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Land tenure and the urban institutional politics of sustainability: How sustainability "lands" in the relationships between global North and South contexts.

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LAND TENURE AND THE URBAN INSTITUTIONAL POLITICS OF
SUSTAINABILITY: HOW SUSTAINABILITY "LANDS" IN THE RELATIONSHIPS
BETWEEN GLOBAL NORTH AND SOUTH CONTEXTS

By

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my loving family.

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ABSTRACT

LAND TENURE AND THE URBAN INSTITUTIONAL POLITICS OF
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Sustainability is not simply a moral concept but is essential for human survival, and the tensions inherent in sustainable development bear repercussions that are increasingly placed onto the poor and powerless (Redclift 1987). While sustainability has become a relevant concept for urban knowledge and research especially in the global South, much of our urban sustainability knowledge is shaped by research and typologies from the global North (Nagendra et al. 2018; Parnell & Robinson 2017; Roy 2005). This dissertation considers the spatial transferability of sustainability knowledge from a relational perspective (Massey 2002). Sustainable development can be understood from this perspective as a set of multiple and differing relations - social, environmental, economic - that encounter one another in coexistence, conflict, and cooperation to shape urban form.

The first paper offers a theoretical contribution which brings the concept of nomotropism into conversation with institutional bricolage in the context of land tenure and urban sustainability. Where urban sustainability is best captured through institutional

processes, institutional bricolage and nomotropism are complementary venues for capturing these relationships with normative implications in the arenas of planning and policy. The second and third papers offer empirical contributions. In the second paper, I offer a comparative urban account where I track neoliberal processes of planning, land tenure reform, and the production of statistical knowledge as they relate to the institutional politics of sustainability in the Nicaraguan and Dominican contexts. The third paper presents findings on how varied forms of land are mediated through the urban institutional politics of sustainability. Through critical discourse analysis of documents from non-governmental organizations in two Latin American contexts, I demonstrate the important roles of discourse in activist land tenure reforms.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

LAND TENURE AND URBAN SUSTAINABILITY

The United Nations Economic Commission has expressed that land tenure security should be stressed as a precondition for better natural resource management and, by proxy, sustainable development (UNECA 2003: 6). The Nicaraguan and Dominican contexts complicate this proposition. In parts of Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic, hybrid and complex land tenure institutions are differentially discursively and materially enacted through urban informality and neoliberal sustainability policy. To elaborate, recent data suggests that the Dominican Republic scores relatively poorly on the UN's sustainable development goals, yet relatively well on perceptions of tenure security (United Nations 2021; GPRI 2020). The inverse may be argued for Nicaragua; while recent data suggests that Nicaragua scores relatively well on the UN's sustainable development goals, data also shows that Nicaragua scores relatively poorly on perceptions of tenure security (United Nations 2021; GPRI 2020).

These data show contradictory findings because the notion of "sustainable development" attached to them is inherently contradictory (Redclift 1987). Powerful societies utilize frameworks from law and politics for the exploitation of the natural environment of less powerful societies. For instance, powerful societies utilize "rational" forms of environmental management, inclusive of forms of land tenure, to increase the

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viability of "underdeveloped" societies for economic development. However, these frameworks do not make the environment safe for the poor and their livelihoods, in part because they destroy cultures and cultural knowledge (Redclift 1987: 172). Existing systems for sustaining the livelihoods of many are therefore put at risk by forms of "development." Sustainability, then, is not simply a conceptual framing but is essential for human survival, and the tensions inherent in sustainable development bear repercussions that are increasingly placed onto the poor and powerless (Redclift 1987). Given the contradictions underlying the connections between sustainable development and land tenure, the existence of conflicting data for the Nicaraguan and Dominican contexts is unsurprising. However, considering these contradictions, scholarship needs to remain conscious as to the ways in which nature is transformed and produced (Redclift 1987). The Nicaraguan and Dominican contexts are generative in this regard.

The concept of sustainability has been operationalized in many fields and is in many cases viewed through the balance of three pillars of social, economic, and environmental sustainability (Orr 2002; Kates 2005). Additionally, sustainability should and has to a degree been urbanized. 'The urban question' extends the unit of analysis from a particular city or place within the conventional rural/urban binary to what I will argue is the "throwntogetherness" of relational encounters that constitute space-time in an era of globalization[1] (Massey 2002). The relational perspective further lends itself to studies of institutions through which sustainability can be captured empirically, because

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[1] In *For Space* (2005), Doreen Massey argues that what makes a given place important is its "throwntogetherness", or the way in which very diverse elements cross both natural and social categories and come together, fostering particular "here and now". The encounter of diverse entities therefore makes places conceptually specific, yet fundamentally open and relational. Space also therefore captures the political, because it holds "the negotiation of relations, configurations" (147).

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issues of sustainability are inherent within the power relationships that comprise society (Lake & Hanson 2000). With a relational perspective in mind, sustainable development can be understood as a set of multiple and differing social relations - social, economic, and environmental - that encounter one another in coexistence, conflict, and cooperation to shape urban form.

While sustainability has become a relevant concept for urban knowledge and research especially in the global South, much of our urban sustainability knowledge is shaped by research and typologies from the global North (Nagendra et al. 2018; Parnell & Robinson 2017; Roy 2005). Critiques such as these have been extended to scholarship on urban sustainability largely through the optic of urban informality. Urban informality has been theorized by Ananya Roy (2005) to highlight the "challenges of dealing with the 'unplannable'" in cities where urban transformation frequently does not match with theories of the global North around the order of formal urbanization (147). While sustainability can resonate with a collective sense of forward-thinking responsibility, northern sustainability ambitions have "come to land on the quintessentially unpredictable, complex space of the city" in which planning theory is disoriented in capturing this complexity (Cowley 2015: 6). The tradition of top-down planning based on ideas of hierarchy, positivism, and the notion of development has been widely undermined by scholars working from the perspective of the global South (see e.g., Robinson 2006; Yiftachel 2006; Shatkin 2007; Watson 2009; Parnell & Robinson 2012).

Postcolonial theory is relevant for studies of land tenure and sustainability, then, because it suggests that the complexity of the postcolonial urban experience can be articulated through the relationships between the 'rural' and the urban' or the 'center' and

'periphery.' Some critical scholarship has addressed this critique by offering venues for capturing complex histories and topographies of urban economic, political, and cultural processes especially in the global South (Ghertner 2015, Larner 2003). Asher Ghertner (2015) offers an external critique on critical urban studies for its use of the term gentrification, which, according to Ghertner, helps to keep critical urban studies locked within its post-industrial, Western confines of ideas of privatized land systems. Further, Wendy Larner (2003) explains that intellectual approaches to studying neoliberalism thus far have illustrated the concept of neoliberalism as universal and spatially homogenous to the neglect of the geographic messiness and multiplicities of particular neoliberalisms. Larner argues for understanding neoliberalism beyond the geographic center and capturing the agency of related neoliberal subjects. I incorporate these lines of thought into my research on land tenure and the urban institutional politics of sustainability. The following section outlines the three papers that comprise this dissertation.

OUTLINE OF THE DISSERTATION

The first paper offers a theoretical contribution which brings the concept of nomotropism into conversation with institutional bricolage in the context of land tenure and urban sustainability. In many fields including geography, institutional bricolage has been used to describe the ways in which actors consciously and unconsciously reshape or piece together different institutional arrangements. Similarly, in the field of legal studies, nomotropism has been used to understand actions that do not comply with the law while still retaining some relation to it. Despite the proliferation of scholarship employing both concepts separately, there have been few instances of overlap, and intentional integration of these concepts has been virtually nonexistent in the literature on urban sustainability

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and land tenure (See Pisu & Chiri 2019; Chiodelli & Moroni 2014; Frimpong Boamah & Walker 2016; Lejano & Del Bianco 2018; Rosa 2016; Kunz at al. 2017; Scurrah 2021; Elfversson & Höglund 2018). This contribution seeks to elaborate on the common ontological ground between these concepts, with a particular focus on studies of land tenure and urban sustainability.

Where urban sustainability is best captured through institutional processes, institutional bricolage and nomotropism are complementary venues for capturing these relationships with normative implications in the arenas of planning and policy. I find two pertinent areas where the concepts overlap, including their common relational ontology and subsequently the ways in which the concepts engage with notions of structure and agency. These theoretical framings encourage prioritizing the unequal relationships among places through capital, territory, and imperialism. In addition to these areas of overlap, I find areas of divergence which may offer new avenues for contextualizing forms of socially located agency. While the boundaries of analysis for institutional bricolage are expansive, nomotropism offers a particular language from legal studies for the study of action within land tenure institutions. In turn, nomotropism may be informed through institutional bricolage's encouragement of capturing multiple and diverse identities and subjectivities.

The second and third papers offer empirical contributions. In the second paper, I offer a comparative urban account where I track neoliberal processes of planning, land tenure reform, and the production of statistical knowledge as they relate to the institutional politics of sustainability in the Nicaraguan and Dominican contexts. Center-periphery relations have been sustained and reinscribed over time in each context through

material and discursive formations of uneven development. I then highlight the role of state-generated statistical knowledge on agricultural cooperatives in reinscribing these relations. I integrate archival and discourse analysis with mapping to show how the statistical representations that emerge out of two national studies of agricultural cooperatives reproduced these relations. The Nicaraguan and Dominican contexts share some similarities in the implementation and restructuring of their agricultural cooperative models. However, these processes materialize spatially, temporally, and territorially differently in each context. An understanding of these contexts from a comparative lens provides a view into the differential ways in which neoliberal planning and policy integrates with real property, land reform, and sustainability.

The third paper presents findings on how varied forms of land are mediated through the urban institutional politics of sustainability. Through critical discourse analysis of documents from non-governmental organizations in two Latin American contexts, I demonstrate the important roles of discourse in activist land tenure reforms. Both NGOs are primary conduits for encouraging collective action against state-led forms of land expropriation, yet their discourse also reinscribes these power relations through limiting conceptions of socially located agency. I find that activists advocating for land tenure security have been able to contest and resist land expropriation in the greater Bluefield's and Santo Domingo metropolitan areas by raising awareness of the legacy and enduring consequences of land expropriation and its effects on marginalized groups. Yet certain discursive strategies have the opposite effect in incorporating structuring devices that correspond to neoliberal sentiments of identity and rights. This

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analysis illustrates the need for a richer conception of the ways in which livelihoods are

sustained in multiple and complex neoliberal formations.

CHAPTER II: BRINGING NOMOTROPISM INTO CONVERSATION WITH INSTITUTIONAL BRICOLAGE IN CONTEXTS OF LAND TENURE AND URBAN SUSTAINABILITY

OVERVIEW

In many academic fields, including geography, institutional bricolage has been used to describe the ways in which actors consciously and unconsciously reshape or piece together different institutional arrangements. Similarly, in the field of legal studies, nomotropism has been used to understand actions that do not comply with the law while still retaining some relation to it. Despite the proliferation of scholarship employing both concepts separately, there have been few instances of overlap, and intentional integration of these concepts has been virtually nonexistent. This contribution seeks to elaborate on the common ontological ground between these concepts with a particular focus on the study of land tenure and the urban institutional politics of sustainability. Where urban sustainability is best captured through institutional processes, institutional bricolage and nomotropism are complementary venues for capturing these relationships with prescriptive implications in the arenas of planning and policy. I find two pertinent areas where the concepts overlap, including their common relational ontology and subsequently the ways in which the concepts engage with notions of structure and agency. In addition to these areas of overlap, I find areas of divergence which may offer new avenues for contextualizing forms of socially located agency. While the boundaries of analysis for institutional bricolage are expansive, nomotropism offers a particular

language from legal studies to frame analyses. In turn, nomotropism may be informed through institutional bricolage's predisposition for capturing multiple and diverse identities and subjectivities.

INTRODUCTION

The concept of sustainability has received widespread attention in various disciplines and is most commonly defined as seeking balance between three pillars of social, economic, and environmental sustainability (Orr 2002; Kates 2005). While sustainability has become a relevant concept for urban knowledge and research especially in the global South, much of our urban sustainability knowledge is shaped by research rooted in typologies from the global North (Nagendra et al. 2018; Parnell & Robinson 2017; Roy 2005). Land tenure, which is otherwise commonly viewed as a conduit for sustainability, has been subject to this form of critique as well as studies have found that land tenure systems in the global South are rooted in typologies from the global North (Rudel & Hernandez 2-17; Behnke 2018; de Castro 2016). Scholarship has addressed critiques in this vein by offering venues for capturing complex histories and topographies of urban economic, political, and cultural processes especially in the global South context (Ghertner 2015, Larner 2003). Critiques of the transferability of typologies of land tenure have been extended to scholarship on urban sustainability largely in reference to urban informality through postcolonial theory, which suggests that the complexity of the postcolonial urban experience can be articulated through the relationships between the 'rural' and the urban,' or the 'center' and 'periphery.'

In this paper I encourage an "urbanization" of sustainability perspectives by bringing relational approaches to the city to bear in several ways. The urban question is

conceptually relevant within studies of sustainability because it extends the unit of analysis from a particular city or place within the conventional rural/urban binary to the relationships that constitute space-time. Further, through a relational lens, sustainability lends itself to analytically capturing the multiple and differing social relations – social, environmental, and economic - that encounter one another in coexistence, conflict, and cooperation to shape urban form. Importantly, the primacy of land, labor, and gender need to be more deeply integrated into the concept of sustainability, and a relational ontology rooted in place and history can encourage that through its conceptual and analytical form.

I draw from the concepts of nomotropism and institutional bricolage that, if brought together, could offer a channel for bringing a relational ontology to sustainability. Conceptually, there is resonance between both concepts and Doreen Massey's (2002) idea of the "throwntogetherness" of proximate encounter in a globalized context. The concept of institutional bricolage is meant to capture three factors of institutional arrangements including the multiple identities of actors, the frequency of cross-cultural borrowing and multi-purpose institutions, and the prevalence of arrangements and norms which foster cooperation, respect, and reciprocity (Cleaver 2002). Nomotropism also lends itself to the idea of thrown togetherness as it has been used in urban geography to highlight multiple and complex forms of engagement with land tenure laws in places typically experiencing rapid demographic change.

Bringing these concepts into conversation would promote a relational analytic in sustainability planning and policy discourse. The benefit of this move lies in thinking of different places not only as unique but as relationally linked, and moreover, usually

linked in uneven power relations. Further, if economic "development" requires and implies spatial inequality, then planning and policy must be concerned not only with issues of distribution but with production (Massey 2007). Institutional bricolage and nomotropism are conceptual avenues through which the problem of distribution can be reframed to processes of production. Nomotropism may be especially informative in this area in that the concept offers a specific optic for capturing the legal complexities around producing diverse tenure institutions, to then communicate them within applied planning and policy settings.

Another aspect of the prescriptive relevance of bringing the concepts together lies in their complimentary boundaries of analysis. Institutional bricolage is especially relevant in this regard because the concept encourages a consideration and acceptance of multiple and diverse forms of identity and subjectivity. This sensibility for the negotiation of rules among multiple sources of authority resonates with feminist scholarship on the relationship between gender and the normative elements of planning and policy (Beebeejuan 2017). When brought into conversation with nomotropism, institutional bricolage can offer a lens for considering gender relations in planning for sustainability.

The paper is laid out in the following sections. I first describe the concept of sustainability and the importance of "the urban question" for the study of sustainability. I then link urban sustainability to land tenure institutions through critiques around the spatial transferability of theories of land tenure. Following this section are two sections describing the concepts of nomotropism and institutional bricolage, and their engagement in studies of sustainability and land tenure. I conclude the paper with describing the

conceptual and prescriptive relevance of bringing nomotropism into conversation with institutional bricolage.

Sustainability and 'The Urban Question'

A growing body of literature has been critiquing and rethinking existing categories of analysis that frame much of urban research and policymaking. From the perspective of these critiques, binaries such as urban/rural, formal/informal, and state/market are no longer viewed to be able to capture or explain the complexities of urban processes, especially in the global South. These critiques have been offered alongside calls for a postcolonial critique of urban studies (Robinson 2006), for 'new geographies of theory' (Robinson 2016; Roy 2009), and for a new 'epistemology of the urban' (Brenner 2013). These calls for new scholarship illustrate a common critique of hegemonic views of urbanization which are based on ideas stemming from the European context of a linear progression from the rural to urban through industrialization and economic development (Nair 2013). Neil Brenner subsequently advocates a shift away from placing focus on "cities" or "regions" to focusing on urbanization as a worldwide set of sociospatial processes driven primarily by capitalist accumulation. From this perspective, urbanization under capitalism produces variegated landscapes through a continual process of spatial restructuring (Brenner, 2014; Brenner & Schmid, 2011). Postcolonial scholarship posits further that the complexity of the postcolonial urban experience can be articulated through the relationship between the 'rural' and the urban' within the perspective that in most of the world, the urban question is the agrarian question (Roy 2016).

Postcolonial critiques of the categories of analysis that frame much of urban research and policymaking are rooted in debates in geography about conceptualizations of space following from debates about the reconciliation of human and physical geography. Doreen Massey offers a relational conception of space in response to critiques of geography for the misapplication of natural science techniques to humans. Part of the issue that Massey raises in offering a relational conception of space is that human and physical geography tend to deal with systems in particular places that are too complicated for the simplified categories of analysis used in early forms of spatial science. Perhaps one of the clearest examples of the use of these simplifying categories is in thinking of the world as divided into developed and developing worlds (Cresswell 2012). This perspective is based on the idea that all countries are the same but are located on differing temporal paths, but it does not consider the ways that spatial difference can mediate temporal difference. When embracing an epistemology from physics meant for dealing with simple systems, space is taken to be a "frozen slice" across a more lively and promising time (Cresswell 242). From this perspective, difference is then understood in the same way, to be viewed as a number of points along a temporal path. A relational perspective posits rather that space and time are mutually generative. To elaborate, space is a sphere in which different and multiple stories encounter one another to actively generate space-time (Massey 1999:247). Place, therefore, is a place of encounter in physical proximity. It is characterized by a "throwntogetherness" that is increasingly characteristic an age of globalization (Massey 2002).

Considering 'the urban question' is conceptually relevant within studies of sustainability, therefore, because it extends the unit of analysis from a particular city or

place within the conventional rural/urban binary to the relationships that constitute space-time. Viewed as bounded objects, cities are considered objects of sustainability (UN (DESA 2012; Ravetz 2011). Cities are often considered to be instrumental to sustainability in that they often envelop the intellectual, financial, and political resources necessary to create sustainable initiatives, or that they dominate in domains such as energy consumption (Feunfschilling 2017). Mainstream conceptions of urban sustainability render the city as a self-contained, bounded territorial unit. The sustainable city is viewed in this regard as self-sufficient and self-reliant while favoring the agenda of the market, of top-down planning, and of scientific, technological, and/or design-based solutions over forms of social and ecological reproduction through the sustainability of livelihoods (Lake & Hanson 2000). Sustainability conceived through bounded cities tends to deny localities their particularity, to ascribe limited or no agency to localities, and to characterize Southern localities as 'flawed' in reference to Northern standards and terminology (NSF 2000). This concept of sustainable urbanization is an oxymoron in reference to Massey's notion of uneven development, because a city cannot exist without its 'other.'

In sum, then, urban sustainability and sustainable development are conceptually different because 'the urban' informs sustainability through relationality rather than a frame of self-sufficient and bounded territorial units. In other words, urban sustainability, when viewed through a relational lens, lends itself to analytically capturing the multiple and differing social relations that encounter one another in coexistence, conflict, and cooperation to shape urban form. The encounter of difference is especially relevant in the contemporary context where the concept of sustainability is commonly associated with a

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typology of balancing three pillars of environmental or ecological sustainability, social or political sustainability, and economic sustainability. David Orr (2002), for instance, discusses the three pillars in expressing the importance of society in establishing long-term economic, political, and moral arrangements in effort to avoid crossing "irreversible thresholds that damage the life systems of Earth" (1458). Entities such as the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development and the Johannesburg Declaration, as well as the more comprehensive 2015 goals of the Millennium Declaration of the United Nations, have also placed focus on these three pillars. When these three elements become apparent at particular scales, they become complex in untold ways and are mediated by factors associated with the urban such as capital, territory, and imperialism.

