitalism and thereby brings it into the field of possibility” (137).

It is precisely this performative aspiration that is at the core of urban food sharing research and diverse food economies more generally (Cameron and Wright, 2014). Davies et al.'s (2017) study of food sharing initiatives in 100 cities across the globe is an attempt to make visible these diverse practices. This research deliberately adopts a weak theory approach, not making assumptions about an economic system at work, but rather to describe the practices with an open stance to see difference. While Davies et al. try to analyze these initiatives at a more global scale, many efforts have been made to map (geographically) solidarity economy initiatives at local and regional scales, not only to make visible these practices, but also to help them identify one another and connect (Borowiak et al., 2017; Safri et al., 2017).

### 2.1. Action research and diverse economies

Our work here is also performative of solidarity economy by making visible practices that might be seen as marginal, coopted by capitalism, or not seen at all. Not only do we share in the desire of actors in Boston to build more just, sustainable, and democratic economies; we are also embedded in relationships and projects within the field, as action researchers. Our approach to action research views the researcher as part of the field of study, in which we can inquire with other practitioners about our work in order to inform practice (McNiff and Whitehead, 2006). As Cameron and Gibson (2005) explain, a post-structuralist diverse economies method can also be consistent with action research. Humans, whether researchers and/or subjects, are always in process of becoming and can change themselves (and their sense of their roles in the world) through the research process. Knowledge and language are socially constructed and never value neutral.

Both authors have multi-layered relationships with the Boston food initiatives described in this paper. Loh worked as a practitioner for more than 13 years prior to his academic position in a community-based environmental justice organization that partners with many of the initiatives highlighted here. The development and use of the solidarity economy framework emerged from a community-university “Practical Visionaries Workshop” he conducted from 2011 to 2013, in which graduate students and community practitioners came together to learn and strategize about community strategies for building more just and sustainable economies (Loh, 2016). An initial article conceiving of these various initiatives as a community food economy was co-written with a community partner in 2013 (Loh and Lloyd, 2014) and later revised and published in Yes! Magazine (Loh, 2014). He continues to work with the Solidarity Economy Initiative, a collaboration of community-based organizations and funders to develop vision and strategies for building solidarity economy. The framework for viewing these initiatives as social movement came out of these dialogues and is summarized in a 2017 report on solidarity economy initiatives in Massachusetts (Loh and Jimenez, 2017). Both authors conduct teaching with these partners, bringing practitioners in as guests, bringing students to site visits, and supporting student projects. Thus, our knowledge of what these initiatives are doing and the motivations of actors is well informed by direct interactions and observations as well as through secondary sources (written by actors themselves, as well as about them).

As engaged scholars who are embedded within this movement, we also see a role for us to frame, critique, and pose suggestions for this work. Whereas diverse economies and solidarity economy frameworks allows us to view the possibilities, we draw on urban political ecology

(UPE) to analyze the ideological, political, and economic processes (or dimensions) that produce and reproduce injustice over time and across space (Agyeman and McEntee, 2014; Heynen et al., 2012). UPE brings an analysis of capitalism in which humans and nature are intertwined and issues of scale and power relations are foregrounded. UPE helps us to theorize trajectories of transformation and to inform these practices as they strive to grow and encounter neoliberal forces.

## 2.2. Food justice and food sharing

In the remainder of this section, we lay out how food justice, as viewed from a UPE perspective, can help us understand the production of injustice and the processes of neoliberalization in which food sharing practices are situated. We see urban food sharing practices in our Boston case as both solidarity economy and food justice. We view food justice broadly, as a movement that goes beyond access to food and its benefits to control over the food system itself – also referred to as food sovereignty (Holt-Gimenez, 2011). Food justice aspires to transformation beyond the neoliberal capitalist food system.

Neoliberalized ideological, political, and economic processes “together go to form highly uneven and deeply unjust urban landscapes” (Swyngedouw and Heynen, 2003, 898). Race and class are central to the causes of inequality in the food system (Alkon and Agyeman, 2011; Morales, 2011; Gottlieb and Joshi, 2011; White, 2010). In particular, race is not reducible to or apart from economic structures, but rather “structural and institutional racisms are embedded in the market itself” (Agyeman and McEntee, 2014, 216).

This lens allows us to analyze food sharing and solidarity economy movements and their transformative potential in relation to neoliberal ideology and its manifestations in political and economic institutions. Neoliberalism is grounded in the belief that “human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade” (Harvey, 2005, 2). However, the processes of neoliberalization vary across place and time, including the “rolling back” of the social welfare programs and regulations (like those established through President Roosevelt’s ‘New Deal’) and the “rolling forward” of new mechanisms such as privatization, public-private partnerships, and devolution of social welfare to the local and individuals (Brenner and Theodore, 2002).

Not only are food sharing and food justice projects struggling against neoliberalization and its effects, but neoliberalism has also shaped the politics of food. As Guthman (2008, 1172) posits, “current arenas of activism around food and agriculture seem to produce and reproduce neoliberal forms and spaces of governance,” through intersecting themes of consumer choice, localism, entrepreneurialism, and self-improvement. Agyeman and McEntee (2014, 211) point out how the food justice movement can be coopted by being “folded into neoliberalization processes through state involvement and an underlying assumption that food injustice can be solved by private market forces, namely the presence of transnational food companies with increasingly dominant retail arms.” Similarly, many community development initiatives, including ones focused on food, have been “solidly in the grips of the idea that we simply need to figure out how to make the capitalist market work for the benefit of communities” (Loh and Shear, 2015, 4).

