

Community and University Podcast Series

Interviewee: Stephen Gasteyer, Associate Professor of Sociology

Interviewer: Matthew Emery, Senior REI Research Assistant

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Matthew Emery: Hello, and welcome to Community and University, the MSU Center for Community and Economic Development podcast aimed at providing outreach to both community members and students throughout the state of Michigan. The Michigan State University U.S. Economic Development Administration University Center for Regional Economic Innovation's (REI) mission is to stimulate innovative economic development in the most distressed communities within Michigan.

The **REI University Center** embraces a culture of regional collaboration and knowledge sharing between economic development professionals and committed scholars. The Center's model provides responsive community engagement, strategic partnerships, and collaborative learning to support the creation and identification of innovative tools, models, and practices to increase the number of small businesses; create access to job skill development; improve public infrastructure; advance high-growth entrepreneurship, and; encourage global competitiveness to strengthen underserved communities and historically excluded citizens.

The REI **University Center**'s most recent award focuses on four key pillars of community and economic development that together will build up the resilience, sustainability, and equity within the communities in which it partners. The four pillars include, resiliency planning, financial resilience, circular economies, and 21st Century communications. The **University Center** will work with community partners to address these themes in Michigan Economic Development Corporation's identified Redevelopment Ready Communities containing opportunity zone census tracts and/ **OR** large concentrations of ALICE populations—or those who are asset-limited, income-constrained employed.

I am Matthew Emery and I am one of the hosts for Community and University. Today, we will be spotlighting one of the 2022 REI Center's Student-Led, Faculty- Guided Project authors, Dr. Stephen Gasteyer, who is working on a project entitled, "Creating Circular Economic Opportunities through Localizing the Food Cooperative." The focus of this project is how food cooperatives and local community organizations can help create a circular food economy that would not only improve local food access and security, but also help local food producers improve their own future prospects. Student- Led, Faculty- Guided projects are researched and written by student teams at Michigan universities and colleges, and supervised by said university or college faculty. The goals of projects like this is to provide assistance to Michigan communities in completing local and regional economic development initiatives.

Matthew Emery: Dr. Gasteyer, can you please introduce yourself, including your educational and professional background, for our listeners?

Stephen Gasteyer: Well, thank you, thank you so much, Matthew. I am Stephen Gasteyer. I'm an Associate Professor of Sociology at Michigan State University. I started working on community development in the 1990s. And in some ways, I started working on community development before that. I actually have an international studies degree from a place called Earlham College, which was in Richmond, Indiana, where about halfway through my international studies degree I started taking development classes. I went from that into the Peace Corps, where I was, theoretically, doing agriculture but so much of agriculture, in the context of Mali, was about organizing the community around alternatives and around adaptation, in fact, to desertification, to droughts, to how to adapt to all those things. And then came back and worked for a little bit on alternative agriculture in the United States, and then went to Palestine and spent time in the West Bank thinking about, again, agriculture environment, but really about community in the context of ongoing conflict, of course, but also adapting to changes in climate, destruction of environment, and adapting to the kinds of shocks that communities get all the time. About a third way through that, this does get to my educational background, I started thinking about the questions I need to ask, which are actually the social questions that led me to my PhD, to applying to do a PhD, that was really focused on how we understand environment, agriculture, large system change, from the context of what people can do at the community level. So, I ended up getting a PhD from Iowa State University in Rural Sociology. And to that degree, it was really thinking about this nexus between development, environment, and community, and how those come together. And how can we use the available assets at the community level to actually create the kinds of vibrant communities with opportunities that have ecological integrity and what is the combination of resources within the community and resources from outside the community that can help foster those kinds of change. What I was thinking about was, how do we empower the community in the context of constant shocks to respond in a way that actually leads to a better life?

Matthew Emery: Interesting. So, you are also a professor now, correct? I know that because I had you last semester. So, how does your previous background, and being a current professor, how did you get involved with researching food cooperatives and the relationship, or lack of relationship, between them and the community organizations that you have worked with in the past?

