

# Master of Arts in Policy Studies Graduate Research Conference

May 16, 2014

## Presentation Abstracts (*by alpha*)

**Name:** Kathy Betteridge

**Title:** *Making the Case for Accessible Housing in the Private Market*

**Abstract:** In an effort to maximize profits, private home-builders in many U.S. cities are primarily building only multi-level housing. This has the unintended consequence of excluding people with disabilities because they are unable to make effective use of such a home. When private home-builders neglect to build accessible housing entire populations of people are being shut out of many communities. This has far-reaching consequences for society as a whole which must be addressed. The purpose of my Capstone research is to examine this problem more closely, as well as investigating the need for policies which will support accessible housing in the private market. The study of this problem will be useful in proposing possible amendments to the Fair Housing Act and policies directed towards encouraging builders to adopt more accessible building practices within the private sector. Ideally I would propose that, in certain demographic areas (defined by density), the building department in that city require twenty percent of all new single-family homes to be designed and built as both single-story and universally designed homes. Government officials and home-builders alike need to turn their attention to building more "Inclusive Communities" where any citizen can reach their dream of homeownership.

**Name:** Jennifer Crownhart

**Title:** *United States Trade Policy and Gold*

**Abstract:** In 2012 the United States imported 147.7 metric tons of gold from Canada, Mexico, Colombia and Peru. The issue that this study addresses is the lack of policy in the United States regarding its importation of gold into national markets from these countries where social and environmental injustices occur as a result. To address this problem, the purpose of this study was to identify the reasons the United States has not adopted regulatory policies for gold. Policies implemented for diamonds were identified and the policy recommendations regarding the importation of gold were made.

In brief reports of human rights violations submitted to the United States State Department and human rights organizations were analyzed to outline the policy problem. Current pending legislation and published statements from members of Congress were examined to determine if there was any movement towards writing and implementing policy in the United States regarding gold as there had been towards diamonds. Trade agreements were analyzed to determine if there were any stipulations on gold mining and compliance with laws set forth to protect miners. The results in the end demonstrated the need for the United States to implement policies to prevent social and environmental injustice in underdeveloped countries.

**Name:** Kerry L. Francis

**Title:** *Constitutional Ambiguity as Policy: The U.S. Federal Framework and American Samoa*

**Abstract:** United States territorial policy represents an alternative constitutional framework in the relationship between the federal government and the nation's constituent political units. It departs from the uniform tug and pull aspect of the debate over the extent of federal powers versus states' rights, yet the existing structural tensions between the federal government and individual territories are separate and contextually unique in each instance. Furthermore, the Constitution of 1787 is explicit in the dispensing of federal responsibility and authority over U.S. territory. At some point, this provision served as a springboard for an evolution of a discrete relationship for each insular area with the U.S., forcing us to re-examine republican ideals inherited in a participatory citizenship and constitutional order. This

differentiation is particularly evident with American Samoa. This research is a composite case study importing evidence from primary textual sources, critical analyses, and reports from multi-disciplinary sources, an exposition on the institutionalization of policies and structures that buttress the islands' territorial relationship with the U.S.

**Name:** Eric Hopson

**Title:** *Visualizing Public Participation: Wind Farm Development in Eastern Washington*

**Abstract:** Washington State has seen a boom of industrial-scale wind farm construction over the past 10 years. The siting process for these projects has prompted conflict between those most directly impacted and those who favor broader community benefits.

This intent of this research is to develop an extensive visual guide which captures both the geographic and temporal scales of this struggle. Information on participating stakeholders was obtained by analyzing publicly available documents and media sources. Participant's summarized opinions, dates involved, and physical locations were then inputted into an online mapping platform.

It is hoped that the research methods employed here will help inform future efforts in visualizing qualitative data and that the final map will highlight the innate inequalities present in large scale industrial development.

**Name:** Sarah Kelley Baba

**Title:** *Teacher-Child Interaction and Child Outcomes: Puget Sound Educational Service District (PSESD) Head Start Preschool Programs 2012-2013*

**Abstract:** There is an achievement gap between high and low income preschool aged children. Head Start targeted preschool programs seek to decrease the achievement gap in school readiness. Higher quality teacher-child interactions are associated with positive child outcomes in empirical research. The purpose of this study is to identify the relationship between teacher-child interaction scores and children's developmental gains over one academic year in Puget Sound Educational Service District's Head Start programs in Washington. This study uses data from fall and spring 2012-13. Classroom Assessment Scoring System CLASS will be used to measure teacher-child interaction and a comprehensive observational checkpoint assessment Teaching Strategies Gold is used to measure child development.

**Name:** Mandy E Knudtson

**Title:** *Electronic Waste Recycling Programs in the United States: A Comparative Analysis*

**Abstract:** Proper recycling of electronic waste (e-waste) allows reuse of finite resources and prevents toxic materials in e-waste from causing harm to humans and the environment. The United States is the only OECD country without national e-waste recycling policies. Currently, 25 States have e-waste recycling policies, and 15 impose landfill disposal bans. Without federal regulations, laws differ from state-to-state, making it difficult to control and measure outcomes. This analysis outlines a framework to compare three different types of State e-waste policy models including: 1) Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR); 2) consumer-based advanced recovery fee; and 3) manufactures to provide public education. Program success was measured by the number of collection sites and recyclers (convenience); the amount of e-waste recycled by weight per capita (volume); and if established goals (incentives) are in place to encourage recycling. This analysis shows convenience and incentives contribute to program success and landfill bans may increase recycling volumes. This analysis also identifies the need for consistent reporting of e-waste data in all States to provide greater transparency. Furthermore, policies at the federal level are needed to address trans-boundary movement of e-waste across state lines.

