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Community Degradation in Post-Industrial America

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Community Degradation in Post-Industrial America

Abstract

In the summers of 2016 and 2017 I travelled to two distinctive places in America in a mission to better understand the issues which most affected people there. The first of the two locations was Kansas, where I traversed its length on a bicycle, stopping along the way to meet people in the rural communities and discuss with them the hardships that they face on a number of fronts. The second location was Flint, Michigan, where I was drawn, three years after the water crisis, to learn how its effects have impacted the residents. Having conducted observational, first-hand research of both of these very different places, there were common telling signs that indicated decline from a socio-economic perspective. From a critically observational lens when you regularly witness crumbling old houses, it doesn't take a scientist to figure out that there is some larger force at play contributing to the degradation. Upon further research into the issues I was introduced to in person, I noticed that there seemed to be constants in the causes of both cases of decline. Not only did it become clear that similar causal factors were present in the socio-economic trials of each of these places, but indeed, many marginalized communities across the country share these struggles.

Cover Page Footnote

The faculty mentor for this Honors project was Professor Matthew Schmeer, English.

In the summers of 2016 and 2017 I travelled to two distinctive places in America in a mission to better understand the issues which most affected people there. The first of the two locations was Kansas, where I traversed its length on a bicycle, stopping along the way to meet people in the rural communities and discuss with them the hardships that they face on a number of fronts. The second location was Flint, Michigan, where I was drawn, three years after the water crisis, to learn how its effects have impacted the residents. Having conducted observational, first-hand research of both of these very different places, there were common telling signs that indicated decline from a socio-economic perspective. From a critically observational lens when you regularly witness crumbling old houses, it doesn't take a scientist to figure out that there is some larger force at play contributing to the degradation. Upon further research into the issues I was introduced to in person, I noticed that there seemed to be constants in the causes of both cases of decline. Not only did it become clear that similar causal factors were present in the socio-economic trials of each of these places, but indeed, many marginalized communities across the country share these struggles.

Over the past four decades, a number of changes in the social structure and economic infrastructure of the United States have pushed it closer to a culmination of issues which are implicit of societal decline. While this is a large claim, and one which has been made across the ages utilizing a variety of scapegoats, this particular brand of societal decline is specific to the post-industrial United States surrounding the turn of the millennium. Considering the rise of poverty in America, along with the prospect of increasingly urgent environmental issues, it appears we as a society are on a collision

course toward massive public health dangers, which will have the greatest effect on poor and marginalized communities across America.

The marking point for the beginning of this rapid economic shift would be the 1980's Reagan era, which was when we as a modern, global superpower entered a policy trend of highly unregulated free trade. This is not to say that the blame is to be completely placed on any one policy or individual, but only as a widely supported fact that the Reagan era serves as a historic marking post to signal the start of the subsequent wage stagnation and rising poverty that has been constant ever since (Chetty 2). During that time, at the end of the 20th Century, policies were put in place which lent themselves toward the re-industrialization of America. Their intentions, were to uphold the trajectory of what is traditionally seen as economic growth, based on production and consumption. These policies have remained alive to some degree over the administrations of the past four decades, and has gained popularity in the current Trump administration. In light of the current state of the industrial economy, which is rapidly losing its need for unskilled workers, re-industrialization is a retrogressive reaction to the changing demands of the economy on a global, national, and community scale, highlighting the contradiction between conventional economic growth, and the reality of societal decline and its correlating processes.

This uncontrollable corporate power teamed with the explosion in mechanization technologies which exponentially increase production, while simultaneously requiring less manpower, have triggered irreversible shifts in the foundation of the American Economy (Samuelson). In contemporary times, we see the developed world largely turning away from an economy (and by extension, society) that relies primarily upon

production and industry in order to ensure the functionality of its systems. Necessarily, a transition away from an antiquated economic mode of operation is going to open new challenges and unanswered questions on how best to adapt and continue economic growth. However, the insufficiencies of our collective response in the United States, as well as the top-down political response, have transformed this natural, historic period of transition into one of societal decline. The movement away from an Industrial economy, while not the direct causal factor of the decline and its relevant processes, is what these complexes of issues primarily compounded from. While these processes: such as aging infrastructure, marginalization of communities, and lack of access to public health resources at large existed before the post-industrial era, their severity was accelerated by the transition into this period of history.

