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DISSERTATION ABSTRACTS

1. ProQuest Digital Dissertations

**Social, economic and environmental justice: A network analysis of sustainable agriculture in Pennsylvania**

Publication Number AAT 3173835

Trauger, Amy K., Ph.D., The Pennsylvania State University (U.S.A.), 2005, 225 pages, Advisor: Brewer, Synthia.

Agriculture and rural communities in the United States are in a period of decline, but sustainability movements in rural communities show promise for revitalizing both rural communities and agriculture as a sector. Sustainable agriculture is committed to the “triple-bottom-line” of social, economic and environmental justice, in which social equality, economic profitability and environmental soundness are emphasized. These discourses of justice, however, are not always translated into the practices of organizations committed to sustainability, according to some critics. This dissertation seeks to investigate how the sustainable agriculture social movement in Pennsylvania articulates these discourses and translates them into practice. The framework I use for this analysis includes a network ontology, which emphasizes social change through connection. I studied three groups (or networks) in Pennsylvania: a marketing cooperative, a women's group and a farm based education program. The methods for the analysis are primarily qualitative, but include visualizing and analyzing social networks and political agency through the use of geographic visualization technologies. The research concludes that sustainable agriculture in Pennsylvania is committed to social change and the triple-bottom-line, but these ideals are translated rather imperfectly into the practices of individuals and groups. Organic agriculture as a technical practice of sustainable agriculture is promoted as a way to obtain price premiums for farmers. Organic agriculture supports environmentally friendly practices, and helps farmers stay in business, but reproduces some of the social injustices of conventional agriculture, such as the exploitation of labor. Women in

conventional agriculture are traditionally marginalized from spaces of knowledge and power, because they are not seen as “real” farmers. Efforts to provide education and agency to women in sustainable agriculture also fall prey to identity politics based on who qualifies as a farmer. Farm-based education programs designed to spread knowledge about environmentally friendly farming practices also translate well into productivist models when an emphasis is on technical practices, rather than on community and holistic farm management. In summary, the networks facilitate the pursuit of justice, but confront obstacles regarding “who belongs,” the scale of the organization, and the length of the network.

### **Imagining a land: The Farm Security Administration and the populist fantasy**

Publication Number AAT 3153576

Hartman, Rebecca Ann, Ph.D., Rutgers The State University of New Jersey - New Brunswick (U.S.A.), 2004, 167 pages, Advisors: Lears, T. J. Jackson; Kessler-Harris, Alice.

This work is a cultural and intellectual history of a New Deal agency, the Farm Security Administration (FSA). I use the FSA as a lens to explore the re-emergence in American culture of a potentially radical producer ideology during the 1930s. What begins in the early years of the Depression as a grass-roots “back-to-the-land” movement celebrating producerism and security on “the land,” by 1937 becomes a political effort by a group of government-affiliated rural intellectuals to create programs designed to redistribute agricultural land to small-scale family farmers as a strategy to resist the trend to large-scale commercialized agriculture. The FSA drew upon and produced a notion of citizenship that was integrally connected to broader cultural understandings of the rural landscape. But not simply to land ownership - the agrarianism that historians have attributed to the agency - but to land as a site of production that resisted the wage relations of capitalist agriculture and the full commodification of the land. For FSA administrators and rural intellectuals that worked closely with the agency, such a vision of landscape would create democratic spaces for independent citizens. FSA administrators committed the agency to securing both economic rights and social, political and cultural legitimacy for the millions of rural Americans who struggled to make a living on the land. Through the development and implementation of long-term land-lease, government-funded land-purchase associations, liberalized credit structures, cooperative associations, and cooperative farm communities, the FSA

challenged the dominant place of commercial agriculture and materially and symbolically inscribed the ideologies of an alternative producer ethos upon the land. Contrary to most historians' assessment of the FSA as an ineffective agency - a "fool's errand" - my work demonstrates that the agency's programs of land distribution and ownership, as well as its efforts to ameliorate rural poverty, were viable policies designed to create a rural landscape that was a culturally and economically resistant site to the ethos of industrial capitalism.