Neoliberalization constrains possibilities by narrowing the focus to local solutions while eliding the global and regional forces that shape the local. It prioritizes market exchange-value over community use-value in an effort to attract private investment (Kirkpatrick, 2007; Stoecker, 1997). Privatization has resulted in more services being contracted out to nonprofits and increasing expectations for nonprofits to operate with more business-like efficiency and subjected to more competition for funding (Holland et al., 2007). These dynamics have led to professionalization of nonprofit community development organizations leading to a decrease in democratic control and a shift to less confrontational approaches that reduce the focus on power relations

(Stoecker, 1997; DeFilippis et al., 2010). From this view, many of the food sharing and solidarity economy efforts to localize the food system, support food entrepreneurs, and provide food security via nonprofits can be seen as part of neoliberalization processes of privatization and use of market mechanisms for social policy.

Urban food sharing, and the politics of the sharing economy more broadly, are likewise subject to neoliberalization processes. Food sharing projects are navigating the constraints of markets and policies that treat food as a commodity and that privilege profit-driven forms of sharing. They are also challenged by the bias towards framing sharing as a transactional economic activity, where the economy is largely informed by market capitalism (McLaren and Agyeman, 2015).

We adopt a paradigm that views sharing not only as transactional, but fundamentally relational. Sharing is a social, political, economic, and cultural process. We also distinguish transactional from transformational sharing. Transactional sharing is oriented towards commercial activity and increasing efficiencies, where sharing is an instrument for private gain; transformational sharing may or may not be motivated by profit, but involves shifting power relations (Gorenflo as cited in McLaren and Agyeman, 2015). This broader sharing paradigm views the basic resources and environment that humans depend on as shared commons and the foundation upon which economies are built (as does the community economies framework). In this view, cities themselves are shared urban spaces in which there is individual, collective, and public sharing of things, services, and activities (McLaren and Agyeman, 2015).

Transformational food sharing and food justice should be understood as a dialectical process across multiple scales and over time. Any potentially transformative project begins within a neoliberalized landscape. For example, urban agriculture can be seen as simultaneously neoliberal and radically transformative, “filling the void left by the ‘rolling back’ of the social safety net” (McClintock, 2014, 147), but also re-embedding the food system within social relations that have been taken over by the capitalist market economy. Guthman (2008, 1181) emphasizes that “the politics of the possible lies in the indeterminacy of neoliberalism, the dialectical relationship between activist projects and their objects, and the always possible unintended consequences.” It is this space of possibility to which we now turn with the concept of solidarity economy movement.

## 3. Solidarity economy movement

Solidarity economy (SE) is a set of theories and practices that aspire towards a more democratic, just, and sustainable society (Loh and Shear, 2015). SE aspires to be “a socio-economic order and new way of life that deliberately chooses serving the needs of people and ecological sustainability as the goal of economic activity rather than maximization of profits under the unfettered rule of the market” (Quiñones, 2008, 13). Like McLaren and Agyeman’s (2015) sharing paradigm and Gibson-Graham’s (1996, 2006) diverse economies, SE frames economy broadly, as all the ways that humans meet our material needs and care for each other. It reintegrates economy within social relations.

We describe SE as a social movement because it has transformational aspirations and is comprised of a collection of individuals and groups (formal and informal). We use the term social movement broadly, as defined by Diani (1992) as “as networks of informal interactions between a plurality of individuals, groups and/or organizations, engaged in political or cultural conflicts, on the basis of shared collective identities” (3). We make this shift from *economy* to *movement* because our interest is not only on economic practices but also the political and ideological processes that make SE possible. We want to analyze how SE can produce (and be produced by) a broader “socio-economic order” (as Quiñones articulates above). The term ‘economy’ may narrow conceptions of SE to only the business or material realm (e.g. producing, exchanging, consuming). By framing SE as a movement, we make visible the political and cultural dimensions of the

socio-economic order, beyond just cooperative forms of business.<sup>1</sup> SE movement is also shifting consciousness and power relations. We use SE to refer to the economic practices in our case, but SE movement to describe the broader set of practices that are associated with SE.

SE is not conceived of as a singular political-economic system meant to replace a unitary capitalism (like theories of state-centered socialism). Rather SE involves the development and negotiation of multiple economies that can put the needs of people and the planet over profit. While there are varying definitions of SE arising from diverse intellectual and social movement roots (Amin, 2009; Kawano, 2013; Miller, 2010, 2013; Utting, 2015), we use the term broadly to embrace a diverse array of initiatives attempting to build non-capitalist economies, including the social economy.

SE movements exist throughout the world but are most well established in Latin America, Canada, and Europe. In Latin America, SE movements have emerged from social movements struggling explicitly against neoliberalism (Allard and Matthaei, 2008; Miller, 2006). With leftist progressive regimes, SE has become incorporated into government policy, for instance with the establishment in Brazil of the National Secretariat of Solidarity Economy in 2003 and the recognition of solidarity economy in Ecuador's 2008 Constitution.

In Europe, SE is often described as the “third sector” of the economy, or the social economy (Laville, 2010), whose origins are often associated with utopian socialists such as Owen, Fourier, Saint-Simon and Proudhon. Well-known SE practices can be found in cooperative economies in the Basque region of Spain (Mondragon) and the Emilia-Romagna region of Italy (Hancock, 2008; Restakis, 2010). In Canada, SE has been particularly visible in Quebec, where labor unions, non-profits, and social movements established the Social Economy Task Force. Since 1996, this network has financed and organized around the creation of jobs in new sectors, such as the homecare industry, which employs more than 6000 in over 100 cooperatives and non-profits (Mendell, 2009). In the US, SE movements are still in a nascent phase (though SE practices have long existed), but SE ideas can be seen in efforts labeled as new economy, local living economy, generative economy, and sharing economy.