Land Tenure and Sustainability

The United Nations Economic Commission has expressed that tenure security should be stressed as a precondition for better natural resource management and sustainable development (UNECA 2003: 6). Sustainability and land distribution are widely recognized as interrelated concepts, reaching back to Garret Hardin's (1968) linking of environmental sustainability to land distribution in his influential article on the 'tragedy of the commons'. In the article, Hardin explains that population growth leads to increased demand for land exploitation by self-interested groups and individuals (1968). Land tenure became prominent within the context of sustainable development following the decolonization of Russia and its transition to a market-driven economy, as well as the growing awareness at the time of the global shift towards urbanization (Dale 1997). In the wake of these circumstances, international sustainability organizations began

investing in land reform programs in countries undergoing economic transition, especially relative to matters of food production in the context of land privatization. Since this time, various scholars have highlighted the importance of legal land tenure for sustainable agriculture and economic development especially in the global South (Carr 2006). More recent policy discourses have considered the importance of land tenure within the contexts of safe shelter and sustainable human settlements (Dale 1622), as well as contexts of Indigenous groups of their rights to land (Rudel & Hernandez 2017).

While land tenure in the global South is commonly associated with customary, private, public, religious, and non-formal tenure types, systems of land tenure in the global South can range widely. For this reason, some scholars have identified issues around transferring common land tenure theories from global North to global South contexts. Thomas Rudel and Monica Hernandez (2017), for instance, explain the ways in which microeconomic theories of land tenure and tenure transitions are able to explain some contexts but not all. Microeconomic theories of land tenure argue for a reciprocal relationship between land tenure security and economic development, particularly regarding credit access. These theories were first generated in the 1960's but gained popularity during the 1980's and 1990's. Microcredit theories inherit a binary association relative to insecure and secure land tenure, and are subsequently unable to capture the complexities of agrarian reforms or resistance to them by rural groups, which have both occurred prevalently in the global South. Similarly, Roy Behnke (2018) and Fernandez-Gimenez (2002) illustrate a similar critique of the use of "conventional" property theories in the global South. Behnke argues that conventional property theories, which are rooted in classical economic theory, cannot accurately depict the institutional arrangements of

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many pastoral tenure systems in Africa and Asia, especially when trying to understand why they may break down when exposed to markets and forms of centralized government control. Fernandez-Gimenez explains that the vagueness, permeability, and overlap of pastoral resource boundaries in Mongolia render them inapplicable to conventional property theories as they are less spatially flexible. Fábio de Castro (2016) offers another empirical example detailing the local politics of floodplain tenure in the Amazon, explaining that land tenure arrangements utilized by local groups are too complex for the simplistic formal legal frameworks found in cultural and political ecology literatures. Rather than relying on formal legal frameworks, de Castro argues, more can be understood about the appropriation of the commons from unpacking the multiple ruling systems and everyday life practices of local actors.

Critiques such as these have been extended to scholarship on urban sustainability largely through the optic of urban informality. Urban informality has been theorized by Ananya Roy (2005) to highlight the "challenges of dealing with the 'unplannable'" in cities where urban transformation frequently does not match with theories of the global North and the order of formal urbanization (147). While sustainability describes a collective sense of forward-thinking responsibility, sustainability ambitions have "come to land on the quintessentially unpredictable, complex space of the city," such that planning theory is disoriented in its inability to capture this complexity (Cowley 2015: 6). Traditions of top-down planning based on ideas of hierarchy, positivism, and the notion of development have therefore been widely undermined by scholars working from the perspective of the global South (see e.g., Robinson 2006; Yiftachel 2006; Shatkin 2007; Watson 2009; Parnell & Robinson 2012). Scholarship working from this perspective has

widely argued that informality and extra-legality are central to urban life in many parts of the world (see e.g., Al-Sayyad & Roy 2003; Watson 2009b; Chiodelli & Moroni 2014; Singh 2014; Eskemose Andersen et al. 2015). A question then arises as to the fundamental possibility for planning theory, as much of urbanization occurs either in the absence of, or as the unintended result or consequence of, planning processes. For example, Solmaz Hosseinioon (2019) offers an empirical case study of the effects of formalization of informal settlements through urban planning within a resilience framework in Tehran, Iran. Hosseinioon argues that it is necessary for urban planning and design fields to acknowledge urban informality as a phenomenon that can be compatible with resilience thinking rather than embracing traditional conceptions of closed and over-determined forms of planning and design.

Theoretical Roadmap

The critiques just described resonate with critical scholarship that captures complex histories and topographies of urban economic, political, and cultural processes in the global South (Ghertner 2015, Larner 2003). Asher Ghertner's and Wendy Larner's projects, for instance, are like mine in that I take sustainability as a concept and interrogate it by considering its conceptual and analytic relevance in different spatial contexts, particularly those characterized by multiple and complex land tenure systems. Asher Ghertner (2015) offers an external critique on critical urban studies for its use of the term gentrification, which, according to Ghertner, helps to keep critical urban studies locked within its post-industrial, Western confines of ideas of privatized land systems. These confines, explains Ghertner, keep scholarship from recognizing other radical,

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multiple and hybrid, and even noncapitalist transformations that are occurring in other parts of the world, rather than just simply the parts of cities that have been privatized, where a forefront of struggle is occurring around the subjection of non-private forms of tenure to elimination. To move past this limiting lens, Ghertner offers a 'tenure diversity' analytic that is explained to help illuminate contexts where "customary land use and intermediate forms of tenure can sustain relatively equitable forms of social reproduction" (554). Wendy Larner (2003) similarly interrogates studies of neoliberalism, arguing that instead of engaging with one universal conception of neoliberalism, studies should consider developments associated with neoliberalism occurring in 'the periphery' as opposed to typical accounts of the global expansion of neoliberal ideas and subsequent manifestation of nation-state and urban policies. Further, Larner advocates for accounts of neoliberalism that consider the multiplicities in which neoliberalism takes form over time. Thirdly, Larner argues for accounts of the ways in which subjects act through techniques and technologies like best practice, audit, contracts, performance indicators, and benchmarks to extend existing understandings of neoliberalism.

Ghertner embraces the analytic of tenure diversity to shed light on how tenure diversity can produce forms of urban space that are erased by the lens of gentrification theory. Ghertner offers two ways of mobilizing tenure diversity as a framework for future urban research. The first is the idea of "occupancy without ownership." The occupancy without ownership optic allows for a concrete recognition of how locally embedded land systems work, and more importantly, how they are made legible through localized histories. The second optic is that of "Pro-poor agglomeration economies." This optic

allows for the validation of forms of social reproduction in informal land settings outside of economic theory's focus on how market mechanisms sustain certain spatialities of land allocation. Overall, these two optics respond to dominant discourse by showing how informality is "much more than a mode of survival or a regulatory regime" (560).

The following section describes the concept of nomotropism, which has been conceptualized in urban geography within the context of hybridized urban tenure institutions associated with informal settlements and economies. Following this section is another section discussing the related concept institutional bricolage, as well as some recent scholarship engaging with the concept of institutional bricolage from the perspectives of hybrid sociotechnical systems and land tenure institutions. While the concepts of nomotropism and institutional bricolage share considerable overlap, they have not been explicitly integrated or considered together in urban scholarship. When brought into conversation, nomotropism and institutional bricolage can bring a relational ontology to sustainability which encourages an understanding of how uneven spatial relations of power shape urban form.

NOMOTROPISM

In urban studies, nomotropism has been used to contextualize legal behavior in hybrid and complex urban land tenure systems. The concept of nomotropism is commonly used in efforts to go beyond the common legal-illegal dualism to describe actions made in light of the law. A common example is the actions of persons living in unauthorized settlements, where inhabitants "take account" of local land tenure laws while not adhering to their prescriptions. Nomotropism is rooted in Northern legal studies

and when broken down, the concept refers to the terms law (nomos) and direction (tropos). Colin Marx and Emily Kelling identify nomotropism as located from within a particularly anglophone register including its existence through condition, laws, or currency (2019). One dominant way of knowing urban informality in "non-western" cities is to draw on legal scholarship especially the strand associated with legal pluralism, which relates urban informality directly to laws and norms (De Sousa Santos 1977; Merry 1988; Marx & Kelling 2019). Scholarship from this perspective tends to focus on and compare the ways in which different yet coexisting legal systems lead to the creation of political authority. To elaborate, the power relations between legal systems become primary in this regard because each system provides its own set of rights and obligations (Chiodelli & Moroni 2014; Marx & Kelling 2019). Another key theme within this scholarship is a focus on tenure and property rights, and how differential forms of tenure offer differing levels of security especially relative to other questions like those of citizenship and economic development (McAuslan 2003).

Amedeo Conte (2000) originally created the concept of nomotropism to describe the role of the law in mediating illegal action. Conte (2000; 2011) defines nomotropism as acting in light of the rules, yet not necessarily acting in compliance with the rules. Related to Conte's conception are two distinct kinds of effectiveness of a rule: these include Y-effectiveness, which posits that actions are made in compliance with rules or that rules causally affect action, and X-Effectiveness, which posits the adaptation of actors to the rules without complying, but rather acting in light of the rules. This means that rules causally affect action even when that action does not correspond to what a rule prescribes (Di Lucio 2002). These two forms of effectiveness are a consequence of

nomotropism in that they illustrate that the effectiveness of a rule cannot be reduced to its conformity, compliance, or adherence (Chiodelli & Moroni 2014). As an example, Davide Pisu and Giovani Marco Chiri (2019) examine regulations regarding architecture and the built environment, finding that even in seemingly neutral building regulation contexts, complexities as well as unintended and unplanned X-effects surface which hamper rational design processes. The authors offer a theoretical framework for the study of legal phenomenon in architectural form based on the concept of nomotropism.

Urban geographic perspectives on nomotropism usually refer to the work of Francesco Chiodelli and Stefano Moroni (2014). Chiodelli and Moroni (2014) point to the differences between perspectives in neoclassical and evolutionary economics in relation to the concept of nomotropism. While orthodox neoclassical economics interprets agents as rational, utility-maximizing, and making use of case-by-case logic, views from evolutionary economics critique neoclassical perspectives for being unable to take structural factors of habits, norms, and rules into account (Vanberg 1993). Unlike perspectives within neoclassical economics, nomotropism contextualizes human behavior relative to two important traits, which include the rule-based nature of humans and human responsiveness to incentives (Chiodelli & Moroni 2014). It argues that a better alternative to the "case-by case maximization" perspective on the rational choice notion can be constructed as a "rule following perspective," which takes account of habitual and rule following behavior while at the same time, retaining two fundamental principles of the neoclassical economic approach including its methodological individualism and the self-interest assumption (Vanberg 1993: 175). Taking account of structural factors

alongside the self-interest assumption means making primary the interaction of structure and agency.

Through encouraging focus on the relationship between structure and agency, nomotropism is complimentary to the study of institutions. Related is the work of Herbert Simon (1957), who offers a theory of human decision making where an actor's choice-behavior is based on a repertoire of patterns and routines based on past experience (180). Unlike within the case-by-case- maximization perspective, the central concept of rule-following behavior includes underlying assumptions of behavioral regularity and recurring situations. Under these circumstances, actors do not respond to situations as unique events, but instead tend to form categories of situations which they perceive as similar (Vanberg 1993: 176). Integrating rational choice and rule-following behavior in a common theoretical framework allows for the interpretation of institutions as systems of networks of interrelated and mutually stabilizing routines (Vanberg 1993: 189). Nomotropism therefore extends studies in methodological individualism to the study of the learned and adaptive behavior of agents within institutional structures.

Nomotropism has been used with prescriptive relevance in the areas of planning and policy especially in global South contexts. Some recent scholarship has applied nomotropism to the complexities between the State and informal economies, housing, and land tenure systems. Francesco Chiodelli and Stefano Moroni (2014) for instance discuss the relationships between unauthorized settlements and regulation in the global South. The authors argue that the concept of nomotropism helps to provide planners and policymakers with a more nuanced and complex understanding of low-income unauthorized settlements. Another study by Emiliano Esposito and Francesco Chiodelli

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(2020) details the informal occupation of housing in Naples and in particular a mechanism used by residents called the 'fraudulent takeover'. The concept of fraudulent takeover differs from 'ordinary squatting' in that it does not involve breaking into buildings, but rather a process whereby actors can exploit legal loopholes and mediate both formal and informal regulatory environments to obtain housing. Nomotropism has also been urbanized in the context of Accra, Ghana, where Emannual Frimpong Boamah and Margath Walker (2016) offer the concept of nomotropic urban spaces to describe how multiple legal land systems generate multiple opportunities for actors to discover and use different rules, both legal and illegal, to justify actions on land in response to urban land scarcity. Where nomotropism refers to processes of acting in light of yet not always in conformity with rules, nomotropic urban space is applicable within the context of Accra in that it has a mixture of regulated and unregulated marketized land systems where land seekers abide by one or neither of those systems. The concept of nomotropic urban spaces is offered as an alternative to the formal-informal binary commonly used to categorize urban spaces in the global South.

Another example is Rosa's (2016), who uses the concept of nomotropism to offer a planning approach to transgressions, or *abusivismo*, within the Italian context of urban regulations. Rosa argues that taking nomotropism seriously would allow for the recognition within planning and policy circles of the differences among various behaviors stemming from transgressions, as well as placing a certain amount of responsibility for transgressions on planning itself. Another article by Raul Lejano and Corina Del Bianco (2018) employs nomotropism to conceptualize the notion of informality as a sociopoetic system to model urban phenomena that urban theorists sometimes refer to as bricolage.

Lejano and Del Bianco's study briefly references the concept of nomotropism as it corresponds to the concept of institutional bricolage. The following section describes the concept of institutional bricolage in depth including some of the literature within the contexts of sustainability and land tenure in the global South that engages with the concept. I conclude by reviewing the possible points of divergence and convergence between nomotropism and institutional bricolage.

INSTITUTIONAL BRICOLAGE

Institutional bricolage is a concept that stems from the French term bricolage, which means to make creative and resourceful use of whatever materials are at hand, regardless of their original intended purpose (Cleaver 2002). Institutional bricolage borrows this term to describe the ways in which actors consciously and unconsciously reshape or piece together different institutional arrangements (Cleaver 2001; 2002; De Koning 2011). The concept is meant to capture three factors of institutional arrangements including the multiple identities of actors, the frequency of cross-cultural borrowing and multi-purpose institutions, and the prevalence of arrangements and norms which foster cooperation, respect, and reciprocity (Cleaver 2002).

Studies of institutional bricolage comprise studies of both the form and effects of institutional arrangements, contrasting starkly to studies that exclusively consider the form of institutional design. Contexts of bricolage are rather characterized by the inscription of meaning and authority placed by people onto institutions throughout everyday adaptive responses to changing circumstances (De Koning 2012). Institutional bricolage is characterized by factors of everyday practice, improvisation and innovation, multipurpose institutions, the naturalization and invention of tradition, as well as

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conscious and unconscious action (De Koning, 2012). Further, institutions are understood to have multiple functions in that they are assembled through both old and new characteristics. For example, Yvonne Kunz et al. (2017) describe institutional bricolage as enacted in relation to the legal order of land tenure regulations in Indonesia. The authors show the ways that institutional bricolage can help to explain ambivalent behavior patterns of land use actors in Indonesia, as a plurality of land tenure regulations allow for an adaptive enactment of institutional change. Diana Suhardiman and Natalia Scurrah (2021) offer an empirical example of the ways in which communal land tenure arrangements in upland and lowland Northeastern Laos were shaped and reshaped by farmers through institutional bricolage in hybrid forms of governance that were unable to be captured by existing generalized concepts of land administration.

The idea that institutional arrangements are forged through the forms of improvisation involved in everyday social life stems from Bourdieu's notion of *habitus* (Bourdieu 1977). Bourdieu argues that the reproduction of social structures results from the habitus, or the socially ingrained habits, dispositions, and skills of individuals. In particular, social classes are understood to emerge over time by the means of embodied learning among individuals. Bourdieu believed that our bodies learn class boundaries beneath the level of consciousness. Embodied learning through social interaction encourages people to develop habits, or habitus, that are common to their social class. Central to Bourdieu's theory of practice is an interpretation of power relationships as practices tied to both institutional and cultural contexts. Habitus combines elements of both agency and structure in the form of historically and culturally defined practices and routines which inform a "practical sense" or logic. Bourdieu writes "The habitus, as the

word implies, is that which one has acquired, but which has become durably incorporated in the body in the form of permanent dispositions" (1993:86). The concept rejects essentialist modes of thought for a more "genetic" mode sensitive to individual history.

In conceptualizing institutional bricolage, Cleaver refers to the work of Bourdieu to characterize individual action through both agency and structural constraint by means of both conscious and unconscious action. Bourdieu's habitus is more applicable to contexts of the global South than other theorists' accounts of structure and agency (Cleaver 2017). Approaches to structure and agency such as Anthony Giddens' (1984), for instance, fail to recognize the role of social structures such as social classes, as well as unconscious or emotional motivations in the management of resources (Cleaver 2017). For instance, Cleaver's study of water management and common property in Zimbabwe (2000) illustrates the ways in which people consciously respond to institutional change by drawing on and adapting existing norms, while these adaptations eventually became legitimized as traditions.

Through the lens of institutional bricolage, contexts are understood to be shaped by relations of power as different actors can hold differing levels of influence over the form and functioning of institutions. The lens of institutional bricolage therefore renders "everyday spaces," such as public space, as not neutral but as sites where power is exercised (De Koning & Cleaver 2012). New characteristics of institutions are typically made to appear familiar through multiple mechanisms including the calling upon of tradition, the utilization of meaning in the form of symbols, discourses, power relationships, categorizations, hierarchies, and notions of proper order derived from social, natural, or spiritual worlds (De Koning & Cleaver 2012). Because people devise

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institutions through everyday improvisation, institutions can be shaped either consciously or unconsciously in relation to everyday practices and conventions, overlapping social identities, moral world views, and psychological motivations for belonging and recognition. For example, Emma Elfversson and Kristine Höglund (2018) note that institutional bricolage is a useful lens for the study of land tenure conflict in urban informal settlements in Kiberia because it encourages interest in the evolution of institutions through embedded power relations. Bjorn Sletto and Joshua Palmer (2017) offer another example through conceptualizing African cities as heterogenous in contrast to the public/private dichotomy common to popular planning discourse, and they use the concept of liminal space to move beyond this binary in the study of an informal settlement in Monrovia, Liberia. They argue that heterogenous, unstable, and complex spaces in this informal settlement work purposely to serve multiple age and gender contingent roles while also working to help reproduce the mobilities, rhythms and social networks that create African urbanism. Andre Skuse and Thomas Cousins (2007) offer another example in an account of the struggles for urban permanency in an informal settlement in Cape Town. The authors characterize the emergence of a bricolage of discursive practices that reveal the application of novel strategies among residents for claiming power over a plot of urban land. These practices were noted to have occurred within a wider context of apartheid where old modes of spatial marginalization and racialization had been enacted through methods of police brutality and a wider racialized polity and economy.

Institutional bricolage is a productive concept for the study of sustainability in global South contexts because it helps in understanding institutional change through the

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ways in which diverse webs of influence and power shape actors' approaches to resource management. The framework is used for exploring institutional arrangements from the perspective that institutional formation is complex, diverse, and iterative, which better reflects the realities of natural resource management (Cleaver 2002). Like some other theoretical work rooted in the global South, institutional bricolage is encouraging of challenging binary distinctions between formal and informal institutions. This sentiment is found in critical institutionalism more generally, as critical institutionalists suggest that it is possible for institutions to operate through both informal relationships and formal structures (Berry 1994). At the heart of much of the scholarship discussed in previous sections is an interest in challenging this binary relative to the transferability of dominant typologies between the global North and South, and what might be uncovered when considering this critique relative to land tenure.

While the concepts of nomotropism and institutional bricolage share considerable overlap, they have not been explicitly integrated or considered together in scholarship on urban sustainability and land tenure[2]. The following section discusses areas of conceptual crossover and productive divergence between the nomotropism and institutional bricolage. If brought into conversation, the concepts could offer a venue for bringing a relational ontology and a sensibility for the relationship between structure and agency to studies of sustainability. The wider purpose for using a relational ontology and a

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[2] The concepts of institutional bricolage and legal pluralism have been brought together, nonetheless. For example, in the book *Outlawed: Between Security and Rights in a Bolivian City (2012),* Daniel Goldstein offers the concept of "legal bricolage", used to describe a process by which Bolivian barrio residents assemble "whatever is at hand" using the simultaneous expression of multiple, incoherent legal fragments. The result of this context is a collective struggle to control an uncertain social reality whose parameters are constantly up for negotiation. This paper uses the concept of nomotropism, which relates to legal pluralism adds an element that makes compliance primary.

consideration of structure and agency is to encourage an understanding in sustainability

discourse of places as linked in uneven social relations. Other areas of productive

possibility can be found in the concepts' divergence in their respective boundaries of

analysis and ways of considering relations of authority. Nomotropism may be informative

in that the concept offers a specific optic for capturing the legal complexities of diverse

tenure institutions and communicating them in applied planning and policy settings.

Further, Institutional bricolage is informative in its emphasis on multiple and diverse

forms of identity and subjectivity, which resonates with feminist planning and policy

scholarship.

