



UPR/MIT/TU Professional Development Program
Transportation Technology Transfer Center
University of Puerto Rico at Mayagüez
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Executive Summary

Puerto Rican Press and the Urban Rail System

By

Jodselyn Rivera Martínez, Sub graduate Student
jod_8@hotmail.com
Social Science Department - Sociology
University of Puerto Rico - Mayagüez

Advisor

Jaime Gutiérrez Sánchez, Ph.D.
didi@coqui.net

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Executive Summary

Introduction

Urban Transportation contributes to the economy through the mobilization of goods and people to different destination. These destinations represent a diversity of options that contribute to the collective well-being and provide access to educational centers, entertainment, health, shopping and working locations. To accelerate the movement of people in big cities, reduce transit congestion and offer transport options its normal to resort to the construction of subways or urban rail systems. Urban, these characterized for been the more standardized and comfortable public transportation mode.

The objective of this study is to determine the aspects of Tren Urbano that had been emphasized in Puerto Rican main newspapers. *El Nuevo Día (END)*, *El Vocero* and the *San Juan Star (TSJS)*, publish between March 1, 1993 and March 31, 2000; using the technique of content analysis. Specifically four important aspects will be covered: media emphasis on topics related to the design, construction, operation and use of the Tren Urbano, key organizations, public and private, affecting or affected by the Tren Urbano project, gauge media support to the Tren Urbano project, format of the messages in the press, and content trends over time. This will bring up today a previous study on the subject that covered the period March 1993 to March 1997.

Present situation in Puerto Rico

Puerto Rico had experienced the transformation from an agricultural society to an industrial society, resulting in significant changes such as population growth and urban sprawl. This situation called on the attention of governmental agencies that had become forced to create traffic plans to counteract the excessive development in the Island. This caused a National transportation policy focus shifted from highways to public transit in the mid 1960's. (Hanson, S., 1995) Improvements and expansion on public transportation services are justified as the means to reduce the use of private auto, reduce air pollution, save energy, and revitalize central cities. These improvements and expansions became the beginning of some social, physical, economic and environmental changes.

After a long period of planning, public hearings, permits and negotiation, in San Juan Metropolitan Area (AMSJ) begins the construction of the Tren Urbano in 1996. Population growth is an important issue in the construction of Tren Urbano. U.S. Census Bureau 1999 population estimates for Puerto Rico a 10.4% growth between 1990-1999, reaching 3.9 million. The 2000 Census is expected to place the Island's current population at about 4 million. Specifically, San Juan Metropolitan Area (AMSJ) consists of thirteen municipalities, has thirty seven percent of the total population of Puerto Rico and concentrates the sixty three percent of the employment opportunities. (Tren Urbano Office)

Problem Statements

Puerto Rico is in a government transition from one political party to another. The study provides

an opportunity to detect how the media, and politicians project the images of a mayor project. The results could be used to:

- Provide basis for the use of the media in educating the general public about the use, benefits and convenience of using the Tren Urbano instead of the private car.
- Help in establishing or maintaining a positive relationship with the media to create an appropriate public opinion image of the Tren Urbano.
- Assist in crisis management of discrediting reports about the Tren Urbano.

Justification

According to the government, *Tren Urbano* is Puerto Rico's largest ever infrastructure project, which will enhance the viability of the neighborhoods by providing improved access to the entire metropolitan area for both residents and business. "Improved access will also support ongoing public and private efforts to stabilize and revitalize commercial activities in the area and to strengthen numerous institutions. Several public agencies and other major employment centers are located within 400 meters of proposed stations locations." (FEIS, 2000)

The success of the Tren Urbano depends on use by the surrounding community. So, the media could take in consideration the social and human factors related to the success of Tren Urbano. This study collects information from newspapers, in order to identify impact of themes in the community and to present a vision of the project as reflected on the press. The findings create benefits to provide basis for the use of the media in educating the general public about the use, benefits and convenience of using the Tren Urbano instead of the private car. It will also help in establishing or maintaining a positive relationship with the media to create an appropriate public opinion image of the Tren Urbano, and assist in crisis management of discrediting reports about the Tren Urbano.