SE practices span all three sectors of the economy: the private sector (market-driven, profit oriented), public sector (planned), and third sector (social economy) (Lewis and Conaty, 2012). They include cooperatives of all kinds, participatory budgeting, fair trade, community land trusts, mutual associations, community banks, alternative currencies, time banks, and more.

Though SE is not a singular theory or framework, we see four cornerstone ideas that underlie SE. First is a view of *humans as interdependent, social beings*. Individuals are more than self-interested, utility-maximizers, the *homo economicus* of neoclassical economic theory (Polanyi, 2001; Mauss, 1990; Graeber, 2010); economic motivations also include collective wellbeing, ethical concerns, and moral values.

Second, *solidarity* is the core value basis for social relations. Solidarity is about “broadening the sense of us” to balance collective and individual interests (Altuna-Gabilondo, 2013). Race, class, gender, and other differences must always be negotiated in enacting solidarity. Solidarity also encompasses our relations with non-human entities, thus incorporating notions of ecological sustainability.

Third is *democratic practice*. Collective ownership and cooperative

<sup>1</sup> The view of SE as only cooperatives is also commonly held among our community partners. Some have difficulty envisioning their role beyond incubating coops. Part of our work in Solidarity Economy Initiative has been to support development of a broader view of SE, particularly of the movement that it will take in order to grow it. Note that SE mapping initiatives also grapple with this distinction between economy and movement, trying to determine what to include and exclude. Some initiatives, such as the US Solidarity Economy Map (Safri et al. 2017) map only business enterprises with solidarity values and practices, whereas the SolidarityNYC map of New York City (<http://solidaritynyc.org/>) also includes advocacy and arts and culture groups.

management are central to SE institutions like cooperatives, community land trusts, and credit unions. But beyond these enterprises, SE also favors more participatory and deliberative forms of democracy in state governance, such as participatory budgeting. Thus, democratic practice infuses both the economic and political spheres and is about empowerment and agency of people to change the conditions affecting their lives.

Fourth is seeing *diverse and plural economies*, beyond capitalist markets. There are many existing forms of exchange, production, and ownership that function within different value frames than those of the capitalist market. Simply acknowledging their existence can cut through the ideological constraints of capitalism, opening up new ways for people to understand and act in the world (Gibson-Graham et al., 2013; Miller, 2010). At the same time, this “pluralist approach, eschew [s] rigid blueprints and the belief in a single, correct path...[and] builds on concrete practices, many of which are quite old, rather than seeking to create utopia out of theory and thin air” (Kawano, 2013).

In food movements, the solidarity economy has been particularly influential. Food justice and sovereignty movements have been on the forefront of challenging the dominant food economy based on corporate control of global industrialized production and informed by ‘free market’ ideology (McClintock, 2014; Agyeman and McEntee, 2014; Holt Gimenez, 2011). It has pioneered solidarity approaches to taking back land, creating cooperative institutions, and forging fair and direct trade networks. Anderson et al. (2014) see the development of cooperative alternative food networks, which also describe elements of our Boston case.

### 3.1. Three dimensions of transformation

A SE movement framework helps us to analyze the possible trajectories of transformation of food sharing and food justice practices. By viewing SE as a social justice movement, we can focus on three dimensions of transformation: ideological, political, and economic (Loh and Jimenez, 2017). In the ideological dimension, social movements shift popular consciousness, uncovering root causes, expanding visions of possible futures, and inspiring dreams of the world as it should be. In the political dimension, movements build and shift power not just to resist and reform the injustices and un-sustainabilities produced by current systems, but ultimately to democratically control and govern shared resources to sustain people and the planet. In the economic dimension, movements can foster the creation of economic alternatives and prototypes for producing, exchanging, consuming, and investing in ways that are more just, sustainable, and democratic.

While each dimension can be analyzed on its own, transformation involves movement across all three. While any given effort may emphasize one particular dimension over the others, SE projects and practices affect all three dimensions simultaneously. As will be described in the case below, an initiative may make progress in one dimension only to face constraints in another. A three-dimensional view allows us to analyze progress and challenges more holistically and suggest strategies for addressing constraints. It also allows us to go beyond the capitalocentric approaches that separate the economic from the social, political, and cultural and an overly narrow focus on business forms or only local action.

Transformation towards SE will entail sustaining and creating solidarity practices, mindsets, and institutions (political and economic), *while at the same time* reforming and transforming current neoliberal capitalist logics and institutions. There will be struggles over hearts and minds, as well as over public resources and policies. We share Wright's (2012) view that transformation will require building on the SE alternatives that have sprouted from the margins or cracks of capitalism by expanding the public resources and spaces of support through reform strategies.



Fig. 1. Boston's emerging food solidarity economy movement.

#### 4. Boston's food solidarity economy movement

We now describe a network of long established and newly emerging initiatives that comprise what we have called the Boston food solidarity economy movement (Fig. 1). This array of food justice and food sharing initiatives has emerged from the nonprofit, social enterprise, and cooperative sectors. This network encompasses all phases of the food system, including a community land trust, for-profit and nonprofit farming and community gardening, processing by a kitchen incubator and catering firm, retail through a social enterprise café and a newly forming food cooperative, and finally recycling by a worker-owned cooperative processing organic wastes back into compost. These are all initiated and led by local residents (mostly people of color), but also partnering with other resources. They are woven together through political alliances, business supply chains, as well as broader food justice, community development, and SE networks.

