

Three Essays on Urban Economics

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Abstract

Explores the role of spatial relations, particularly rent and land ownership, in the context of developed urban capitalist economies.

First essay: develops a Marxist-Georgist framework for thinking about urban land rents, drawing on classical political economy thought, radical geography, and urban sociology. This framework features a three-part class society (capital, land, labor) that engages in distributional conflict over the social product.

Second essay: based on the above framework, develops a model of urban growth and distribution in an urban economy with particular attention to the evolution of the three factor shares (wages, profits, rents) along with changes in the spatial structure of production, communication, and transportation technology. This model is used to examine the role landed property (residential in particular) plays in the production and distribution of surplus.

Third essay: an empirical analysis of rent control. Using an author-constructed database of New Jersey municipal rent control ordinances, I estimate the effects of rent control on the growth of rents and the rental housing stock in rent-controlled vs uncontrolled towns using a first-differences approach.