POINTS OF CROSSOVER

Structure and Agency; Relationality

As described previously, nomotropism and its theoretical underpinnings have

implications for the study of institutions through integrating rational choice and rule-

following behavior in a common theoretical framework. The integration of rational

choice and rule following behavior can allow for the interpretation of institutions as

systems of networks with interrelated and mutually stabilizing routines. This form of

interpretation extends studies in methodological individualism to the study of the learned

and adaptive behavior of agents within institutional structures. Similarly, institutional

bricolage, as used within resource management scholarship, employs Bourdieu's writing

which posits that structures are reproduced through habitus, or the socially ingrained

habits, dispositions, and skills of individuals. Habitus combines elements of structure and

agency in the form of historically and culturally defined practices and routines which

inform a "practical sense" or logic.

Both of these concepts therefore ultimately highlight the critical role of structure and agency in shaping and reshaping institutions in complex settings especially within global South contexts. Like the ways in which the concept of nomotropism has been extended to studies of urban informality, references within discourse on institutional bricolage to Bourdieu's related notion of fields has emphasized constantly shifting and socially constructed spheres of practice representing fragmented, hybrid, and contradictory logics and rules in everyday politics (Wilshusen 2010). As urban sustainability is best captured through institutional processes, institutional bricolage and nomotropism are optics for capturing social, economic, and environmental relationships that shape urban form.

Relatedly, the use of a relational ontology in the study of urban sustainability can provide a bridge for bringing nomotropism into conversation with institutional bricolage, as both concepts encourage a relational geographic disposition sensitive to place and history. One clear connection between these concepts and relationality is the association that they have with the notion of urban informality. Urban informality implies a relational conception of place through global North and South binaries, as well as the question of the spatial transferability of theory between these discursive and material constructions under an implied concept of linear 'development.' The concepts of nomotropism and institutional bricolage, by their association with urban informality, then, lend themselves to a relational sensibility.

Doreen Massey's (2002) concept of the "throwntogetherness" of proximate encounter in a globalized context is a useful heuristic for considering the ways in which nomotropism and institutional bricolage incorporate a relational sensitivity. The concept

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of institutional bricolage assumes that processes "take place in a wider arena than that defined by the visible structures of bureaucratic resource management institutions" (Cleaver 2002: 18). The concept is also meant to capture three factors of local institutional arrangements including the multiple identities of actors, the frequency of cross-cultural borrowing and multi-purpose institutions, and the prevalence of arrangements and norms which foster cooperation, respect, reciprocity, or conflict (Cleaver 2002). Social relations quite literally take 'place' in local institutional contexts, implying a relational and geographic sensitivity that accepts that places are connected through unequal power relations. Through the geographic idea of the coexistence of difference, the concept of place becomes historical, and this is especially apparent when place identities are tied to ideas of 'development' (Massey 2002). Institutional bricolage is a process where bricoleurs with complex identities and norms piece together both the formal and informal as well as the historical and modern in practices of cultural borrowing. There is therefore an assumption of a continual and nonlinear historical process of shaping and reshaping institutional structures, rather than of pre-designed institutions in bounded places existing on a linear developmental path.

Nomotropism also lends itself to the idea of throwntogetherness, as it has been used in urban geography to highlight multiple and complex forms of engagement with land tenure laws in places typically experiencing rapid demographic change. Geographic accounts of nomotropism highlight that the concept is rooted in legal pluralism, where the interaction of multiple regulative orders are seen to exist simultaneously. The lens of legal pluralism argues that aside from formal laws and procedures, there are multiple other relevant regulatory systems – for instance, customary, community, religious,

economic – that are valid forms societal ordering (Romano 1918). Overall, both concepts are grounded in a relational and geographic sensitivity such that bringing them into conversation would promote a relational ontology in sustainability discourse. The benefit of this move for sustainability discourse is the result of thinking of different places not only as unique but as relationally linked, and moreover, usually linked in uneven historical relations.

AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

Boundaries of Analysis for Policy and Decision Making

Nomotropism and institutional bricolage have differing yet complimentary boundaries for analysis. Institutional bricolage encourages an acknowledgement of plurality and complexity by critiquing essentialized notions of culture. The concept encourages this primarily through framing institutional change through the ways in which actors take up multiple, diverse, and changing subjectivities. Institutional bricolage therefore critiques formal/informal and state/society dichotomies through encouraging this kind of narrative. Importantly, where institutional bricolage embraces plurality and complexity, the question remains as to how we produce analyses of those complex processes which are also legible within policy and public decision making (Cleaver 2000).

Nomotropism may be informative in this area in that the concept offers a specific optic for capturing the complexities of diverse tenure institutions to then communicate them in applied planning and policy settings. Like with institutional bricolage, nomotropism critiques essentialized notions of culture by encouraging a view of the poor as being compelled to seek an informal mode of life due to the structural conditions of

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their existence. Legal pluralism, and in particular, the language of X-effectiveness, is employed to contextualize legal action in a way that removes essentialized notions of culture in favor of a conception of action that rejects a dichotomy between defiance and adherence to rules. An important normative aspect of the concept of nomotropism therefore lies in its ability to be applied within planning discourse as a way of reframing the problem of low-income unauthorized settlements, especially in global South contexts where rules have been imported spatially into different conditions. The normative objective would ultimately be to formulate urban regulations that accept the possibility of their violation, and to recognize that violation is conscientious (Chiodelli & Moroni 2014). What is fundamentally at stake in this conceptualization is an acknowledgement in urban planning and policy of the possibility that inequities between places are in fact useful and favorable for certain conditions of economic production and ultimately technological progress (Massey 2007). In other words, if economic growth requires and implies spatial inequality, then planning and policy must be concerned not only with issues of distribution, but with production. Institutional bricolage and nomotropism are conceptual avenues through which the problem of distribution can be reframed to processes of production in planning and policy discourse.

Relations of Authority

Finally, nomotropism and institutional bricolage differ in their scales of analysis for contextualizing relations of authority. Nomotropism can be used to conceptualize how different yet coexisting legal systems lead to the creation of political authority. As described earlier, power relations between legal systems are made primary through nomotropism because each system provides its own set of rights and obligations

(Chiodelli & Moroni 2014). Likewise, bricolage is an authoritative process, yet intergroup authority relations are made primary in that "some 'bricoleurs' are likely to possess more authoritative resources than others" (Cleaver 2002: 19). Institutional bricolage offers room for complexity, specifically in that it assumes that identities and motivations are complex and multi layered. From here, interdependence rather than autonomy characterizes livelihoods (Cleaver 2009: 136), and participation in decision making involves embodied presentations of self as an important signifier in social action in terms of factors like status, power, and communicative intent (Bourdieu 1977). Cosmologies, or the wide-ranging worldviews within which people both consciously and unconsciously understand their actions ultimately matters in the formation of subjectivities and the subsequent shaping of the relationships between individuals, collective action, and social hierarchies (Cleaver 2000; Englund 2004). With an emphasis on intergroup authority, analyses can capture how some are able to call upon a diversity of attributes - such as wealth or knowledge - to justify their positions or influence within an institution.

A similar conception of authority resonates in feminist scholarship on the relationship between gender and the normative elements of planning and policy. This scholarship suggests that gender remains a neglected aspect of urban theory and practice, specifically through the continued neglect of gendered and embodied rights to everyday life (Beebeejaun 2017; Fenster 2005; Vaiou 2014). In sum, the consideration and acceptance of multiple and diverse forms of identity and subjectivity through institutional bricolage encourages a questioning of how multiple sources of authority means an "inevitable negotiation about who has the right to form the rules" (Cleaver 2002: 19). As the

normative objective of nomotropism lies in formulating urban regulations that accept the possibility of their conscientious violation, institutional bricolage could inform this normative objective through encouraging a questioning of by whom and how those violations are made possible. This sensitivity for authority could ultimately lead to "more productive ways to incorporate divergent experiences within planning practices" (Beebeejaun 2017: 331).

CONCLUSION

A growing body of scholarship utilizes the concepts of nomotropism and institutional bricolage, yet the concepts surprisingly have not been thought together as a possible optic for studies of land tenure and urban sustainability. This paper traces the potential for integrating these concepts through the case of the relationship between land tenure and urban sustainability in the global South context. Considering 'the urban question' is particularly relevant within studies of sustainability because it extends the unit of analysis from a particular city or territory within the conventional rural/urban binary to a relational perspective sensitive to place and history. With a relational perspective in mind, sustainable development can be understood as a set of multiple and differing social relations - social, environmental, economic - that encounter one another in coexistence, conflict, and cooperation to shape urban form. The concepts of nomotropism and institutional bricolage can offer a lens through which a relational ontology can be encouraged in perspectives of urban sustainability. The normative implication of bringing these concepts into conversation lies in its potential use in policy and public decision making in capturing multiple and diverse social forms through the optic of legal behavior. Nomotropism is informative in its emphasis on the particularities

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of legal language, and institutional bricolage is informative through its sensitivity to potentially divergent experiences within institutions. The integration of these concepts can encourage new ways of seeing and sustaining livelihoods through the interactions of land, labor, and gender.

CHAPTER III: COOPERATIVE TERRITORIES: AN URBAN COMPARISON OF
LAND TENURE KNOWLEDGE IN THE NICARAGUAN AND DOMINICAN
CONTEXTS

OVERVIEW

In this comparative urban account, I track neoliberal processes of planning, land

tenure reform, and urban-rural dynamics as they relate to the institutional politics of

sustainability in the Nicaraguan and Dominican contexts. Center-periphery relations have

been sustained and reinscribed over time in each context through material and discursive

formations of uneven development. I highlight the role of state-generated statistical

knowledge on agricultural cooperatives in reinscribing racialized conceptions of national

identity. I integrate archival and discourse analysis with mapping to show how the

statistical representations that emerge out of two national studies of agricultural

cooperatives reproduce these relations. The Nicaraguan and Dominican contexts share

some similarities in the implementation and restructuring of their agricultural cooperative

models. However, these processes materialize spatially, temporally, and territorially

differently, so an understanding of these contexts from a comparative lens provides a

view into the differential ways in which neoliberal planning and policy integrates with

real property, land reform, and sustainability.

INTRODUCTION: COOPERATIVES

Agricultural cooperatives offer a compelling venue for analysis because they sit at

an analytical border between resistance to and dispossession associated with neoliberal

policy. When viewed as a subsector of the national economy, agricultural cooperatives emerge from inflationary pressures and laws regarding land tenure institutions, price controls, taxation, and inflation (Dadone and Di Marco 1972, Mamalakis and Reynolds 1965; Gordon 1994: 353). In this framing, cooperatives and cooperative behavior relate to national and international economic policies for urban development, and they can be painted in a complicated light through being associated with institutional resistance to modern regional order while simultaneously existing as an institutional vessel for neoliberal policy (Stock et al. 2014; Wedig & Wiegratz 2018).

While cooperative action exists in a variety of formats across societies, a distinction exists between cooperative models from the global North and South (Bennett 1983). Since the 1970's, models of cooperative agriculture from the Northern context favored by development agencies such as USAID and the World Bank have implied a multi-scalar self-help model of movement toward progress, security, and equity through rational relationships of economic exchange for productivity and contributions to national income (Bennett 1983). These kinds of models of agricultural knowledge generated by national and international powers materialize through "orderly geographies of distant places" (Naylor 1997). As a management model for land reform projects, agricultural cooperatives have been implemented and experimented with by national governments in Latin American countries seeking economic growth through rural agroeconomies (Meyer 1989). While varied, "Northern" models comprising these experiments are critiqued for being narrow and doctrinaire compared to the diverse and multiple forms of cooperation in other places and of the world. The "Southern" variant of agricultural cooperation is sometimes seen as synonymous with Indigenous agricultural forms (Bennett 1983).

The implementation of neoliberal policies beginning in the 1980's and 1990's in many Latin American countries adds additional context to the binary distinction between Northern and Southern models of agricultural cooperation. Most countries within the Latin American context shifted to a greater reliance on markets and the withdrawal of state provisioning and action in the 1980's and 1990's (Walton 2004). Neoliberal policy centered on the discourse of 'sustainable development' became a guiding model of social, political-economic, and environmental governance (Renfrew 2011). In many contexts, the implementation of neoliberal policy has occurred in multiple and hybrid formats, involving multiple and contradictory aspects of neoliberal spaces, techniques, and subjects (Larner 2003). The hybrid and complex nature of neoliberal policy as it has materialized in cooperative agriculture therefore complicates a notion of exclusively "western" or "Indigenous" cooperative agricultural models. Considering the varied enaction of cooperative models, there exists "no one model and no one ideology associated with the basic principle or reciprocal exchange in social life" (Bennett 1983: 5). Amidst this perhaps overwhelming diversity, highlighting the complexity and contradictions attached to agricultural cooperatives and their relationship to neoliberal policy allows for new opportunities for understand processes such as imperialism and sovereignty in analyses of social power (Larner 2003).

The Nicaraguan and Dominican contexts share similarities in their trajectories of structural reform, implementation of agricultural cooperatives, and neoliberal policy. Similarities can be seen specifically through the ways in which "territorial" approaches to regional analysis of cooperative activity have expressed interest in linking smallholders to wider dynamic agricultural value chains (Kay 2015). These "territorial" approaches to

rural development in global South contexts largely emerged following the

implementation of structural reform measures to boost peasant farming (Kay 2015).

However, neoliberal policy materialized spatially, temporally, and territorially differently

in the Nicaraguan and Dominican contexts. Understanding them from a comparative lens

provides a view into the differential ways in which neoliberal policy integrates with real

property, land reform, and sustainability. In this regard, I follow recent scholarship in

geography encouraging a comparative and relational consideration of the political

economy of urban and rural real property ownership (Van Sant, Shelton, & Kay 2023).

METHODOLOGY AND OVERVIEW

Geographies of Statistics

Recent scholarship in human geography has argued that an understanding of the

production of statistics, situated both historically and geographically, is paramount to

understanding current relationships between geography and power (Prince 2020). In this

paper, I trace the geography of statistics to uncover the kinds of spatial formations

through which governing is realized in different contexts (Prince 2020). By

contextualizing agricultural cooperative activity historically and spatially, I show how the

production of this statistical work is inherently social (Mair 2016; Prince 2014). The

statistical representations that came out of the studies analyzed in this paper produced

differential geographies[3] in Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic, where state-

generated statistics simultaneously played a role in producing space and 'society'

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[3] "Differential geographies" is defined here as places that result from uneven socio-spatial processes, with different social groups relatively and consequentially positioned (Massey 1993). In human geography the notion of power has been used to frame differential geographies of groups based on gender, class, race etc. (Kitchen 2016).

(Foucault 2007; 2008; Eldin 2005, 2007, 2010, 2013). This work shows how both population and territory emerge from viewing the world as measurable, quantifiable, and ultimately composed of enclosed territories containing populations. This critical approach to thinking about the visual is attentive to the cultural forms, social processes, and power relations within which the visual is embedded (Rose 2016). It argues that ways of seeing are integral to those power relations in that they can reinscribe, be understood through, and be challenged by those relations.

I supplement my analysis with mapped statistical data from discourse on agricultural cooperatives, and I aim to locate these maps epistemologically alongside practices of feminist data visualization. Practices of feminist visualization seek to make visible landscapes of resistance and dispossession in capitalist, colonial, and neoliberal geographies (Kwan 2002; Wood and Krygier 2009; Kurgan 2013; Ignazio 2015; Voyles 2015; Van der Vlist 2017). This method encourages a critique of dominant forms of mapping by questioning how, why, and with whom maps are made (Maharawal & McElroy 2018). Counter mapping is ultimately an attempt at creating an "alternative geographic imagination" (Katz 2011, 58; Harvey 1990) for imagining new possibilities for geographic analysis embedded in an intersectional approach to theorizing issues of risk, displacement, and resistance (Maharawal & McElroy 2018).

Urban Comparison

I compare land tenure, neoliberal policy, and structural reform in the Nicaraguan and Dominican contexts to show how cooperatives define their own spatio-temporal realities over time, through which nature and culture can constitute one another. I locate

this framing in a relational conception of urbanization, where urbanization is not understood through a bounded notion of place, but as constituted through social processes, or spatio-temporal forms, embedded in social action (Harvey 1996). I draw from a relational comparative method encouraging the view that places are not simply territorially bounded entities but are created through relation to other places, recognizing both the territorial and relational histories and geographies that are behind their production and (re)production (Ward 2010). Importantly, a relational ontology highlights the unevenness of relationships between places through illustrating their simultaneously territorial and bounded nature (Massey 1993). Part of my account centers on discourses of sustainable "development," understood using a relational method that implies a consideration of sustainability as not an outcome but a process. Further, this method implies that places (urban and otherwise) are not containers of sustainable or unsustainable processes, but the outcomes of processes that may or may not be sustainable (Lake & Hanson 2000).

Archival Analysis

Because of the historical relationship between land tenure and agricultural cooperatives in the Latin American context, I draw on an archive of scholarly literature pertaining to land tenure institutions in Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic with a particular emphasis on structural reform and neoliberal policy in the latter half of the twentieth century. The archive is comprised of urban geographic and policy discourse pertaining to histories of land tenure change in each context. The historical account draws from an anti-humanist, politically attuned, and historically contextualized framework that posits that knowledge is inherently incomplete and situated due to the impartial, or

"gapped," nature of the channels through which knowledge travels (Simandan 2019). The impartiality and situatedness of knowledge viewed from this lens is therefore inherently spatial (Haraway 1988; Nagel 1986; Simandan 2013). The implication of using this framework means acknowledging that my positionality affords me access to particular kinds of information (in this instance, publicly available archival and quantitative data), of which I analyze according to my methodological and embedded cultural sympathies.

Discourse Analysis

I inform each archival account with an analysis of discourse and quantitative data pertaining to statistical knowledge about agricultural cooperatives in the Nicaraguan and Dominican contexts. I focus primarily on knowledge production in the wake of structural reform and regional analyses of cooperative models by national and international organizations. For the Nicaraguan context, I draw from a study of cooperatives published in 2008 through a partnership between Nicaragua's Center for the Promotion and Investigation of Rural and Social Development, Nicaragua's National Union of Farmers and Ranchers, and the Swedish Cooperative Center (CIPRES 2008). For the Dominican Context, I draw from a cooperative rice marketing study published in 1998 through a partnership between USAID, the Dominican National Planning Office, and the Inter-American Institute for Agricultural Cooperatives (USAID 1998). The two studies provide insight into how institutions and agencies maintained, analyzed, and distributed statistical knowledge on agricultural cooperatives. The strategy I use for interpreting discourse broadly includes immersing myself in the discourse, identifying key themes, examining their effects of truth, paying attention to complexity and contradictions, and looking for the visible as well as the invisible (Rose 2016).

My account shows that mapping statistical data provides a visual representation of racialized constructions of national identity. I contextualize this argument through drawing from the work of Sarah Radcliffe (1999) to highlight the mutual constitution of spaces and embodiments, whereby national identities can be constituted through gendered/raced/classed insertions into differential national spaces. Another way of describing the mutual constitution of raced/classed/gendered embodiments and national identities can be found in how these categories are drawn upon in performances of modernity, development, and socio-economic differentiation found in both official and popular discourse (1999). Relatedly, understanding and comparing the economic character of different places, to then understand the role of those places in the wider spatial divisions of labor, requires an understanding of national and international processes (Massey 1993). The Nicaraguan and Dominican contexts are constructed through their global connections, and my research shows that these constructions are imbued with racialized nationalist nostalgias.

LAND TENURE IN THE NICARAGUAN CONTEXT

In this section, I contextualize how structural reforms led to and impacted land tenure and the production of agricultural cooperatives. A nature/culture dualism has been constructed and reinforced through material and discursive contexts of uneven development throughout Nicaragua's history. As an imagined place, Nicaragua would not be possible without its geopolitical relations especially with the United States. Global relations have materialized over time in the uneven development between Nicaragua's Pacific region which includes both the country's major urban centers and historical agroindustry that was integral to the country's capitalist evolution, and autonomous

Indigenous territories of the Caribbean coast (Lee 2015). These relationships were concretized in the mid 1900's through urbanization, the preeminence of private property, and commercial agriculture in Nicaragua's pacific region (Lee 2015; Deere & Marchetti 1981). Later socialist reforms resulted in systematic processes for transitioning into the implementation of an agricultural cooperative model through USAID-funded credit unions established in the 1960's. By the 1990's, neoliberal agrarian reform policy implemented in part through an emphasis on the collateral value of titled land was met with changes to Nicaragua's cooperative sector (Boucher et al. 2005). This occurred through the parceling out of cooperative lands in a process of privatization with identity-centric beneficiary practices imbued with processes from previous generations of land reform (Nygren 2004; Merlet & Merlet 2010).