Over the past four decades, while economic productivity has continued to rise sharply, average American household income per GDP has been stagnant (BLS). This is while the cost of almost every commodity has risen steadily, and the consequence has been an increase in wealth gap and social stratification (BEA). Social mobility correlates strongly to personal capital, so subsequently, individuals belonging to marginal groups being most heavily impacted by these economic issues are experiencing decreasing social mobility. The process of groups being cemented into their respective positions of society is called stratification. Not only does social stratification rob communities of the economic assets they need in order to maintain a healthy community, but it also results in a lack of political power, and an inability to advocate for their own issues through the democratic system.

The span of this decline, while being confined mostly to marginalized communities, is still considerably large and effects a diverse range of Americans by both geographical and ethnic standards. For example, two specific cases of affected regions, which may seem to stand in stark contrast with one another demographically, are Flint, Michigan, and rural Kansas. While the former stands as a more microcosmic sample as compared to the latter, observing and analyzing the constants in these two models can help in coming to an understanding of the broader problems that are faced by the United States at this particular moment in history. The shared causal factors of community degradation in post industrial America can be categorized into the following four points: unemployment, loss of community assets, supply-side economics, and aging infrastructure.

Driven by increasingly mechanized industrial and agricultural operations (and, to a lesser degree, outsourcing), we have seen the increase in unemployment within certain economic sectors, particularly since the recession. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), between the years 2006 and 2016, over eighteen million jobs have been lost in the manufacturing sector alone, with a projected fall of about seven hundred and fifty thousand more to occur over the course of the next decade. According to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), manufacturing is more essential to the rural economy than it is to the urban economy. In these areas, between the years 2001 and 2015, there has been a reported loss in every subsector with the sole exception of tobacco and beverage production. Some industries dropped in employment as much as sixty percent (USDA). What's more, unemployment in the private agriculture sector is unhealthily high at 7.2 and is coupled with a comorbid steady loss of self-

employed agriculture jobs (BLS). Just a year prior, during the end of the drought which covered much of the western states, this number was as high as 9.5, higher than any other sector. This puts together a grim picture for the socioeconomic situation of rural America, which is implicative of the overall state of marginalized communities in the United States.

Due to a lack of capital in communities most dramatically affected by these economic changes, there often follows a subsequent loss in community assets, which both contributes to their economic devaluation and sets into effect a chain reaction that leads to neighborhood degradation. The primary cause of the degradation of communities is the process by which it loses capital. Much of this process of is driven by a lack of faith in a communities ability to function. This is exemplified by a lack of communitarian participation, private investment, and public funding. Through a decrease in investment in the very things that a community needs in order to maintain a fair degree of economic autonomy, and to promote decent standards of living for the individuals within it, the fabric of these towns and neighborhoods begins to corrode. When speaking of loss of capital in relation to a specific populated area, it is often difficult to avoid cyclical language, as the different elements which interplay to create the compounding problem are so complex that the causes are often the same as the consequences (Grigsby 41). As Grigsby states in his essay *Dynamics of Neighborhood Change and Decline*:

"It may seem immaterial to ask whether neighborhoods deteriorate as a consequence of succession or whether they experience succession as a consequence of deterioration... A popular question helps to illustrate the possibilities: Have central cities declined because an increasing proportion of middle-class

families have opted for the suburbs, or have these families chosen the suburbs because of worsening central-city conditions? It is easy and perhaps to some degree correct to answer, 'A little of both.'"

(Grigsby 45)

It is, however, apparent that once the cycle of degradation has begun, effects begin to compound quickly. There is typically both a response from the private and public-sector economies of areas suffering from these problems. On one hand, businesses find it difficult to stay open in areas with such little economic activity (Kato). On the other hand, a decrease in tax money results in a loss of public services, which can result in decreased infrastructure maintenance, substandard public health services (such as trash collection and sewage lines), and a decrease in the quality of education (Grigsby 16). The physical and economic degradation of neighborhoods increases social stratification, and therefore the amount of people susceptible to the 21st century American decline, by virtue that it undermines the structures which foster social mobility. According to a comprehensive study conducted by the National Bureau of Economic Research, two of the five most strongly determinant factors of the social mobility of a given location are proximity to quality public education, and social capital (or community involvement).

