

RESEARCH STATEMENT

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Overview

I am primarily interested in urban and regional economic development and the design and implementation of public policies that facilitate such development. More specifically, I am interested in how small towns and cities are able to revitalize their local economies via downtown redevelopment efforts and other efforts at job creation and property reinvestment. I am also interested in the patterns of regional growth and decline experienced by metropolitan economies, especially those that are resilient to long-term structural changes.

Dissertation

My dissertation will evaluate the effectiveness of the Main Street Program as a strategy for economic development in non-metropolitan communities. The Main Street Program (MSP) is one of the more common revitalization strategies found throughout smaller communities in the U.S. and was designed to equip smaller towns and cities with the resources and know-how to leverage their dense, walkable retail corridor(s) as an economic development asset. My objectives in this dissertation are to 1) identify the Main Street Program's impact, if any, on the economic vitality of participating communities and to 2) identify the differential impact of the regulative environment—at the state and community level—on the organizational performance measurement of local MSP directors.

Current and Future Work: My “Research Pipeline”

Including the research contained in my dissertation, I have three distinct areas in which I am currently working, and in which there is future work to be done:

1. *Regional economic resilience.* This research deals with the economic growth and decline of U.S. metropolitan regions. Together with my advisor, Dr. Ned Hill, we have completed two studies in this area and have a few more planned or in progress.
2. *Local economic development policy.* This is the area where my dissertation fits, but is also an area where I will readily be able to continue situating future work. In addition to testing the impact of adopting the Main Street Program on job creation and housing value appreciation, there are still several other measures of economic vitality that can be further tested to ‘triangulate’ the overall estimated impact of the program. In future research, I will continue to search for various economic development policies at the regional or municipal level and use an appropriate combination of methods to identify their economic impact.