Urban Development, Agricultural Capitalism, and Cooperatives

Urban-rural relations interwove with changes in land tenure and the implementation of cooperatives in Nicaragua during the mid-twentieth century. The country was governed by the Somoza regime from the year 1936 into 1979, which emphasized the primacy of private property rights as well as the goal of obtaining an export-focused, market-oriented, and large-scale commercial agricultural system. A program known as the United States Government's Alliance for Progress Program (USGAP) aided in this goal. During the 1960's, Nicaragua was considered somewhat of a showcase for the USGAP and its vision for a modernized Latin America (Lee 2015). According to proponents of the program, communism could be rendered obsolete though the growth of large urban areas and the consolidation of the country's agricultural export economy (Lee 2015). In the 1970's, the decentralization of the city of Managua became a

priority through the development of other cities along Nicaragua's Pacific coast (Lee 2015). These included the cities of Granada and Leon, older centers where refugees fled following an earthquake, and where government aid was sent to keep those refugees there (Lee 2015). Nicaragua's northern and central pacific coastal plain eventually became the site of an agricultural economic boom.

During its years in office, the Somoza regime negotiated for land in what is widely considered a coercive process, which resulted in multiple displacements of peasants within Nicaragua's Pacific region between the 1930's and 1960's. The development of Nicaragua's agricultural export economy in the twentieth century relied on the dispossession and transformation of the peasantry into a seasonal, free wage labor force (Deere & Marchetti 1981). An initial stage of cooperative financing was initiated in Nicaragua between the years 1960-1971 in the wake of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, where funds from USAID were provided to the Nicaraguan Development Foundation's (FUNDE) cooperative system, a private foundation founded in Nicaragua in 1969 which provides credit, technical assistance, and various services to a national cooperative system mainly comprised of credit unions. This funding set the stage for later processes through which many credit unions transformed into agricultural cooperatives (USAID 1982).

Conflict, Reform, and a New Stage of Cooperatives

During the 1970's, there was a growing awareness in Nicaragua of the civil and political rights movements occurring in North America as well as the Indigenous movement transforming at the level of the United Nations (Cunningham 2017). Mass revolution supported by the United States government aided in both taking down the

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Somoza regime and encouraging land rights and political representation for Indigenous and Afro-descendant groups in 1979. The Somoza regime was later replaced by Nicaragua's Sandinista government that held office during the 1980's (Cunningham 2017).

By this time, rural agricultural producers became one of FUNDE's primary client groups, which was met with a new wave of growth in the agricultural cooperative sector. USAID and other donors such as the Inter-American Foundation, SOLIDARIOS, the Inter-American Development Bank, Private Agencies Collaborating Together, Appropriate Technology International, and the German Development Assistance Association for Social Housing played a role in promoting economic recovery through programs for rural cooperative development (USAID 1982). Funding from USAID came with a systematic process for collecting and updating agricultural production data to evaluate agricultural activities in order to plan future lending practices (USAID 1982). The Sandinista government of 1979 through 1990 that replaced the preceding Somoza regime attempted to revise the policies created during the Somoza regime through redistributing the property of large landowners to land cooperatives, smallholder, and government-controlled lands for domestic agricultural production (USAID 2005). Limitations were placed onto certain segments of the private sector through controls over land use, labor relations, credit, prices and marketing, and taxation to construct a socialist state (Deere & Marchetti 1981). This process resulted in the confiscation of land by the Nicaraguan State's Sandinista government throughout the 1980's. Nicaragua's subsequent Agrarian Reform Law authorized the expropriation of decidedly abandoned

or poorly managed properties. Along with other measures for acquisition, the Nicaraguan State obtained over five thousand agricultural properties during the 1980's.

Land tenure institutions were transformed through Sandinista agrarian reform procedures. The properties confiscated by the Nicaraguan State comprised roughly twenty percent of Nicaragua's cultivable land, to then later be turned into state farms which were otherwise known as Areas of People's Property (Nygren 2004). The transformation of confiscated land into agricultural cooperatives began in 1981 with the distribution of land to small farmers. Cooperative farms included several different forms of farming, but farmers were largely unable to sell the land that they farmed or to create security of tenure through legal landownership (Merlet & Merlet 2010). With the Sandinista National Liberation Front in power until 1990, cooperative farmers were also unable to form a cooperative federation, but a peasant movement emerged during the 1980's. The expropriation and confiscation of land that occurred under the Sandinista government was met with a halting of rural agricultural expansion (Rueda Estrada 2013). The internal conflict in the 1980's was met with the displacement and mass migration of many rural households out of Nicaragua to Costa Rica and Honduras or to urban areas within Nicaragua where conflict remained at a decreased level (Rueda Estrada 2013).

The Effects of Structural Adjustment on Cooperatives

By 1988, the high cost of defending the country while also continuing to subsidize social services like health care and education resulted in economic friction at the national level (Babb 1996). A national peace treaty was signed in Nicaragua in 1989 in effort to end the internal conflict between Nicaragua and the US-backed Contras. At this time, Nicaragua had enacted conflict resolution which included the recognition of the

rights of Indigenous peoples within the country's constitution (Cunningham 2017). A regional and multi-ethnic autonomous governance regime was then created and approved within the context of peace negotiations, whereby ethnic pluralism and multi-ethnicity were established as a guiding framework through the Constitution of 1987.

The end of conflict was followed by a return to rural agricultural expansion (Caussa & Tort 1996). This expansion was made possible in part through structural adjustment measures within the context of a market driven economy that emphasized export production and decreases in social spending (Babb 1999). Following the Sandinista Regime was a seven-year tenure during the years 1990-1997 by Violetta Chamorro who attempted additional land reform by adopting policies that provided beneficiary status to both Indigenous groups located in the Caribbean coastal region as well as landowners who were dispossessed in the wake of Indigenous recognition. While the Sandinista government followed a strategy at odds with the methods proposed by the main proponents of structural adjustment, the inauguration of the Chamorro government in 1990 was met with a vigorous implementation of structural adjustment policies (Enriquez 2000). Market-oriented reforms beginning in the 1990's in Nicaragua emphasized the strengthening of individual property rights, extending titling efforts through privatizing cooperative lands, activating land rental markets, and reducing government intervention outside of the use of market mechanisms (Boucher et al. 2005).

Under intensified structural adjustment, land ownership became highly concentrated in areas where large landowners successfully asserted their prior rights to land that had been dispossessed due to the previous Sandinista reform. These contradictory policies in part led to a system of competing claims to land which was

simultaneously characterized by decreases in land tenure security in the country at large

and economic investment in the country's agricultural sector. These policies were made

in reference to a property law characterized by conflicting aims where on one hand, the

law sought to reconcile property rights and compensate those who experienced

expropriation during the Sandinista regime, yet on the other, the law simultaneously

acknowledged the social benefits of providing the rural and (increasingly) urban poor

with land titles (McCoy & McConnel 1997). An idea behind this form of land reform was

that land-poor households who own some land could become more active in land markets

as they become more productive, specifically through securing finance via the collateral

value of their titled land (Boucher et al. 2005). An additional hurdle came of this reform

in response to changes in political representation over time, which resulted in the

illegitimate allocation of land titles given to those who were not eligible as agrarian

reform beneficiaries, or as beneficiaries of urban property distribution programs

(Stanfield 2003).

Neoliberal agrarian reform policy, implemented in part through an emphasis on

the collateral value of titled land, changed Nicaragua's cooperative sector. The creation

of the protective Cooperative Company of Agricultural Producers in the 1990s was met

with its fast disappearance, which some saw as a demonstration of a lack of sustainability

among the peasant and rural workforce (I Puig & Baumeister 2017). In the wake of

negative fluctuations in global processes for goods like cotton and coffee, as well as

tenure insecurity for rural agricultural producers, farmers no longer received access to

credit (USAID 1993). This decrease in financing was met with many cooperatives

abandoning production and selling the land they farmed. Land markets were restored in

areas close to urban centers along the Pacific coast, and tenure insecurity due to fear of

expropriation fueled land sales in these areas (Utting, Chamorro, & Bacon 2014).

Thousands of agrarian reform beneficiaries who received land in the 1980s who lacked

legal title were met with claims from former landowners and demobilized conflict

combatants. Subsequently, the Chamorro government favored confiscated landowners

over newer beneficiaries (Nygren 2004). By 1994, 80 percent of Nicaragua's

cooperatives were parceled out (Merlet & Merlet 2010). The following section describes

a process of creating statistical information about Nicaragua's cooperative sector as part

of an expanded rural economic development initiative.

STATISTICAL INSTITUTIONS AND AGENCIES

The Construction of Data

To visualize the agricultural economy of small and medium producers in the

decade following the emergence of mass neoliberal reform in Nicaragua, an in-depth,

national-scale study was conducted on ten cooperative organizations by Nicaragua's

Center for the Promotion and Investigation of Rural and Social Development (CIPRES)

(CIPRES 2008). The organization was founded in 1990 under the commitment to

encourage welfare in Nicaragua's rural areas through a partnership with the World Fair

Trade Organization. CIPRES more recently has been involved with encouraging the

advancement of the 2015 Millennium Sustainable Development Goals through the

promotion of the principals of fair trade (CIPRES 2023). The study was financed through

the Swedish Cooperative Center, an advocacy network stemming from the Swedish

cooperative movement in 1958. In order to gather data, these organizations collaborated

with Nicaragua's National Union of Farmers and Ranchers, which is an organization for

rural economic development created in 1990. The study's introduction asserts the importance of making visible the problems surrounding small and medium agricultural producers in Nicaragua, namely those who have been affected by neoliberal policies between 1990-2006 (7). An overarching aim of the study was to showcase the economic possibilities for the small and medium farm sector as a conduit for Nicaragua's social policy for the Government of Reconciliation and National Unity's (GRUN) National Development Plan.

The study offers a compiled list of the departments in Nicaragua that had the largest numbers of cooperatives, located namely in Nicaragua's pacific zone in the departments of Chinandega, Rivas, Masaya, Managua, Granada, and León. Outside of recognizing places with the highest number of cooperatives, one of the main components of this research project was to characterize and systematize a total of ten "successful national [cooperative] experiences in the integration of the links of the productive chain" (3). In other words, the ten cooperatives deemed the most successful at integrating with the national agricultural economy were considered for intensive study. The research began with an analysis of the total number of cooperatives recognized, followed with ranking them according to several different indicators including the average amount of education of members, access to basic services, availability of and access to land, forms of income generation, family income generation, as well as areas of the structure of the cooperatives' institutional network and perceptions of community integration and human capital. The ten cooperatives chosen for intensive analysis were located in eight of Nicaragua's total livelihood zones, primarily within the central and western areas of the country where major urban centers are located.

Geographies Made

Map 1 shows cooperatives derived from data collected in the study analyzed in this paper, as well as urban extent polygons for the year 1995. Urban extent polygons are included to showcase the appearance of overlap between urbanization and cooperative agriculture in Nicaragua. The map shows the appearance of clustering of both major urban areas and agricultural cooperatives in Nicaragua's pacific region, where major urban centers are located. As mentioned previously, the report illustrates an assumption that agricultural cooperatives do not exist in Nicaragua's Caribbean coastal region. Map 1 visualizes this assumption by displaying that the report's data covers agricultural cooperatives almost exclusively in Nicaragua's pacific region near major urban centers (Map 1). Additionally, the unit of analysis for this data is the at the scale of the department, which limits potential for granular-scale analyses of spatial patterns.

Map 1: Percent of Total Agricultural Cooperatives in Nicaragua by Department, 2008
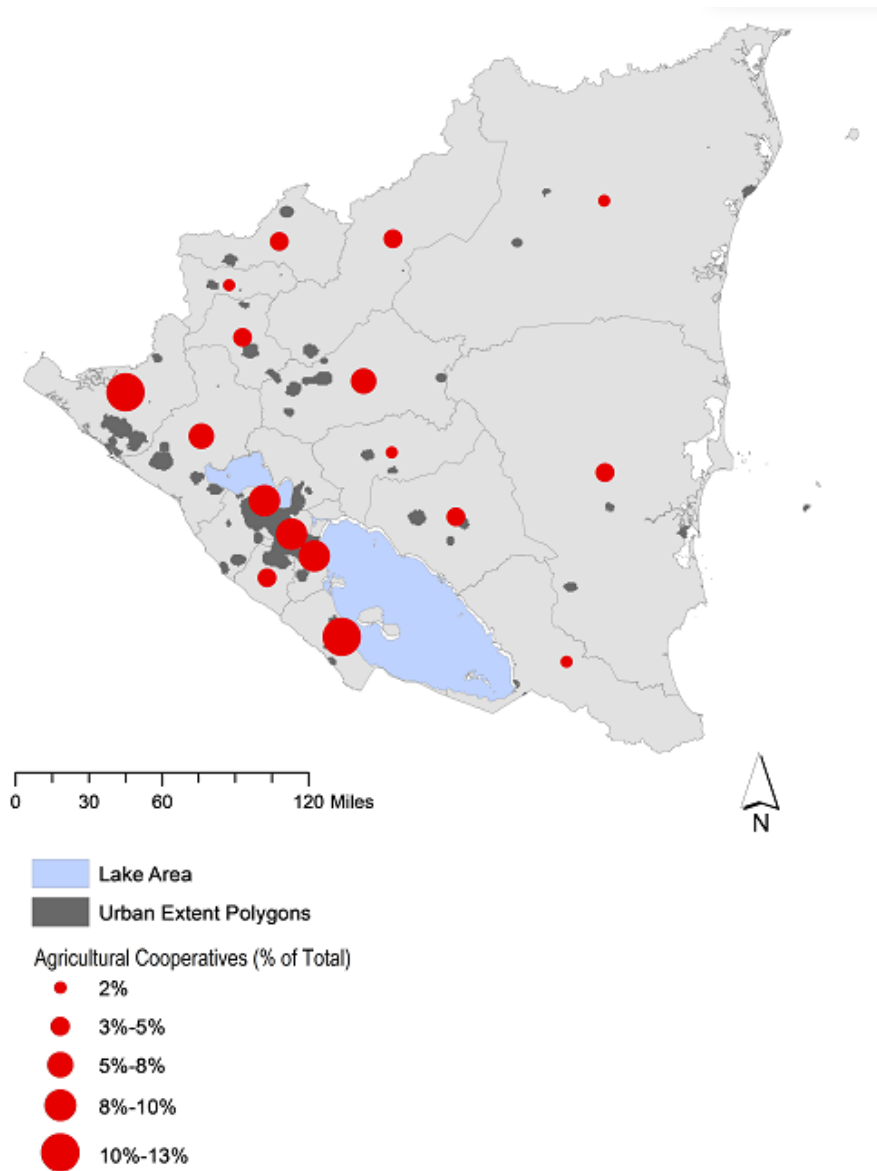
Sources: CEISIN 2021[1995]; CYPRES 2008

By emphasizing examples of cooperatives that successfully integrate into national markets, the research report on agricultural cooperatives illustrates the sentiment of an

exclusively 'Northern' model of agricultural cooperatives unaffected by the diversity of land tenure arrangements existing in other areas of the country. The sentiment of a Northern model is presupposed by a discourse on sustainable development at the national scale centered primarily on a consideration for economic sustainability through employment and aggregate profitability (CIPRES 2008: 5). Through advancing discourse on sustainable development, the report implies a binary distinction between Northern and Southern models of cooperative association. This binary distinction is exemplified through a prioritization of "successful" cooperatives in the urban pacific region to the neglect of cooperative systems in the Caribbean coastal region.

Map 2 offers further context in visualizing areas of land utilization and vegetation according to the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency in 1979. As the majority of agricultural cooperatives identified by CYPRES were located in Departments containing cultivated land and area, a question arises as to the meaning of these terms used to categorize land. Of particular importance is the map's differentiation between cultivated land and savannah. While cultivated land and area are designated primarily for tree and crop cultivation, savannah includes a diversity of land utilization and vegetation forms including cultivated plots. According to Map 2, savannah land is located both within Departments which include the highest percentages of identified agricultural cooperatives, as well as within Nicaragua's Awas Tingni title located along the Caribbean coastal region. Against the statistical data offered by CYPRES on agricultural cooperatives, there lacks clarity as to whether many cooperatives were located in cultivated land, cultivated area, or savannah. The lack of clarity can be attributed to the research having been conducted at the department level, leading to a wider scale of

analysis than if the study had been conducted at the municipal or local community scale.

The following paragraphs highlight a case of a cooperative system in the Awas Tingni

context. The statistical discourse constructed through CYPRES is categorically unable to

capture the complexity of the multiple and diverse forms of cooperation that exist in

Nicaragua's Caribbean coastal context, due to the ways in which the discourse's

overarching neoliberal ideology obscures overlapping identities, spatialities, and realities.

Map 2: Land Utilization and Vegetation, 1979
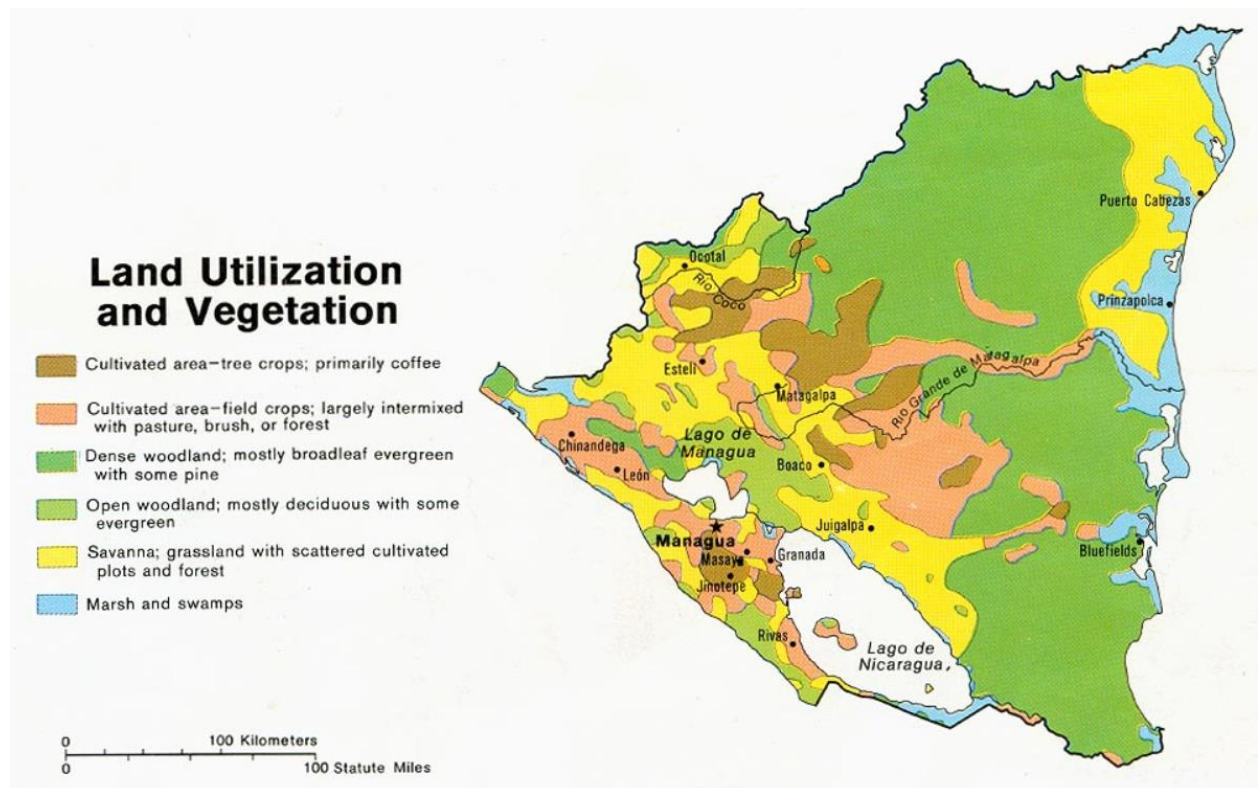
Source: The U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, 1979

Competing narratives exist as to the nature of the effect of models of cooperative

agriculture within Nicaragua's Caribbean coastal region. The cooperative movement in

some ways is seen to have been integral to the designation of communal lands along

Nicaragua's Caribbean coast (Utting, Chamorro, & Bacon 2014). By the mid 1990's, existing cooperatives faced powerful challenges due to years of structural adjustment measures. However, some accounts find that the cooperative movement created during that time remained active by spreading through Nicaragua's Pacific coast into the Caribbean coastal region which aided in justifying the Caribbean regions as communal Indigenous lands (Utting, Chamorro, & Bacon 2014). Histories of land tenure change within Nicaragua's Awas Tingni title, which is located in Nicaragua's northeastern Caribbean coastal zone, complicates that narrative. Throughout the 1990's, several cooperatives were permitted, rescinded, and then occupied without authorization within Nicaragua's Awas Tingni title in the form of the Yatama collective. The collective was given permit to over half of the Awas Tingni title in the early 2000's, to then later be sold to a Nicaraguan logging company (Bryan 2019).