Stephen Gasteyer: So, for those of us who are thinking about agriculture and the food system and the environment, and also thinking about community development, we know that food co-ops come up a lot. They come up a lot because they are one of the mechanisms through which we can think about an exchange of resources that's not competitive. So, one of the problems with the conventional store, grocery or whatever, is the whole model is individualized, right? So, the whole model is based on the notion that each of us, individually, are looking to maximize our own benefit, which ultimately means, A. I want to get that cucumber more cheaply than the other

people, right? So, if I can buy a whole bunch of them, and in effect, maximize my own benefit, I don't care what happens to all the other people in the store. And so, the first notion of the co-op was that consumer co-ops came together, understanding that actually we can move beyond a competitive form of buying the best stuff for each individual to a collective, and that makes the whole better, right? In addition, in the traditional food co-ops, a consumer co-op, there was a notion of democracy. We came together, it wasn't just that we walked into the store and whatever was there we tried to get the best. We actually talked about how do we source from the right places and it allowed us to infuse value, the values of the collective into the decision-making process about what should be there. So, for those of us thinking about community and how do we build community as part of the economic system, this was very alluring. It also so happens that producers have long had co-ops in the agricultural sector as well. And it's the same notion. So, rather than each of us individually needing to get all of the things that need to go into growing stuff, you have producers coming together and pooling resources and thinking about, again, that full suite of things that you would want, not just services, but the full suite of things that you would want to have to produce. And again, because producer co-ops are organized around collective decision making, the production side becomes less individuated, less about individual farms and more about thinking about the whole community. What we are interested in doing in this co-op in the East Side of Lansing is one step further. So, we're looking at the East Side of Lansing, which recently has the Allen Neighborhood Center. This is a nonprofit, a very active nonprofit, which does a full range of things on the East side of Lansing. It's respected throughout Mid-Michigan as one of the most active neighborhood associations. They recently expanded into something called Allen Place, which is going to have a range of income housing, a health center, and they've invited the East Lansing food co-op to open a space on the ground floor of this new development. The East Lansing food co-op independently had made the decision several years ago that one of the things they could do that would give them a niche was to develop a produce chain that really invited local growers and provided a space for local growers. And so, we might be seeing the opening of a cooperative that is not just about how do consumers come together and create community among consumers, and not just how do producers come together and create a community among producers but combines the two. So that in fact, consumption and production get integrated in a way that we take all the values that are important to all those parties, and then infuse that with the broader value of how do we build the community and do it in a way that there are democratic systems embedded in the system so that there is actually a discussion about these things. One of the beauties of a co-op, from somebody who is thinking about participatory community development, is that they are part of what makes a co-op a co-op. It's not just that I own the establishment and you buy so that we all own the establishment. And so, there are then mechanisms through which all of us get to be part of the decision making about what that establishment is doing and how it is furthering the broader good. And if we can move to adding producers to that mix, then we've got something is really powerful in terms of changing the way that we do economic accumulation.

Matthew Emery: For sure. So, thank you for that. So, you mentioned that this Co-Op is on the East Side of Lansing. For your project, did you pick the East Side of Lansing because those systems are already in place, or because it is close to home, or what made that community so attractive to you?

Stephen Gasteyer: So, the East Side of Lansing is attractive for a number of reasons. Yes, it is close to home, so that's always a plus. But more importantly, the East Side of Lansing does have a lot of the pieces in place, right? They have Allen Neighborhood Center, which has invited the East Lansing co-op to open with them and it is in the process of opening, right? So those conversations are going on. In addition, the Allen Neighborhood Center is on the East Side and is one of the most impressive neighborhood associations in this region, so active on a number of different fronts, specifically on the local food front. So, what the Allen Neighborhood Center has been facilitating on the East Side are activities in all sides of the food production and consumption area, so they have a food pantry that is integrated with the food production. You have easily a dozen micro farms in the area. So, people are producing in the area. And you have the Hunter Greenhouse, where the Allen Neighborhood itself is not only growing food, but it's also doing programming. And that programming involves everything from inviting interns, like said class you were in, you were all students who were interns, to actually doing workshops with young people and teaching them, yes, how to grow stuff in the greenhouse. But also, for instance, how to spot fruit trees and in our legacy cities, we actually have fruit trees around that aren't actually being harvested, they're legacies of when people lived in the area who had fruit trees. So, spotting those and foraging for food that isn't actually harvested right now. And then other kinds of workshops that are, you know, talking about different kinds of seeds and how do you plant seeds. And then, they have things like garden in a box, which is actually taking all the stuff to people in the neighborhood in a box and saying here's what you need to plant a garden in your backyard. So, it is these multiple aspects of building community through thinking about food, thinking about development of the soil and the plants and the biodiversity and respecting what is already there that makes this a really exciting place to try to do this kind of a project.