Often fueled by claims that government regulation is somehow impeding economic growth, a common rhetorical discourse used—particularly by Republican lawmakers—over the past three decades, is that giving tax cuts to big businesses will create jobs. This idea that government is the sole problem standing in the way of development was popularized by Ronald Reagan in the 1980's (Nutting). However, more recently this campaign pitch has been made by politicians, most notably Donald

Trump, who claim that deregulation is the key to bringing back jobs which have been lost in sectors such as manufacturing and mining. The major fallacy in this claim is that it relies on the assumption that the majority of these jobs have been lost to outsourcing to more competitive, foreign markets. However, the reality is that the primary reason for employment reduction in these industries is the rise in mechanization, and these are jobs that will probably never be recovered (Samuelson). Paradoxically, many of the policy issues which are contributing factors to this societal decline are currently being utilized by divisive politicians in an attempt to sway public opinion in their favor by appealing to their fears of decreased semi-skilled job options, thus opening the doors for a resurgence in an unregulated era, which will in turn exacerbate the issues at hand. This is an odious political practice which not only benefits the industries which are key culprits of this collapse, but also strings vulnerable people along with false promises of jobs that will never viably return to the market.

The consequences of these economic decisions are far reaching and dangerous. In both Kansas and Michigan, two states where corporate tax cuts have been most heavily implemented by Republican-dominated legislatures and their gubernatorial counterparts, spending has been drastically cut in areas such as education, infrastructure, and mental health services. In both states, supply side economics also comes at the expense of water resources, where lack of environmental regulation allows private industries to pump millions, even billions, of gallons of water every day.

Anywhere where there is outdated water infrastructure, there is a significantly higher risk for public health disasters such as the one which occurred in Flint (Gaskin). This list is increasing very steadily, due to the fact that much of America's underground

piping is nearing, or has already reached, the date by which it ought to be replaced (Buckley). The cost of making these updates and repairs would be difficult to estimate; however, the societal cost of the infrastructural ruptures and leaks, which have occurred has risen sharply over the past seven years, is projected to reach about 150,000,000,000 by the end of the decade (Buckley). According to Vic Montgomery, water researcher and overseer of numerous water infrastructure installation projects in the Northeast Kansas District, constant inspection and regulation is necessary for old pipes. Water pH, levels of microbes, mineral content, temperature, and flow speed are just some of the factors that need to be constantly examined in order to maintain proper integrity of the infrastructure. If these regulations aren't met, it leads to environmental and public health consequences, potentially leading to the level of a public health state of emergency, such as in Flint (Montgomery).

The factors that cause our own economic infrastructure to turn against the people and damage their health are rooted in degradation of the economic and political strength of a community. It is the marginalization of these communities which strips away their ability to advocate for the issues that would affect their health most directly. In order to be pushed to the margin, towns and communities first experience economic difficulty, which leads to a politicized, social inequality as lawmakers and rhetoricians first appeal to their fears and desires in order to implement policies which are exploitative by nature. In Kansas, this has occurred dramatically through the implementation of financially crippling policies, which are largely supported by the masses who are desperate in the faces of their disappearing way of life and economic security.

Throughout Kansas, as with much of rural America, the trend is for small towns to be in a state of decline. As younger generations find there are more job opportunities in larger population centers, people migrate in that direction (USDA 2). However, the shrinking of rural communities is not only in population, but also in economic assets. Due to the negative growth of manufacturing jobs in these rural areas (USDA 4), in which this is often the only viable employment option, the closure and downsizing of industrial operations often triggers a chain reaction of negative economic consequences. Intuitively, unemployment is a causal factor of emigration, and as the spending power of a community decreases, its local businesses suffer and often close. When a community loses its grocery store, the lack of fresh produce not only poses health issues for the inhabitants, but it triggers a greater incentive to leave. As Peter Lawrence, artist and resident of Lucas, Kansas, said to me: "When a grocery store closes down, it usually means it's the beginning of the end for small towns like these." According to a study conducted by the University of Chicago, considerably over half of Kansas counties meet the requirements of being a food desert. In degradative cycles like these, not only do private assets suffer, but public ones, such as post offices, schools, and parks. Many times, when bicycling through these communities, I would see beautiful old brick school houses, abandoned and empty with broken windows. Often children need to bus up to two hours in order to get to school, and the quality of schools there, due to lack of funding and the stressed conditions, lead to a substandard educational environment.