**Name:** Gene Mueller

**Title:** *Nuclear and Chemical Weapons and Law - Comparative Analysis*

**Abstract:** This paper briefly reviews nuclear and chemical weapons policy on the international scale since the dawn of the 20th century. The paper goes into detail about how both chemical and nuclear weapons

actually function, and then describes the various legal agreements nation-states have enacted to control their use. The objective of the paper is to gain a greater understanding of the arms control regime for humanity's most reviled weaponry, and ascertain what innovations have taken place in the field of arms policy recently. New cooperation regarding weapons verification and the increasing role of international cooperation and non-government organizations in the policy of disarming and controlling weapons systems makes international arms control more reliable and durable than ever. Yet there are still concerns to be had, as the issue of terrorism and rogue states introduces new issues that have not yet been solved by international-level agreements.

**Name:** Safaa F. Rajkhan

**Title:** *Women in Saudi Arabia: Rights, Limitations and Future Development*

**Abstract:** From appointing women to political positions in 2013 for the first time in Saudi Arabia's history to granting a lawyer license to the first Saudi female lawyer last January. Saudi Arabia's policies and programs are promising steps on the road to women's full participation in the society. However, women still make up less than 15 percent of the national workforce; this represents an enormous source of untapped potential for the Kingdom. The ban on women's driving is one of the biggest obstacles women still face and deal with every day. Legislative, social, educational, and occupational constraints prevent women from fully participating in the development process of their country. Overcoming these constraints will be essential if the Kingdom is to introduce sweeping reforms that would enable Saudi women to take a serious part of developing their country. Labor market, political and law reforms—including legislation promoting gender equality—should be seriously considered. This study presents a socioeconomic profile of women in Saudi Arabia and based on it, policy recommendations will be offered.

**Name:** Alexander Schuler

**Title:** *The Federal Earned Income Tax Credit as Regional Economic Development Tool: An Economic Impact Analysis of Rural Southwest Washington*

**Abstract:** As the United States marks 50 years since the beginning of the Great Society social programs initially intended to end rural poverty the results of this endeavor are far from complete. Over eighty percent of the most impoverished counties in the United States are rural with double digit unemployment and limited potential for economic growth. Although traditional welfare transfer structures have helped to stabilize rural communities, these transfers have not created the economic development necessary to break the bonds of poverty. The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) presents a difference policy tool for economic development. The EITC essentially functions as a wage subsidy lifting 6.5 million people out of poverty, including over 3 million children, every year through a post-tax transfer of up to \$6,000 dollars for a family of five. The EITC's proven record of incentivizing work and reducing the need for in-kind government transfers has earned the credit bipartisan support. My analysis demonstrates the potential benefits of utilizing a modified EITC as a targeted rural development tool in southwest Washington.

**Name:** Omer Terrason

**Title:** *Imposing charging and parking limits on electric vehicles that have attained their maximum state-of-charge at free electric vehicle public charging stations*

**Abstract:** This study aims to deduce whether the incumbent policies surrounding "free" electric vehicle public charging stations are being abused and hoarded by the electric vehicle drivers/owners as privileged parking, and it shall attempt to determine the propensity of electric vehicle drivers/owners who deny others access to electric vehicle charging stations by leaving an electric vehicle connected that does not need a charge or needs very little charge. Furthermore, the study through historical data, trend analysis, and sales projections of electric vehicles versus the planned installations of electric vehicle charging stations shall attempt to project the breadth of the problem and the probability when this problem could severely undermine the spirit in which this public good was established. Moreover, the study shall make policy recommendations to preemptively address this problem.

**Name:** Laurie J. Tuff

**Title:** *Court Appointed Special Advocates: Are they effective? Do they affect the well-being of children?*

**Abstract:** Studies evaluating the effectiveness of Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs) as advocates for children in foster care have previously compared cases assigned a CASA to those without a CASA, without consideration for the higher-level risk factors inherent in cases assigned a CASA. Children with a higher level of abuse or neglect are likely to experience more negative outcomes, CASA assignment notwithstanding. As a result, little empirical evidence has been generated to evaluate the effectiveness of CASAs in child dependency cases. This study examines the effectiveness of Snohomish County CASA volunteers and their impact on child well-being by comparing cases with and without a CASA, controlling for case severity and demographics. This study asks the questions: Are CASAs effective? Do they affect the well-being of children? Effectiveness is measured by the length of stay in foster care, the number of out-of-home placements, the number of school changes, and the number of services obtained for the children. Well-being is measured by proxy by positive school engagement and extended-family contact, as documented in reports filed with the Superior Court for the State of Washington, Snohomish County. The empirical evidence generated by this study will lay a foundation for future studies of CASA effectiveness.