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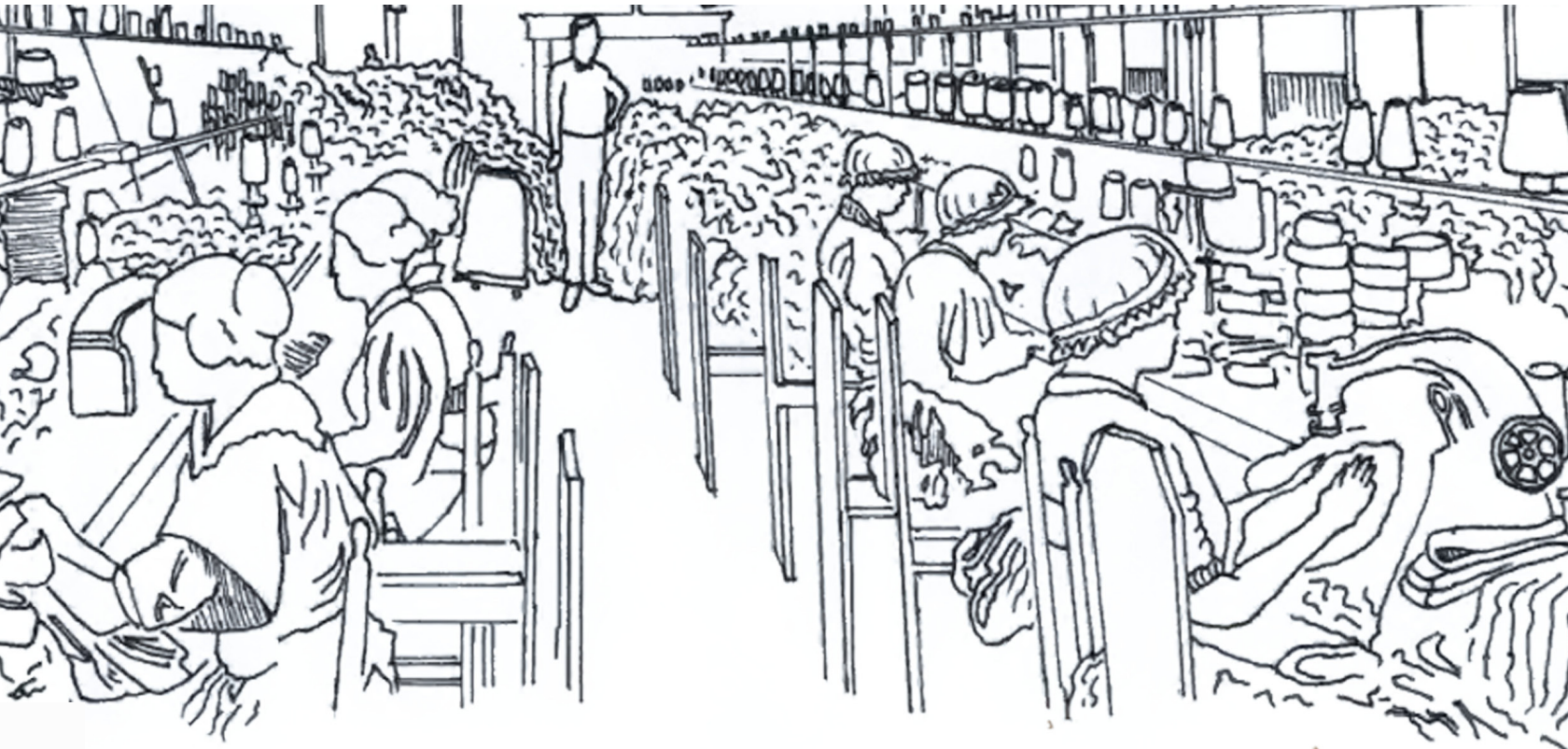
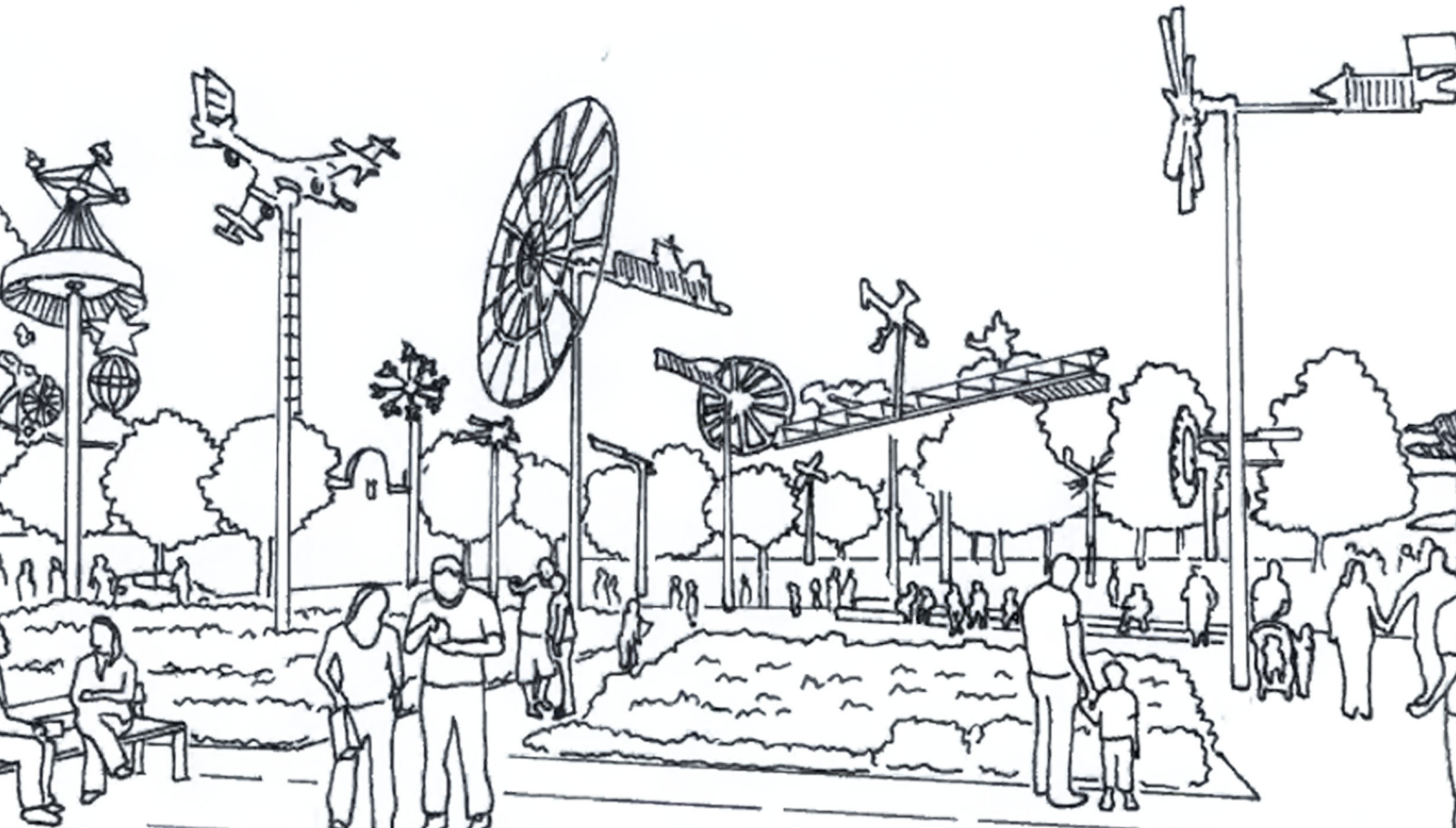


