

For this Initial Proposal, simply write a brief summary of 2-4 potential research topics you are considering exploring, including a question you might ask about each of them. Here are a few guidelines for selecting a topic:

- The topic will need to connect to localism in some way; ideally, it will connect to a specific localist consumer or political movement, perhaps including political movements that involve spatial occupation.*
- You will need to be able to access rich information about the topic, so ensuring that you can find a rich repository of data is a priority.*
- This topic cannot be the same as the topic for Project 1.*
- While you will eventually need to generate a motivating question about the topic, this initial proposal merely requires you to convince yourself that the topic is rich and complex enough that you will be able to generate such a question later on. Nevertheless, you should take an initial stab at articulating a genuine question for each topic you propose.*

Write as much or as little as you'd like here. The more detail you can give me about your topic and why you think it might be interesting, the more I can do to help you refine the topic or select among several options.

1. Unionwear

Unionwear is a company based in Newark that manufactures and embroiders headwear, bags, accessories etc. It employs 115 people total and operates at a 45,000 SF manufacturing facility. Unionwear sells through a nationwide network of promotional products distributors, focusing its products to clients that require their hats be made in USA so there is no import competition. Unionwear believes in trade justice and social equality. It states that when workers earn a living wage with good benefits, there is low turnover and higher morale, and thus lead to more company success. The “Made in USA” label is meant to make a statement on where and how a product is made, focusing on local value and quality. Unionwear means to take a stand against sweatshop injustice in order to reduce exploitation and increase worker rights.

Question: Does Unionwear’s “Made in USA” products serve as a localist movement that supports increased local ownership in the economy and does the project build up to more democratic, just and sustainable policies?

2. Slow Food

Slow Food Chicago is a chapter of the Slow Food movement. An international movement born out of Italy, Slow Food promotes alternatives to fast food trend, including industrial food and farming, and raises awareness of how our consumption of food impacts the environment and how local support helps the workers who grow the food.

Question: Is Slow Food’s movement for renewed interest and support in local food culture, sustainability and democracy justified?

3. One Island: Sustainable Living

One Island is a program that works to create innovative community-building projects that foster a more equitable, just and environmentally conscious society. They preach the importance of implementing local solutions to pressing challenges, working on providing community gardens, local restaurants and food gleaning projects.

Question: Are One Island's sustainability projects reflective of its local region (Hawaii, California) and do the projects build more just environments?