Matthew Emery: Very interesting, thank you. I didn't know that much about the East Side and we're right there. So, you've talked a lot about your project and a little bit about the goals and the aims for the project, but as the project kind of wraps up, what do you hope to accomplish, what do you hope to take away, from the project, on top of what you already listed?

Stephen Gasteyer: Well, so the thing that I'm actually interested in is how might we be able to better account for the various assets that are built through the relationships that are created, right? So, I use something called a community capitals framework, the wonky term is heuristic device. It is a way of looking at the world and trying to understand what is going on, right, a conceptual framework. And what the community capitals framework says is that community development has to involve the mobilization and investment in different resources in the community. And so good projects identify where there are existing assets and it pulls them into meeting additional goals, but also identifies where there may be deficits of assets and figures out how and where to

invest to increase those. And so, return on investment of any kind of an initiative... yes, you're looking for financial, but hopefully you're not just looking for a one off. So, it's important that you think about how different kinds of resources circulate through a given community and how do they contribute to creating a more vibrant community of creating a community where there's economic growth and a community where there is ecological integrity. So, you're building all of those things at the same time. And so, what I'm hoping I'm going to understand at the end is, what are the kinds of assets that we are looking at developing as we put in place both the means of production, the means of consumption, and put those into dialogue in a community, like the Allen Neighborhood Center. So, if we have that conceptual model, then we are well placed over the next five years as the co-op gets open and functioning, as the center transitions to have a better system of measurement of what do we get out of any given initiative in this place. How do we understand what a local circular economy is, what's circulating, who benefits? How do they benefit? How does it contribute to interaction among people? How does it contribute to wealth among individuals? How does it contribute to community wealth? Maybe in the form of new playgrounds. So, thinking about all those things, the first thing you have to do is really refine that conceptual model so you know what you're looking at, know what you would be measuring, so that's what I'm hoping I'm going to get by the end of the day. So that's on the East Side. As a scholar, of course, I'm interested in how might this apply globally. And the thing about the East Side, if you look at the statistics, the demographics, it looks like a lot of neighborhoods in what, unkindly, sometimes gets called the Rust Belt. Where it used to be a lot bigger, it used to have a lot more wealthy people. It has now got a population that is not so wealthy. It used to have grocery stores in the area, and you don't anymore, right? That's true of our legacy cities across this region, and I think as industries, as the global economy, continues to shift, we're going to see them emerging in other places. Part of what I'm hoping is this becomes one of a suite of models that can be used to think about how do you revitalize those areas, and how do you do it? One of the things that they've so far done beautifully in the East Side is made the place a little more vibrant, a little more exciting, without wholesale, expelling those who are less fortunate. Is there a possibility to do that, right? The old model of improving communities that had sort of gotten the short shrift during the last economic transition was effectively a gentrification process. And we all understand that unless gentrification means everyone in that neighborhood becomes more wealthy, but usually what that means is everyone in that neighborhood gets kicked out. And then you have fewer wealthy people in the same number of buildings that have become fancier and whatever, right. Ideally, we would be able to improve all of society. So, part of what I'm interested in is the kind of community development model that is more inclusive, more participatory that develops internally.

Matthew Emery: Thank you for that. You actually answered my next question I was going to ask about if you could implement your work with this project into other communities, which you said would be one of their goals. So that's very good news. So, talking about the circular food economy that this project is based around, what are the key changes or benefits brought to

communities that adopt these local food economies, compared to ones that do not? What do you anticipate?