These territorial processes cannot be understood without attention to the historical geographies that preceded it. In Nicaragua's post-revolutionary context, the State struggled to construct a national identity where Afro-descendent peoples were legitimately included (Goett 2006). The contemporary neoliberal context obscures multiple and overlapping identities, spatialities, and realities, which also cannot be disregarded. Within Nicaragua's neoliberal and multicultural context, difference-making is imperative because differentiated, homogenous, and legible identities facilitate the neoliberal project (Sylvander 2018). From this perspective, collective property rights are therefore conducive to the stability that capitalism requires. This sentiment applies to Nicaragua's agricultural cooperatives, which through the historical account in the previous section I have shown that the introduction of neoliberal policy and an expansion

of cooperative farms in Nicaragua overlapped with a neoliberal, identity-focused beneficiary policy for land distribution.

In the Nicaraguan context, this has meant embracing a binary distinction between Indigenous and mestizo identity. To elaborate, legal frameworks render it difficult to identify who exactly is a mestizo in order to have them legally removed from Indigenous territory (Sylvander 2018). Stories like those described above corroborate this complexity and illustrate that the sentiments of multicultural identity politics cannot capture the full diversity of cultural forms that shape Nicaragua's subnational regions, as well as its place in the global context. Neoliberalism has taken form in various Nicaraguan contexts in hybrid, multiple, and contradictory ways. In Nicaragua, cooperative developments have played out in conjunction with neoliberal policy, and its developments occurring in the periphery deserve much more detailed attention than what available policy discourse can offer. Without this detailed attention, available spatial-statistical knowledge obscures from vision the construction of a multiplicity of spaces, states, and subjects.

In sum, this study reinscribes territorial relations through the 'successes" of urban-adjacent cooperatives in integrating into the national economy. Complex formations, such as the example of cooperative land titling in Caribbean autonomous region above have been excluded from consideration through the statistical techniques utilized in the study analyzed. The data made available through the above cooperative research project emphasizes an ambiguous concept of success over the various political economic factors contributing to land change and affecting social possibility in different areas. In doing this it renders histories of complicated land struggle less visible within mainstream policy discourse by prioritizing quantifiable distributions of bounded

cooperative entities. The erasure of the Caribbean context implied through this study

contributes to the re-inscription of generations-old international and subnational

territorial relations associated with Nicaragua, from relations with global economic

powers to subnational urban-rural relations involving claims to indigeneity that I describe

in the previous section of this paper. The discourse ultimately contributes to a

mainstream, territorial, and outcome-oriented conception of sustainable development.

The following section describes a comparative account of cooperative knowledge

in the Dominican context. I provide a historical overview of the transformation of land

tenure in the Dominican Republic especially as it relates to structural reform and the

creation of agricultural cooperatives. Using the case of rice cooperatives, I then describe

the ways in which statistics on rice cooperative factories shaped geographies in the

context of sustainable rural development through neoliberal policy.

LAND TENURE IN THE DOMINICAN CONTEXT

The context of land tenure in the Dominican Republic cannot be understood

without considering the relationship between neighboring country Haiti as well as wider

international powers such as the United States. Decades of international and subregional

agricultural economic change intersect with sustainability and land tenure in the

Dominican context. A nature/culture dualism has been constructed and reinforced in the

Dominican Republic through material and discursive contexts of uneven development.

Land privatization through the use of regional land surveys was met with a widespread

conversion to private property ownership in the Dominican Republic in the first half of

the twentieth century (Geisler, Warn, & Barton 1997). By the 1990's, land privatization

became prolific alongside an intensified territorial and racialized nationalization project

differentiating Haitians and Dominicans (Howard 2007). Like Nicaragua, the Dominican Republic implemented agrarian reform programs which were met with urban-rural migratory shifts. Shortly after the institution of agrarian reform, agricultural cooperatives were made possible in part through foreign assistance from USAID (Aranju, Viveros-Long, & Murphrey 1984). By the 1990's, Haitian migrant labor moved from Dominican rural agriculture to labor in cities and resort towns (Jayaram 2010). In turn, the Dominican State debated the use of cooperatives and their ability to supply food to an increasingly urban workforce as a strategy for regional economic development (IAICO 1999).

Land Privatization and (Inter)Nationalization

The Dominican Republic was formalized as a national territory in 1844, and this nationalization could not be possible without the country's relationship with both the United States and its neighboring country, Haiti. Unlike other countries in Latin America, the Dominican Republic does not celebrate its independence from European colonial power, although historically, discourse does recognize its detachment from Haiti (Wucker 2000). At the time at which it gained its individual nationhood, the country's economy was struggling, and Haiti was threatening an invasion. The United States government encouraged annexing the Dominican Republic as a "protective" measure (Wucker 2000). Between 1874 and 1912, several struggles ensued to define the border between Haiti and the Dominican Republic and during this time, the United States under the Roosevelt administration gained control over the Dominican Republic's customs administration under a fifty-year mandate (which was eventually overturned in 1941). As the US administration gained control over Haiti and by 1904, the Roosevelt alterations to the

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Monroe Doctrine committed the United States to forcing debtor nations to follow through with foreign obligations (Wucker 2000). Currently, the country relies on the Torrens system for property demarcation and registration, which connects to the Dominican Republic's agro-economic linkage to both the United States and Haiti.

Low population densities in the Dominican Republic meant that extensive land uses could be implemented in the country, which then 'necessitated' land surveys and the subsequent mass conversion of land to private ownership (Geisler, Warn, & Barton 1997). Rapid expansion of sugar plantations led to an increase in wage laborers and sugar estates, which exacerbated the shift from common property regimes to privatization (Geisler, Warn, & Barton 1997). This shift to the use of migrant labor occurred in part due to the subsistence farming utilized by the peasantry; the Dominican Republic embraced migrant labor partly to sustain the national economy despite an existing, yet subsistence-prioritizing workforce (Carruyo 2008).

In 1905, the Dominican Republic fell into financial receivership with the United States, and as with other Caribbean nations in the following decade, the United States marines occupied the Dominican Republic between 1916 and 1924, which led to new patterns of land use and ownership in the country (Geisler, Warn, & Barton 1997). As the measures of the 1904 iteration of the Monroe Doctrine were placed into effect, administrators of the then occupied Hispaniola constructed new economic plans to address foreign creditors (Wucker 2000). New sugar plantations were planned as a response for the Dominican Republic to survive economically, particularly through Haitian migrant labor. Laws like the Land Registry Law of 1907, the Law Dividing

Common Lands of 1922, and the Land Law of 1912 allowed for a smooth transition from a common property to a private property regime (Geisler, Warn, & Barton 1997).

Dominicanidad and Racialized Policy Discourse

Throughout the 1900's, the Dominican Republic's population increased rapidly while its political context spurred urban/rural migration and environmental degradation. Overall, throughout the century, the Dominican Republic's population grew by over six million during the 1990's (Geisler, Warn, & Barton 1997). The increasing utilization of private property in the Dominican Republic during the 1900's meant a loss in joint use lands and their attached community traditions, the dissolving of the distinction between insider and outsider, and the loss of collective decision making as to the use of natural resources like pastures, forests, and cultivated areas (Geisler, Warn, & Barton 1997). Adding to this loss, the Trujillo regime appropriated almost 20 percent of the Dominican Republic's lands.

Approaches to conservation in the Dominican Republic did not involve the participation of rural populations until much later in the 1990's (Geisler, Warn, & Barton 1997). Subsequently, the trend of natural resource pressure in the Dominican Republic throughout the 1990's has intersected with the relationship between the Dominican Republic and its neighboring country, Haiti. Like early forms of uneven development between Dominica and British and French colonizers, a relationship of uneven development exists between Haiti and the Dominican Republic (Werner 2015).

Discourse against Haitians was rampant during the early years of the Dominican Republic's Trujillo regime, and it materialized in relations at the site of the national

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border. Resource extraction of rice, bananas, and tobacco crops was desired at the border region during the early years of the Trujillo Regime, and many landless Haitian peasants resided at the Haitian border during this time (Fiehrer 1990). However, through technological advancements in agricultural processing and rail transport during the 1800's, American sugar interests multiplied in the Dominican Republic, which spurred a need for low-paid and unskilled agricultural laborers (Fiehrer 1990). The Trujillo regime characterized Haitian migrants as the cause of environmental and economic challenges at the border and sought rather to further its goals of nationalization by developing the agricultural frontier from the inside (Fiehrer 1990).

Haitians were considered obstacles in the path to the Dominican Republic's modern 'development,' and a discourse differentiating Haitians from Dominicans was part of a wider trend of nationalization inspired by the Trujillo regime otherwise known as *dominicanidad.* The development of the Dominican Republic since the country's designation in 1844 was critical to the forging of dominicanidad nationalism (Peña, Lorgia Garcia 2016: 3). In 1937, the Trujillo regime created a semi-formalized policy to remove Haitian migratory labor from the country which resulted in the massacre of 12,000 people of Haitian origin. Genocide was not the only act of the Trujillo regime under the guise of *dominicanidad* but was one that was legitimized through racialized policy discourse that enforced ideas of sovereignty, security, territory, and nationhood (Howard 2007).

Neoliberal Policy and Urban-Rural Relations

Following Trujillo's assassination in 1961, the Dominican Republic joined seventeen other Latin American countries, including Nicaragua, in initiating agrarian

reform processes through the U.S. government's Alliance for Progress program (UN-HABITAT 2005). The Dominican Republic's Agrarian Reform Law was passed in 1962, which was intended to be used to redistribute land that had been concentrated in the Trujillo regime to farmers, sharecroppers, and displaced families, as well as other landless or near landless individuals. Success of these reforms has been mixed following the seizure of rural land by peasants following slow implementation.

The adoption of a neoliberal ideology in the Dominican Republic during the 1970's and 1980's resulted in rural-urban migratory shifts. The Dominican Republic underwent two rounds of structural adjustment in the wake of financial crisis. These rounds of structural adjustment were implemented in part through devaluing the Dominican Republic's currency, as well as diversifying exports away from primarily sugar (Espinal 1995). Due to this diversification, trade zones were created in several secondary cities and towns in the Dominican Republic by the end of the 1980's. Factories were constructed in these cities and towns, which led to a decentralization of urban growth from Santo Domingo, the Dominican Republic's capital city, and an increase in migrants especially young, married, and single women seeking waged work in these factories (Werner 2010). In the national context, control of food prices made it possible for urban industrial workers to live cheaply, but this occurred largely as a consequence of rural agricultural workers living on less (Gordon 1994).

Agricultural Cooperatives

In the mid 1970's, agricultural collectives were made possible through assistance from USAID (Aranju, Viveros-Long, & Murphrey 1984). According to USAID

documentation, technical and financial assistance was offered largely in order to help

alleviate the chronic problem of rural poverty in the Dominican Republic (Aranju,

Viveros-Long, & Murphrey 1984). According to the legal structure of the Dominican

collective farm model, the Dominican Agrarian Institute held the most control over

collectives (Carter & Kanel 1985). This meant that the collective model lacked a

universal form of self-management. Further, government pricing, which favored the

urban industrial class, led farming to be seen as a less attractive means of family income

for farmers. This was met with reform beneficiaries beginning to seek employment

outside of the farming sector as well as the minimization of individual labor on farms

over time in the cooperative sector (Gordon 1994). By 1978, which was five years post

the initiation of the Dominican cooperative sector and at the cusp of an increasingly

liberalized Dominican government, land reform beneficiaries began to press for private,

family-owned plots rather than cooperative plots (Gordon 1994).

Legislation in the Dominican Republic in 1995 banned migratory agriculture,

where the Dominican State referenced mass deforestation and subsequent ecological

collapse which occurred in neighboring Haiti (Geisler, Warn, & Barton 1997). By 1990

and following the land reform of earlier decades, 1.8 million urban lots and 1.6 million

farm plots representing 74 percent of the country's farmers were untitled (Haggerty

1989). The lack of land titling by this point was part of the broader neoliberal economic

context where Haitian migrants were not migrating to rural areas but to major cities and

resort towns in the Dominican Republic (Jayaram 2010). This change in immigration

patterns occurred in conjunction with the country's economic shift away from sugar and

other agricultural industries, which then was met with the migration of Haitians into

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urban and resort areas (Wooding and Moseley-Williams 2004). Again, the nature/culture

dualism constructed in earlier decades in the Dominican Republic not only reinforced the

Dominican Republic's national identity through Dominican and Haitian identity

constructs, but both the material and discursive relationships between rural and urban

areas within the country. Recent literature has illustrated that Dominican-Haitian violence

continues to be reflected in both the rural and urban landscapes (Howard 2007).

The following section describes the statistical institutions and agencies associated

with a case of knowledge production on rice cooperatives in the Dominican Republic

following structural reform. I describe the construction of data for a report on the

functional status of rice cooperative factories and its relationship to land tenure and a

neoliberal, multicultural policy framework for sustainable rural development.

STATISTICAL INSTITUTIONS AND AGENCIES

The Construction of Data

By the end of the 1990's, state-generated agricultural discourse centered on

modernization in search of competitiveness in global markets (IAICO 1999). A main

actor in producing knowledge on cooperatives in the Dominican context was the Inter-

American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (ICAA). The ICAA is a specialized

agency for agriculture which describes as its objective to support the efforts of 34 Latin

American Member States to achieve agricultural development and rural well-being.

Today, the ICAA integrates its work with the 2015 Millennium Sustainable Development

Goals through programs in the areas of innovation and biotechnology, climate action,

international trade and regional integration, territorial development and family farming,

food and farm safety, digital technological development of agriculture, and gender and

youth equity (ICAA 2023). Outside of adopting new production techniques, a report by

the ICAA published in 1999, for instance, claims that the modernization of agriculture

has "higher requirements" in that the human element requires transformation in terms of

modifying value systems, developing new skills and abilities, and internalizing new

knowledge to strategically integrate the country's agricultural sector into global markets

(IAICO 1999). For sustainable development, the report writes, the agricultural sector

needs to become more competitive, and the living conditions within rural environments

need to be improved (IAICO 1999). For cooperatives, the report recommends improved

communication technology between agricultural cooperatives such that they become

nodes of national and local information networks linked to international databases (70).

The described purpose of measures such as these were to integrate rural communities into

national decisions.

This report implies a version of sustainable development with implicit racialized

sentiments. The report lays out four areas of intervention needed in order to encourage

sustainable development in part through cooperatives including to promote

comprehensive institutional agricultural reform, to incorporate an international

institutionality into the agricultural sector, to improve production and marketing support,

and to capitalize on human resources (73-75). Importance was placed onto rural areas,

and by proxy, cooperatives, in constructing national identity through sustainable

development. Haitian immigration is described to have negatively impacted sustainability

of the Dominican rural areas. Of Haitian immigrants the report writes:

> "They push down the rural wage, reducing the possibility of betterment for the
> poor Dominicans. These same Haitians compete for services and environmental
> resources (firewood for cooking), which reduces the quality of life of the

Dominican population. This is especially severe in the border area, which is the driest and poorest in the country. It is recommended to carry out an investigation on the incidence of Haitian labor in agricultural production and management" 71

The text above offers an example of the continuation of anti-Haitian sentiment within Dominican policy discourse. The shift to economic liberalization in the Dominican context during the 1990's restructured Dominican political economy, Haitian labor market participation, and anti-Haitian sentiment, but it also was met with spaces for advocacy on behalf of Haitian migrants (Jayaram 2010). Together these transformations disorient the multicultural sentiment of a homogenous Haitian identity (Jayaram 2010). The study on cooperative rice factories described in the following section further delineates the complicated relationships between land, labor, and identity in the neoliberal context.

One year preceding the publication of this report, another report detailing a study of marketing policies in the Dominican Republic's rice sector was produced by the Dominican National Planning Office, USAID, and the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture. The study aimed to identify the fundamental issues surrounding rice marketing in the Dominican Republic in effort to create greater market efficiency. A portion of this report focuses primarily on Dominican rice cooperatives. Until then, the rice sector had played a key role in the Dominican context, not only because rice was an important cash crop and a major employer of wage labor. As the interest of rural households to participate in cooperative land management institutions had decreased throughout the preceding decade while institutional support for collective farms increased, rice became a point of contention resulting in a regional politics of

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knowledge production to determine the worth and necessity of the cooperative sector

(Meyer 1989). Beginning in the 1980's, several studies were conducted focusing on the

rice sector in agrarian reform lands to compare the utility of individual and collective

forms of rice production. While concerted efforts were performed to statistically compare

the profits of individual and collective producers, empirical consensus was difficult as a

sizeable portion of rice produced was guessed to either be consumed by households or

smuggled to and sold within Haiti (Meyer 1989).

One study offers an extended response to this politics by using secondary data

from national organizations to determine the distribution and functional status of

cooperative rice factories in the Dominican Republic. The report, titled "Study on the

Marketing of Rice in the Dominican Republic," describes the necessity of forming a link

between the Dominican national economy and international markets and the potential of

rice cooperatives to achieve that goal (12). The study was conducted through a

partnership between the Dominican National Planning Office, USAID, and the ICAA.

Rice factories were an integral aspect of agricultural cooperatives at this time

because there was a direct dependency relationship between agrarian reform producers,

rice factories, and commercial banks. The majority of reform farmers did not have access

to land titles, which led them to being unlikely to receive access to financing from banks

for production. If they did receive financing, they would receive it at a very high rate. In

light of this, the cost to produce rice was typically financed using the amount of rice

produced (IAICO 1999). Thus, a focus on rice factories is connected to land reform

through the tangential financial relationship between these three entities.

To illustrate the state of rice in the Dominican Republic relative to the global market, the report emphasizes the difference between rural and urban rice markets given differences in demand between affluent urban households and poor rural households. The report also makes primary the demands of urban households in Santo Domingo, Santiago, La Vega, and San Francisco de Macorís, as well as those who live in urban areas of smaller cities with "a lower degree of development" (24). The study also emphasizes serious working capital problems in agrarian reform properties in the areas of technological development and farmer income, as well as production and storage capacity.

Geographies Made

Map 3 visualizes a table of findings from telephone survey results conducted with cooperative factory representatives to identify cooperative factories with obsolete or inefficient equipment. Of the twenty-eight factories considered for the study, three were deemed to be in sufficient working order. Map 3 shows that few factories are located in provinces directly neighboring provinces where urban areas are located, illustrating the appearance of factories being located primarily in rural areas. Being that the spatial data made available through this report focused primarily on the lack of function among of cooperative rice factories, the map illustrates a general representation of rural decline.

Map 3: Cooperative Rice Factories by Province in the Dominican Republic, 1998

Lake Area

Rice Cooperative Factories (% of Total)
- 3%
- 4%-7%
- 8%-10%
- 11%-14%
- 15%-18%

Urban Extent Polygons

0   20   40   80 Miles

N
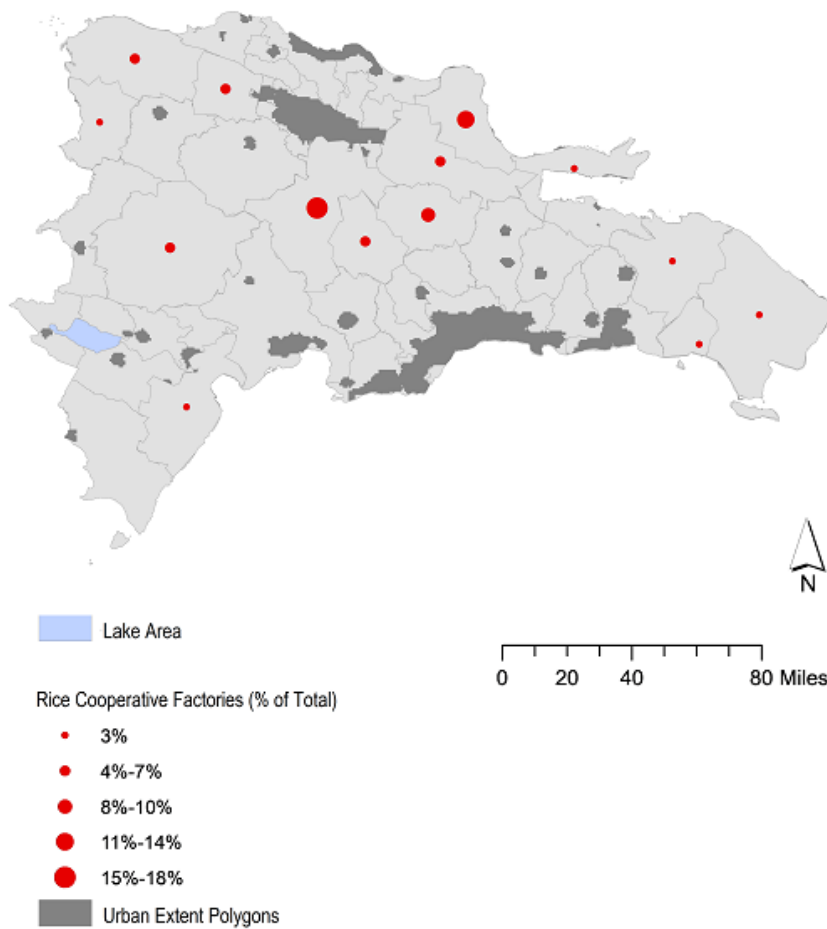
Source: CEISIN 2021[1995]; USAID 1998

While in one sense, this data offers a snapshot in time of the uneven geographical distribution of the conditions necessary for profitable and competitive production, in another sense, it only offers a glimpse into one round of new investment in which a spatial division of labor is evolving (Massey 1993). As described in the previous section, by 1978, which was five years post the initiation of the Dominican cooperative sector and at the cusp of an increasingly liberalized Dominican government, land reform beneficiaries began to press for private, family-owned plots rather than cooperative plots

(Gordon 1994). Legislation in the Dominican Republic in 1995 banned migratory agriculture and by 1990 following the land reform of earlier decades, 74 percent of the country's famers were left with untitled land (Haggerty 1989). The lack of land titling by this point was part of a wider neoliberal economic policy context within which Haitian migrant laborers were no longer migrating to rural areas but rather to major cities and resort towns in the Dominican Republic (Jayaram 2010). Rural-urban migration of Haitian laborers contributed in part to a growing demand for staple foods including rice.