We focus on the initiatives that are sprouting in Roxbury and Dorchester, two adjoining neighborhoods that are home to about one quarter of Boston residents. They are over 75% people of color, mostly African American and Latino. They are among the city's lowest income communities. In 2011, Roxbury's per capita income was just over half of Boston's, and more than 35% of households received federal food subsidies (SNAP).<sup>2</sup>

In this section, we describe this emerging movement from the perspective of possibility. Even though these initiatives are not centrally coordinated and each may seem small and marginal, *together* they hold promise for more transformative change. We will make explicit reference to food sharing for those initiatives that fall directly within the Davies et al. (2017) typology, but note that all of these efforts involve sharing of some kind through governance and ownership. We first root this movement in the history of community struggles over land and development in these neighborhoods. Then we show how this diverse network of initiatives, some decades old and others still forming, is an example of how SE movement can grow from the merger of already existing with new institutions and practices.

##### 4.1. Securing land

The emerging movement starts with shared ownership of land in the Dudley neighborhood through a community land trust (CLT). The roots

<sup>2</sup> All data in this paragraph is from Boston Redevelopment Authority neighborhood reports using American Community Survey 2007–2011 estimates (May 2013).

of this land trust trace back to decades of neighborhood struggles over land and development. Following World War II, Roxbury and Dorchester, like many other inner city areas, suffered from disinvestment and neglect. Racially discriminatory banking and housing policies ('redlining') and practices such as 'block busting' further segregated people of color from opportunity. Urban renewal programs and highway building dealt a further blow to these neighborhoods by taking land and in some cases removing residents (Medoff and Sklar, 1994).

By the 1980s, the Dudley Street section of Roxbury and North Dorchester had been devastated by the disinvestment and white flight of the 1960s and 70s. More than 1/3 of the land lay vacant – 1300 parcels in a 1.5 square mile area. In 1984, residents and community organizations came together as the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative (DSNI) to revitalize the Dudley neighborhood and resist City redevelopment plans that would have gentrified and transformed the area into hotels and offices serving downtown Boston. They successfully pushed the City of Boston to adopt their own plan for the neighborhood and to give DSNI the power of eminent domain<sup>3</sup> over 60-acres in the core of the Dudley neighborhood. In 1988, they established their own community land trust<sup>4</sup> to take ownership over and develop the vacant land (Medoff and Sklar, 1994).

A CLT is a nonprofit organization governed by community members that owns and stewards land for long-term public benefit. It protects land from the pressures of the real estate market, as the land is never resold. By separating ownership of land from human improvements to the land (such as housing), a land trust allows the community to retain the value of land appreciation for common use. The land trust is a vehicle for decommodifying land and governing it as a shared commons. The classic formula for the board of a community land trust is equal representation of people who lease the land, other local residents, and members representing the broader public, thus balancing the varying public interests (Davis, 2014). Land trusts then rent land to leaseholders, often for long terms (typically 99 years), to build housing, operate farms or other businesses, and develop other beneficial uses as determined by the community. The terms of the lease can include limits on resale in order to preserve affordability. There are now almost 250 CLTs across 46 states and Washington DC (Thaden, 2012).

In the almost 30 years since establishing their CLT, DSNI has built 226 permanently affordable homes, as well as parks, a town common, a community center, and a charter school. The land trust also hosts a variety of urban agricultural activities. These include a 10,000 square foot community greenhouse and two farm sites operated by the nonprofit The Food Project, as well as dozens of home and community gardens. These developments are remarkable given that the land in this neighborhood is no longer inexpensive, as real estate prices have skyrocketed across Boston. But as it does for housing, the CLT keeps land affordable for community uses such as food production that would otherwise be priced out of the real estate market. Farmers can gain long-term affordable access, such as through the 99-year lease that DSNI's land trust granted to one of The Food Project's farms. This control of land, made possible by building political power, has enabled DSNI and its community partners to guide development that goes beyond the constraints of the private real estate market.

##### 4.2. Growing

Long-term control of land has allowed for growing through diverse economic forms, including self-provisioning, nonprofit farming, and

<sup>3</sup> Eminent domain is the power to seize privately owned land for public purposes (paying fair compensation), usually a power reserved only to government.

<sup>4</sup> DSNI's community land trust is an affiliated, but separate, nonprofit named Dudley Neighbors, Inc., which is governed by a board where a majority of members are appointed by the DSNI board.

commercial agriculture. Growing in home gardens for self and neighbors is a significant activity and is bolstered by the housing affordability provided by the land trust, which allows residents the stability to stay for longer terms and invest in their gardens. A 2013 survey identified more than 65 resident gardens, some more than 40 years old, in DSNI's core area growing more than 50 types of vegetables and fruits and yielding an estimated 4400 lb of produce (Loh et al., 2013). While some were started by immigrant residents who brought their gardening knowledge to the US, some were more recently built through The Food Project's Build-A-Garden program.

A guerilla gardening campaign has taken back even more public and private vacant land in the neighborhood for resident use. Since 2011, youth organizers from the environmental justice group Alternatives for Community & Environment have reclaimed 9 vacant lots and built raised-bed gardens that are tended by more than 100 families in Roxbury and Dorchester. Some of these lots had been vacant for more than 40 years. "We've grown up next to all these vacant lots that were just collecting trash. We can take back the land and provide for ourselves," said Hakim Sutherland, a youth organizer with ACE (Loh, 2014). Though these gardens are not on the land trust, there are efforts under way to transfer some of these sites to the Dudley CLT in order to secure permanent access for growing. This is an example of sharing growing spaces through taking over underutilized land (or "collecting" in Davies et al.'s, 2017 typology). The produce from these gardens is used directly by the growers but can also be gifted or bartered. There is also at least one case of a prolific home gardener piloting selling at a local farmers market (Parad, 2017).