Objectives

- To bring up today a previous study on the subject that covered the period March 1993 to March 1997.
- To detect media emphasis on topics related to the design, construction, operation and use of the Tren Urbano.
- Identify key organizations, public and private, affecting or affected by the Tren Urbano project.
- Gauge media support to the Tren Urbano project.
- Observe format of the messages in the press.
- Detect content trends over time.

III. Project Phase I

Originally this study attempted to describe land use impact along the alignment of the Tren Urbano. The subject was initially approached through the press to get familiar with the image it presented about the subject. Given the amount of work involved, the study has been

redefined as the Tren Urbano in the Puerto Rican Press. In the phase very preliminary results are presented since the final investment is being refined.

Content Analysis: El Nuevo Día Interactive

- 60 news from El Nuevo Día
- Years: 1993-2000

Selection Criteria or Categories

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| ▪ Alignment | ▪ Environmental Impact |
| ▪ System Design | ▪ Businesses |
| ▪ Land Use | ▪ Politics |
| ▪ Land Cost | ▪ Economic |
| ▪ Cost of Housing | ▪ Other transport modes |
| ▪ Types of Housing | ▪ Stations arrivals |
| ▪ Locations | ▪ Users |
| ▪ Construction Projects | ▪ Legal Aspects |
| ▪ Social Impact | ▪ Security |

Transport Evolution: Rail System in Puerto Rico

1880 - The train or railway, "El Trensito de Ubarri", was the first mode of collective transportation in the Island. (Huyke, 1973)

- The alignment was from Santurce to Río Piedras.
- Purpose:
 - Trade
 - Commerce
 - Collective transportation.

1950 - The train or railway had lost importance as a mode of collective transportation. (Olivieri, 1979)

- Reason:
 - The arise of cars and trucks.
- Consequence:
 - Bankruptcy of the railway company of Puerto Rico.
 - The end of the collective transportation development in Puerto Rico

1967- After a decade of the bankruptcy of the railway company of Puerto Rico, appeared the first transportation study. (Acevedo, Kevin y Carmen Vilella, 1996)

- Suggestions:
 - "Rapid Transit Rail"
 - Two routes of 27 miles, 7 miles per exclusive way and 13 per express way.
 - 36 stations
- Routes:
 - San Juan - Cupey Alto
 - Bayamón - Carolina

- Cost - \$232 millions

1979 – A second study reiterate the necessity of a rail system in the Metropolitan Area.

- Suggestions: “Metro” (Técnicos Asociados, 1979)
 - 16 stations
 - 15 mile route
 - Cost: \$558 millions

1993 – The study of Regional Transportation, in which first appear the concept of Tren Urbano.

- Suggestions:
 - Project development in three phases.
 - *First phase:* 11.8 miles // Santurce - Bayamón
 - 14 stations
 - Cost: 1,200 millions
 - *Second phase:* 7.8 miles // Río Piedras – Carolina
 - *Third phase:* Possible expansion from Río Piedras to Caguas.

Different studies have demonstrated the necessity of possible solutions to resolve the mass transportation in San Juan Metropolitan Area.

- San Juan –1920:
 - A private bus company:
 - “Líneas”
 - Capacity:
 - Seven passengers
- San Juan – 1942:
 - Transport mode called:
 - “La Pisicorre” or “station wagon”
- San Juan – 1957:
 - AMA- Autoridad Metropolitana de Autobuses
 - Metro bus 1988 – a private line of AMA
- San Juan – 1990
 - “Acuaexpreso”
 - To lighten the necessity of passengers mobilization.

According to governmental reports, these projects had become an economic charge for the public administration. Besides, they haven’t resolve the mass transportation problem in the San Juan Metropolitan Area. That’s why the government had been working in the project of Tren Urbano.

