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ABSTRACTS AND TITLES OF STUDENT WORK

Department of City and Regional Planning,
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Ph.D. Dissertations

Government policy or household choice: What drives housing outcomes in The Gambia?

Roddie Lloyd Cole, 1995.

The dissertation seeks to identify factors which determine the rate and delivery of housing units in the Gambian metropolis.

Numerous undeveloped or partially developed residential plots in Greater Banjul testify to the significant difficulties faced by households endeavoring to create dwelling units. These are most prevalent in high income areas and on government-allocated subdivisions. Why does the delivery of housing remain so low even where the state provides land and other critical inputs at minimal cost? Focusing on cases where people desirous of home-ownership are compelled to develop their own, the research reviews household strategies for plot development and examines whether government policies facilitate or impede development. Cluster analysis is used to group households into different socioeconomic categories and delineate the different housing delivery systems. Logistic regression is applied to examining the association between household class and access to government subsidy programs, and to evaluating how the two affect housing delivery.

Socioeconomic status determines access to government-subsidized inputs. The configuration of political authority, the status quo, skews housing subsidies to those households that are most effective at demand articulation. The lower class households that lack access to formal programs are compelled to operate in nonformal or customary systems with no government assistance. That finding is not surprising. It is not even new. The more important conclusion is that the politics of distribution renders the housing sector inefficient, and constitutes a barrier to the government's own goals of expanding the supply of urban housing. Driven by the "enterprise" goals, lower status households produce more residential and commercial units per plot. The housing decisions of upper class households, on the other hand, are driven by a "prestige" imperative which translates to longer construction periods, fewer completed housing units, and fewer units

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per plot. Lower class households are – in fact – a more effective conduit through which desired outcomes can be achieved.

Because housing assistance is mistargeted, the volume and rate of housing delivery in the Gambian metropolis remains low.

Coca cultivation, drug traffic, and regional development in Cochabamba, Bolivia.

Roberto Laserna, 1995.

In 1981, the prices of coca leaves skyrocketed: there was not enough supply for an increasing demand. Peasants, petty traders, small entrepreneurs, adventurers were attracted to the Chapare, in the central region of Cochabamba, Bolivia.

This happened when a profound political and economic crisis affected Bolivia, and amid accelerated changes in the international economy that created new conditions and required structural adjustments and vigorous policy making.

Based on primary as well as secondary data collected in 1981 and 1991, related to the life and working conditions of coca growers (campesinos) and small drug producers and traffickers, this dissertation analyzes the implications of the coca boom and the anti-drug policies for the regional development of Cochabamba. What happens in a region dominated by an illegal activity with global dimensions? Were those significant flows of resources a development opportunity? To what extent did the coca growers have a chance for accumulation? Was it possible for the region to take advantage of the boom so as to improve life conditions and to accelerate its development process?

The research shows that coca growers increased the size of their plots and obtained higher incomes compared to other peasants, but that they were unable to engage in economic accumulation due to the highly volatile nature of the coca market and the increased uncertainty created by the anti-drug policies intervening in those markets. It also demonstrates that the boom created highly paid but also unstable and risky jobs, that represented income opportunities for the lower classes, particularly those in the more vulnerable position in the labor market. Finally, it shows that regional development policies became harder to implement.

The coca boom created in Cochabamba temporary income opportunities both for the people and for the region, but they could not be transformed into a long term development process. It alleviated the stress of the economic crisis, allowing the permanence of trade links to the world economy, but only on uncertain and vulnerable basis.

Travel demand and transportation policy beyond the edge: An inquiry into the nature of long-distance interregional commuting from the Northern San Joaquin Valley to the San Francisco Bay Area and its implications for transportation planning.

Richard William Lee, 1995.

This dissertation explores the identity, motivations, and travel demand characteristics of interregional long-distance commuters (LDCs) in California's San Joaquin Valley, which became the residence of more than 30,000 commuters to employment centers in the San Francisco Bay Region during the 1980s. This investigation seeks to identify, classify, and better understand the general phenomenon of long-distance commuting using the particular context of Valley to Bay commuting. Literature on urban residential location theory and commuting is reviewed, as is the historical development of both the Bay Area and Valley regions.