Nonprofit agriculture is happening through the two farms and community greenhouse operated by The Food Project. Founded in 1991, The Food Project supports youth development and leadership through sustainable agriculture. The community greenhouse provides shared year-round growing space and educational programs for local residents, youth, and organizations. While the Food Project is a nonprofit, it also earns revenue by growing produce for market in half of the greenhouse to pay much of the operating costs for the half dedicated to community uses (Bewiener, 2016).

Finally, commercial for-profit farming has been pursued by City Growers, an urban farming business founded in 2007. They developed a small scale intensive model to grow greens and other high-value crops for local restaurants and specialty groceries, with approximately 20% sold back to the community at farmers markets (Lloyd, 2017). But gaining long-term affordable access to land has been a main challenge. They began by securing access to land on the site of the Dorchester Sportsmen's Club, a nonprofit tennis center built by and for the African American community. To secure city-owned land, they needed to first change city zoning to allow commercial farming, so they helped lead a multi-year effort to pass Boston's urban agricultural code (Article 89) in 2013. The new zoning then allowed transfer of several city-owned vacant sites to a CLT, which would then lease the land to urban farms.

Though their model generated \$45,000 in revenue on slightly less than a half-acre, City Growers found that market conditions would not support a solely commercial small-scale farming business. Thus, in 2015, they merged with the sister nonprofit that they had founded in 2012, the Urban Farming Institute of Boston (UFI) (Lloyd, 2017). UFI continues to provide farmer training programs, conduct public education, and secure additional land for farmers. Most crucially, UFI has now started its own CLT to own the land for four farm sites that it now operates. Several of these sites are temporarily being held by the Dudley CLT. UFI is also exploring the development of various cooperative structures among the farmers they support, such as pooling resources and marketing under one brand. Even though there are no purely commercial farming ventures in the neighborhood, the decommodification of land has allowed for various modes of urban growing to proliferate, including self-provisioning and hybrid nonprofit-commercial models.

#### 4.3. Processing

This emerging food solidarity economy also has initiatives that process food, including the produce grown on local land. City Fresh Foods is a for-profit catering company co-founded in 1994 by Glynn Lloyd, who wanted to create jobs for young people in the neighborhood. Lloyd also co-founded City Growers years later out of the desire to source locally-grown greens for City Fresh, which delivers fresh, healthy, and culturally appropriate meals to nursing homes, schools, and other institutions. They employ about 100 people, have a profit sharing program for employees, and are working towards 100% community ownership.

In spring 2014, Commonwealth Kitchen (CWK) opened a shared kitchen and food incubator facility in Dorchester at the site of the former Pearl and Bornstein Meat factory. This \$14 million redevelopment project was guided by Dorchester Bay Economic Development Corporation. The center provides shared and private kitchen space, business development support, and a commissary kitchen serving the food preparation needs of institutions, restaurants, and the food truck industry. CWK provides space and business support to more than 50 businesses, three-quarters of which are owned by women and/or people of color, and which collectively employ 140 people. With the growing popularity and demand for local food and its focus on entrepreneurship and innovation, CWK has attracted mainstream attention and experienced more than 450 percent growth over the last three years (Faigel and Sinfield, 2017).

While CWK has a range of member businesses and entrepreneurs, it maintains a focus on those impacted by racial, social, and economic inequalities. CWK partners with a number of the initiatives included in this case study: DSNI, UFI, and CERO coop (see recycling below). But it also partners with other food sharing initiatives such as the Boston Area Gleaners. In its efforts to build good food jobs, CWK has been building its small-scale contract manufacturing services, so that it can aggregate contract jobs to sustain its own food manufacturing workforce. In addition to contracts with member businesses, CWK is pioneering new product lines to process surplus and gleaned produce, such as tomatoes and apples, into products with a longer shelf life (e.g. sauce) to sell to local universities and hospitals. Though CWK's primary mission is supporting local businesses to thrive in the current market, it is developing models for sharing space, capital equipment, and labor to overcome some of the gaps and constraints in the current food system. Both CWK and City Fresh are attempting to create access to good jobs in markets where workers are typically not well paid.

#### 4.4. Consuming

On the retail end of the food solidarity economy, the Dorchester Community Food Co-op has been organizing since 2011 to launch a member and worker-owned store providing affordable, fresh, and healthy foods and green products, as well as space for community education and cultural activities. Unlike many food cooperatives that cater to more white and middle-upper class populations, this effort is dedicated to serving a culturally and economically diverse community. So far, they have over 640 member-owners, run a winter farmer's market, and hold weekly "Fresh Fridays" festivals in the summer. They have raised \$184,500 through a direct public offering in 2016 and are now working with a local community development corporation to develop a building, which they hope to open in 2019. They envision the store will also be a shared gathering space hosting educational and cultural activities.

The Haley House Bakery Café is a social enterprise opened in 2005 by a nonprofit social service organization serving the homeless. The Café has become a vibrant community space, providing dining and catering services and also running a bakery training program for ex-prisoners and education programs for youth. When it opened, it was one of the only sit-down restaurants in the district. It hosts frequent arts and

cultural events, including a weekly pay-what-you-can Community Tables dinner. The Food Co-op and Haley House are challenging conventional supermarkets and for-profit restaurants to provide more communal ways to buy and eat food and to serve as a channel for local produce and food products.