The report's text categorizes Haitian demand for rice as "informal," which contributes to a territorial relationship between Haiti and the Dominican Republic through a binary informal/formal distinction between Haitian and Dominican citizens. One described purpose of the report is to characterize the distribution of demand for rice production, yet as explained earlier, until this time, a growing and incalculable demand for production distributed to Haiti existed on what the text describes as an "informal" basis (25). In other words, out of agrarian reform rice producers, the report's text recognizes an informal system of rice exportation to Haiti through the mainstream market to meet demand there. Because of this demand, there was a subsequent inability to accurately convey the total quantity of rice consumption within the Dominican Republic, which is described to be "probably the result of unrecorded exports to Haiti." (25). Determining this demand statistically immeasurable yet categorizable through a formal/informal binary, the report contributes to the construction of a developmental, core-periphery binary between Haiti and the Dominican Republic. The implication of using this dualism is that the discourse ideologically flattens and homogenizes complex and dynamic realities (Lawson & Klak 1993).

As previously discussed, the multiple transformations that occurred in the Dominican Republic during the 1990's through neoliberal economic policy complicate the multicultural sentiment of a truly homogenous Haitian identity (Jayaram 2010). Yet, as a knowledge producing institution, the ICAA and its collaborators' contextualization of Haitian demand for rice plays into neoliberal and multicultural sentiments of homogenous and clearly definable identities. The referral to a clearly identifiable Haitian identity and its association with informality supports the implementation of neoliberal economic policy in part through encouraging the integration of cooperative agriculture into national and international markets. Also, by proxy, the contextualization of Haitian identity through the ICAA's territorial conception of sustainable rural development reinscribes generations-old, racialized sentiments of Dominican nationalism.

Importantly, neoliberal and multicultural sentiments encouraging homogenized versions of identity that emerged in the 1990's obscures from view complex and multiple relational agricultural ties between Haiti and the Dominican Republic. The way in which ties which materialize along the national border are particularly obvious (Murray, McPherson, & Schwartz 1998). This observation is corroborated through the complex relationship between state land, settlement land, and common land institutional arrangements along the Dominican Border region which can materialize in complex and varied forms (Murray, McPherson, & Schwartz 1998). Map 4, which illustrates land utilization in the Dominican Republic in the year 1971 according to the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, enriches the border region context especially in comparison to Map 3. Map 3 displays the prevalence of cooperative rice factories in the Dominican Republic, the majority of which were located in the Central and Northern regions of the country.

Map 4 identifies a diversity of cropland forms especially within the central border region,

which emphasizes accounts of agricultural land tenure diversity in this region. By

emphasizing the economic potential of rice as a major export cash crop, the statistical

report analyzed in this section obscures the rich landscape of cooperative forms in the

Dominican Republic. In doing so, the discourse reinscribes an ideal of sustainable

neoliberal development ideology.

Map 4: Land Utilization in the Dominican Republic, 1971
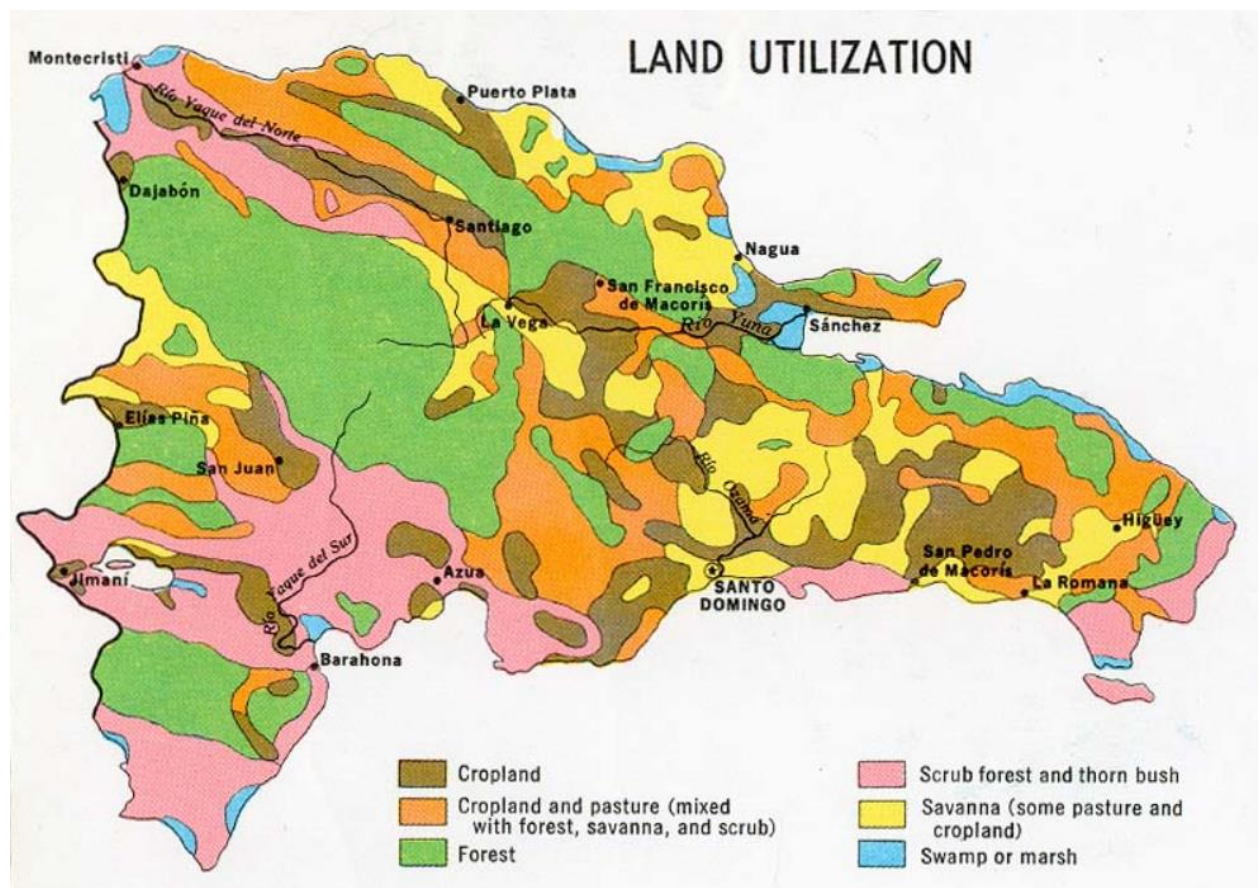
Source: The US Central Intelligence Agency, 1971

CONCLUSION

The Nicaraguan and Dominican contexts share a common historical trajectory in some respects, notably their common implementation of the USGAP program, as well as years of structural reform and transformation to neoliberal land tenure policy. While the two contexts differ in the ways in which their adoption of the agricultural cooperative system occurred over time, in both contexts, statistical techniques were used by national and international powers to reinscribe generations-old territorial relations through accounting statistically for cooperatives as potential conduits for national and international economic integration.

In the Nicaraguan context, Indigenous autonomous zones have been separated from the rest of the country where major urban centers are located, and this differentiation played a role in constructing Nicaraguan national identity. Agricultural cooperatives played a role not only in national land tenure reform but in the ways in which neoliberal multicultural politics shaped the trajectory of cooperative land systems both outside of Indigenous territory and inside of it beginning in the 1990's. Through reliance on success indicators, statistics were created detailing the state of cooperative geographies in Nicaragua to the exclusion of other complex geographies in the context of Nicaragua's Caribbean coastal periphery. Statistical data on agricultural cooperatives in the Nicaraguan context illustrates an erasure of the complex relationships between Indigenous identity, mestizo identity, and land tenure complexity within the autonomous regions. Overall, through advancing mainstream notions of sustainable development, the discourse analyzed implies a binary distinction between Northern and Southern models of cooperative association. This binary distinction is exemplified through a prioritization of

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economically viable cooperatives in Nicaragua's urban pacific region to the neglect of the multiple and diverse cooperative forms in the Caribbean coastal context. The discourse ultimately contributes to a mainstream, territorial, and outcome-oriented conception of sustainable development.

In the Dominican context, national identity has been formed over time in part through the historical racialization of Haitian migrant workers. The cooperative agricultural model for rice endured scientific scrutiny throughout the 1990's at the same time as Haitian migratory agriculture was banned as part of a wider process of neoliberal economic restructuring. While knowledge produced about the Dominican rice sector centered on integrating rural agriculture with national decisions about national and global market relations, the sustained territorial relationship between the Dominican Republic and Haiti was simultaneously naturalized through government discourse including statistical knowledge on the status of cooperative rice factories and its related discourse on Haitians. Overall, by emphasizing the economic potential of rice as a major export cash crop under neoliberal policy, related statistical geographies obscure rich landscapes of cooperative forms occurring along the Dominican Republic's border region.

Institutions for statistical knowledge are historically ongoing. Statistical knowledge in the form of the reports analyzed in this paper have been met with more recent systematized efforts at capturing and publicly disseminating agricultural statistics at the scale of the global region. An exemplary version of this is CEPALSTAT, considered to be the gateway of statistical information for Latin American and Caribbean countries which offers several indicators around issues of land tenure, agricultural activity, cities, and sustainable development within various Latin American countries.

The multiple institutions creating and disseminating data in this centralized location may be forming new ways of classifying, ordering, and regulating the social world through large and publicly available datasets. Within its related institutional structures and methodologies for collecting data lie new forms through which geographies and territorial relations can be constituted.

CHAPTER IV: AN URBAN COMPARISON OF NGO DISCOURSE IN TWO LATIN
AMERICAN CONTEXTS

OVERVIEW

This paper presents findings on how varied forms of land are mediated through

the urban institutional politics of sustainability. Through critical discourse analysis of

documents from non-governmental organizations in two Latin American contexts, I

demonstrate the important roles of discourse in activist land tenure reforms. Both NGOs

are primary conduits for encouraging collective action against state-led forms of land

expropriation, yet their discourse also reinscribes these power relations through limiting

conceptions of socially located agency. I find that activists advocating for land tenure

security have been able to contest and resist land expropriation in the greater Bluefield's

and Santo Domingo metropolitan areas by raising awareness of the legacy and enduring

consequences of land expropriation and its effects on marginalized groups. Yet certain

discursive strategies have the opposite effect in incorporating structuring devices that

correspond to neoliberal sentiments of identity and rights. This analysis illustrates the

need for a richer conception of the ways in which livelihoods are sustained relative to

multiple and complex neoliberal formations.

INTRODUCTION

In this paper I analyze textual discourse from two Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Nicaraguan and the Dominican contexts focused on land tenure activism. In the Nicaraguan context, I analyze textual discourse from the Legal Assistance Center for Indigenous People (CALPI). I analyze texts produced by this NGO around the issue of a canal megaproject planned to be constructed on Indigenous and Afro descendent territory in the greater metropolitan Bluefields area. In the Dominican context, I analyze discourse from the non-governmental organization Alternative City related to the issue of an environmental sustainability plan that incorporates the eviction of people living in unauthorized settlements along a river basin at the edge of Santo Domingo. This critical discourse analysis centers on a comparison of the relationship between land tenure and the urban institutional politics of sustainability in the Bluefields and Ozama River basin contexts.

In many parts of the world, neoliberal policy has interacted with complex land tenure formations, making it important to understand the dynamics through which livelihoods are sustained through land tenure institutions. Institutions can be understood more generally as the rules, structures, and norms that create and enforce behavior among individuals and groups (Davies & Troustine 2012). This definition of institutions is an adaptation by Davies and Troustine (2012) of Lowndes' (1996: 182) umbrella definition of the concept. Lowndes describes institutions as being created by and constraining of political actors at the meso level while situated within macro social structures, which persist over time through formal and informal characteristics as well as divisions of power, labor, rights, obligations, and historical constitution and embeddedness.

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Neoliberal institutional policy contexts offer space for understanding the ways in which state and corporate actors create and promote particular subjectivities (Künkel & Mayer 2012). Studies of the urban institutional politics of sustainability have been extended to contexts of neoliberal urbanization, largely as a venue through which neoliberal urban sustainability governance can be critiqued (Gibbs & Kreuger 2007; Sternberg 2019). Jennifer Robinson (2011) discusses the importance of institutions in describing the wider relevance of studies of the local political dynamics associated with neoliberalization (see McGuirk 2005; Guarneros-Meza 2009; Varsanyi, 2011). I follow these writings in extending traditional accounts of the path dependencies of neoliberalism to be able to reflectively contextualize institutional politics through the pathways of the political dynamics associated with neoliberalism.

METHODOLOGY

I draw from the work of Norman Fairclough (2001) who extends the tradition within human geography to blur structuralist and poststructural theoretical boundaries through critical discourse analysis (CDA). CDA offers a way to analyze language so that the workings of contemporary capitalist societies can be captured and addressed. Fairclough presents CDA as a method of critical research that highlights contemporary capitalism, particularly the ways in which capitalism enables yet also prevents human wellbeing. As the contemporary dominant form of capitalism, neoliberalism is characterized by factors such as free markets and reductions in state responsibility for social welfare. Neoliberalism has been widely recognized to have entailed major changes in domains of social life such as politics, work, education, healthcare, moral values, and lifestyles, and these effects are pervasive. CDA carries a normative element in that its use

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prompts analysis of the discursive aspects of power relations and inequalities. I capture

these aspects through an analysis of the dialectical relations between discourse and

power, which includes questions of ideology, understood as 'meaning in the service of

power' (Thompson 1984). In other words, ideology stands for explanations that are at

once inadequate but also necessary to maintain relations of power. As described earlier,

the purpose of critical analysis is largely to capture the cause of social wrongs and to

produce knowledge that may contribute to righting them. Critique therefore is meant not

only to interpret the social world, and in particular the effects of neoliberalism, but to

contribute to changing it.

In this paper, I refer to Fairclough's (2001) approach to discourse analysis at

micro, meso, and macro scales of analysis. At the micro level, I aim to study the formal

features of the text(s) relative to factors such as vocabulary, grammar, linkages of textual

elements, and the text structure. I undertook a coding process at the textual level by

marking any representations of sustainability and land tenure within the text to decipher

how these terms are formulated and conceptualized. At the meso level, I construct an

understanding of the various possible processes involved in the production, consumption,

and distribution of the texts, as well as a consideration of how land tenure practices and

policies draw on outside texts (intertextuality) as well as the discourses that those

strategies draw on (interdiscursivity). After coding for the terms land tenure and

sustainability, I considered relevant aspects of intertextuality and interdiscursivity around

them. The second level also includes discursive practice which includes the immediate

context within which language and discourse are utilized. Both discourses utilize a

participatory methodology and offer interview data shedding light on discourse as practice.

At the macro level, I then construct an explanatory critique as to how social practice mediates what is and is not included in the discourse. Part of this analysis is a consideration of 'orders of discourse,' which is a concept from Foucault (1971). Orders of discourse include the configurations of various types of discourse (e.g., neoliberal, social democratic, conservative), genres (e.g., for consulting, discussing, interviewing) and styles (e.g., styles of managing in organizations) that define fields of action. At the macro scale of analysis, discourse analysis can explain how discourse is embedded at various scales including in immediate social settings, at the wider institutional structure, and at the societal level.

Main Findings

In the Nicaraguan context, identity categories are drawn upon by CALPI in its participatory discourse to construct a narrative of sustained land tenure insecurity, yet social difference is reinscribed through these generalized categories. In sum, this analysis demonstrates the potential for power interests to co-opt claims to indigeneity within the text. Without granular attention to the ways in which different identities are drawn upon in contexts of land tenure conflict, the meaning behind "Indigenous" and "settler" are ultimately subject to the discretion of the dominant power relations regulating land tenure claims. I find that by calling upon indigeneity in this format, future practices drawing on CALPI's guidance will inadvertently place all existing forms of legal pluralism in line with the preferences operating in the dominant neoliberal ideology through which the

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canal project is made possible. Indigenous claims can be invalidated at the same time as multicultural identity politics are utilized under Nicaragua's neoliberal governance structure to construct the canal, which overrides other legal claims to land which are based on the land through length of tenure. A relational conception of urban sustainability is moderated by the megaproject's neoliberal sustainable development discourse.

In the Dominican context, Alternative City's text relies on a structuring device of a division between the right to housing and the right to the city to construct a narrative around sustained land tenure insecurity. At the textual level, Alternative City relies on a division between the concept of the right to housing and the concept of the right to the city as a main structuring device. Alternative City's discourse constructs a narrative of land tenure insecurity among Nuevo Domingo Savio's residents which corroborates this textual division. This division created in the text between the right to the city and the right to housing is subject to external critique for its congruence with the neoliberal economic policies generating mass eviction in the Ozama River basin under the pretext of environmentally sustainable development. Structuring the text around this rights-centric division assumes a prioritization of a narrow liberal and individualized conception of rights (Villanueva 2016). Liberal rights discourse is also congruent with a territorial notion of the city, which overshadows attempts in the text to acknowledge a relational conception of urban sustainability through descriptions of socially located agency among residents living the Nuevo Domingo Savio neighborhood. The overshadowing of these attempts relegates discursive practice to the interests of neoliberal environmental sustainability policy.

Finally, both discourses incorporate the value of participatory democracy. Participatory democracy experienced a surge in popularity in urban planning scholarship at the turn of the twenty-first century. Since then, a wealth of urban scholarship has used the concept of participatory democracy to contextualize and critique top-down planning practices in the contemporary globalized context (see Karaman 2008; Oduwaye 2013). The concept derives from Aristotelian philosophy encouraging an outcome of active citizenry, yet it has been subject to scrutiny for its potential to simultaneously inhibit and legitimate neoliberal urbanization (Purcell 2007). Critical literature on participation warns that the methodology's focus on consensus can have the unintended effect of preventing participants from challenging discourse and orthodoxy about the way the urban can be constituted (Legacy 2017). This analysis corroborates these writings and argues for a version of participatory democracy sensitive to the recursive relationship between structure and agency.

Overall, findings of the research demonstrate the important roles of discourse in activist land tenure reforms. Both NGOs are primary conduits for encouraging collective action against state-led forms of land expropriation, yet their discourse also reinscribes these power relations through limiting conceptions of socially located agency. I find that activists advocating for land tenure security have been able to contest and resist land expropriation in the greater Bluefield's and Santo Domingo metropolitan areas by raising awareness of the legacy and enduring consequences of land expropriation and its effects on marginalized groups. Yet certain discursive strategies have the opposite effect in incorporating structuring devices that correspond to neoliberal sentiments of identity and rights.

The following section includes a critical discourse analysis of NGO discourse in the Nicaraguan context. In sum, this analysis demonstrates the potential for power interests to co-opt claims to indigeneity within the text. Without granular attention to the ways in which different identities are drawn upon in contexts of land tenure conflict, the meaning behind "Indigenous" and "settler" are ultimately subject to the discretion of the dominant power relations regulating land tenure claims. I find that by calling upon indigeneity in this format, future practices drawing on CALPI's guidance will inadvertently place all existing forms of legal pluralism in line with the preferences operating in the dominant neoliberal ideology through which the canal project is made possible. Indigenous claims can be invalidated under Nicaragua's neoliberal governance structure to construct the canal, which overrides other legal claims to land based on the land through length of tenure.