**Palestinians; from village peasants to camp refugees: Analogies and disparities in the social use of space**

Publication Number AAT 1422482

Maraqa, Hania Nabil, M.A., The University of Arizona (U.S.A.), 2004, 108 pages, Advisor: Doxtater, Dennis.

The study examines the spatial transformation from local practice in the Palestinian village around the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to discursive forms of expression in the Palestinian refugee camp a hundred years later. It looks at the reflection of the small-scale egalitarian social groups or large-scale hierarchical powers in spatial settings and social interactions. By the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Palestinian villages enjoyed relative social stability and autonomy. The Palestinian village was an integrative and cooperative social unit that lacked class-consciousness and external hierarchical authority. It was a fragile relation that connected the village to the Ottoman Empire. Landownership was dominantly communal and the village head was frequently elected. Moreover, it was not only the local practice of Orthodox Islam that dictated village life but a set of popular shrine practices as well. All these circumstances created sets of symbolic spaces maintained by local practices. By moving to refugee camps, Palestinian peasants witnessed drastic transformations from the small-scale rural, stable, and independent community to a large-scale, semi-urban, temporary, and dependent one. The cooperatively built stone houses were replaced by small universal concrete structures. Hierarchical authority was imposed on the refugee as institutional buildings replaced the guesthouse; schools and mosques replaced village shrines. Times and spaces of festivity shrank or diminished and the hegemony of external modern institutions increasingly influenced space. Spatial boundaries were manipulated by discipline and order imposed on the whole body of refugees. Despite these radical spatial transformations, the study suggests that there are remnants of village life in the camps. (Abstract shortened by UMI.)

**Traditional shade, rural livelihoods and conservation in small coffee farms and cooperatives of western El Salvador**

Publication Number AAT 1422482

Mendez, V. Ernesto, Ph.D., University of California, Santa Cruz (U.S.A.), 2004, 276 pages, Advisor: Gliessman, Stephen R.

This research aimed to better understand on-farm and organizational relationships affecting shade tree biodiversity and household livelihoods in three small farmer coffee cooperatives of western El Salvador. The cooperatives were chosen based on their distinct characteristics, and their proximity to the protected area *Parque Nacional El Imposible* (PNEI). Fifty-one 1000 m<sup>2</sup> plots for agroecological research were randomly or systematically laid out in the three cooperatives. Data on social organization and livelihoods was collected through 52 household interviews, and at least 15 focus groups. Household livelihoods of cooperative members relied mostly on agricultural work relating to coffee. Shade trees produced a diversity of products that were used both for household consumption and sales, which contributed considerably to the household economy. Member perceptions of their cooperatives were the result of a combination of factors, which include the origin, size, history and structure of each organization. Complete tree inventories yielded a total of 169 tree species, of which 123 were adequately identified. Tree species richness was lower, but similar to that found on a recent study on the PNEI (total of 174 species in 28 plots). Only 24% of the 123 species identified were shared by the three cooperatives. A comparison between the sum of species found in the cooperatives and the forest (227) showed that the forest and the shade coffee plantations only share 16% of the species identified. The levels of native tree biodiversity found in the cooperatives shows promise for conserving these species within shaded coffee plantations. Tree species richness was affected by a combination of biophysical factors (e.g. elevation and slope), as well as variables related to management, such as tree density. Dependence on tree products for livelihoods and cooperative types also influenced the levels of species richness. An integration of the cooperatives into conservation strategies needs to ensure that these initiatives will not negatively affect their member's socioeconomic situation. Special attention should be placed on avoiding use restrictions of their shade tree resources. Despite some of the problems observed and issues expressed by their members, cooperatives seem to be a familiar form of organization that remains functional and respected by its members.