The media

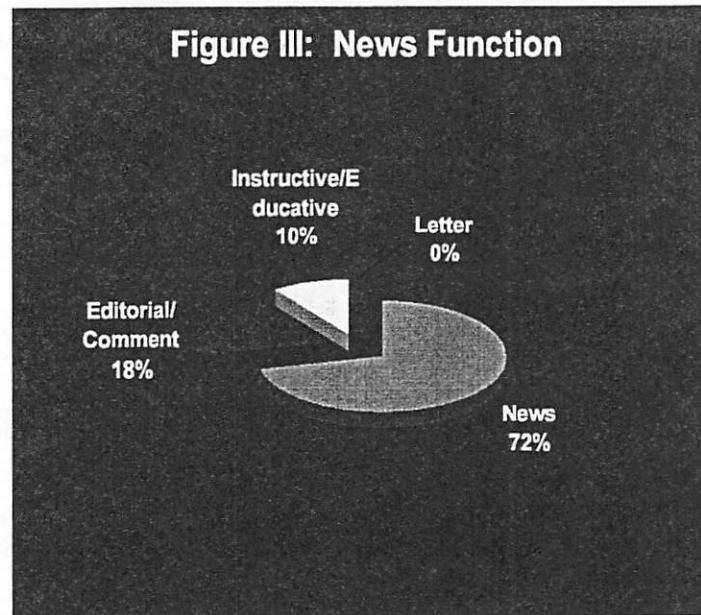
The communication media exist according to the convectional position of the majority. To maintain inform the members of a society, about the daily happens facts. In Puerto Rico The San Juan Star and El Nuevo Día, have covered the Tren Urbano project. This study pretends to identify the impact of the theme in the community and to present a vision of the problem as reflected on the press.

IV. Preliminary Results

Articles Function (Figure III)

- 43 News
- 11 Instructive/Informative
- 06 Editorial/Comment
- 0 Letter

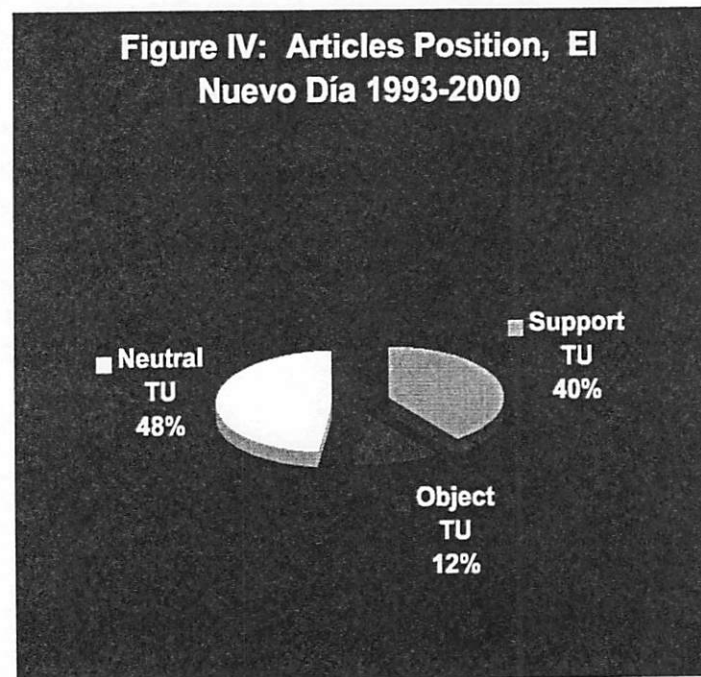
Figure I represent the samples distribution and news function. The major frequency was reflected on news about Tren Urbano 72%. The editorials/comment articles are 18%. Instructive/educative articles have 10%. Letters are in 0%; this reflects a low awareness of the community about the project.



Articles position (Figure IV)

- 40% Supports Tren Urbano
- 12% Objects Tren Urbano
- 48% Neutral to Tren Urbano

Figure II represents the inclination of the articles about the Tren Urbano Project. The 48% of articles position is neutral. The 40% of the articles support the Tren Urbano Project and the last 12% have negative inclination to the Tren Urbano Project. This lower percent obtained by the objections about the Tren Urbano remains as an important issue, because it reflects that the community isn't



it reflects that the community isn't influenced by news about the progress of the project.

Content Analysis

In this Content Analysis sixty-press clips have been compiled, covering the years 1993-2000. The newspaper used was El Nuevo Día and the San Juan Star. Each article has been analyzed with a pre-codified questionnaire, covering the important issues in the research. For the purpose of this report, the most important inquiries on the survey have been chosen for discussion.

Frequency of Predominant Themes in the Articles: El Nuevo Día (1993-2000)

The following table presents the predominant themes in the newspaper.