Educational budget cuts are a trademark of the infamous Brownback era policy changes. He has left a legacy of many actions which defy common sense and

contribute to the social stratification in Kansas. Kansas currently has some of the lowest corporate taxes of almost any state in the union, and the effects of this have been wide reaching; job growth dropped to over five percent less than the national average, money was allocated away from unfinished highway restoration projects, and education funding was rated unconstitutionally low (Leachman). The justification behind these policies is that through creating an economy that benefits business, citizens will financially benefit in the form of jobs and increased wages. Governor Brownback rhetorically stated that "it will act as a shot of adrenaline into the heart of the Kansas economy." (Weissmann) At large, the privatizing economic scheme of Brownback's Kansas has nationally been cited as a failed experiment of tax-cut politicians and has paved the way for a very difficult recovery for this economy.

One of the hidden demons within the devastated Kansas economy is that Big Agra has been virtually left to its own, and to no surprise, it is taking a huge toll on the high plains ecosystem. Agricultural producers are not required to pay any tax on their irrigation and are allowed to pump virtually unlimited amounts of water from the Ogallala Aquifer (Oden). Agricultural operations throughout the state account for 85 percent of total water usage (DWR), and amounts to a consumption of five billion gallons a day (Oden). As Professor Jeff Oden simply and effectively concluded in his lecture over Kansas water resources: "Kansas is footing the bill for a lot of our country, water-wise." According to him, some estimates state that the Ogallala Aquifer only has 25 years at its current rate of depletion before it reaches its minimum threshold, and will no longer be able to support the current rate of agricultural production, let alone facilitate growth. Additionally, this intensive irrigation also takes a toll on the streams and rivers which are

naturally abundant in the state. I witnessed the depletion first hand as I was peddling down Highway 24 between Hill City and Hoxie, Kansas. Multiple times throughout the course of that day I crossed over the South Fork Solomon River and its tributaries to find the water levels extremely low and some creek beds altogether dry. That was the summer of 2016, and the drought was still impacting much of western Kansas, leaving dry, semi-arid conditions. As climate change continues to foster desertification across much of the region, the water problems we are currently experiencing will become exacerbated (Oden). At the moment these concerns are being treated as debatable and specific to the future, however, the effects of water depletion in Kansas have already began to be felt in certain parts. If the problem is allowed to continue at the current rate, it could have economically devastating consequences on the Kansas Economy and Ecosystem, turning a decline scenario into an all-out ecosystemic collapse, reminiscent of the dust bowl of the 1930's.

In 2014, the country looked to the mainstream media as many peoples' nightmares of ecologically rooted health catastrophe came true. I am, of course, referring to the Flint water crisis. This was one of the worst cases of water contamination in the history of the United States, and its completely preventable nature shocked millions. To me, it was a warning of the urgency and seriousness of our abusive relationship with the ecosystem. Upon researching the crisis, it became ever clearer to me that our environmental and economic policies are intertwined and coming to a head.

In Flint, Michigan, we witness a very acute case of rise in unemployment, one that has made Flint one of the poorest cities in the United States in only about three

decades. With an overall unemployment rate currently at 9.5, it is down from 12 in July of 2017 (BLS). This is likely due to the FAST act initiative, a municipally organized redevelopment program of one hundred million dollars, started in response to the lead water crisis (Gaskin). Such massive unemployment came about due to changes in the automotive industry, where increasing mechanization and outsourcing led to the loss of tens of thousands of jobs. The reality was that the economy of Flint was completely dependent on companies such as GM and Buick, with 80,000 employed by GM alone before the shutdowns of the 1980's began, falling just 18,000 short of the entire current population of the city (Robinson). As a consequence of such massive levels of unemployment in a period of only several decades, other economic structures in Flint began to suffer. As an increase in poverty and vacant properties began to rise, depleting the value of formerly prosperous neighborhoods, municipal funds were also taking significant losses, resulting in the termination of thousands of public sector jobs (Gaskin).