Demographic analysis is performed based on extensive cross tabulation of Census data to identify LDC types and underscore salient characteristics. The 1990 Census of Population and Housing tabulations for San Joaquin and Stanislaus counties and the nine Bay Area counties provide the baseline demographic and commute data against which information on interregional LDCs is compared. Data on long-distance and interregional commuter households and workers is tabulated from the Census Public User Microdata Set (PUMS) for the two Valley counties. The Census Transportation Planning Package (CTPP) is examined for information on LDC travel modes and work destinations. The primary source regarding nonwork travel by LDCs is a travel demand survey conducted in 1991.

In-depth focus group interviews with members of exemplar LDC households are summarized. These provide significant insights into the commuters' own conceptions of their travel behavior and use of time; these conceptions undermine notions of travel as a cost capable of being expressed in simple monetary terms. Overall, the interviews reveal a unique explanation of long-distance commuting, and suggest further avenues of research. The analysis concludes that while many LDCs are unlikely to change the location of either their home or workplace, many are actively seeking to economize on both work and nonwork travel through measures such as ridesharing and trip clustering.

This dissertation also assesses and critiques various solutions for the problem of long-distance commuting. Solutions examined include transportation projects and programs as well as alternative regional

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development policies for the northern San Joaquin Valley, including new town proposals.

The space of property capital: Property development and architecture in Ahmedabad.

Bimal Hasmukh Patel, 1995.

This is a study of three aspects of property development in Ahmedabad, India. It focuses first on the emergence of property development in Ahmedabad and its specificity as a mode of organizing building production. Second, it describes the manner in which developers organize the production of buildings in the city. Third, it focuses on developments in the architecture of Ahmedabad since the emergence of property development.

The first part of this study shows that property development emerged as a significant mode of building production in Ahmedabad during the mid-sixties. It compares property development with other modes of building production in the city – private building, cooperative building, public building, and squatting. It argues that property development is a peculiarly capitalist system of building production where buildings are produced as commodities, accumulation is the primary purpose driving production, and individual producers are thrown into competition with one another.

The second part of this study describes the manner in which developers raise finance, buy land, design and construct buildings, and sell them. It also briefly discusses the evolution of these four aspects of property development over the last three decades. It is argued that the capacity of developers to raise finance, disregard or mold land policies, and use architecture and advertising technology to their advantage has increased significantly. Simultaneously, consumer awareness and protection have also increased.

The third part of this study shows how developers, driven by the pressure to accumulate and compete with one another, have transformed architecture in Ahmedabad. Competition, it is argued, forces developers to use prevalent architectural designs to maintain normal levels of profitability. Competition also forces them to use radically different architectural designs to shift the terrain of competition to their advantage. It is shown how developers have transformed architecture by maximizing the floor area ratios of their buildings, by rationalizing building designs, by developing new salable images for their buildings, and by developing entirely new types of buildings.

As a whole, this study shows how the development of capitalism in building production in Ahmedabad has transformed its architectural landscape.

Residential growth controls and racial and ethnic diversity: Making and breaking the chain of exclusion.

Rolf Joseph Pendall, 1995.

This dissertation asks three questions about the role of local land-use planning in perpetuating and overcoming the exclusion of low-income households and racial minorities from U.S. cities, towns, and counties. First, what is the current landscape of residential growth control in the United States? The dissertation presents the results of a 1994 survey on growth and affordable housing policies in the 25 largest metropolitan areas in the nation. Of the 1,530 local planning directors surveyed, 1,168 (77%) responded; their answers suggest three sets of residential growth controls and affordable housing policies ("growth regimes"). The "old regime," centered mostly in the Northeast, combines low-density zoning with few affordable housing programs. The "new regime," most common in California, combines growth boundaries and infrastructure protection ordinances with large numbers of affordable housing programs. The "free-market" regime, most common in Texas, is typified by few growth controls or affordable housing programs. Second, what effects do these growth controls have on housing affordability and racial composition in the communities that use them? The dissertation uses multiple regression to analyze the survey results, showing the existence of a "chain of exclusion" that directly and indirectly connects low-density zoning to exclusion of low-income households and racial minorities. The newer controls do not have this systematic effect, despite theory and past empirical analyses that suggest they should raise housing prices. Third, how do communities with growth controls avoid exclusion? The dissertation's final section concerns the planning and growth programs of two jurisdictions: Union City, California, and Franklin Township, Somerset County, New Jersey. In both places, local governments used a growth control, but the population remained racially and economically diverse in the 1980s. The study shows that both have used a broad number of planning mechanisms to build on historic diversity. In both places, people supporting planning and growth management have also supported affordable housing, and have called on people outside their jurisdictions as well as state laws and rules to ensure that their communities attended to both protection of the environment and public services, on the one hand, and diversity on the other.