Planning for the New Economy



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Features

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Planning for Inclusive Prosperity: Lessons from the North Carolina Experience

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We present North Carolina as a working laboratory for agency within a new political economy. North Carolina has gone through a significant political transformation in recent years, threatening key institutions and channels for promoting inclusive forms for economic development. But this shift has not meant a wholesale loss or retreat of progressive actors and actions. Progress is still being made by planners and practitioners, though often in new forms and through alternative channels and partnerships. This paper presents three examples of continued efforts by planners to promote living wage standards, extend job-centered training opportunities, and upskill and upgrade legacy industries. It demonstrates the ways that planners can redirect policy goals and collectively articulate a vision of a more equitable form of economic development.

The sluggish U.S. labor market recovery—and the growing disconnect between productivity and wage growth—has necessitated a search for a new national economic paradigm. An emergent concept is that of inclusive prosperity, which seeks to capture and strengthen policy tools for pulling up those at the lower economic echelons of our society. Advocates for inclusive prosperity include the Center for American Progress (CAP), a progressive think-tank that published a recent report by the Commission on Inclusive Prosperity, a group co-chaired by former US Secretary of the Treasury Larry Summers. The CAP report calls for well-established policy targets: for example, improvements to public and STEM education and promotion of greater college attainment. It also outlines a more ambitious federal policy agenda that establishes a significantly greater role for government intervention in the private sphere. This includes a call to increase the federally mandated minimum wage and enforce stronger workplace protections and worker rights—but equally, includes concurrent steps designed to strengthen supports for process and product innovation through targeted industrial policy.

At its heart, inclusive prosperity captures a growing recognition among mainstream economists that high levels of inequality are detrimental for continued national growth and productivity. It also reflects an ideological shift away from traditional free-market principles, which presumes prosperity automatically flows from business growth and development. In its current iteration, inclusive prosperity is a much welcomed platform for repositioning government as a more central player in market formation

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and development—this includes support for interventions that are designed to shape and guide business principals and decisions. But with this pro-government stance also comes an opportunity for us to better position the work of local economic development practitioners and especially those linked to the profession of city and regional planning. Inclusive prosperity is akin to what we practice and promote in the field of economic development planning. Beyond making the rhetorical connection however, we believe there is an opportunity for local practitioners, including planners, to step out from the shadows and shine a brighter spotlight on the existing contribution of our profession to strategies of inclusion. And building from this, we seek to elevate planners, broadly defined, as crucial actors in framing and reframing a new national policy agenda.

Planning scholars across all specializations, including contributors to foundational theories of planning, have long pushed cities and regions to adopt strategies of greater inclusion—think advocacy and equity planning in the 1970s and 80s. Concepts around inclusion, justice, and equity abound and are commonplace in planning discourse and debate. These concepts are also integrated into norms of professional ethics and are incorporated into the official mission of the American Planning Association. Additionally, local practitioners, including those with planning backgrounds, have helped move this agenda forward through daily practice. They are at the heart of planning efforts to promote affordable housing, transit-oriented development and job-centered approaches to economic revitalization. As this suggests, planners—both within the academy and through their continued work in cities and communities—are not just positioned to change gears and implement a new national agenda of inclusion. They are already at the frontier, establishing themselves as pioneers in strategy implementation and are making progress on many fronts through decades of tireless work and advocacy.

But planning has more to offer than touting an existing commitment to inclusion. Lessons can also be drawn from earlier planning missteps and mistakes. For example, planners and related practitioners have learned over the decades to move away from more technocratic models that impose solutions from above to more participatory approaches that ensure members of marginalized and at-risk groups are heavily involved in problem framing and resolution. Equally, experiments in local and regional planning help shed light on innovative approaches to introducing policy change within deeply divided political environments. Planners are especially well positioned for navigating partisan barriers. They are not constrained to working within the confines of government agencies. Rather they act within and move through multiple institutional spaces—in some cases as founders, staff, or consultants for non-profits, universities, and for-profit organizations and initiatives. This opens up the possibility for creative partnering that transcends traditional organizational and even political boundaries—partnerships that can also be issue-oriented and thus bi-partisan in form. As such, planning offers insights for how to address deep economic and labor market disparities, even during times of political stalemate at the federal and sub-national level.

North Carolina as Planning Laboratory

We present North Carolina as a working laboratory for agency within a new political economy. The state of North Carolina has gone through a significant political transformation in recent years, shifting away from its historic progressive roots. Admittedly, North Carolina's progressive past has its own limits and mostly came in the form of business progressivism, which in the U.S. South is often accompanied with state-mandated policies to minimize labor union representation and worker voice. But still, past administrations and elected officials in North Carolina demonstrated a strong commitment to institution building as a means to promote broadly-shared prosperity. Previous administrations strongly promoted public and higher education and made substantial investments to extend pathways into meaningful careers through a robust and much-praised community college system.

