

Conceptualizing the ‘power to build’: Lessons from housing development in Hawai‘i

Jennifer Darrah-Okike
University of Hawai‘i

How do land developers, builders or “place entrepreneurs” shape (or attempt to shape) land-use in the presence of significant political and cultural opposition or intensive regulation? In order to answer this question, I present findings from original qualitative research on four controversial high-end luxury housing development projects in Hawai‘i. I describe specific political processes through which developers of the projects studied attempted to neutralize political opposition and navigate amidst the authority of local and state agencies; I also describe how developers responded in complex ways to the voices and interests of diverse Native Hawaiian communities and local residents. Overall, I argue for greater analytical attention by scholars to the symbolic politics of development (and their unintended consequences for local residents and diverse Native Hawaiian communities) and the protracted and episodic quality of development under intensive regulation.

FRIDAY, MARCH 6TH
SAUNDERS 624, 2:30 – 4:00 P.M.