- The category with the major frequency was, the economic aspects related to the Tren Urbano. This category refers to the financing, cost and monetary benefits of the Tren Urbano Project. According to the compile data, the theme most emphasized by the press was the financing of the Tren Urbano. An example of this is the title, "*Asignación Millonaria para el Tren Urbano*", published on July 14, 1999. This news said, according to the Secretary of DPTO Carlos Pesquera, that Tren Urbano would receive a federal fund of \$148 millions. Another example is, "*Niega el Deficit y exalta el Proyecto*", published on February 14, 2000. In which the purpose was to emphasize that the TU would not operate with a deficit and that it represents a clear example of an administrative excellence. These are two examples that demonstrate the importance of the financing aspect of TU, and this also proves the purpose of the press; which is to maintain the community informed about situations related to our country.
- The second position of the predominant themes is the one of areas and location that is also related to the third position which is land use. Under this category are included the design of the alignment, the stations locations, alternates route and housing. An example of this is the title "*A toda máquina la expansion del Tren*", published on August 15, 1998. It talks about the extensions, such as the one of Viejo San Juan, locations and future projects of Tren Urbano along the alignment.
- The third position of the predominant themes in the articles is land use that has a relation with the previous category. In this category the newspaper makes reference of some actual or future projects related to Tren Urbano. An example of this category is the title, "*Despejan la vía al Tren Urbano*", published on May 2, 1996. This news informs about the concessions of land made by Junta de Planificación de Puerto Rico, to the Tren Urbano Project. This, for the viability of the project, in terms of the time of the construction.
- The fourth position of the predominant themes is the politics. In terms of politics, at the beginning of the construction of the Tren Urbano there is no conflict between parties. But in recent years, there have emerged some controversies about the financing and deficit of the project. An example is the publication titled, "*Piden Investigar por qué*

subió el costo del proyecto", published on September 3, 1999. In which the senator of the Popular Democratic Party, Antonio Faz Alzamora, claimed in a resolution, to investigate why the construction of the Tren Urbano had exceed its estimates.

- In summary, these are the predominant themes presented in the press during the years 1993 to 2000. Specifically, emphasized in the economical aspect of the project.

Table I: Frequency of Predominant Themes in Articles: El Nuevo Día, 1993-2000

Predominant Themes	Frequency	Percent
Land Use *	26	12.26%
Cost of land	8	3.77%
Cost Housing	8	3.77%
Types of Housing	20	9.43%
Areas & Locations *	27	12.73%
Other transport mode	10	4.71%
Social Impact	23	10.84%
Environmental Impact	20	9.43%
Business	11	5.18%
Politics *	24	11.32%
Economic *	35	16.5%
N=212		

Frequency of agencies and organizations mentioned in the articles: El Nuevo Día 1993-2000

The following theme is about the agencies and organizations mentioned in El Nuevo Día, related to the Tren Urbano project. For this purpose the agencies have been identified from the newspaper publications. Between the agencies and organizations mentioned are: Departamento de Transportación y Obras Públicas (DPTO), State Government, Federal Government, Municipal Government, the municipalities of San Juan, Bayamón, Caguas, Guaynabo, Autoridad Metropolitana de Autobuses AMA, Junta de Planificación, University of Puerto Rico, and other agencies included.

- The agency with the highest frequency is DPTO. DPTO has a frequency of 22 that is a 13%, which means that it is the agency with the highest influence in the construction of the Tren Urbano. An example of the intervention of DPTO in the articles is the one titled "*DPTO desmiente señalamientos sobre el Tren*", published on February 4, 2000. Also the executives of DPTO have been predominantly mentioned in the articles. They are the ex-secretary of DPTO, Carlos Ignacio Pesquera and the actual secretary Sergio González.
- The second agency with a high frequency is "Junta de Panificación de Puerto Rico". The frequency was 17, with a 10%. This is an important agency because it is in charge of approving future developments in the benefits of the community. An example is the article titled, "*Rechaza JP el plan territorial de Calderón*", published on March 17, 2000. In which JP asked for several changes to the "Plan of Territorial Ordering of San Juan", to be approved.

- The San Juan Municipality was the third agency with the mayor frequency. The frequency was 12, with a 7%. It is important, because San Juan is one of the Municipalities to be served by the Tren Urbano. An example of how the analysis emphasizes the municipalities involved is the following article title "*Nuevo Ordenamiento de Tránsito en San Juan*", published on February 19, 2000.