**A case study of farmers joining together to create change: Perceptions and experiences of Agricultural Guild leaders and members**

Publication Number AAT 3182265

Frerichs, Rita Lorene, Ph.D., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (U.S.A.), 2005, 306 pages, Advisor: Sofranko, Andrew.

Current agricultural trends have revived discussions of the need for organized and cooperative action on the part of commercial Midwestern farmers. The prevailing belief is that without some form of organization and greater interest in “downstream” activities farmers will remain “price-takers” and, ultimately, end up losing out on opportunities for producing value-added grain. Alliances, guilds, and other forms of organization are thus seen as mechanisms for addressing a variety of farmers' needs. How these groups form, how successful they have been in achieving their stated goals, and the organizational structure that will ensure their continued success is not well understood. This dissertation uses a multi-method approach, consisting of in-depth face-to-face interviews, participant observation, document analysis, and survey data. It weaves together several theoretical perspectives and strands of community research to document the experience of a group of progressive farmers who have formed a “Guild”. It focuses specifically on their efforts at, and interest in, joining together to, in effect, produce “social capital”. The research examines, over a four-year period, the process through which farmers organized and cooperated in the production of a consumer-demanded, specialty grain. Considerable attention is given to the network structure that is put in place to successfully achieve a working community of committed members. The findings show that the Guild has been able to tap into and create community social capital. The leaders gained initial support for the Guild by building upon the strength of existing local social networks and institutional linkages that exist in rural communities. An examination of motives for joining the Guild indicate that in the face of an agricultural system increasingly defined by a new, differentiated market structure, members mainly joined the Guild to satisfy an overarching need for agricultural information and knowledge. Implications of the findings are discussed for two major areas of concern. The first is an understanding of how some of the farmers' basic problems were addressed in creating a network that would provide them with information and greater leverage in securing new market opportunities and higher income; and second, for sustaining Guild membership over the next decade or so. Express, overall concern is with gaining a clearer, more in-depth understanding of how contemporary farmers, from their

embedded position in the local landscape, are working their way into global production chains.

### **Maya coffee farmers and the fair trade commodity chain (Guatemala)**

Publication Number AAT 3176041

Lyon, Sarah, Ph.D., Emory University (U.S.A.), 2005, 322 pages, Advisor: Barlett, Peggy F.

Historically, Juaneros navigated external cultural, economic and political flows while struggling to maintain their community based identity. Beginning in the late 1800s with Guatemala's forced labor drafts and continuing through the poverty of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, community members were forced to seasonally migrate to coastal plantations in search of wages to supplement their subsistence production. This seasonal migration posed potential challenges to the maintenance of community life and left generations of Juaneros without education. Participation in the export commodity market and access to agricultural inputs slowly helped community members' transition from these slave-like conditions into a relative prosperity marked by higher rates of education, improved housing, and the possession of consumer goods. Participation in the fair trade coffee market is the contemporary means through which cooperative members interact with non-community members and external forces. This market participation forms the foundation of the contemporary dialectical relationships linking community, regional, national and international processes. This contemporary engagement with external economic, political and cultural flows, is distinctly different from that of previous eras because cooperative members' successful participation in the global economy is now predicated on remaining *in* the community and the continued viability of cooperative practices and ideologies. Cooperative membership and fair trade market participation provide Juaneros with the agency and power that their parents and grandparents lacked. Fair trade advocates argue that this alternative market ameliorates some of the commonly cited negative consequences of capitalism such as inequality, community disintegration, environmental degradation, and loss of local control. However, in order to present an alternative to historically inequitable international trade relations, fair trade must first contribute to the sustainability of coffee growing communities within economic, social and environmental arenas. Therefore, the dissertation evaluates fair trade's contributions within three distinct domains: the income level of producers, their agricultural production practices and the strength of the organization itself. The

research demonstrates that fair trade market participation positively impacts each of these factors; however, it also contributes to emerging tensions within the community as a result.