The state government also positioned North Carolina as an institutional pioneer in economic development. In the mid-1950s, the State, in partnership with prominent business and university leaders, worked to create the Research Triangle Park. In the 1980s, the State created and funded the nation's first economic development agency in biosciences and at a time when only one biotechnology firm resided in the state. The Biotech Center, as it is now called, was itself one of three related actions undertaken by the North Carolina Board of Science and Technology in 1981, including forming the Microelectronics Center of North Carolina and School of Science and Math, a prestigious public high school. These forward-thinking actions have in turn inspired other institutional actions and sector-based initiatives to take hold. Admittedly these efforts have disproportionately benefited urban residents in our state. Here too, the state has attempted to diffuse these gains—past recipients of state funding included the Rural Economic Development Center and a number of other state-supported institutions targeting underserved populations and impoverished rural communities.

Under new political leadership, the fate of this institutional infrastructure remains unclear. Dozens of economic development institutions have been disbanded or presently struggle in the face of budget constraints. Steps to privatize key divisions of the state Department of Commerce have raised timely questions about potential conflicts of interests and concerns about the ability of practitioners to continue to enact smart forms of economic development. Additionally, legislative actions have been introduced which undermine local governments' ability to regulate economic activities.

While this shift represents an ideological and political

U-turn for North Carolina, it has not meant a wholesale loss or retreat of progressive actors and actions. Progress is still being made to address the underlying causes of inequality and poverty, though often in new forms and through alternative channels. This suggests room for agency through which practitioners involved in economic development planning can redirect policy goals. As educators and scholars in planning, we have not simply observed these strategies from afar but have participated in their development through our applied research and our work with students and graduates. We turn next to three examples from that work with the goal of motivating continued action in North Carolina and beyond.

Moving Beyond a Low-Wage Economy: The Prospects for Raising Labor Standards in NC

While the post-Great Recession recovery is finally making headway in terms of employment growth—with 8.45 million jobs created since the 2009—the nature of economic growth over this period has largely been a continuation of the type of bifurcated growth that occurred over the previous two decades. Specifically, job growth has occurred in a limited set of high-wage, high-technology industries such as professional and technical services, but the labor market is also creating a much larger number of jobs in low-wage, service sector industries such as restaurants (with an average wage of $274 per week) and retail ($496). With opportunities in the middle increasingly scarce, this growth drives income inequality higher (NELP, 2012).

Despite the growing concern for rising income inequality among national policymakers and new rhetoric about inequality creeping into the policy discourse from Democrats and Republicans, no major pieces of legislation, new policy initiatives, or tax reforms have been enacted at the Federal level. In response to the stalemate in Washington, state legislatures and local city council chambers have pushed ahead with a policy agenda to directly intervene in the labor market in order to raise labor standards and ultimately seek to ameliorate wage inequality. As of 2015, 29 states have a minimum wage higher than the federal level of $7.25, and 14 of them passed bills or ballot initiatives raising the minimum wage in the last year. The lists of states enacting higher minimum wage laws is not limited to the traditional "blue states" on the coasts, as raises were passed in Nebraska, Arkansas, and South Dakota.

Beyond these state actions, local governments have pressed the case for higher labor standards, some even meeting the call for a $15 minimum wage made by a national fast-food worker organizing campaign. Although, San Francisco, Santa Fe, and Washington D.C. were early adopters of city-wide minimum wage laws in the early 2000s, the current trend increased dramatically in breadth and depth after the small city of SeaTac—near Seattle's airport—set its minimum to $15. Today, 14 major cities and counties have passed minimum wage laws that apply to all private sector employers with a range of pay rates well above the state or federal levels and approaching $15 per hour over a period of years (Dube, 2015). These laws, while controversial and opposed by some business leaders, have the potential both to improve the lives of large segments of the low-wage workforce and directly ameliorate the problem of wage inequality from below. For example, there is a proposal in Los Angeles to increase the minimum wage to $13.25 per hour by 2016. Researchers at UC Berkeley estimated that over 567,000 residents would see a wage increase, totaling $1.8 billion in additional spending power across the City (Reich, Jacobs, Bernhardt, & Perry, 2014). In addition, we can look to how San Francisco's comprehensive set of labor standards—which includes not only a minimum wage that has been indexed to inflations since 2004, but also health-care spending mandates and paid sick leave—have impacted the relative wage growth of low wage workers. Between 1996 and 2011, wage growth in the restaurant sector (which is the most intensive user of minimum wage workers) was 30.6 percent, while total private sector wages grew by 17.7 percent.

