

Robert Nutifafa Arku
University of Toronto, Geography

Transit investments, land value uplift, and the residential mobility of marginalized groups

Decades of research indicate that accessibility plays a crucial role in shaping urban dynamics, influencing both land markets and household location choices. Additionally, accessibility is often considered a strategic tool in improving the well-being of marginalized populations. In light of recent findings on transportation equity, there is a pressing need to thoroughly examine how accessibility and affordability impacts are distributed. My dissertation, centered on equity issues, employs a quantitative approach to contribute valuable insights based on three main objectives. Focusing on Metro Vancouver, the first objective delves into the heterogeneity in the relationship between accessibility and housing markets across different neighborhood types. The results indicate that, while Affluent neighborhoods show the highest marginal willingness to pay, disadvantaged communities experience the highest predicted price premiums for access.

The second objective, currently under analysis, focuses on the impact of new transit infrastructure on the housing market in selected Canadian cities. The guiding hypothesis posits that the implementation of a new or improved transit system will lead to a substantial increase in land values within the surrounding areas. The third objective explores the long-term outcomes of low-income individuals directly affected by the presence of new transit infrastructure, particularly those living in proximity to new transit stations. This is approached by investigating the life trajectories of low-income individuals before and after the construction of new transit infrastructure. Although analysis is pending, progress has been made in securing access to the Longitudinal Administrative Databank, an individual-level panel dataset spanning from 1982 to 2020 and representing a 20% sample of tax filers across Canada, located at the Research Data Centre. Overall, my dissertation has significant policy implications, particularly in addressing the ongoing housing crisis through informed housing provision strategies.