

RESEARCH YOU CAN USE

FIVE ACADEMIC PLANNERS YOU SHOULD KNOW

IF THERE'S ONE thing planning researchers like to do, it is to run numbers. It should come as no surprise, then, that a planning professor recently ran the numbers on his colleagues. The study used Google Scholar to identify the tenure-track faculty in accredited planning departments whose work has been cited the most.

Tom Sanchez, a professor at Virginia Tech who published the study in the *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, based the count on citations through 2014. He argues that determining who the most-cited researchers are and where they work can help academics and practitioners find the best research.

But, based on the study's findings, writing influential papers that get cited a lot doesn't translate into automatic name recognition. One reader of Sanchez's 2015 update of the citation list (available at tomwsanchez.com) commented, "Interesting. Have never heard of half the people listed in the top 10, including the number one."

Ouch. So let me introduce the top five researchers to this reader and anyone else who wonders.



Luc Anselin

Arizona State University

45,101 citations

Anselin is a pioneer in the field of spatial econometrics, which accounts for spatial

effects in statistical models. You can thank him if you've ever run tests for—or even heard of—spatial autocorrelation, spatial-lag models, and a host of other spatially relevant statistical tests.

His 1988 book, *Spatial Econometrics: Methods and Models*, helped to move spatial econometrics from the fringes of planning and geography to a central concern. The book is still considered a foundational work nearly 30 years later.

At ASU, he founded and directs the GeoDa Center for Geospatial Analysis and Computation. The center is dedicated to developing and disseminating new spatial analysis methods. The bottom line? Anselin is the guy who has helped everyone in planning make regression and other statistical models run right.



Michael Storper

UCLA

28,139 citations

Michael Storper is a professor of urban planning at the University of California, Los Angeles. He studies the ways innovation—especially in governance and technology—influence regional economies.

His most recent book, *The Rise and Fall of Urban Economies: Lessons from San Francisco and Los Angeles*, focuses on this process in California. It tracks how decisions about regional development, corporate priorities, and business relationships over the last 40 years transformed San Francisco and Silicon Valley into a

technological juggernaut, while southern California languished by comparison.

"Per capita, workers in the Bay Area make 30 percent more than those in greater Los Angeles. That's almost as great a difference as divides high-income and middle-income countries," Storper wrote in a recent op-ed piece in the *Los Angeles Times*.



James W. Varni

Texas A&M

25,040 citations

James W. Varni is professor emeritus at Texas A&M's Department of Landscape Architecture and Urban Planning. His planning work focuses on how the built environment affects people's well-being and health. In particular, he looks at how the design of hospitals and other health care facilities influence outcomes for patients and staff.

Before joining the planning faculty at Texas A&M, Varni spent more than two decades working as a clinical psychologist in hospitals. He remains a licensed psychologist. As a medical researcher, he is probably best known for developing a series of surveys that clinicians use to measure the health care quality of life among children.

Varni's work on the healing environment of children's hospitals led him to planning when he landed the Julie and Craig Beale '71 Endowed Professorship in Health Facilities Design at Texas A&M in 2012.



AnnaLee Saxenian

UC Berkeley

21,281 citations

AnnaLee Saxenian is dean of the Information School at the University of California, Berkeley and is a professor in the university's Department of City and Regional Planning. Her research explores how people, ideas, and geographies combine to form hubs of regional economic activity.

She is probably best known as the woman who explained Silicon Valley to itself. Saxenian's seminal 1994 book *Regional Advantage: Culture and Competition in Silicon Valley and Route 128* traces how the valley's famed entrepreneurial culture rose to prominence while Boston's older, more established technology hub along Route 128 faltered.

She told the *Harvard Business Review* in 2014 how she regularly hears people at conferences reciting her theory of how Silicon Valley became so successful without realizing she is the one who came up with it. Her response? "Yeah, I think I've heard something about that."



Robert Cervero

UC Berkley

20,752 citations

Robert Cervero has probably the most traditional focus on urban planning of any researcher on this list, but that doesn't mean his thinking is conventional. Cervero was one of the first academics to study the influence of the built environment on travel behavior, a subfield that is now one of the most heavily

researched in planning. He pioneered the use of the now-ubiquitous "D" variables—the first three were density, diversity, and design—in explaining travel behavior.

I don't think I exaggerate when I say that Cervero is the world's top expert on transit-oriented development, a subject that bridges the gap between land use and transportation. He travels all over the globe speaking on the subject. He was also a contributing author to the recent IPCC (International Panel on Climate Change) Fifth Assessment and UN-Habitat's *Planning and Design for Sustainable Urban Mobility: Global Report on Human Settlements 2013*. In 2013 he was ranked among the top 100 City Innovators Worldwide by UMB's *Futures Cities*.

So now you know the top five, and have even more cause to be proud of our diverse field and its varied contributions.

—Reid Ewing

Ewing is chair of the Department of City and Metropolitan Planning at the University of Utah, an associate editor of the Journal of the American Planning Association, and an editorial board member of the Journal of Planning Education and Research and Landscape and Urban Planning. Fifty past columns are available at mrc.cap.utah.edu/publications/research-you-can-use.

LETTERS

Short-term rentals

Currently in Natchez we have stringent ordinances that regulate the establishment of bed and breakfasts, guest houses, and rooming houses. We have a wide range of requirements in regards to historical significance of the subject property to availability of on-site parking. In Natchez, current B&B owners are starting to use Airbnb and other sites like this to advertise their rooms, which is well and good because they have gone through the proper channels. However, I could see how people could take advantage of Airbnb services without going through the correct processes and approvals, leading to a loss in tax revenue for the city.

Your article ("Could You Bnb My Neighbor," February) has really opened my eyes in regard to how apps and websites are constantly changing their image to dodge legal processes. One of the most

concerning was the app dedicated to renting out on-street parking spaces in residential neighborhoods. Natchez, being an older and smaller community, has yet to acquire the means for a fully functioning GIS system in which current short-term rental properties could be displayed and monitored. I hope in the future to map out the existing short-term rental properties and then cross-reference with sites like Airbnb to find the properties that are in violation of local licensing laws.

Once again, this article has been extremely informational, and I want to extend my appreciation to the author and editors who dedicated their time and efforts to spread the word about this concerning issue.

—Riccardo Giani
City Planner
Natchez, Mississippi

On the ball

I would like to congratulate APA staff on the excellent work being produced in *Planning* magazine. It is like the editorial team is reading the mind of what my jurisdiction needs in real time. For example, the sign issue hit my desk the morning after the Town Council directed staff to update the ordinance. The comprehensive plan issue came as I was launching our plan update. The issue with students and planning arrived as I returned from spending the day in the local schools. I find I am copying multiple articles to pass out to my town manager, town attorney, and elected officials. Thank you for the timely articles!

—Denise M. Harris, AICP
AICP Region II Commissioner
Warrenton, Virginia

Letters may be edited before publication. Address them to Meghan Stromberg, Planning's Executive Editor, American Planning Association, 205 N. Michigan Ave., Suite 1200, Chicago, IL 60601; mstromberg@planning.org.

LIBRARY

When the government goes away

It's not news that decades of white racism, disinvestment, and ongoing privatization of services have put Detroit in a bad way, with six straight decades of population shrinkage, a 2013 bankruptcy, and mini-