Despite the 'rescaling' (Brenner, 2004; Lester, 2009) of labor standards regulation—from the Federal to local scales—North Carolina has recently taken steps to reverse this trend. Specifically, the State Legislature passed HB74 ("The Regulatory Reform Act of 2013"), which places limits on the ability of local governments to enact living wage mandates on private sector firms that provide contracted services. As a result of this change, Durham County recently dropped its contractor living wage provision. Despite the continued popularity of high labor standards regulation among North Carolina citizens, the current political environment in Raleigh does not seem hospitable to a state-level minimum wage increase in the near future.

Does this mean that efforts to improve wages and working conditions for the estimated 31 percent of workers in North Carolina engaged in low wage work will remain stalled? Not necessarily. Civic leaders, labor advocates and local business owners continue to press for living wage standards through voluntary living wage certification programs. This model seeks to publically recognize businesses that agree to pay their workers a living wage (set to the local cost of living) and aims to raise standards by encouraging consumers to patronize businesses that are certified as living wage employers. The most extensive example to date in North Carolina is Ashville's Living Wage Certification program. Started in 2008 by the non-profit organization Just Economics, the program now lists over 300 businesses as certified living wage employers in and around the City of Asheville. These employers must pay at least $12.50 per hour and represent a variety of industrial sectors including restaurants, retail, construction, and manufacturing. Recently, a group of restaurants in Durham agreed to join the Durham Living Wage certification program—a project that started in

2014 by the Durham People's Alliance—and will pay their workers approximately 70 percent more than the prevailing federal minimum wage of $7.25 per hour. In Durham this emerging program now covers 42 employers and 757 workers. Two participating firms, Monuts and FirstHand Foods, were founded by graduates of the UNC-Chapel Hill DCRP master's program.

While these voluntary efforts are impressive and have the potential to help workers who are covered by the program, the number of workers affected still remains small in comparison to the scale of the problem of low-wage work. In the fall of 2014, a group of DCRP masters students undertook a semester-long project to document the state of low wage work in North Carolina and to estimate the impact of potentially raising the minimum wage in the State. The most likely avenue for this would be at the Federal level. According the State of Low Wage North Carolina (www.lowwagenc.org), approximately 723,500 people would be impacted by increasing the minimum wage to $10.10 per hour. These individuals include all workers currently earning between $7.25 and $10.10 per hour and their dependents, as well as those slightly above $10.10 who would receive raises based on a "ripple effect."

Thus, there is still a lot of work to be done in North Carolina to help the lowest earning workers achieve economic stability and family security. While voluntary certification programs are essential in the current political climate, their impact is perhaps most important from a rhetorical rather than material point of view. As Lester (2014) points out, keeping the issue of living wages alive in state and local policy discourses can be essential to any future legislative agenda that focuses on raising labor standards.

Next Generation Workforce Strategies

Wage increases benefit not only working families but also the businesses that employ them. As one example, wage increases have recently been proposed as a solution to industry skill shortages: the assumption is that increased wages will motivate skilled, yet underemployed workers to seek out and even relocate for better paying jobs for which they are already well qualified.

But simply raising wages to resolve immediate industry skill needs ignores an opportunity to promote inclusive prosperity through intentional strategies that also influence who gets access to good paying jobs that facilitate career advancement through work-based training and skill development. Rather than assuming an external market for skill—one in which businesses simply buy

and trade skill on the open market—workforce strategies can play a role in getting employers to contribute to and invest more fully in employee upskilling, in turn opening doors for individuals that might not have the complete spectrum of required skills and experiences at the time of hiring. In essence, these interventions help shift some of the responsibility for skill development back onto employer by helping them realize that skill is a collective and constructed resource that requires their on-going investment and support.