Stephen Gasteyer: Well, we do not know because the project has just started. But I would say this though, I think what we are understanding... I don't know that we understand this. But what we hope, and this is from the emergence of urban farms and the regional food system work, is that there is, if you will, negative benefits, which is to say you move from a system where most of the food comes from far away, eats up lots of food miles and greenhouse gas emissions as it gets transported from California. It probably gets produced on a farm that's large enough that they're doing it in the most efficient way, which may not be the most environmentally sound way. So, there's probably benefits just in having the supply chain be closer just because of the number of resources and there may be environmental benefits in terms of being able to cycle nutrients more quickly. I was just spelling this out in a memo this morning to somebody, think about the feasibility of taking the food that you ate, taking all the stuff that you didn't eat, and putting it into a compost bin that you take back to the farm that's less than a mile away. Compare that to the way that we had structured things, so your lettuce came from California, your meat came from Iowa, and it all got shipped here. At the end of the day, it's not very feasible to ship it back. So, we don't have anything circular about that way of production. Karl Marx, the economist, identified this problem in the 1800s with industrializing England and John Bellamy Foster called it the metabolic rift, right? The idea that instead of circulating nutrients, we dump our nutrients into the waste stream, and then we have depleting soils on the outskirts. So maybe that solves part of that problem. If we're thinking about, how do we connect, how do we shorten supply chains, maybe we have a better chance of actually cycling nutrients through those supply chains, so that's one thing. But then the other thing is really within community. What might be the benefit of, given that we have vacant lots, of taking those vacant lots and turning them into places where we're producing stuff, right? And especially for producing stuff in a way that's more sustainable, ecologically sound. Wouldn't it make sense that that actually has a benefit to the community? So, the concrete jungle becomes less a concrete jungle and more a space where there is greenery, where there is biodiversity, where there are things growing, where people are nurturing the soil, and that can have a benefit in terms of tearing down the alienation of urban life, right? People understand where their food comes from a little bit more. And what we know is that, from our public health specialist, things like ADHD are connected to people who don't interact with green space. So, if there is more of this local food going on, then there's more opportunities for people to be interacting with green stuff, just because they walk by it every day. They have the chance to work in it as they get old enough to be of working age, right? And so, there could be benefits like that. Part of what my interviews will hopefully bring out is some of the thinking about how that happens. But my suspicion is that there is some of that, there is this benefit to people playing with dirt. So, that is a possibility as well, that by having a localized food economy, you've created a space where we break down the nature-society divide, and we create more opportunities for community to be involved in creative production.

Matthew Emery: Very interesting. Thank you for that, yet again. So, in terms of food security and local food, do you see any setbacks with this local circular model of food production? And how does that compare to a community that does not use these local circular models?

Stephen Gasteyer: Well, I mean, the reality is that it is probably not feasible that the staples come to people locally, right? So, there's always going to be an input from outside, right? And in our modern society, there is all this other stuff that we are dependent on; telecommunications, electricity, etc., all of which is shipped from outside. So, you always have to be creating wealth. So, the economy cannot just be circular, it has to be able to move out and bring in. So, part of the conundrum is how do you create circular local economies that are also responsive to broader economic changes and broader economic realities? What is that interaction? And ultimately, you're interested in any given community, the potentials of creating enough wealth that people can still live, given that they're dependent on stuff coming from the outside, and live well. So, there is always this interplay between the community and what's happening, the circulation of resources within the community and the broader economic and broader political structure. So, thinking about how that works is going to be an ongoing struggle.

Matthew Emery: I see. So, you mentioned to really examine the circular food economy, you are using a framework, sorry, I forgot the complete title of the framework. But what made you use a framework like this to understand the East Side of Lansing, compared to another model that could have been used?

Stephen Gasteyer: So, I use the community capitals framework because it allows me to think more broadly than just a more classic economic development framework. So, a classic cost benefit analysis, for instance, or return on investment analysis that is just looking at dollars and cents. Because I think that the benefits are going to go beyond how much money, and in fact, I expect that if we just looked at money, by the time I'm reporting out to you, I would say, you know, become a financier, and move to Wall Street, they make a whole lot of money these days. But that doesn't actually help us, I think what makes communities vibrant places is not just how much money they have. And in fact, to use the negative ideal type of a community, I think all of us have been in the gated communities where there's very little community, you know, everyone's living in a trophy house. So, it's not just about dollars and cents. And so, what I want to get at is, how does creating a more circular flow of resources improve the community and not just the dollars and cents in the community? And so, the community capitals framework allows me to think about what are the skills, knowledge, and ability, so human resources, that people have access to, how do those improve? What are the relationships, that's social capital. To what extent do we change worldviews, so cultural capital. To what extent do we give opportunities for people to engage in the arts, also cultural capital. What about local political engagement, so political capital. Then, you know, to what extent are we actually improving the natural environment around us, so natural capital. And then we can get to sort of built resources and financial resources, which are the two pieces that normally get accounted for in the more conventional frameworks. But that other stuff is so critical to what makes life worth living, right?

Matthew Emery: Yeah, you can't leave it out. All right, perfect. So, you've touched kind of a lot on how this project will impact the community members, especially on the East Side of Lansing, but who do you think, or who do you anticipate, that this circular food economy will have the largest effect on, positive or negative?