#### 4.5. Recycling

At the waste processing end of the food system is a worker cooperative, CERO (Cooperative Energy, Recycling, & Organics), which was formed in 2013 to help local businesses separate their wastes, increase recycling, and collect their food scraps for composting back into soil. CERO was started by African-American and Latinx workers who wanted to create their own green jobs. Their founders were members of economic justice programs at two community non-profits, Boston Workers Alliance and Massachusetts Coalition for Occupational Health and Safety. These groups were organizing and providing support to unemployed and underemployed workers. They raised the funds for business development, which included a ‘coop academy’ where the initial core group of workers developed their own business plan. They designed their business to take advantage of a new market opportunity created by the 2014 Commercial Food Waste Disposal Ban on large institutions in Massachusetts, the result of past environmental struggles to reduce waste and its impacts on communities.

After completing their business plan, they raised initial startup funds with a crowd-funding campaign in 2013 that raised \$17,000 from over 300 donors and also secured zero-interest loans from Boston Impact Initiative and the Cooperative Fund of New England. CERO then used these funds to launch a direct public offering in 2014, raising more than \$370,000 from over 80 investors. Since launching with five worker-owners, CERO has grown to seven worker-owners and an eighth employee. It has established several dozen contracts, including with larger grocery chains and universities as well as smaller operations like CWK and Haley House. With growing business, they hope to achieve their goal of break-even in 2018. CERO has become an inspirational example of workers creating and owning their own business, in a market started by an environmental policy change.

### 5. Assessing trajectories of transformation

A SE movement framework helps to assess the transformative potential of these initiatives. Each, alone, may seem small and fragile, but together as a network (and a social movement), they are building political power and creating business ties and their own supply chains. Perhaps most importantly, they are a breeding ground for cutting through the ideological constraints of neoliberalism. They show that another world (beyond neoliberal capitalism) is not only possible, but is already here in some ways. A pluralist view encourages us to see how solidarity values and practices are being enacted across diverse sectors, including cooperatives, nonprofits, and social enterprise, and among long-established, as well as more recent, initiatives.

As important as it is to see the potential, it is also crucial to analyze the constraints and challenges in transformation. These efforts are trying to sustain existing and build new solidarity practices and institutions, while simultaneously resist and reform neoliberalization processes. The emerging food solidarity economy movement is navigating across the ideological, political, and economic dimensions of change, each of which is affected by neoliberalism.

In this section, we foreground several critical questions regarding transformation that have emerged from dialogue within the field, as well as our own analysis. First is a concern over neoliberal hegemony and capitalocentrism; how might the SE movement disrupt dominant narratives that limit our consciousness of possibilities and create counter narratives for broad transformation. Second is a concern over cooptation; how can these projects avoid becoming mainstreamed and ‘tamed’ (or depoliticized) in order to survive? Third is a concern over

scale; how might these initiatives grow beyond ‘boutique’ or marginal niches involving relatively small numbers of people?

Constraints in any of these dimensions can stymie or undermine the growth of the solidarity economy movement. Often times, initiatives are advancing along one or two of these dimensions, but are hampered by a third. For instance, the new commercial urban farms were built on strong political support and are changing ideas about land ownership, but remain embedded within an economy where their produce is sold to Boston’s high-end restaurants. ACE’s guerilla gardens produce food for a relatively small number of people but are shifting ideas about who land should benefit. And without formal ownership the land remains at risk of being taken for other purposes.

#### 5.1. Ideological shifts

In the ideological, or discursive dimension, the mere existence of SE initiatives helps to counter the idea that “there is no alternative” (a phrase often used by former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher). These examples can inspire belief that other worlds are possible and other action and projects. Even if these initiatives are not sustained or fail to reach their goals, they are still ideological assets for instilling a sense of possibility that goes beyond neoliberalism. Gibson-Graham (2006) believe that many disparate efforts across many places can contribute to broader transformation by sharing language, values, and practices. This type of symbolic scaling starts in the ideological dimension. For example, ACE youth got the idea for guerilla gardens by visiting and learning about similar food justice efforts in Detroit. DSNI’s CLT has become an inspiration for many other urban neighborhoods, not only in Boston and across the U.S. but in other countries as well.

However, practicing values of democracy, justice, and sustainability in a few instances may not be enough to counter the neoliberalism that has so deeply infused the social enterprise and nonprofit sectors (as well as public sector), thereby reinforcing ideas around individualism, market efficiency, privatization, and small government. These initiatives encounter skepticism and disbelief that broader transformation is possible, both from within communities as well as the funders and other partners with whom they work. Even in Boston, where DSNI’s land trust is so prominent, efforts to start CLTs in other neighborhoods find that one of the barriers is the idea that a property owner should be able to reap all the windfalls of rising real estate prices. That is one of the reasons why DSNI, ACE, UFI, and others formed the Greater Boston Community Land Trust Network, which is helping to spread awareness of the model. DSNI and ACE are also part of the Solidarity Economy Initiative, which brings together community organizing groups with progressive funders to develop vision and strategies around solidarity economy movement. This initiative supports a learning cohort, meeting four times a year and holding workshops and trainings focused on shifting consciousness and developing solidarity economy projects.

The ideological dimension can also be expanded through politics. One of the tenets of neoliberalism is reducing government only to its role in supporting private enterprise. As discussed below, these initiatives are advocating for public policies and resources to support the solidarity economy, such as CLTs and cooperatives. These efforts are opening more discursive space for changing conceptions about the role of government and the use of public capital.

#### 5.2. Political power-building

Organizing and power building are critical to furthering the solidarity economy movement. Solidarity initiatives are building their own autonomous power through democratically governed organizations. For instance, Dorchester Food Co-op and CERO are democratically governed by their members, while DSNI is a nonprofit with several thousand members electing a board of directors representing the various racial/ethnic groups and other stakeholders in the neighborhood.