Reconstructing urban poverty policy: Alternative credit, poverty alleviation, and economic development in U.S. inner cities.

Lisa Jean Servon, 1995.

The existence of urban poverty in U.S. cities poses a great challenge to the theory and practice of urban economic development. Over the last 30-odd years, urban poverty policy has continually failed to hit its mark, which leads one to believe that the theory upon which it is based is flawed. This dissertation examines one new strategy designed to help alleviate poverty and promote other economic development goals – microenterprise programs.

This dissertation presents the results of fieldwork conducted at microenterprise programs in three cities – New York, Boston, and San Francisco – and places the microenterprise strategy into the context of economic development and urban poverty policy. The dissertation explores the historical incongruity that exists between the economic development and social welfare fields as they are traditionally configured, beginning with the War on Poverty and Great Society programs and continuing through to the present new breed of strategies to which microenterprise programs belong. The new breed of strategies to which microenterprise programs belong marry critical aspects of both social welfare and economic development approaches.

While each program falls under the label “microenterprise program,” the research findings demonstrate the breadth of that label. While all three programs provide small amounts of credit to microentrepreneurs, the manner in which the credit is distributed and the role credit plays within the larger mission of each program differs greatly from one program to another. Each of the programs studied uses credit as a springboard to achieve something that goes beyond simple access to business funding. WISE uses credit to achieve individual empowerment; Working Capital aims to achieve community empowerment through the provision of credit; and Accion New York is the closest thing in the microcredit world to a pure alternative financial institution – empowerment is not part of the vocabulary. The fact that all three go by the same label – microcredit – obscures their differences and de-emphasizes their orientations around other goals. Similarly, the range of people who use these programs is extremely broad, providing support for the idea that “the urban poor” is not a unified category.

At its base, the problem of persistent urban poverty is rooted in the uneven distribution of political, economic, and socio-cultural resources. It is important to recognize that this unevenness is patterned, not random. A meaningful analysis of why urban economic

development strategies have failed to benefit this group must therefore begin by asking questions about power, dominance, and distribution. Current strategizing about policy reform should therefore begin by understanding entrenched power imbalances as structural constraints to solving the problems, and move on to brainstorm about conjunctural opportunities that can be exploited in the short run. I argue that the new wave of strategies to which microcredit programs belong has begun to exploit these opportunities, and that important lessons can be learned from these experiences that can be used as the foundation for a reconstruction of urban poverty policy. This reconstruction must take a long term view of developing individuals by increasing their assets through the flexible provision of resources such as credit and training.

Local enterprise zone programs and economic development planning: A case study of California and four mid-Atlantic states.
Chun-cheung Sidney Wong, 1995.

This dissertation explores the underlying concepts of enterprise zones, assesses their effectiveness, and seeks to identify conditions under which enterprise zones work. It covers 70 zones in California, Delaware, Maryland, Pennsylvania and Virginia (roughly one-tenth of the nation's locally administered zones established before 1987).

It first reviews previous studies and exposes common methodological problems and theoretical weaknesses they confront. Pulling literature from industrial location, local economic development, and taxation studies, it develops and applies an analytical framework for classifying and evaluating zone performance. It measures zone performance in terms of the difference in the percent changes in employment and business establishment between zones and their regions. Next, it conducts a survey to investigate how zones are structured and managed. Combining survey results and zone performance data, it uses regression models to identify determinants of zone success. Finally, it includes case studies of three zones, all with an above-average performance to further validate previous statistical findings and to provide insights on the operation of "successful" zones.

This research finds that there is considerable variability among zones, but most of them do not adhere to the original laissez-faire conception of enterprise zones. In general, changes in employment and business establishment within a zone differ little from those of its region. However, active management and outreach by zone administrators tends to improve zone performance. Successful zones are typically those which are small, actively managed, with a simple program structure, located in a growing region, and with some basic

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location advantages. This dissertation research cannot link any specific economic development tool adopted in enterprise zones to their performance. Instead, regression models and case studies find that zone performance is determined by regional growth, initial zone conditions, and the employment size of the zone. Finally, income and employment levels in enterprise zone communities are found barely changing even when zones are experiencing rapid employment growth.

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