Work by Nichola Lowe has examined this labor market challenge in the context of U.S. manufacturing and through a close study of institutions that position themselves as workforce intermediaries (Lowe 2015). Workforce intermediaries are dual-customer, insofar as they respond to the needs of both employers and job seekers. But they use their role in local and regional labor markets to do much more than make a good initial match. Ultimately, they position themselves to influence labor market dynamics within and outside the firm, by shaping employer expectations and practices around skill and with the goal of extending employment opportunities for disadvantaged and underserved populations.

In North Carolina we find strong evidence of workforce intermediation. One example is in biomanufacturing, where a network of state-sponsored community college and workforce development institutions have intervened to help firms realize they can relax initial hiring requirements and, in the process, broaden their eligible hiring pool (Lowe, 2007; Lowe, Goldstein and Donegan, 2011). Initially focused on workers displaced from traditional manufacturing industries, strategies of intermediation in biomanufacturing also benefit newer labor market entrants by demonstrating the value of non-traditional credentials and transferable qualifications such as military experience. But equally, these intermediaries help firms strengthen their own internal training programs, somewhat paradoxically by externalizing more standard training protocols. In essence, they create general-use training modules and certificates, thereby allowing employers to invest more heavily in firm-specific training and building in-house expertise.

Unfortunately, budget cuts and organizational changes have started to chip away at some of this institutional infrastructure. Most notably, some state-sponsored training institutions that once used their position to advocate on behalf of job seekers have moved toward more exclusionary models that cater narrowly to the needs of employers. This change was introduced in response to state withdrawal of essential funding, in turn forcing these institutions to raise money through the collection of user fees from private business. In exchange, employers expect training for their incumbent workforce or for individuals they have already hired through other channels, including private staffing agencies.

With this emergent challenge also comes an interesting workaround—one that suggests ways that planners and related practitioners can respond to hardening (and often politically motivated) budget constraints. Staff and trainers that long valued their dual role in advocating on behalf of disadvantaged job seekers are finding new channels for continuing to play that role. One staff member moved permanently into a private sector job, using his position within a prominent biomanufacturing firm to continue to influence industry hiring decisions. Others have strengthened their informal networks within the private sector, most notably drawing on networks of former trainees and program alumni to help them advocate on behalf of newer generations and graduates. This network strategy has been especially effective in light of changing organizational approaches to human resource management. In essence, these alumni networks act to maintain and deepen organizational awareness of the value of these institutional supports, especially during periods of staff turnover or outsourcing of human resource functions.

These adaptive strategies are not simply moving in one direction—that is to say, from the public to the private sphere. It is therefore wrong to conclude from this one example that government support for workforce development is no longer needed. In North Carolina we are also observing counterexamples where employer-driven solutions are rescaled and institutionalized through government-sponsored programs and initiatives. A great example is that of Apprenticeship 2000, an innovative apprenticeship program that was started in the mid-1990s by a half dozen small and medium-sized manufacturers—the vast majority (in fact all but one) had European roots and thus, prior experience with formal apprenticeship models. In the past few years, a growing network of government sponsored agencies has stepped in, including the North Carolina Department of Commerce, the Community College System, and even county-level school districts, to replicate the Apprenticeship 2000 model and with the goal of creating rewarding careers in advanced manufacturing for more North Carolinia youth. A key focus involves helping non-European firms understand the value of this model for long term productivity growth and innovation.

Considerable investment by firms is essential for apprenticeship success—on average, Apprenticeship 2000 members invest $150,000 per apprentice. But institutional actors pushing to diffuse the model are also cognizant of the need for government involvement and financing to overcome initial reservation by firms to participate. As the Apprenticeship 2000 case illustrates, it takes time for firms to realize the full benefits of this investment—at the beginning it can also be very hard to recruit young apprentices as there are no others ahead of them to illuminate career development potential. Yet a virtuous cycle can take hold once that threshold is crossed that can also propel firms to invest in apprentices during periods of economic downturn. As such, getting this model to initially stick requires considerable resolve, resources, and public-sector buy-in.

With that in mind, a new economic development partnership has recently been formed by NC Commerce and the state's community college and University of North Carolina systems to extend the model to high-growth sectors, including healthcare and information technology. That effort seeks to reinforce North Carolina's national position as a pioneer in next generation apprenticeships. And as such, it provides another great example of adaptive strategies of inclusion in North Carolina's ever changing political economy.