This power base can then be mobilized to gain supportive policies

and other resources from the state. CERO coop is building its business from the gains of past environmental organizing, which won a state-wide food waste ban. CERO continues to actively participate in a city-wide zero waste coalition, in order to open up even more political space and public resources for their business. The Greater Boston Community Land Trust Network (facilitated by DSNI) has successfully pressured the City of Boston to include CLTs within its housing strategies and is advocating for city resources and preferences in disposition of city-owned land. Finally, Article 89, Boston's urban agricultural rezoning code, was established through a coordinated effort involving City Growers/UFI, DSNI, The Food Project, and other community and urban farming stakeholders.

These positive gains, though, are tempered by other neoliberal policies that support large corporations and an industrialized food system. Victories, like legalization of commercial farming, are still premised on a for-profit approach that reinforces the commoditization of food and its sale for highest return. The focus on decent income for farmers allowed the effort to tap into political support for entrepreneurship and job creation, but also argue for de-commoditization of land and the privileging of labor over capital. Initiatives that depend on resources from public agencies and philanthropy need to be cautious about how oppositional they can be in their political strategies and often have to justify their work in more neoliberal terms. For example, CWK's kitchen facility depended critically on public financing in order to be built. CWK often has to justify its work based on conventional entrepreneurial and business measures.

While CWK itself does not engage in more conflictual politics, they work with other solidarity economy movement partners that do. Collectively, they are pairing 'offensive' strategies to gain legitimacy and resources for solidarity alternatives with 'defensive' ones to reform policies that support neoliberal capitalism. For example, DSNI and many members of the CLT network were part of a recent campaign for just cause eviction, which provides further protection for renters and challenges the power of landlords. Some are also fighting to restrict corporate users of Airbnb and other homesharing services from displacing residents. There is also potential for more coalition building between solidarity economy initiatives and the various labor initiatives organizing food service workers,<sup>5</sup> many of whom live in lower income communities of color.

But this organizing and coalition building requires resources and time and conscious effort to link reform with transformative alternatives. Because support from philanthropy and government for this work is severely constrained, many organizing groups are hopeful that successful solidarity businesses can generate enough surplus to provide an independent source of funding. However, as discussed below, the alternative economic enterprises are also constrained in current market conditions.

With a wide diversity of actors involved in these efforts (which is a strength), there is also negotiation across differences in socio-economic, racial, and other privileges within the movement itself. DSNI and UFI each have boards and staff leadership that are predominantly people of color with deep ties to the neighborhood. CERO's Lor Holmes describes their cooperative as "Black, Brown, White, Latino, African American, queer. Everyone is choosing our multicultural workplace, choosing to bridge those differences, where we aim for raising everybody up in their power" (Loh and Jimenez, 2017, 30). The Food Project, which started in the Boston suburbs and expanded to the Dudley neighborhood, has white leadership and has been conscious of the need to diversify both its staff and board. Insufficient attention to these racial and class differences may reinforce inequalities and tensions and undermine cooperation across movement actors. For example, UFI and The Food Project are both looking to access more land, which may put them into

competition with one another in city land disposition processes or even within the Dudley land trust. Without ways to resolve these tensions, privilege and power based on racial and socio-economic hierarchies may be exploited and exacerbated. At worst, these divides can set actors against each other rather than working together.

### 5.3. Economic alternatives

Economically (or materially), there arise questions of financing and resources, business models, and competition. All of the entities described above, while building on local assets, rely to some degree on outside resources, whether from philanthropy, private capital, or public funding. Although this reliance can lead to a taming of resistance and less confrontational forms of organizing, it can also open up access to public and private capital. For instance, nonprofit and social enterprise initiatives, such as City Fresh and CWK, can tap into financing sources for entrepreneurship and job training. City Fresh, CWK, and CERO are also developing partnerships with larger nonprofit anchor institutions (like universities and hospitals) in order to grow their businesses. While the anchor sector is highly neoliberalized, it is also susceptible to pressures based on their nonprofit missions and their 'customer' base (students and patients).

In some cases, solidarity economy businesses are achieving viability under current conditions. However, each faces some level of conventional market competition and gaps in their supply chains. They are making trade-offs to balance their goals of sustaining the enterprise, supporting good jobs, and operating in an environmental manner. For example, CWK encountered numerous challenges trying to sell tomato sauce made from surplus crops to universities. In their first attempt, they partnered with the university's distributor to offer the sauce at below cost, but still found that the university's food service contractor would pay only half the cost and would make purchases only when they demanded it rather than when it was seasonally available (Gruber, 2017). CWK learned that they needed to establish strategic partnerships based on more than just competing on price and convenience. They have since developed more successful partnerships that help universities make progress towards their sustainability and local food goals, which are often being demanded through student political pressure.

In other cases, SE enterprises are not able to sustain themselves. Haley House opened up an affiliate, Dudley Dough, in 2015 as a pizza shop that paid a living wage with profit sharing for workers and sourced local and organic ingredients. However, it was closed at the end of 2017, because it could not achieve break-even without endangering the broader Haley House operation. All of these solidarity businesses are more than private market actors and weave together nonprofit and public support in order to survive. While some, like CWK, collaborate with (and cajole) partners (like universities), others, like CERO, explicitly challenge injustices and advocate to change policies, while also building their business.