The financial state of emergency in Flint was implemented in 2011, after massive government layoffs, cash shortages, and inability to pay public expenses (Michigan Dept. of Treasury). The emergency manager appointment legislation, spearheaded by governor Rick Snyder, gave significant executive power to whoever occupied that position, which was appointed by the governor himself, virtually allowing both state and municipal governments to bypass democratic procedures in regards to the city of Flint (Gaskin). The goal of the financial emergency manager was by any and all means to recover the city from the verge of bankruptcy. This, of course, includes measures such as raising water and energy costs while simultaneously cutting public spending. As

Jamie Gaskin, CEO of Genesee County United Way (who was a significant actor in representing NGOs on committees regarding the state of emergency) points out: "The financial state of emergency manager, who is concerned primarily with saving money, was tasked with making decisions about water rules for fifty-thousand-plus people." He also added throughout our interview that the agencies which were responsible for ensuring the water quality for the city were massively understaffed due to previous layoffs. To add to that, it had been over thirty years since preventative maintenance had been done on the water infrastructure. According to Gaskin, the appointment of emergency managers was the single most unrecognized factor in the lead up to the Flint water crisis, as it was a political tool by which the government could cut public spending and avoid repercussions of changing public opinion.

It was an attempt to save public funds that ultimately led to the water crisis which poisoned tens of thousands with lead. In 2014, the board of the Financial State of Emergency Manager decided to switch Flint's municipal water source from the Detroit water service, which took clean water from Lake Huron, to drawing from the Flint River (Carmody). However, it was well-established knowledge that the river had been contaminated with massive amounts of chemicals from a number of point and nonpoint sources dating back decades. The horrifying, condensed list of contaminants and toxic conditions include, but are not limited to, high levels of bacteria including fecal coliform, chlorine and chlorine by products such as trihalomethanes, phosphates and the subsequent algae growth (which decreases oxygen levels in the water), phenol, ammonia, arsenic, mercury, lead, toxic solvents, VOCs, and petroleum by products (Carmody). The water was so corrosive that it ended up destroying the insides of the

outdated lead infrastructure, releasing lead particulates into the tap water and contaminating over one hundred thousand people, in addition to an outbreak of Legionnaires disease caused by bacterial growth in pipes where water could "lay stagnant for up to two weeks" (Gaskin), which led to the deaths of ten others. The nightmare did not end there for the residents of Flint, Michigan. Due to the water crisis, values of already aging homes dropped to as low as two thousand dollars (Robinson), essentially stripping families of their greatest economic asset and crippling their ability to relocate. This is especially unfortunate seeing as how the water in most of these properties is still contaminated with lead. What's more, to cover the public funds for the redevelopment of the water infrastructure, water is more expensive there than in almost anywhere else in the United States (Gaskin). There have even been reported cases of residents getting evicted from their homes because they refused to pay the outrageous water bills they were charged (Robinson), and this is in a community which was already going through a financial emergency.

Here you see all four elements of the postmodern economic collapse coming to a breaking point. The Flint water crisis is a potentially common scenario of the type of public health emergencies we could be looking at if these issues are left indefinitely to a compounding deteriorative condition. The problem is not just confined to Flint. In Michigan alone, 15 out of 83 counties, including densely populated areas in Detroit, have even higher rates of lead contamination (*Detroit News*). With aging infrastructure, decreased public spending proportional to need, and recent decreases in water quality regulations, lead and copper contamination, amongst other mineral and bacterial impurities, are an impending reality to be dealt with across the United States (Buckley).

This even applies to Kansas, one of the states with the highest standards for drinking water, and ironically, one of the worst for ground water (Oden). I personally witnessed brown liquid come out of the tap of the home of a family in the crumbling old town of Waldo, Kansas. Just another instance of the four common elements of the American post-industrial collapse, this town has shrunken to a population of just thirty. As evidenced by the consistencies we see in these two vastly different regional economic systems, and cross-supported by the data that is available on the national level, it is clear that there is significant and far-reaching concern in terms of marginalized communities across America.

While the postindustrial economy of the United States is leaving many unresolved problems in its wake, the solution is not reindustrialization, nor is this even possible in the technological competitiveness of today's global economy. Looking far into the future with the assumption that this collapse scenario will not spiral out of control, the truth is perhaps optimistic. If the issues are addressed in a timely way and dealt with accordingly, a transitioning away from an economy which emphasizes industry and production might cause a revolutionary shift to a more conscious society. It is entirely possible that we are a couple of hours before the dawning of an era where education is more highly valued and sustainability is more widely put into practice; an economy weighed on the amount of capital that is retained and fostered by the community and the equity and efficiency of its systems, rather than GDP. However, these goals will never be achieved if there are not radical shifts in our political, economic, and socio-ecological structures that guide us through and out of this decline.