Institutional Change and the Resurgence of Traditional Sectors

A third example of progress towards shared prosperity are institutional shifts that help rebuild, restructure, and revitalize segments of North Carolina's old industries: furniture, textiles, machining, and agriculture. This involves recognizing and valuing the rise of sunrise segments in the so-called "sunset" of traditional industries that have provided millions of North Carolinians with pathways to the middle class for over a century. Their geographical spread across the state – well beyond the Research Triangle Park and the Charlotte-Wilmington metropolitan belts—means that growth in these sectors can also spread good paying jobs around the state. Despite three decades of attrition, there is plenty of evidence not only of life, but of dynamism in these sectors. Meenu Tewari's research (2004, 2005, 2012) shows evidence of a robust rise (and resilience) of North Carolina's hosiery and non-woven clusters in the textile segment; the rapid growth and diversification of the upholstered and high-end custom-designed furniture segments – including the recent re-shoring of portions of the case goods sector that had moved overseas in the late 1990s and early 2000s; rapid transformation and restructuring of the state's post-tobacco agrarian economy with flourishing vineyards; a dynamic local brewery industry; and a steadily deepening and vibrant local foods economy.

A central driver of this new growth in old economy sectors has been the embedded and endogenous emergence of new institutional arrangements. These institutions have helped foster sectoral and cross-sectoral collective action involving private firms, universities, community colleges, industry associations, progressive local governments, workers, institutions, and intermediaries. The results of these efforts have helped shape something of a shared industrial or "institutional commons" that multiple actors can potentially draw on across local scales and geographies. We illustrate this dynamic using North Carolina's furniture industry as an example.

Between 1992 and 2012, North Carolina lost 56 percent of its furniture employment and roughly 22 percent of its establishments in the sector (BLS). In 343 reported closings in the furniture industry documented by the NC department of Commerce from 1989 through May 2013, 35,132 workers were affected (laid off) (Department of Commerce) as furniture imports surged. Upon closer examination, however, developments in the furniture industry tell a more complex story that conflicts with expectations of a future without furniture. In the midst of an aggregate decline, some firms and workers are finding ways to stay competitive, often with the help of supporting institutions and strategic partnerships. Even as imports ballooned, furniture exports from North Carolina have grown sharply from a negligible amount in 1990 to $150 million in 2002 and then doubling to $300 million in 2012. Upholstered furniture has held its own and grown in NC as firms restructured toward custom made, quick turnaround high end furniture; While some core manufacturing tasks in the case goods sector have shrunk, other better paying jobs have grown, such as in design, wholesaling, logistics and distribution. Meanwhile, High Point Market, the region's flagship distribution platform, withstood a strong challenge from Las Vegas and has innovated to better anchor a resurgent furniture industry in more effective ways; and finally in the post-recession period there is growing evidence of re-shoring: several firms that outsourced production to Asia are bringing manufacturing back home.

Many leading furniture companies have remained competitive and created new employment opportunities in the state by moving into downstream links in the value chain, such as retail and design. These links are not only higher value adding than some traditional furniture manufacturing segments, but also better paying. Training and educational institutions, such as High Point University, have supported the furniture industry's movement into retail and design by modifying their curriculum to address new skill demands from companies in the region. The University's Department of Home Furnishings has been training students for marketing and management positions with home furnishings manufacturers, suppliers and retailers for almost 30 years. Recently, however, the department has been building a design component into their curriculum, which included creating an Interior Design major. According to Dr. Bennington, the department's chairman, one of the growing needs of the furniture industry is trained merchandising executives who better understand the nuances of design and also have skills to put together a product line – this involves courses in marketing, merchandising, and design.

Similarly, Rockingham Community College has introduced courses to help support the transition of furniture manufacturers into the high-end custom furniture niche by teaching advanced woodworking and design skills to students earning associates degrees and certificates in fine woodworking. These courses prepare them to design, build, and market customized products. Graduates of the program have gone on to establish their own business or find work in high-end custom furniture shops.