THE BLUEFIELDS METROPOLITAN CONTEXT

Indigenous groups, specifically Rama Indians located at the outskirts of Bluefields City in Nicaragua have been involved in urban-rural dynamics for centuries as the metropolitan area has transformed. The Rama Indigenous group stems largely from a combination of Indigenous communities that occupied the Caribbean coast of Nicaragua at the onset of European encounter. The first Black settlers to arrive on the coast dates to the mid seventeenth century when a ship containing Black slaves sank near Nicaragua's Keys Mestizos, which led to relationships and exchanges with the Bawihka and Tawira Indigenous groups living in the Bluefields area (Acosta & CALPI 2017). In the sixteenth century, Bluefields City began as a port location for individual sailors, but English colonies eventually became a dominant group designating the coastal area of Nicaragua's

Miskitu Caribbean Coast with Bluefields as the capital of this region. Later between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries, Bluefields remained a village area comprised of a Creole and European population until both the Miskito coast and subsequently Bluefields were annexed by Nicaragua. In the first half of the twentieth century, American and British companies utilized the Miskitu coastal area for natural resources. Companies did not permanently settle in the Bluefields area, yet Bluefields became a small city by 1950.

Air travel between Bluefields and Managua, Nicaragua's capital city, became available later in 1955, and settlers from the western coast of Nicaragua began to migrate into Bluefields City resulting in a demographic shift in the Bluefields urban area from appearing like the British Caribbean to appearing more similarly to Nicaragua's Mestizo national ethnic majority. Despite the demographic shift, decades later in Nicaragua's post-revolutionary context, the State struggled to construct a national identity where Afro-descendent peoples were legitimately included (Goett 2006). Following the end of Nicaragua's civil war in the 1980's and in following years, peasant colonization of the Bluefields area increased. Most of these so-called settlers are occupying land without legal documentation.

Into the 1980s, the Rama Indigenous group of the surrounding Bluefields area became increasingly involved in Bluefields through the cash economy. Rather than being involved in specialized wage labor, Indigenous groups utilized horticulture to sell products in the urban market. Additionally, increasing pressure placed on the Rama by Spanish settlers on area land holdings led to the Rama becoming increasingly involved in the Bluefields administrative institutions. Christine Loveland (1973) explains that during the 1980's, the negative image of the city held by Rama Indigenous populations, along

with a simultaneous negative image placed on the Rama by those living in the city,

reinforced each other to contribute to a resistance among the Rama to avoid living in

Bluefields and instead remain at the urban periphery.

In the surrounding area of Bluefields, collective property titles were granted to

Indigenous Black Creole communities (CNBIC) in the years 1841, 1906, and 1934

(APIAN 2017). CALPI's text reads that "the state continues to treat the traditional land of

these peoples as "national" land, without recognizing the property rights that the

Indigenous and Creole peoples have historically and traditionally had" (APIAN 2017:

34). This narrative illustrates an overlap between the dispossession of Indigenous

territory and national identity.

A most recent reiteration of Indigenous dispossession described in CALPI's texts

occurred by 2016, when the state government of Nicaragua established what the text

described as a parallel governing scheme to facilitate a Grand Canal megaproject to be

located within Indigenous territory. The canal project was initially approved in 2014

through collaboration with the Beijing Xinwei Technology Group, a telecommunications

company based in China (Gregosz 2016). This trans-oceanic railway, which is popularly

known as the "canal seco" or "dry canal," is planned to utilize the deep-water harbor of

the Caribbean Coast's Monkey Point, so the canal would cut through the primary area of

the Rama's territorial claim extending coastally from Bluefields City to the opposite side

of the country at the mouth of the Brito River on Nicaragua's pacific coast. Despite

opposition from Indigenous groups, the dry canal remains a primary aspect of the

Nicaraguan State's post-revolutionary neoliberal development scheme. The megaproject

is generally touted for its potential to offer the nation a secure entry point to the global marketplace through the transport market sector (Goett 2006).

The process of land tenure change corresponding with the planned construction of this canal comprises one focal point of CALPI's recent work as well as comprising the focus of the texts analyzed in this article. CALPI takes issue with the preponderance of the Nicaraguan State to capture "irregular" title of the CNCIB, describing the effort as a "parallel government" in that this concession of title was essentially illegal. The organization narrates a context where the Creole Community Government of Bluefields (CGCB) attempted to initiate the titling process of the community's traditional territory in accordance with local law at the same time as the Nicaraguan State's adoption of a parallel government structure to weaken the CGCB in an effort to usurp both its institutional structure and territory (APIAN 2017).

The following sections detail the main findings of the analysis of CALPI's discourse. At the textual level, CALPI relies on a division as a main structuring device whereby it relies simultaneously on essentialized Indigenous and settler categorizations alongside an accepted reality of complexity due to land titling conflict between so-called settler groups. At the second level of discourse, CALPI constructs claims to indigeneity by relying on definitions of Indigenous territory based upon Indigenous and Afro-descendent groups' length of tenure, as well as an understanding of sustainable livelihoods reliant on that conception. At the level of ideology, CALPI's text excludes a contextualization of the supposedly postcolonial era of multicultural recognition politics that Bluefields Indigenous groups are and have been acting within. Without inclusion of

this discussion, CALPI's reliance on notions of identity and self-determination in its texts are met with the potential to gesture toward neoliberal sentiments of identity politics.

Conveying Identity with Divisions

From the starting point of universal values and human rights, the text relies on moments of intertextuality in reference to several laws and regulations pertaining to land to explain rights around Indigenous territory in Nicaragua. The text emphasizes the contemporary problem of the lack of sanitation of settler groups on Indigenous land through the process of Saneamiento, as well as the issue of state dispossession of land in the wake of protectionist human rights laws for Indigenous groups. Saneamiento is a tertiary regulation stemming from the implementation of Nicaragua's Communal Lands Law 445, which in practice refers to the removal of unlawful mestizo claimants (so-called settlers) from Indigenous territories. Added to concerns around Saneamiento in the text is an exemplary case of a state of exception where the Nicaraguan State acts as an "irregular" arbiter for the Grand Interoceanic Canal through Nicaragua over Rama and Kriol territories as well as the Black Creole Indigenous Community of Bluefields (APIAN 2017).

Perhaps the most obvious factor perpetuating the continuous political strife over land tenure institutions in Nicaragua relates to ambiguous methods for recognizing territorial land rights for Indigenous and settler identity groups in accordance with Law 445. In this paper, I consider indigeneity as a politics, or a "contested terrain of discursive and material struggle that simultaneously unites and divides people as individuals and collectives" (Nichols 2020:103). Where CALPI's texts describe dispossession as a historical process, the text thereby highlights the ways in which forms of dispossession

constitute categories of identification and subjectivity around a historical process of more general concern. These intertextual references provide a general outline of what might be possible for Indigenous land tenure institutions in the urban Bluefields context, but they exclude precise definitions of authentic "Indigenous" groups vs authentic "settler" groups.

An Indigenous subject is called forth in CALPI's text to support a claim for counter dispossession, partly in reference to the contemporary discourse of multicultural recognition politics. CALPI references The Declaration of the United Nations on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (DPPI), Articles 5, 89, and 180 of the Political Constitution of the Republic of Nicaragua, as well as laws from Nicaragua's 2003 National Assembly and the Political Constitution of Nicaragua, as primary texts encouraging the ownership of rights of the CNCIB over its traditional lands (Acosta & CALPI 2017). As for Articles 5, 89, and 180 of the Political Constitution of the Republic of Nicaragua, CALPI refers to the recognition of Indigenous people's identity and self-determination. Further, the organization writes that the DPPI promotes "the commitment to promote actions that retake the legal premises of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples to adapt national regulatory frameworks" (Acosta & CALPI 2017:18). Finally, Law 445 is referenced because it recognizes Indigenous authority within the territories which they legally represent, and Article 21 of the 1969 American Convention on Human Rights recognizes the rights of Indigenous communities to communal forms of property ownership (APIAN 2017).

These intertextual references highlight a division as a main structuring device within CALPI's text, where alongside intertextual reference to these governmental

documents to validate Indigenous rights to communal forms of property, CALPI

conversely highlights the complexity and lack of determinacy around the land titling

processes, explaining that Law 445 has resulted in:

> "determining the rights of the people within the Indigenous territories who claim to have property rights; which has resulted in the titling process becoming a process unfinished, undermined by violence, created by armed settlers who invade Indigenous territories; by "third parties" who have remained in the titled territories, and who are also being driven to search for alternative lands and for the promises of work that the GCIN megaproject would offer in the event of the Autonomous Region of the South Caribbean Coast (hereinafter "RACCS"). 5-6.

The text acknowledges that as an industry, the canal megaproject is producing and

contributing to a new form of geographic inequality inextricably tied into existing land

tenure regulations. The complex tenure arrangements resulting from the new spatial

division of labor implanted into Indigenous territory complicate the connection between

Indigenous identity and territorial rights over land. Rights claims become complicated

through the canal megaproject because the project tightens existing criteria for

determining communal, identity-based land rights through inserting spatially an

antagonistic value of private production for profit.

Interview Data and Discursive Practice

CALPI's text critiques the inauthentic and unmeaningful forms of participation

implemented by the Nicaraguan State in its planning processes, which illustrates a value

of participatory democracy in the text. To elaborate, CALPI asserts that an inability to

encourage participation of Indigenous communities on the part of the Nicaragua State

was directly conducive to the State's methods of land expropriation (APIAN 2017: 114).

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Conversely, CALPI incorporates a participatory approach into its texts analyzed in this paper. The report cites that the research team used a participatory methodology in the construction of one report, with the use of interview data from key actors including community authorities, members of territorial governments and leaders of Indigenous and Afro-descendent peoples of the geographical areas covered in the report (APIAN 2017: 13). This approach falls in line with deliberate attempts in contemporary processes of planning to include multiple and diverse points of view.

Identity and Sustainability

CALPI's participatory discourse narrates a complex conception of sustainability where indigeneity is utilized in the Bluefields area to make claims to territory against other competing interests of settlers as intermediaries for the Nicaraguan State. Interview data included within the text centers on territorial rights as integral to the sustainability of Indigenous and Afro-descendent livelihoods (APIAN 2017). Sustainability is a value inscribed in CALPI's text to argue for legal flexibility from the Nicaraguan State to grant Indigenous groups permanent access to the lands they inhabit. For example, the text explains that the actions taken on behalf of the Nicaraguan State to construct a parallel government, in the form of a state of exception, through reference to Law No. 840[4] has affected the livelihoods of Indigenous communities. The report quotes a Creole representative explaining that "This is a new form of genocide; I say it with this certainty because many people do not realize [or] account that a population can be eliminated if

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[4] Law No. 840, Art 12 Literal K states: "When the real estate or rights of use affected [by the GCIN or its sub-projects] are at the date of this Law or are subsequently owned by a Government Entity, there will be no Compensation for Expropriation and any corresponding resolution or transfer will be timely issued by the Commission without further processing or cost to The Concessionaire (emphasis added)" (98).

their livelihood is curtailed" (APIAN 2017: 98). The text reiterates the organization's

interest in notions of sustainability by referring to a previous court case with a statement

that reads that "these peoples have the right to a dignified life, emphasizing that the loss

of their territories for these peoples results in the absence of possibilities for self-

sufficiency and [the] self-sustainability of its members" (Acosta & CALPI 2017: 21). The

value of sustainability is therefore tangentially related to territorial rights over traditional

lands, regardless of access to legal title, to increase chances of Indigenous survivability

(Acosta & CALPI 2017: 21).

Further, unlike the ambiguous definitions of Indigenous identity found in Law

445's discourse, CALPI's text offers a second factor for defining Indigenous and Afro-

descendent groups and settler groups specifically based on the history of tenure for each

group. CALPI references interview data with the Bluefields Registrar, who explains that

"the Indigenous and Creole communities claim the right to own these lands because they

have been on them for 30 years or more" (CALPI 2012: 34). This definition is relevant in

contrast to the wider regulatory discourse of Law 445 from which CALPI draws upon

that leaves the definition of "settler" and "Indigenous" an open question.

CALPI also introduces the case of the canal megaproject by highlighting attempts

at activism from Indigenous community members. CALPI asserts that between 2014 and

2017, the Nicaraguan State declined consultation with Indigenous and Afro-descendent

activists regarding the megaproject. CALPI's text describes that the State declined "free,

prior, and informed consent," resulting in the escalation of land expropriation through the

denial of Indigenous and Afro-descendent self-autonomy and self-determination (APIAN

2017: 84). As described previously, the wider regulatory discourse of Law 445 from

which CALPI draws upon leaves the definition of "settler" and "Indigenous" an open question. Ultimately, the combination of these varied definitions illustrates a common problem for racialized and colonized peoples who seek to critique dispossessive processes but often need to construct the critique in a way that is constrained by the dominant vocabularies at their disposal (Nichols 2020).

This observation is relevant because in relying on a claim to indigeneity based upon historical length of tenure while at the same time relying on definitions of indigeneity based upon neoliberal multicultural discourse, CALPI's text does not explicitly grapple with the era of multicultural recognition politics that Bluefields Indigenous groups are and have been acting within. An example of scholarly work that grapples with this issue is Coulthard's analysis of "structured dispossession" (2014), where a liberal politics of recognition is regurgitated in the form of liberal multiculturalism. Without contextualizing this aspect of claims to indigeneity, the text's referral to notions of identity and self-determination has the potential to gesture toward neoliberal sentiments of identity politics (Nichols 2020: 86-7).

Indeed, the failure of Indigenous recognition through Saneamiento has occurred in part because the process is based on an Indigenous/mestizo categorization made possible through neoliberal multiculturalism (Hale 2002; 2005; Sylvander 2018). It does this by legitimizing Indigenous identity while delegitimizing the other, which ultimately obscures the possibility for complex, multiple, and overlapping spatial identities that can actually exist in relation to Nicaragua's Caribbean region. Contributing to this complexity is the aspect of a spatial division of labor imposed onto the Caribbean coastal Indigenous territory. Where the labor is temporary, as the Canal megaproject will eventually be

finished, a question emerges as to how so-called settlers perform, or create a sense of belonging within Indigenous territory. This question is important because those performing this labor are indeed integral to national identity through economic development. Neha Vora (2013) similarly asks this question of legal citizenship status relative to Dubai's Indian diaspora. Saneamiento is structured similarly on an impossible configuration of identity, which illuminates the complex relationship between activist claims to indigeneity and the neoliberal and multicultural context from which those claims are made, in that those claims are prone to reifying cultural forms and existing power structures.

In sum, this analysis demonstrates the potential for power interests to co-opt CALPI's claims to indigeneity. Without granular attention to the ways in which different identities are drawn upon in contexts of land tenure conflict, the meaning behind "Indigenous" and "settler" are ultimately subject to the discretion of the dominant power relations regulating land tenure claims. By calling upon indigeneity in this format, future action drawing on CALPI's guidance inadvertently places all forms of legal pluralism in line with the preferences operating in the dominant neoliberal ideology through which the canal project is made possible. Indigenous claims can be invalidated at the same time as multicultural identity politics can be utilized under Nicaragua's neoliberal governance structure to construct the canal, overriding any existing legal claims to land which are based on the land through length of tenure. Overall, CALPI's discourse illustrates the double-edged sword of claims for indigeneity within a neoliberal context, in that identity politics are part of neoliberal orthodoxy.

The following section includes an analysis of discourse from the NGO Alternative City. I find that Alternative City's discourse acknowledges urban informality, yet where the discourse is structured on advocating for a division between rights – the right to the city and the right to housing – it excludes attention to the messiness of and multiplicity of the agency of neoliberal subjects and the political possibilities that could be uncovered in emergent subjectivities and strategies for sustaining livelihoods (Larner 2003; Derickson 2015). I begin with a description of the context of unauthorized settlements in the Ozama River Basin, followed by an analysis of several texts authored by Alternative City contextualizing the land tenure injustices faced by the people living there.

THE OZAMA RIVER BASIN METROPILITAN CONTEXT

La Ciénaga, Los Guandules, and La Zurza are three of the oldest river communities that exist in Santo Domingo, the Dominican Republic's capital city. La Ciénaga and Los Guandules were first settled in the 1950's, while La Zurza was first settled in the 1960's, by migrants from other areas in the Dominican Republic as well as neighboring Haiti. These neighborhoods, along with several others, are located in what is known today as the so-called Circumscription Three (C3) of the National District (DN) in Santo Domingo. This area predominantly consists of urbanized land, and it has both the greatest population density and the greatest percentage of households living in multidimensional poverty in the city.

Many of the households that live in this area use low quality building materials and lack access to basic resources like drinking water, electricity, and sanitation. Over time, redevelopment strategies at the level of the Dominican Republic's central government in these communities have been met with housing eviction (Vasuvedan &

Sletto 2020). Several urban plans and projects in Santo Domingo have centered on the production of new forms of socio-environmentalism especially through neoliberal governance strategies beginning in the 1990's (Vasuvedan & Sletto 2020). One plan, the Ozama-Isabela Strategic Plan 2015-2030 (Plan Estratégico Ozama-Isabela 2015–2030), focuses primarily on development in the Ozama-Isabella River basin with a central focus on the area's social and environmental challenges. The plan is framed as an economic development strategy that can be encouraged through several social and environmental changes.

Alternative City's text centers on land expropriation in the Nuevo Domingo Savio neighborhood in the Circumscription 3 (2021a). Within Santo Domingo, Nuevo Domingo Savio is made up of the sub-neighborhoods of La Ciénaga and Los Guandules. These neighborhoods along with the neighborhood of La Zurza, all of which are located along the western banks of the Ozama and Isabela Rivers, are unauthorized settlements that have been subject to state planning for decades. In 1991, for instance, the Dominican Republic state used police power to evict the households living in these settlements despite other government efforts underway to improve the settlements' health and safety. Edmundo Morel and Manuel Meija (1998) cite these processes as imbricated in political economic relations where the Dominican State justified this expropriation in reference to health risks due to pollution and structural danger, as well as the need to open space for beautification through business and tourist investment. Through this planning process, over 300 families were evicted from their homes. By the 1990's, 70 percent of Santo Domingo's population was comprised of the so-called informal sector which produced 85

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percent of the city's housing. Essentially, preexisting land tenure laws as well as later revisions never took account of this majority portion of the population.

The settlements within Nuevo Domingo Savio are part of a more recent government-led project for redevelopment, and Alternative City's text critiques this project in reference to a planning document which writes as its objective "the formalization of the neighborhood and its connection with the rest of the city" (MAPRE, 2019). Proposed changes include a restructuring of local roads, the sewerage system, drinking water, public lighting, and garbage collection systems in the neighborhoods, as well as the construction of schools, street furniture, and signs and the removal of homes in flood prone areas. In terms of the removal of homes, the plan includes the removal of 1,400 families along the west bank of the Ozama River as part of a process of environmental sanitation.

The following sections detail the main findings of an analysis of Alternative City's discourse. At the textual level, Alternative City relies on a division between the concept of the right to housing and the concept of the right to the city as a main structuring device. At the second level of discourse, Alternative City's discourse constructs a narrative of land tenure insecurity among Nuevo Domingo Savio's residents, which corroborates this textual division. At the level of ideology, Alternative City's discourse acknowledges urban informality through its conception of the right to the city. In other words, the discourse deals with informality in a way that recognizes the "right to the city" as a collection of claims that do not fit perfectly into the ownership model of property (Roy 2005). Yet, where the discourse is structured on advocating for an opposing division between rights – the right to the city and the right to housing –attention

to the messiness of and multiplicities associated with neoliberalism are overshadowed by an overarching prioritization of liberal property rights.

Urban Informality

Alternative City's text narrates the history of the Domingo Savio neighborhood as rife with land conflicts, threats of evictions, and environmental vulnerability. In a report, Alternative City offers a narrative surrounding the emergence of the Domingo Savio neighborhood as not a product of the development of an informal housing market or a process of the invasion of land promoted by individuals, but of the action of the Dominican State (2021a: 28). The text's narrative of the neighborhood occurs in historicized phases according to the Dominican Republic's political history and history of modernization.