Community health is an increasingly urgent need to address as the onset of the twenty first century continues with the exacerbation of a wide range of symptoms, including degradation of infrastructure, lack of quality economic and educational resources, ecosystemic destruction, misinformation, and exploitation by powerful corporations. This has affected marginalized demographics most extremely (Poole 3). The keystone cause of these compounding issues is the concentration of wealth and resources away from the community. The way out of the oncoming complexes of crises which are faced by our society is to strengthen the community and its ability to function autonomously. Increased cultivation of community assets needs to be applied.

For the state, this means increasing public spending, particularly in the areas of education and public health. It is the quality of community life that ultimately leads municipalities into a cycle of waxing valuation (Grigsby 39), which will in turn both foster job growth and an increased incentive for educated youth to stay and give back to their local economies (Chetty 6). All things considered, because it is the educational institutions which play a heavy role in shaping the paradigms of its students, it is their responsibility to advocate for a more community conscious approach to their programs. In an entry in the academic journal *Preparing for Higher Education*, Trudy Bers suggests that, intuitively, community colleges have in recent years been following a trend of adapting to establish those economic ties. She explains that personnel at these types of colleges generally have stronger local connections, and more of a sense of their niche in the community, which could help them establish more firm pedagogical relationships and help guide students into the local economy. Community colleges are crucial in spearheading the movement toward a more economically and personally

integrated method of pedagogy, rather than the hands off approach which has increased in popularity over the previous decades (Clemmit 232). Educating individuals in a way that more directly connects them to their communities is a vital step in encouraging the retainment of community capital.

According to the Human Capital Theory, the purpose of education as it pertains to society as a whole is to provide necessary skills for its success, and to the individual as means of obtaining their desired positions in society (Crawford 145). This school of thought introduces people- their skills, their strengths, and their ideas- as a working part of the economy. However the common view of economics today is somewhat skewed, as value has been defined in a monetary sense rather than the direct, literal, resources that are involved in the economic processes. In a similar way many college educated adults have obscured their own economic value by competing for a limited supply of employment positions seen as viable, rather than using their unique set of skills in order to make personal, vocational contributions to the world community. James Inabinet, ecologist and founder of LaTerre Center for Integral Studies calls this “finding your niche in the human ecosystem”, and asserts that this should be the goal in educating people for a sustainable future, with healthy, functioning communities. Just like how the brain is only a component of the body, the purpose of education ought not grow away from the needs of the whole of society, or the natural result will be a deep and degradative undermining of societal health.

In terms of spending on public health, one of the most pressing issues are localized environmental problems which are inherently tied with our economic infrastructure, especially regarding water quality (Montgomery). For example, in

Kansas, the course at which we are consuming water for agriculture is completely unsustainable, and it can be done with more modern technology which uses less water (Oden). To facilitate these changes, it is necessary to impose regulations and incentives on the private industries which hold a nearly autocratic place in our society, to make sure they develop only within the framework of a sustainable economic infrastructure that protects the ecosystem and benefits communities. In the face of this post-industrial collapse, to treat problems which are already looming, our governmental structures need to be drawing money from the large corporations who have gotten away for too long without paying their fair share to the problems that were largely caused by them. Not only is it necessary that corporate and resource taxes are increased, but in order to tackle the structural root of this abuse, legislation needs to be put in place which effectively impedes the political power of corporate lobbies which have bought out states like Kansas and Michigan.

Community is the foundation of societal health. Without it, lower classes don't have the socio-political support system, nor the health resources necessary to ensure their places of living don't degrade over time. As a country in the face of rapid economic changes, it is crucial that we don't forget this, and proactively address the complexes of issues which face marginalized communities in America today. If we don't we run the risk of wide scale public health crises, from the rural countryside to the urban core. Alternatively, if we do begin to make the systemic changes necessary in order to combat the contemporary socio-economic decline, our democracy will be strengthened by generations of empowered citizens who act as voices of innovation in the emerging

sustainable economy- and voices of hope for a future in which we as a society care for the needs of those who, as of yet, do not have the voice to advocate for themselves.

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