## **Essays in incomplete agricultural markets**

Publication Number AAT 3165842

Cross, Robin M., Ph.D., Oregon State University (U.S.A.), 2005, 92 pages, Advisor: Buccola, Stephen T.

Agricultural revenues, the product of stochastic prices and yields, lead to markets which are incomplete, thereby entangling and complicating economic inquiry. The following three essays explore the incomplete nature of agricultural markets and consider the implications of incompleteness for a range of policy questions and economic tools. The first essay, "*Cooperative Pricing Policy under Stress: The Case of Tri Valley Growers*," explores the incomplete contract markets that arise from unobservable yield processes. I formalize a common class of forward contracts, decompose them into a convex combination of yield derivatives, then derive the arbitrage-free forward price bounds. These bounds are used to show how the Board of Directors of a large agricultural cooperative, Tri Valley Growers, overstated earnings in order to liquidate financial equity. The second essay, "*Adapting Cooperative Structure for the New Global Environment*," follows up on the first by showing that the liquidating strategy Tri Valley's Board pursued was rational in terms of maximizing expected net present value of future cash flows. I derive a condition under which optimal equity retention is strictly greater for investor-owned than for cooperatively owned firms. Finally, I use ruin probabilities associated with the standard first-crossing-time problem, together with numerical integration methods, to verify that this condition held under the market conditions in which Tri Valley and its investor-owned rivals operated. The third essay, "*DEA and The Law of One Price*," explores the effect of variable prices on technical efficiency estimation. Data commonly are furnished in value, rather than factor terms. This raises the question of how value-based DEA models coincide with factor-based models. A sufficient condition for the two models to coincide is that all firms face the same set of prices. In practice, however, prices commonly vary across firms. I show that, unless an unreasonable restriction holds, the two models do not coincide. I decompose the resulting estimation error into its technology and firm-related components. Using Farrell's original 1957 data set to illustrate, the resulting estimation error is found to be both systematic and one-sided.



**The limits of equality: An economic analysis of the Israeli Kibbutz**

Publication Number AAT 3177675

Abramitzky, Ran, Ph.D., Northwestern University (U.S.A.), 2005, 183 pages, Advisor: Mokyr, Joel.

The Israeli Kibbutzim are thought-provoking organizations. In my dissertation, I identify an economic puzzle underlying the Kibbutzim's persistence, suggest an analytical approach that solves the puzzle, draw out the testable implications of that approach and then test those implications. As voluntary cooperatives based on equality in the distribution of income across members, standard theory suggests that they are potentially subject to unraveling due to severe problems of adverse selection and moral hazard. Yet, the Kibbutz movement successfully survived for most of the twentieth century and still seems, in large part, viable. Recently, however, a financial crisis hit the Kibbutzim and many Kibbutzim shift, for the first time in history, away from full equality by introducing various degrees of differential reforms. I build a simple theoretical framework to capture the main tradeoffs facing the Kibbutzim. My model makes predictions about the degree of equality that each Kibbutz would choose as well as predictions about the exit rates and the quality of migrants. I test the predictions of the model with both individual-level data sets and Kibbutz-level data sets assembled through field work in Israel. A study of the Kibbutzim allows us to deal with fundamental questions in economics such as how insurance can be provided despite the problems of moral hazard and adverse selection, how moral hazard and adverse selection shape contractual relationships, and how these problems are solved in egalitarian partnerships. I address the following questions: how did the voluntary egalitarian Kibbutzim coexist with a more capitalist environment? What level of equality can be sustained within a Kibbutz as an equilibrium? What is the role of economic forces in the behavior of Kibbutzim and in members' migration decisions? I find that Kibbutzim are self-enforcing organizations, whose behavior is shaped by the tradeoffs between insurance and incentives. The analysis suggests that in the foreseeable future, the Kibbutzim can continue to survive in a changing economic environment, even if in an altered form.