Stephen Gasteyer: Well, I'm certainly hopeful that the development of a local site for distribution will be of benefit to those micro farms, the growing number of micro farms in both the East Side and also in the region. We have small farmers, micro farmers, who are producing stuff, and a number of the farmers I've talked to already say that we could produce more if we knew we had a place to sell it. So, you could give, if you will, undercapitalized local food producers. Boom, that's financial, but also allows them to produce to their values. And so, there's a real benefit in that. I'm also very hopeful that this will improve food security on the East Side. So, there's a number of emergency feeding kinds of things that are going on. There's also a number of efforts to try to engage people in things like the Community Supported Agriculture at Allen Neighborhood Center. Those already exist but having a store that's open seven days a week is a different avenue through which you can get people in and thinking about diet, thinking about how can they afford to improve diet, and it may actually help us identify folks who are food insecure and getting them worked into the systems that should be helping them. So, one hope would be that this would improve the well-being of the less fortunate among us and then could improve, through doing that or in addition to doing that, it could improve the vibrancy, the extent to which this is a place where you can live a better life, right? I can just go down the street and get my milk from the food co-op. I can just go down the street and rather than thinking about okay, so now I've got to trudge over to Kroger's... So, I can see all those constituencies benefiting right away down the line, probably not by the time I'm reporting out to you. But those would be the three core constituencies and then there's likely to be additional benefits. You know, if you've created this kind of circular economy, you may be creating opportunities for young people to start thinking about alternatives. Say you get a young person who can't figure out how to get into the industrial sector, they love getting into the dirt, you can start providing opportunities because you've got stuff going on right in the neighborhood, right? So those kinds of benefits I could see as well.

Matthew Emery: That's amazing. So, as you have started your project and are working through it a little bit, have you seen or encountered anything that you did not think you would or that was unexpected? Or any challenges that you faced, or you anticipate you will face, through the remainder of the project?

Stephen Gasteyer: Supply chains are a huge problem. I mean, I think the co-op, when I started writing the proposal, I was thinking, you know, the co-op is going to be open by May, at the latest. And when I finally got the proposal in, I think it was May, and you know, it's still at least a month until the co-op opens, even in a soft opening. And that's just the reality of creating a building, I mean, you know, shelf space and freezer space and all that stuff into the building. It just takes time; it always took more time than you would expect. And now, given that everything

is backed up, it's backed up. So, I wouldn't have anticipated that, except that I probably should have. Otherwise, to be very honest, I'm just getting going. So, I haven't done enough of the interviews to get to the point of saying, wow, I never thought of that. Which, invariably, as I start talking to people, that is what's going to happen. And that's actually the fun part of research is, you know, you go in with your preconceived notion, you ask your question, and then they they're like, oh, wow, that was different than I ever thought about.

Matthew Emery: Yeah, perfect. So, I know you've mentioned the Allen Neighborhood Center a few times... are you working directly with them, or any other partners, to complete this project? I know you have a grad student working with you as well?

Stephen Gasteyer: Yes, so Faith Saerah, Faith Saerah Bradley, at Michigan State University. She lives right here on the East Side, she has a long experience, prior to coming to graduate school, working with emergency food distribution networks. She also is on the healthcare board and is somebody who's a wonderful creative speaker, creative thinker, about food issues. We have been working very closely with Allen Neighborhood Center in terms of thinking about the food co-op. And I fully intend to see if Allen neighborhood would be willing to work with me on this project. And I think they would, I haven't approached them yet.

Matthew Emery: Yeah, absolutely. I think they would be pretty open to it.

Stephen Gasteyer: Yeah, they... They get approached a lot because they're doing so many amazing things and so you have to sort of design what you're asking in a way that you're not taking up more of their time. Just yesterday, I was at the farmers market and there were three groups from MSU that were coming through parading, right? This is the time of year where MSU has the international delegations and stuff coming... you want to show what a farmers' market in our legacy cities looks like at its best, the Allen Street Market is one of the places you can take them.

Matthew Emery: Wow, perfect.

Stephen Gasteyer: So, there is, you know, the trick of doing research like this is doing it in a way that it is of benefit to folks in the area but not tremendous cost to them, in terms of time. So that's going to take some thinking, right, and also, we're midsummer, so talking to farmers I need to be able to do it in a time and place where I'm not keeping them from doing what they need to be doing, right. So, all of that is going to take a little bit of finessing, but I'm hoping that I can do this in partnership with a lot of these folks. And certainly, would be excited about if any of the partners in this area wanted, you all obviously, but then also the more local partners, wanted me to give sort of a summary of research findings that, you know, that is something that we all should be doing as researchers. If we're going to take from the community, you should report back to the community

Matthew Emery: For sure. Well, that sounds like great partnerships you have planned and such. So, as we talked about a little bit earlier, you said that there was potential for this initiative to be

implemented in other Michigan communities. So, for those other said communities, what would they have to seek out, or what partnerships and tools would they need, especially in places where they don't already have that foundation like the Allen Neighborhood Center?

