

SWAAG 2014 Abstracts

Undergraduate – Paper

Plastic bag use analysis in Denton, TX.

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Abstract: The use of plastic versus reusable bags in grocery shopping is a prevalent issue in the Denton area, considering the many potential environmental and economic impacts each type potentially has on the community. The current proportion of plastic bags to reusable bags used by grocery shoppers is unknown. Data was collected from stores within Denton city limits to determine a baseline demographic for the percentage of bag use by type. Variables such as race, gender, and presence of children were also recorded. Once information was gathered, analysis of the data was performed to extrapolate the future of plastic bag use and whether or not a city-wide plastic bag ban in the Denton area is feasible, as well as to determine if a certain gender or ethnicity is more likely to use a specific type of bag. The results of this research lend to a recommendation that a plastic bag ban at this time is highly unlikely to be accepted in the Denton community based off of an overwhelmingly high percentage of plastic bags used in grocery shopping.

Keywords: plastic bag, reusable bags, Denton, ban, human geography

Graduate – Paper

Urban Transport Governance and Public Dialogue: A Transition to Compressed Natural Gas in Bolivia.

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Abstract: Would you consider owning an alternatively fueled vehicle - what if it were cheaper than gasoline and the conversion costs were completely subsidized? This paper examines the competing discourse surrounding compressed natural gas as an alternative vehicular fuel source in Bolivia. The rapidly developing nation is keen on making ubiquitous use of compressed natural gas a reality by providing substantial natural gas subsidies, citing increased mobility and environmental stewardship as the primary motives. The aim of this research is to understand how governmental persuasion to consume domestically extracted and manufactured natural gas affects the public's transportation choices. Through semi-structured interviews, questionnaires and secondary data collection, this paper elucidates the transitional process of building a natural gas based transport network through transport governance. This study dissects disaggregated

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modal preference data collected in varying neighborhoods and public transit hotspots in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Latin America's second fastest growing city. Results show that Bolivian automobile owners are reluctant to adapt their automobiles, despite reduced transportation costs, stating that the conversion damages their vehicle's motor and minimal natural gas infrastructure exists outside of urban areas. Additionally, the research reveals that automobile owners are currently the main beneficiaries, though surprisingly, respondents who do not possess an automobile speak more favorably of natural gas. By understanding the discourse in the push for alternative fuels, we can begin to determine the likelihood of compressed natural gas as a transitional fuel source in a world that is constantly seeking greater mobility.

Keywords: compressed natural gas, urban transport governance, transport geography, alternative fuels, Bolivia