**Appropriating citizenship: Resources, discourses and political mobilization in contemporary rural Mexico**

Publication Number AAT 3181361

Johnson, Jennifer L., Ph.D., The University of Chicago (U.S.A.), 2005, 212 pages, Advisor: Parish, William L.

Grounded in field-based ethnographic research conducted at the end of the 1990s, this dissertation documents the emergence of new political actors and forms of activism in contemporary rural Mexico. Specifically, it elucidates how economic globalization impelled small-scale farmer cooperatives to challenge deep-seated norms about who governs and how in the Mexican countryside. In some cases these cooperatives became outspoken opponents of traditional authoritarian patterns of governance. In others, they became proponents of highly unorthodox forms of political self-governance. In all instances, however, organizations that had originated as strictly economic endeavors became sites for developing and enacting new collective understandings of citizen rights and duties in the political sphere. Comparative analysis across three such cases reveals that peasants mobilized politically because economic globalization redistributed material resources in ways that discredited exclusionary patterns of governance even as it engendered discourses that helped rural citizens envision alternative modes of state-society relations.

**In the shadow of indebtedness: Sustaining community in a heartland livestock auction**

Publication Number AAT 3185170

Johnson, Duane Richard, Ph.D., The University of Kansas (U.S.A.), 2005, 219 pages, Advisors: Warren, Carol A. B.; Antonio, Robert J.

Does community exist? If it does, what form might it take in our postmodern world? This ethnography of the situated interactions in a Midwestern livestock auction accounts for a response to these questions. Recent economic sociology sees markets as complex social *and* economic phenomena and takes the position that markets should be recognized as grounded in normative patterns, including reciprocity, that also sustain them. I argue that community is constructed and reproduced as this semi-rural farming population engages in a weekly market

(auction) activity. The essential unpredictability of social interaction and an assumed propensity toward self-interest by social actors, necessitate constructing norms of social interaction that lead to predictability and stability for social systems. The norm of reciprocity (*generalized* reciprocity) is central to that stability and to the construction of community. Community is understood in interactional terms - as processes rather than places. Community is not spontaneously generated nor is it self-perpetuating. The cultural reproduction of community requires social situations where there is opportunity for a particular kind of self-conscious participation of persons in one another's lives. This kind of participation requires a common shared sense of values and norms, established over time and acted upon repeatedly. It also requires at least the tacit recognition of the necessary mutual dependence among participants, thus supporting acts of cooperation among them. Such processes of participation lead to a sense of obligation to the other participants, leading to a norm of generalized reciprocity. The social interactions between members require a "transparency" that is a result of a critical level of social density. Lastly, reputations and trusting relationships are both the product and the measure of such participation in a community. I argue the auction setting provides the opportunity for members (over time, *many* members) of this farming community to have enough face-to-face participation in the lives of other perceived members - enough experiences of reciprocity to create a norm of generalized reciprocity - to create community in a stronger, *less imagined*, sense.

**Common ground between crafts collectives and conservation:  
Protecting natural resources through artisan production**

Publication Number AAT 3157871

Wilhoit, Jennifer Jade, Ph.D., Antioch New England Graduate School (U.S.A.), 2005, 161 pages, Advisor: Watts, Heidi.

The formation of collectives that focus on crafts production is a survival strategy for artisans in remote areas both domestically and abroad. In many cases crafts artists are influenced by their rural environment and use images of and resources from nature in their work. Some of the cooperatives are situated near protected areas with local residents as members; others draw membership from a larger regional area and have no strong tie to a protected area. Yet in a number of crafts cooperatives in developing countries, members have incorporated a formal environmental agenda into the cooperative's bylaws. This research explored crafts collectives in the United States in order to learn how crafts artists understand

conservation in this country. I conducted my study with members of the Gallery Shop in rural Pennsylvania and the Southern Highland Craft Guild's Folk Art Center in North Carolina. My inquiry focused on the artisans' perceptions of their work, the collective and their community in regard to conservation. The results showed that individual artisans place a high value on, and are very knowledgeable about, their local ecology but do not take formal environmental action as a collective. In response to the findings, I propose a model for integrating the ecological, economic and sociopolitical actions of artisan members. The implications of this research for those concerned about crafts and ecology are significant; there is potential for collaboration between artisans and conservationists.