Even if particular enterprises are not sustained or do not grow larger, they still play an important role as non-capitalist examples. They also, through their own practices, build more consciousness of solidarity values. For example, CERO's democratic management through their weekly coop meetings is a way of "transmitting the values and talking about the principles in the context of how we do business with each other" according to CERO's Holmes (Loh and Jimenez, 2017, 30).

Startup financing has proven to be one of the most immediate constraints faced by solidarity businesses. CERO surmounted this startup phase initially with philanthropic grants and then self-financing and a direct public offering. Dorchester Food Co-op has a base of dues-paying members, but also pursued a direct public offering to raise startup capital. It is now partnering with a nonprofit developer, which can access more conventional community development financing. But there are still many financing challenges ahead.

The SE movement in Boston is actively working to connect to

<sup>5</sup> These include UNITE/HERE Local 26 unionizing cafeteria workers, the Restaurant Opportunities Centers United, and Fast Food Workers Alliance.



financing partners who see themselves as part of SE movement. For example, Cooperative Fund for New England, which was established in 1975, has provided investments and loans to CERO, CWK, and Dorchester Food Co-op. Boston Impact Initiative (BII) was established in 2013 with a mission to invest in SE. BII made an equity investment in City Fresh Foods in 2015 to help it transition to worker ownership (City Fresh Foods, 2015). The Boston Ujima Project, formally launched in 2017, is a new initiative building a community investment fund, capitalized by direct equity investment from local neighborhood residents and augmented by other institutional and impact investors (including BII). The fund will allocate investments through a democratic process modeled on participatory budgeting. Ujima also has established a business alliance which includes CERO, Dorchester Food Co-op, and Haley House, to further build the network (or in the project's own words, an "ecosystem") for a community-controlled economy. These financing innovations are crucial for these initiatives to launch themselves at a feasible scale and compete with the conventional food economy.

## 6. Conclusions

In this paper we have analyzed the challenges and opportunities for food sharing and food justice within the emerging Boston food solidarity economy movement. The proliferation and extent of these multiple efforts in lower income communities of color is expansive: cooperatives, organizing, CLTs, social enterprises, and more. Together, they represent and can inspire desires for transformation towards a more democratic, just, and sustainable food system – for food justice and sovereignty.

Yet, this emergence occurs within an urban landscape of deeply embedded historical, social, and spatial inequalities and injustices, which are produced and reproduced by neoliberalism. To assess the trajectories of transformation of this movement, we have examined the ideological, political, and economic dimensions of change. In economic terms, this movement is still small, materially involving small numbers of people in relation to the conventional food system. Yet, the initiatives span across all sectors, from land and growing to processing, consumption, and recycling; the hope is that this localized food system can more effectively sustain itself as a collectivity rather than isolated enterprises. In the political dimension, this movement has achieved gains such as the legalization of commercial farming and support for community land trusts. It is also continuing to fight for defensive reforms such as living wages and tenant protections. In the ideological realm, these initiatives are real-world examples of possibilities beyond capitalism. They are also succeeding to some extent in shifting ideas about the role of government in job creation and support for cooperative businesses and community land ownership.

There remain many challenges to the further growth of the solidarity economy movement in Boston. Tensions and contradictions arise from the interface of this economy with larger-scale conventional markets, where food, land, and labor are commodities. Current conditions mitigate against paying good wages, using ecologically sustainable practices, and keeping wealth in the commons. The nonprofits and social enterprises that are part of this movement also face deep-seated neoliberal logics of privatization, state rollback and unfettered markets that can coopt and depoliticize them. Independent political power-building initiatives are challenged to find sources of support beyond neoliberalized philanthropy and the public sector. These material and political pressures conspire to build skepticism that this movement can become more than marginal or anomalies that cannot be scaled up or replicated. Without a transformative vision, there is the danger that these efforts will remain fragmented, further fueling competition for funding and resources. Finally, differences internal to the movement are always being navigated among the socioeconomic, cultural and racialized positionalities of the various organizations and people involved.

We close by offering some reflections from this case that we believe can be useful for proponents of food justice, food sharing, and the emerging SE movement in Boston and beyond. First, organizing and movement building are crucial, not only for creating more space and support for solidarity economy, but also to link together reform and alternative-building strategies. The fight for living wages for food service workers can be linked to cooperative ownership of restaurants (as the Restaurant Opportunity Centers' cooperative incubator program does). These linkages can help build the power base as well as spread consciousness of transformative possibilities.

In terms of growing the scale of the movement, a networked approach seems promising. A network of independent initiatives operating across all food system sectors can work together towards greater effects on power relations, policies, and consciousness. In Boston, each of these efforts recognizes the need for strategic partnerships with other SE movement actors, but also with other sectors such as anchor institutions, existing small businesses, and finance. Many of these initiatives are intentionally building business supply chains from within the SE sector. While nonprofits and social enterprises can be vulnerable to and compromised by neoliberalization, they remain key building blocks with access to critical philanthropic and public sector resources. The CERO coop was initially incubated by two nonprofits. Most of the organizing efforts are still anchored by nonprofits. In Boston, this food solidarity economy movement can forge stronger connections with the food sharing movement, particularly gleaners. Finally, the movement is seeking to build its own solidarity financing vehicles in order to grow the scale of the work.

We see transformative potential emerging in the Boston food solidarity economy movement. These efforts, though small, have a sum that is potentially greater than the parts. Though not centrally coordinated, these efforts are finding each other, collaborating both politically and economically. They are organizing and fighting against neoliberal policies and for more community supportive policies. They are co-operating with each other to build local supply chains. They are inspired by and inspiring others locally and beyond. As a social movement, they are navigating all three dimensions of change – ideological, political, and economic – towards transformation beyond capitalism.

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