

TTP289A-05: THE TRANSPORTATION-LAND USE CONNECTION

Assignment 1: Critique of Research Article

Due Date: 2/18

The purpose of this assignment is to give you practice in critically assessing the empirical research of others. The assignment is to submit a short critique of an article of your choice from a peer review journal. The first step is to select your article. Ideally, you can find one that you will be using for your term paper. Another possibility is to use one of the readings for class (hint: look at the readings for the dates 1/28, 1/30, 2/11, 2/13). You can also pick any other article that interests you, as long as it describes empirical research and covers some aspect of the transportation – land use connection.

For your critique, I'd like you to look at three things.

1. The hypothesis. In some cases, the hypothesis will be formally stated as such. In other cases, a research question rather than a hypothesis will be posed. Either way, the question is, what are they trying to show? Then take a look at how they develop this hypothesis. Do they use theory? Do they look at the results from other studies? You should expect to find some logical argument for why this is a reasonable hypothesis to begin with.
2. The research design. In order to address the research question or test the hypothesis, what kinds of data and analysis did the researchers use? Think first about general distinctions: quantitative versus qualitative, time-series or cross-sectional. For quantitative studies, what was the dependent variable? What kinds of independent or explanatory variables did they include? Did they use existing data or collect their own data (e.g. using a survey)? For qualitative studies, what kind of data collection technique did they use? After getting a good feel for the research design, think about the strengths and limitations of this approach as a way of approaching the research question (hint: the researchers themselves should discuss this somewhere in the paper).
3. The findings. After all that, what did the researchers conclude? Do these conclusions make sense to you? Do you think they are well supported by the analysis presented? Do the researchers discuss what additional analysis needs to be done or what questions remain to be answered? Were there questions that you felt weren't adequately addressed by the researchers?

Your write-up should follow this general structure. Each section should include both description of what's in the paper as well as your assessment. Do not quote from the paper – put their words into your own words. The critique must be no more than 4 pages, double-spaced, 12-point font, 1-inch margins. Put the full citation for the article right after your name and date at the top of the first page. *For articles that are not in the reader, please attach a full copy to your critique.*