Upgrading worker skills alone cannot create higher sales for companies or more jobs for local residents unless there are industrial and institutional spaces for the

graduates to employ their skills. The region's furniture manufacturing companies that have survived have been those are continually striving to not only restructure their organizational arrangements (Hickory Chair's Kaizen program) and upgrade the quality of their product lines, but also develop new markets for those products. In one of the most striking examples of collective action, six competing manufacturers – all of them high end custom furniture shops in North Carolina – entered into a strategic partnership in 2008 to facilitate these market development efforts. They came together to form the American Furniture Exporters (AFE) partnership, a consortium to find a cost effective way to develop overseas markets for their products and increase their exports.

Their strategy is based on using coordinated logistics and joint marketing to reduce costs for customers while increasing the convenience of shopping through AFE. For example, AFE coordinates orders and shipments with a single freight-forwarder and distribution firm so that shipping and credit instruments are negotiated under one umbrella. Similarly, the joint marketing effort involves matching international buyers to AFE exporters best able to serve their needs. This cooperative arrangement between companies who would otherwise be competing for customers has been supported by the Center for Emerging Manufacturing Solutions at Catawba Valley Community College, which pioneered these arrangements for the Hosiery Industry and has organized many successful joint marketing efforts with firms in other sectors – an excellent example of cross-industry institutional spillovers and learning (Willis, 2005).

Finally, the High Point Market, which was under stress in the early 2000s when North Carolina furniture was experiencing its sharpest declines, reinvented itself in 2005 most significantly by adding a "Pre-Market" as an opportunity for buyers to view market-ready furniture a week before the formal High Point Market event begins. In an ironic twist of fate, this innovation was led by Kevin O'Connor, the CEO of Samson Marketing, a Chinese company that owns the Craftmaster, Legacy Classic, Pennsylvania House, and Universal brands. The Pre-Market has been a success – it has helped increase sales and build loyal networks of buyers and suppliers, and has accompanied the re-shoring that is gaining steam: not only of American firms that took parts of their supply chain overseas (La-Z-Boy, Stanley, Broyhill and so on), but also Chinese firms and importers that are seeking a foothold in the U.S.

Of course, not all experiments have succeeded – as illustrated by Stanley Furniture Company's closing of its Robbinsville plant in Graham County in 2014 – a plant where it had brought back children's furniture manufacturing from China in the last few years. Still, these efforts demonstrate not just individual intentions, but collective and more collaborative institutional supports and innovations that leave a high-water mark of what can be accomplished when a diverse set of actors come together to craft solutions demonstrating the power of agency and collective action in the face of crises and economic stress.

Reflective Conclusions

The Great Recession has left an indelible mark on the economy of this nation—a lasting reminder of economic struggle that affects millions of individuals and families in the form of job loss, underemployment, and income insecurity. Yet, in the midst of this deep and protracted economic crisis comes an unexpected silver lining. The Great Recession has moved once buried policy discussions of income inequality and the need for strategies of socio-economic inclusion to the national fore. No longer dismissed as a marginal debate, concerns over high levels of income inequality have also emerged from mainstream policy circles—even traditional economists have raised the alarm, noting the detrimental effects of income inequality on national productivity and growth.

But naming inequality as a significant national policy problem is not the same as solving it. Federal level action has stalled in the face of aggressive partisan opposition. A more progressive federal tax code remains a distant dream. So, too, are more interventionist federal policies designed to influence wage-setting standards and improve employment practices at the establishment level. In this divisive policy environment, other channels can be explored to move the progressive agenda forward. And it is here that the planning profession is especially well suited.

As our three North Carolina examples suggest, there remains a critical role for both government and civic sector intervention in addressing the problem of inequality. Specifically, what we learn from these examples is that agency matters, whether it comes from non-profits launching a voluntary living wage certification program, a state-funded agency like the North Carolina Biotech Center, a University-based program that provides training and support for a key export industry, or progressive businesses. These examples also illustrate that planners are well equipped to traverse this institutional landscape, leveraging opportunities for progressive action. At this critical juncture, Carolina planners and related practitioners must find ways to promote inclusive prosperity even if that means exploring alternative, temporal channels for advocacy and change. Still, the real challenge for planners is drawing connections between these various efforts in order to collectively articulate a vision of a more equitable form of economic development—and in the process, influence public opinion and inspire collective action through accumulated change.

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See lowwagenc.org for full report.