## **2. University of Pretoria Electronic Theses and Dissertations**

### **Determining economic value added for agricultural co-operatives in South Africa**

Publication Number ETD-01182005-101059

Liebenberg, Isabel Elsje, M.Sc., University of Pretoria, (South Africa), 2004, 129 pages, Advisor: Geysler, J.M.

No research has been done to date on Economic Value Added (EVA) as a performance measure for South African agricultural co-operatives. The main objective of this study is to calculate Economic Value Added for South African agricultural co-operatives. Further objectives are to determine whether co-operatives add value to their members' interest, whether there exists a correlation between EVA performances over the years under review and between the individual groups of co-operatives. The study aims to determine EVA for the grain and oilseeds, wine, meat, timber, tobacco, fruit and vegetables co-operatives. The study further calculated EVA values for all the groups of co-operatives under changing beta-values to look at the sensitivity of EVA. EVA can be described as a value-based performance measure, an investment decision tool and also a performance measure reflecting the absolute amount of shareholder value created. Three basic inputs are needed in the calculation of EVA, namely return on capital earned on investments, the cost of capital for those investments and the capital invested in them. These three inputs are determined before the calculation of EVA can be applied. The values for the determination of these inputs are obtained from the income statements and balance sheets of the respective agricultural co-operatives. After the calculation of the EVA values for all the separate co-

operatives, it could be concluded that no grain and oilseed co-operatives created value. There was only one wine co-operative which created value, five which improved from a negative to a positive EVA, three which had negative but improving EVA values. The rest of the wine co-operatives destroyed value. In the case of meat co-operatives three of the four co-operatives destroyed value, while the other one created value in the first (1998) and last year (2001) under review. The timber co-operatives created value, except for one of the three which destroyed value in 2000 and 2001. The tobacco co-operatives destroyed value over the four years under review. In the case of fruit and vegetable co-operatives, one co-operative created value, while the rest of the co-operatives destroyed value. All of the general co-operatives, as well as all the requisites co-operatives destroyed value. Averages for all the groups of co-operatives were calculated as well. Grain and oilseeds, wine, tobacco, general and requisites co-operatives destroyed value. The average of the meat co-operatives showed that this group destroyed value over the first three years under review, but created value in the last year. Timber, fruit and vegetable co-operatives created value over all four of the years under review. The average for all of the co-operatives showed that co-operatives, in general, destroyed value. From this study it becomes clear that no correlation exists between the EVA values calculated for the co-operatives over the four year period under review. There is no correlation between the individual groups of co-operatives either. This means that the EVA performance of co-operatives is not influenced by external factors, but depends on the effective management and decision-making within the agricultural co-operatives. By increasing and decreasing beta-values by 10% and 20% respectively and then recalculating EVA with these changed beta-values, the sensitivity of EVA could be determined. There were no significant changes in the EVA values after recalculating them. Most negative EVA values stayed negative and the positive EVA values stayed positive after recalculating EVA. It can be said that EVA is not very sensitive to the changing betas.

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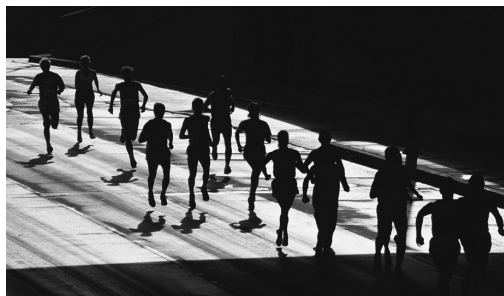
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