Alternative City writes:

> "The occupation of the land that forms the neighborhood began in the late fifties and early sixties (at the end of the dictatorship of Rafael Leónidas Trujillo), as a result of evictions from other areas of the city and the country, but also of displaced families who did not return due to natural phenomena (Pantaleon 1983). This policy of forced evictions was the result of the implementation of "modernization" projects in the city promoted by the dictator, as well as the appropriation of land in rural areas. So, as the formal city advanced, it generated informal settlements on less valuable land, especially around industrial zones" 28

In describing the narrative of land expropriation carried out by the Dominican State in the Nuevo Domingo Savio neighborhood, the text refers to a study conducted in 1990 describing the complexity of the legal land system in one area of the neighborhood (2021a: 38-9). While La Cienega was considered to be 'practically owned by the state,' as it clearly appeared on property titles and plots, the case of Los Guandules is different

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in that the Dominican State offered ownership to households with titles despite the land

being owned by the State. Although most inhabitants did not have legal title at this time,

there existed a land tenure system that operated beyond the limits of legality with

reference to the rule of the *cuareria*, where rent was often paid for a part of a house rather

than for an entire property. To address cuareria, a multi-phase planning process was

conducted by the Dominican State including a plan for which subdivision, land

demarcation, and compensation to inhabitants for the land were made primary, as well as

the participation of neighborhood inhabitants throughout this process.

Alternative City's text makes intertextual reference to critical urban scholarship

that argues that dualistic approaches to land tenure through concepts of legality and

illegality ignore the complexity and validity of other land tenure arrangements (2021a).

The implication of a dualistic view of land tenure is that urban informality automatically

means insecure tenure. For instance, the text (2021a) integrates descriptions of

informality and land tenure security by explaining that:

> "Taking this perspective, when analyzing the case of Dominic Savio, the methods
> used by impoverished people to improve their housing situation are recognized as
> alternative ways of obtaining the benefits that derive from having a formal title"
> …" understanding that the State is not the only source of security."
> (Hollingsworth, 2013)" 51

In sum, urban informality is instilled as a value in the text. The text acknowledges

that the most vulnerable families in Santo Domingo live in contexts of urban informality

and do not choose to accrue the costs of benefitting from so-called formalization (2021a:

7). The implication of this choice is that those living in unauthorized settlements are

conscientiously acting in light of existing land tenure regulations. The text therefore

highlights a simultaneous characterization of nomotropic human behavior; being that of a rule-based nature and responsiveness to incentives (Chiodelli & Moroni 2014). This is especially relevant for the case of Los Guandules, where cuareria is utilized by those living in unauthorized settlements.

The Right to Housing and the Right to the City

The text also employs the concept of the right to housing, being the second facet of an opposing division as a structuring device within the text. The organization quotes a segment of Law 160-21 to build its case about the right to housing in the Dominican Republic:

> "… there is, on the part of the Dominican State, a historical debt in terms of habitat and guarantee of the right to decent housing for affected communities [that have become] permanent impoverished human settlements. Consequently, it is necessary for the State to guarantee the right to sustainable**,** decent housing, granting legal certainty through the provision of certificates of titles with the legitimacy and legality required by the legal system regarding land in the Dominican Republic." 6

Several devastating storms prevented the implementation of the State's plan for subdivision, land demarcation, and compensation. A second plan, which is subject to critique in Alternative City's text, was later put forward in 2014 advocating for the preservation and sustainable use of the basin of the Ozama River. Alternative City describes the state action in response to the implementation of this most recent plan to be rampant with eviction which violates the right to housing (2021a). Alternative City's text makes intertextual reference to a United Nations Human Rights Office report to argue that:

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"It stipulates that governments must grant "legal security of tenure to all persons who are currently threatened with forced eviction and take all necessary measures to provide full protection against forced eviction, on the basis of participation, consultation and effective negotiation" (United Nations, 1996). 4

The text critiques the most recent planning procedures of the Dominican State through intertextual reference to Law 160-21. For instance, the text critiques the way in which families are pressured to choose new living arrangements without adequate time after being coerced to move (2021a: 50). The organization also critiques the inability of the Dominican State to perform the payment process in a fair and equitable manner as essentially a violation of inhabitants' right to housing.

The text incorporates the concept of the right to the city as a framing device alongside the concept of the right to housing (2021a). The right to the city thesis was developed by Henri Lefebvre who emphasized the centrality of space and urban life under capitalism (1968). The right to the city is meant to be understood as a 'transformed and renewed right to urban life' (1968: 158). Lefebvre largely views the city as an oeuvre which is produced through labor and the daily actions of those living in the city. The right to the city can signify a right to live in the city, to produce urban life on terms outside of exchange value, and the right of inhabitants to remain unalienated from urban life.

Since the creation of the notion of the right to the city, several critiques of the concept have been presented. For instance, Kafui Attoh (2011) questions what is meant by "right" and argues that while the fuzziness of the concept may be strategic in some cases, it ultimately veils from view important contradictions in the ways in which rights claims may or may not be commensurable with others. According to this argument, these incommensurabilities must be understood in order for the potential of the right to the city

to be realized. In other words, some rights are incommensurable when viewed under the abstraction of the right to the city framework, and these inconsistencies deserve analytical scrutiny in order for the vision of the right to the city to be realized.

In the text, the right to the city is utilized in a way that highlights the concept's "strategic fuzziness" (Attoh 2011), in that the discourse simultaneously encourages the conflicting rights of legal and procedural fairness as well as the right to be included when operating outside of the legal/illegal binary. These different goals are acknowledged in the text: "it's necessary to highlight that the right to decent housing does not guarantee the right to the city and that in order to democratize cities it is necessary that both rights go hand in hand" (2021b: 10). As I described earlier, the text's reliance on the concept of the right to the city alongside the right to housing illustrates a division between rights as a main structuring device. This division has been written about by several scholars who point more generally to the ambiguous place of rights in right to the city discourse (Blomley 2008; Attoh 2011). In some cases, amidst multiple possible definitions of democracy in each context, there remains the possibility of a tension between the exercise of collective power and the protection of minority rights against unjust collective decisions (Attoh 2011). This tension is illustrated in Alternative City's text, and the participation of diverse groups is a topic in Alternative City's text which speaks to this conflict. The following section describes the implications of Alternative City's participatory methodology relative to this tension.

Interview Data and Discursive Practice

The text critiques a trend from the Dominican State of excluding the urban population in decision making in the implementation of a capitalist and neoliberal vision

focused on the market rather than rights (2021b: 3). Alternative City also adopts a participatory methodology in its report to describe the experiences of inhabitants of the Nuevo Domingo Savio neighborhood who did not receive fair and legal treatment or compensation through the State's processes of land expropriation. At the same time, the text demonstrates the value of urban informality through the acceptance and integration of unauthorized settlements into planning discourse.

Following the doctrine of the right to the city, Alternative City's interview discourse covers the perception, legal status, and material conditions of community members and leaders as well as a cadastral lawyer. The interview discourse illustrates a division between an understanding of land tenure security based on the feelings of normality that residents have experienced throughout the time that they have lived in Nuevo Domingo Savio, and conceptions of legal property rights that negatively affect residents' perceptions of tenure security through the prioritization of the right of property over the experiences, possibilities, and needs of people living in the neighborhoods.

The discourse speaks to an affective politics whereby residents, particularly property landlords working in the framework of *cuareria*, fear eviction and thus do not repair their homes for their tenants. This highlights a conflict not only between the Dominican State and homeowners but between homeowners and renters (2021a). Another point of contention brought forth in the interview discourse is a conflict between owners and renters because the Dominican State offered a higher payout to renters than to owners in its eviction and compensation processes (2021a).

Sustainability and Spatial Ideology

The text illustrates an argument that law 160-21 is formulated on a neoliberal basis where the private real estate sector is a primary actor in housing affordability in the Dominican Republic. This critique relies on a relational conception of sustainability. To elaborate, Alternative City's text critiques Law 160-21 for placing too much emphasis on the construction of sustainable physical infrastructure, in that the Law "takes into account the economic dimension, generates programs that facilitate access to housing but do not ensure access to means of livelihood and work, which can lead to an of the beneficiary families of these plans and shut out many others who do not qualify." (2021b: 10). The point being made in this area of the text is that democracy cannot be materialized if the primary focus of the Dominican State is exclusively around the construction of environmentally sustainable housing. Instead, focusing on other factors such as the livelihoods of actors is expressed within the text to be primary. The organization's report defines urban resilience as a relational process through which cities can maintain continuity through the social function of property, alongside a solidarity economy based on reciprocity and adaptation in reference to local knowledge (2021b: 10).

At once, the discourse values an acceptance of urban informality through a relational conception of sustainability and the right to the city, as well as an acceptance of 'formality' through mainstream planning procedures of fair compensation and due process for evicted persons within the framework of the right to housing. The following section describes the text's reference to the concept of the right to the city serving as an additional structuring device. It then provides context to this concept in its ability to

capture the complexity of contradictory claims to rights in Nuevo Domingo Savio's land tenure institutions.

The concept of the right to the city has been used in attempts at promoting collective rights and reclaiming urban space in the face of neoliberal ideology. Alternative City's text illustrates this sentiment through descriptions of how urban space is understood, lived, and perceived as a social and historical set of processes (Merrifield 2006). Through this framework, the text illustrates a tension between collective rights to the city through the rights of minority residents under the frame of the right to housing. The text grapples with the differentiation between these two conceptions of rights, but a richer contextualization of agency within this complex land tenure institutional context could offer a different venue for theorizing the complexity of legal action in Nuevo Domingo Savio's unauthorized settlements. Importantly, the concept of the right to the city is connected to geographies of liberalism. While the right to the city has been considered interesting for its potential to commit to a collective struggle to transform current urban conditions, it has subsequently been critiqued for remaining undertheorized (Blomley 2004). In response to this critique, Joaquin Villanueva encourages defining and clarifying how the right to the city fits within and sets itself apart from geographies of liberalism (2016). Avoiding this discussion means risking a default assumption of a liberal and individualized conception of rights.

The right to the city framework, especially as it has been elaborated on in dominant urban scholarship, has also been critiqued for having a gendered and patriarchal theoretical foundation (Fenster 2005; Vaiou 2014; Beebeejaun 2017). This critique falls in line with an understanding of ideology presented by Michel de Certeau, who makes

primary not the collective and political acts of the right to the city but the ways in which

every day embodied practices recover a sense of meaning and belonging (de Certeau

1984). Underlying the conflict occurring in the Nuevo Domingo Savio neighborhood, for

instance, may be gendered or ethnic dimensions which, in their encounter in both private

and public arenas, can lead to the construction of places through the right to participate in

processes of local planning and governance (Fenster 2005). In excluding these factors,

the text reinscribes the urban poor as a singular rational subjectivity. With feminist

critiques of the right to the city in mind, it does this by inadvertently refusing a spatial

ideology that urges the question of the subject as a multiplicity and nonidentity (Poster

1992: 100).

The division between the right to the city and the right to housing present in

Alternative City's discourse suggests implications for the urban institutional politics of

sustainability. The text promotes a vision of resiliency as a relational process through

which cities can maintain continuity through the social function of property, alongside a

solidarity economy based on reciprocity and adaptation in reference to local knowledge

(2021b: 10). While this conception is relational, the text's focus on a division between the

right to the city and the right to housing excludes space for contextualizing the

development of varied political subjectivities in favor of a questioning, based on the

concept of the right to the city, of residents' perception, legal status, and material

conditions within unauthorized settlements under neoliberal urbanism. This conception

neglects the messiness of and multiplicity of the agency of neoliberal subjects (Larner

2003). It also disregards the political possibilities uncovered in emergent subjectivities

and strategies for sustaining livelihoods (Derickson 2015). Further, the implications of

using the concept of the right to the city alongside a relational conception of sustainability is that the notion of the right to the city has been critiqued for conflating "the urban" with bounded notions of the city compatible with a liberal and individualized conception of rights (Villanueva 2016). The division created in the text between the right to the city and the right to housing can therefore be externally critiqued for its wider congruence with the neoliberal economic policies generating mass eviction in the Ozama River basin under the pretext of environmentally sustainable development. Structuring the text around this rights-centric division without elaborating on where it fits into geographies of liberalism overshadows attempts at acknowledging forms of socially located agency.

COMPARATIVE MOMENT

Both CALPI and Alternative City's discourse highlights the complex nature of land tenure institutions in global South contexts. In the Nicaraguan context, the primary and arguably most contentious characteristic of land conflict revolves around claims to indigeneity in the contemporary neoliberal and multicultural era. This discourse necessitates narratives that prioritize the complexity of claims to indigeneity. The institutional context of land tenure in the Bluefields metropolitan area requires a consideration of not only socially located agency, but of the interactions between multiple and diverse identities in sustaining livelihoods.

In the Dominican context, Alternative City's text relies on a division between the notions of the right to the city and the right to housing to critique the neoliberal urban condition in the context of Nuevo Domingo Savio. The text accepts urban informality and the right to the city, yet its focus on the division between rights excludes attention to the

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messiness of and multiplicity of the agency of neoliberal subjects, as well as subsequently the political possibilities uncovered in emergent subjectivities and strategies for sustaining livelihoods (Derickson 2015).

Finally, CALPI and Alternative City adopt a participatory approach to knowledge production while also critiquing certain elements of the participatory approaches taken on by the Nicaraguan and Dominican States. A main critique of participatory approaches falls within their inadequate model of connecting individuals and social structures. Cleaver elaborates on this critique: "Despite the strong assumption of the links between individual participation and responsibility, there is little recognition of the varying livelihoods, motivations and impacts of development on individuals over time" (1999: 605). Participatory approaches assume that collective action can be made possible through an equality of actors derived from common livelihood interests. Rights-based approaches are congruent with this line of thought (Englund 2004). This thinking is largely critiqued for its assumption that agents are equally placed to exercise rights (Cleaver 2009). Participatory planning approaches that assume that subjectivities like state and civil society are essentialized into definable, organized, homogenous, and consensus seeking entities can undermine areas of social complexity and conflict (Cooke and Kothari 2001). A relevant issue highlighted through these critiques is an inability to capture the interplay of structure and agency through participatory democracy. These critiques among others have established an often-repeated story about the limits to participatory planning approaches. However, some have encouraged a renewed focus on forms of expertise in planning (Harris 2023) and relatedly, new ways of framing what have been termed "progressive knowledge practices" (Robin & Acuto 2022).

The inclusion of participatory approaches within CALPI's and Alternative City's discourses can be critiqued in that while they serve practically as a link between differing subjectivities such as the state and civil society, they reinscribe those differences through discourse that favors neoliberal ideology. The implication of this move is that "social difference is recognized only through the categorization of general social or occupational roles; `women, `farmers, `leaders' and `the poor" (1999: 605). The uncovering of the contradictions underlying CALPI's and Alternative City's discourse shows that forms of land tenure are mediated by static notions of subjectivity. Without a richer contextualization, the neoliberal orthodoxy that these discourses critique is at risk of being reinscribed in practice. In turn, this analysis encourages prioritizing the recursive relationship between agency and structure in participatory activist discourse to gain a nuanced understanding of the multiple and contradictory aspects of neoliberalism, especially in contexts such as Bluefields and the Ozama River Basin which are characterized by conflict-saturated forms of land expropriation. This would require a discursive structuring device that avoids the languages of neoliberal multiculturalism and liberal conceptions of rights.

CONCLUSION

Findings of the research demonstrate the important roles of discourse in activist land tenure reforms. Both NGOs are primary conduits in terms of encouraging collective action against land expropriation, yet aspects of the discourse inadvertently reinscribe territorial power relations through discourses of neoliberal multiculturalism and liberal property rights. Both discourses advocate for land tenure security to contest and resist the commodification of land via the state. Both discourses also promote a relational

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conception of sustainability. The texts generally raise awareness of the legacy and enduring consequences of land expropriation and its effects on classed, gendered, and Indigenous subjectivities. Yet certain discursive strategies have the opposite effect, which was uncovered through an analysis of the textual structuring device of divisions found in both discourses. These structuring devices promote a mainstream notion of sustainable development under neoliberal ideology. Areas in the discourse where complexity is excluded presents areas of possibility for an approach to knowledge production that takes account of socially located agency. Participatory approaches in contexts of legal pluralism that incorporate elements of structure and agency may avoid the elements that have subjected participatory democracy to universal critique. Importantly, much can be gained from capturing the complexities of socially located agency in these contexts, most importantly that of understanding and supporting the sustainability of marginalized livelihoods.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION

Land tenure is connected to contemporary concerns for sustainability in that unequal land distributions and pressure on land can lead to environmental, social, and economic degradation. Further, while sustainability has become relevant for urban knowledge and research especially in the global South, much of our urban sustainability knowledge is shaped by research and typologies from the global North (Nagendra et al. 2018; Parnell & Robinson 2017; Roy 2005). In the Nicaraguan and the Dominican contexts, hybrid and complex land tenure institutions are differentially discursively and materially enacted through urban informality and neoliberal sustainability policy. In this dissertation, I have provided explanation and elaboration around these complex and contradictory contexts.

The first paper offered a theoretical contribution which brought the concept of nomotropism into conversation with institutional bricolage in the context of land tenure and urban sustainability. In many fields including geography, institutional bricolage has been used to describe the ways in which actors consciously and unconsciously reshape or piece together different institutional arrangements. Similarly, in the field of legal studies, nomotropism has been used to understand actions that do not comply with the law while still retaining some relation to it. Despite the proliferation of scholarship employing both concepts separately, there have been few instances of overlap, and intentional integration

of these concepts has been virtually nonexistent in the literature on urban sustainability and land tenure. This contribution seeks to elaborate on the common ontological ground between these concepts, with a particular focus on studies of land tenure and urban sustainability.

Where urban sustainability is best captured through institutional processes, institutional bricolage and nomotropism are complementary venues for capturing these relationships with normative implications in the arenas of planning and policy. I find two pertinent areas where the concepts overlap, including their common relational ontology and subsequently the ways in which the concepts engage structure and agency. These theoretical framings encourage prioritizing the unequal relationships among places through capital, territory, and imperialism. In addition to these areas of overlap, I find areas of divergence which may offer new avenues for contextualizing forms of socially located agency. While the boundaries of analysis for institutional bricolage are expansive, nomotropism offers a particular language from legal studies for the study of action within land tenure institutions. Institutional bricolage can be informed through nomotropism's language for recognizing conscientious objections to regulations, while nomotropism may be informed through institutional bricolage's predisposition for capturing multiple and diverse identities and subjectivities. In sum, bringing these concepts into conversation can encourage a relational ontology within studies of sustainability.

The second and third papers offered empirical contributions. In the second paper, I offered a comparative urban account where I track neoliberal processes of planning, land tenure reform, and urban-rural dynamics as they relate to the institutional politics of sustainability in the Nicaraguan and Dominican contexts. Center-periphery relations have

been sustained and reinscribed over time in each context through material and discursive formations of uneven development. I then highlighted the role of state-generated statistical knowledge on agricultural cooperatives in reinscribing these relations. I integrated archival and discourse analysis with mapping to show how the statistical representations that emerge out of two national studies of agricultural cooperatives reproduced these relations. The Nicaraguan and Dominican contexts share some similarities in the implementation and restructuring of their agricultural cooperative models. However, these processes materialize spatially, temporally, and territorially differently in each context, so an understanding of these contexts from a comparative lens provides a view into the differential ways in which neoliberal planning and policy integrates with real property, land reform, and sustainability.

The third paper presented findings on how varied forms of land are mediated through the urban institutional politics of sustainability. Through critical discourse analysis of documents from non-governmental organizations in two Latin American contexts, I demonstrated the important roles of discourse in activist land tenure reforms. Both NGOs are primary conduits for encouraging collective action against state-led forms of land expropriation, yet their discourse also reinscribes these power relations through limiting conceptions of socially located agency. I find that activists advocating for land tenure security have been able to contest and resist land expropriation in the greater Bluefield's and Santo Domingo metropolitan areas by raising awareness of the legacy and enduring consequences of land expropriation and its effects on marginalized groups. Yet certain discursive strategies have the opposite effect in incorporating structuring devices that correspond to neoliberal sentiments of identity and rights. This

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analysis illustrates the need for a richer conception of the ways in which livelihoods are sustained in multiple and complex neoliberal formations.

These theoretical and empirical contributions add the literature on urban sustainability and have prescriptive relevance in the realms of planning and policy. I highlight the need for new forms though which the complexities of neoliberal planning and policy can be understood in the context of the relationship between land tenure and the urban institutional politics of sustainability. Through a relational lens, sustainability lends itself to analytically capturing the multiple and differing social relations – social, environmental, and economic - that encounter one another in coexistence, conflict, and cooperation to shape urban form. Importantly, the primacy of land, labor, and gender need to be more deeply integrated into the concept of sustainability, and a relational ontology rooted in place and history can encourage that through its conceptual and analytical form.

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(Published Abstract) Brooking, A.S., Simpson, D.M., Hatchell, M.L., Van Zant, A.C., Moore, A.P., Connors, L., Clarke, J. E., Sartain, M.M., & Sephton, S.E. Do canine companions reduce college stress? Poster presented at the virtual meeting of the American Psychosomatic Society, December 3, 2020.

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