Stephen Gasteyer: I think it is... I think each community has its own context. And so, thinking about what that context is can tell you what's the kind of investment that needs to be made. And so, part of that, a part of what the community capitals framework allows us to do, is to move in and to take each community as an individual entity, and to start thinking about what are the indicators in that community, right. So, if you don't have an Allen Neighborhood Center, maybe it makes sense to start one or maybe there's half a dozen churches that are already doing, if taken in totem, a lot of what Allen Neighborhood is doing as one entity, right. Or maybe none of that exists and the first part of the project is really having the conversations that Joan Nelson and the Allen Neighborhood Center folks had a decade ago, or two decades ago, to start the process, the building. And in some communities, it is very appropriate to be looking to set up local farms. In other communities, maybe that's not so appropriate, maybe there are good reasons that that's not what they want to do, but they have other ambitions. And so, we want to think about, what does the economy want to produce in those areas and the point is to make resources circulate, right? And maybe there's one big, or two big, urban farms two neighborhoods over that are producing more than they need, so the circulation would be a little bit different, right? It's really about thinking contextually in each of these places. What I do hope I'll get out of this is some of the questions you asked about that context, right? That actually, I think, is a really important, would be a really important, research finding, how do you think about what the context is, how do you think about what the resources are, how do you think about what the institutions are and what roles they play and what they're hoping to get out of it?

Matthew Emery: Oh nice, very interesting. So, could you speak just briefly about your project and how it applies to equity and resilience and maybe how those relate to one another?

Stephen Gasteyer: Oh, my goodness, yes. So, I think this... I would say that this project is ultimately about both of those concepts. So, equity is the notion of providing equal opportunities for people, right? And so, this is about creating the kind of economy that is less about some succeeding and others not, and is more about how do we succeed together, right? And again, what are the shared values, or if there are contrasting values, how do we understand how to negotiate among those values to create economic opportunities? So, it's the polar opposite of industrial recruitment, where the whole notion is we're going to make ourselves as desirable as we can so we bring in an entity, which will then provide jobs and, you know, too bad if you didn't have to be one of the people who could have one of those jobs right? So, it really is about trying to reconceptualize production and consumption around notions of equity as opposed to around notions of competition. It is also about thinking through what it is that allows communities to adapt to changing conditions. So, we saw just a couple of years ago, in the height of the pandemic, the extent to which there was not resilience within our food system. And we're seeing the knock-on effects of that now, right? If you want a hamburger from the grocery store,

it's, you know, exponentially more expensive than it used to be. So, the part of the point is really thinking about the extent to which we might create alternative supply chains that build resilience into our system to the kinds of shocks to global supply chains that we're likely to see more and more, right, between climate change and disruptions. The epidemiologists I talked to say that, you know, COVID-19 was the most recent and the most dramatic, but we were going to see more and more of this just because we've decimated biodiversity, we've encroached on habitats, we've done all these things, we've created a global system of global transportation, both of goods and of people, all of which, you know, as Laurie Garrett noted, was absolute manna from heaven for all of these viruses, right. So, we've created a system that is ripe to have shocks within it, ripe to have the kinds of disruptions within it that can be really problematic to global supply chains. What's the alternative to that? Maybe it is creating more local supply chains, and maybe that's the way that we become resilient to these global disruptions, which may become more and more than normal.

Matthew Emery: Well, I'm really glad you talked about that because the goals here at REI, a lot of them are focused around equitable development and resiliency, so thank you for that. So, is there anything else you'd like our listeners to know about you, your research, anything before we sign off for the day?

Stephen Gasteyer: I think just, thank you very much for the opportunity, both to do this project and to talk about it, and I look forward to talking more, I think I'm due to talk in August, right?

Matthew Emery: Yes, thank you. Thank you so much for joining us. We look forward to the completion of your project and also your presentation at the *Innovate Michigan!* Summit, which will be held on August 18, 2022, at the Kellogg Center.

This has been 'Community and University' with Stephen Gasteyer, discussing his project, "Creating Circular Economic Opportunities through Localizing the Food Cooperative." Tune in next time for another interview with an REI project leader!