
Localist Movements in a Global Economy

Sustainability, Justice, and Urban Development
in the United States

David J. Hess

The MIT Press
Cambridge, Massachusetts
London, England

© 2009 Massachusetts Institute of Technology

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form by any electronic or mechanical means (including photocopying, recording, or information storage and retrieval) without permission in writing from the publisher.

For information on quantity discounts, email special_sales@mitpress.mit.edu.

Set in Sabon by SNP Best-set Typesetter Ltd., Hong Kong. Printed and bound in the United States of America.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Hess, David J.

Localist movements in a global economy : sustainability, justice, and urban development in the United States / David J. Hess.

p. cm.—(Urban and industrial environments)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-0-262-01264-5 (hardcover : alk. paper)—ISBN 978-0-262-51232-9 (pbk. : alk. paper)

1. Sustainable urban development—United States. 2. Globalization.

3. Central-local government relations. I. Title.

HC110.E5H47 2009

338.973'07091732—dc22

2008035958

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Acknowledgments

This book is based partly on research funded by the National Science Foundation under the title “Sustainable Technology, the Politics of Design, and Localism” (SES-00425039). Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this book are my own and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Science Foundation or others who are acknowledged. Under the grant, I had the opportunity to team-teach a course with Langdon Winner on sustainability and local democracy, and I worked with him to supervise a team of four graduate research assistants (Richard Arias-Hernández, Colin Beech, Rachel Dowty, and Govind Gopakumar). The graduate students developed some of the case studies that are discussed in chapters 4 and 5, and the grant also provided me with the resources needed during a sabbatical semester to conduct site visits and other case studies that are discussed in chapters 4–6. The thirty case studies that provide the background for this book are now posted on my website (www.davidjhess.org). Langdon graciously read some of the chapters and commented on them. I also greatly appreciate the willingness of the many people who consented to be interviewed for the case studies. I wish to thank especially Jim Boon, Leanne Krueger-Braneky, Betsy Johnson, and Ray Schutte.

I appreciate comments from the graduate students who read a draft of the book: Jennifer Barton, Doug Clark, Jessica Kyle, Anna Lamprou, Jennifer Maniere, and Ross Mitchell. Attorney Harry Miller provided some important insights into the differences among types of nonprofit organizations and the fiduciary limitations of privately held corporations. Comments on various aspects of the work from colloquia at the University of Illinois and Virginia Tech were also helpful. My long-term

colleague Patric Giesler has influenced my attention to the internal diversity and variation of a social phenomenon. MIT Press editor Clay Morgan and series editor Robert Gottlieb oversaw a very helpful peer-review process that led to significant improvements. Melanie DuPuis also read the entire manuscript. Although she may not agree with all of my analyses, her comments were invaluable.

I also wish to thank the people who helped build Capital District Local First, Inc. During the time I spent attending meetings of that nonprofit organization and various national conferences of its national umbrella organization, the Business Alliance for Local Living Economies, I learned a great deal about localism. My hope is that this book will be valuable not only for academic researchers but also for people involved in the localist movement who want a broader perspective on both challenges and potentials that localism offers for enhancing environmental sustainability and social justice.

There may be some overlap of content with the following previously published essays: “Enhancing Justice and Sustainability at the Local Level: Affordable Policies for Local Government” (*Local Environment*, 2007); “Localism and the Environment” (*Sociology Compass*, 2008), and “What Is a Clean Bus?” (*Sustainability: Science, Policy, and Practice*, 2007). A contractual agreement provides permission for republication of any overlapping material. I began my discussion of localism in chapter 6 of the companion volume, *Alternative Pathways in Science and Industry* (MIT Press, 2007).