Condensing Capitalism: The benefits of local markets

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Imagine our society trying to survive during another great depression. We rely too much on outside corporations to provide the essentials of live, and if another depression hit, it would be impossible to sustain ourselves. Condensing capitalism down to local communities is a much more sustainable way to run an economy.

Food is one example of how we can support our local communities. In big cities like Denver, it is really hard to find local grown food. It seems like every block you turn onto there is a McDonalds or Burger King. There aren’t many local businesses. It is hard because these large corporations come in and offer the same products local businesses offer but for lower prices. A lot of people can’t even afford to buy the local food so they end up buying the produce from the supermarket.

A paper by an author named Brian Halwell, a member of the Worldwatch Institute, promotes farming locally. “Money spent on local produce at farmers' markets, at locally owned shops, or on locally produced food stays in the community longer, creating jobs, raising incomes and supporting farmers. Developing nations that emphasize greater food self-reliance can thereby retain precious foreign exchange and avoid the whims of international markets.” An old saying my grandpa told me is a dollar spent in the community can turn over seven times before returning back to the original owner.

Thomas Jefferson is a person who envisioned a country that could sustain its self. He says, "Cultivators of the earth are the most valuable citizens. They are the most vigorous, the most independent, the most virtuous, and they are tied to their country and wedded to its liberty and interests by the most lasting bands." He wanted a nation that was mostly agrarian with most people being farmers that would provide food only for the local community and there would be no international trade. Jefferson believed that the masses could basically govern them selves, and great concentrations of power may be a greater threat to the needs of the majority. Some of these large concentrations of power could be these large-scale corporations hurting local business and trade because they are not keeping the revenue in the community.

Many of these large corporations suck up all the local revenue and decimate all the local competition. Don Hunter, owner of a small local hardware store in a small town called Middlefield, Ohio, commented on the effects of a Wal-Mart coming into their town. “I have never been in a Wal-Mart store, and I never plan on going into a Wal-Mart store because I have never had the need. Also I do not like their principles, it might sound like a mean thing to say but I have seen small communities crucified. Ma and pa stores that have been in business for many years get shut down because of corporations like Wal-Mart. “ When you drive through a small town you will see that Wal-Mart up on the hill, then maybe a McDonalds or a Burger King but as you start driving deeper into the town you will notice empty buildings where small businesses used to be. All victimized by such a large corporate power.

In places like Durango, Colorado the local community is very strong. It doesn’t benefit the few but benefits the many. Joe Lloyd, owner of the local coffee company Durango Joes, says, “Buying local is very important for the economy here in Durango, it provides jobs for people that live here, and keeps the money in the community. My motivation behind Joes is not to sell coffee for the next 20 years, and make a lot of money, or provide for my family, but that is not what it is all about. My motivation behind Joes is to do more for the community and be a bright spot for people’s day. Serving really good coffee and putting a smile on some one’s face is really what is all about. Making a small difference in peoples’ lives is the goal here at Joes.” Buying a product from a local business keeps the money in the community. Localizing an economy would create more jobs for the local people; by doing this, the poverty rate will go down, and the middle class will strengthen. Having a stronger middle class could prevent the economy from destruction.

While large corporations hurt local businesses the argument is true corporations provide a lot of money for various things. A quote from McDonalds says, “McDonald’s is proud to be a part of the communities we serve. Through involvement in youth sports, local charities, and events that inspire the world, giving back is an essential part of the way we operate every day.” It is true corporations like McDonalds support a lot of charities and sports events around the world.

Even if corporations do some good in the community, in a moment of crisis they could be unsustainable. During the Great Depression, my grandma Juanita Russell moved to Bayfield Colorado, and started a farm. They were able to make it through the depression just fine because of that local farm. They grew their own produce for themselves and with the crops left over they sold them at the local market. Because of this local trade my grandma’s family made it off better than most

Although our society may not survive without these large, outside corporations, increasing the amount of local small businesses and consuming products from these small businesses would make our world a better place. Supporting local businesses keeps the money in the community longer, it provides quality jobs, and builds relationships between customers and employees. Remember one of our greatest founding fathers had a vision of self-sustaining communities. Little by little we can improve the quality of our country and improve the lives of others. The ideology of localizing an economy is the best method to create a sustainable society.

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