Table II: Frequency of agencies and organizations mentioned in the articles: El Nuevo Día

Agencies	Frequency	Percent
DPTO*	22	12.94
Highway Authority	9	5.29
San Juan Municipality*	12	7.05
Federal Government	9	5.29
State Government	11	6.47
Bayamón	11	6.47
Guaynabo Municipality	9	5.29
Río Piedras	8	4.70
Santurce- Hato Rey	11	6.47
AEE	2	1.17
Medical Center	4	2.35
Municipal Government	11	6.47
University of P.R.	11	6.47
TU Office	8	4.70
Junta de Planificación*	17	10
AMA	5	2.94
Other	10	5.88
N=170		

Figure III: Frequency of agencies and organizations mentioned in El Nuevo Día

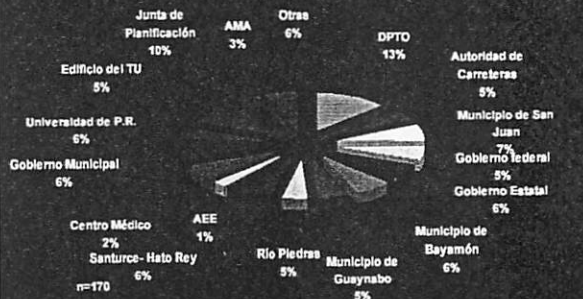
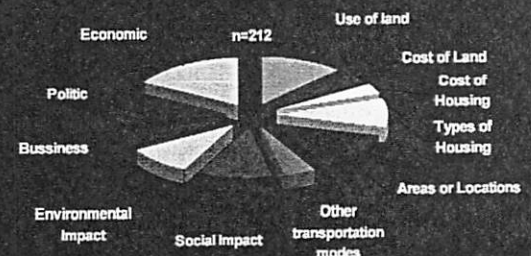


Figure IV: Frequencies of predominant themes in the articles, El Nuevo Día 1993 - 2000



VI. Preliminary Conclusions and Future Research Activities

According to the data, the most emphasized theme by the press was the financing of the Tren Urbano. However, the categories of land use, locations and areas remained as an important issues in the press, supporting the objectives of the research. The second phase of the study will apply a refined instrument improved after testing it in phase one. The instrument will cover more categories to a wider range of articles. A larger period of time and two additional newspapers will also be included.

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"Despejan la vía al Tren Urbano", El Nuevo Día, published on May 2, 1996.

"DPTO desmiente señalamientos sobre el Tren", El Nuevo Día, published on February 4, 2000.

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"Nuevo Ordenamiento de Tránsito en San Juan", El Nuevo Día, published on February 19, 2000.

"Piden Investigar por qué subió el costo del proyecto", El Nuevo Día, published on September 3, 1999.

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INTERNET

<http://www.notiaccess.com>

<http://www.presupuesto.prstar.net>

<http://www.vtpi.org>

APENDIX

Universidad de Puerto Rico
Recinto de Mayagüez
Departamento de Ciencias Sociales

Programa de Desarrollo Profesional UPR/MIT/Tren Urbano
Consejero: Jaime Gutiérrez, P.h. D

PUERTO RICAN PRESS AND THE URBAN RAIL SYSTEM

Instrumento para el estudio de noticias relacionadas con sistemas urbanos de rieles

COLM.	COD.	
7	()	1. Periódico (0) El Nuevo Día (1) The San Juan Star (2) El Vocero
		2. Título del Contenido: _____
8	()	3. El Contenido es: (1) Hechos (2) Opinión (3) Ambos (4) Otro _____
9-10	()	4. Número de página donde aparece el título: _____
11	()	5. El Artículo es: (0) Primera página (1) No primera página
12-16	()	6. () () () Fecha del Contenido día mes año
17	()	7. Posición que ocupa el Título: (0) Parte superior de la página (1) Parte central de la página (2) Parte inferior de la página
18	()	8. Fotografías: (1) Fotografía de persona (2) Fotografía no persona (3) Fotografía persona y no persona (4) No Fotografía
19	()	9. Gráficas:

- (0) Sí
- (1) No
- (2) Mapa

- 20 () 10. Dibujo / Caricatura
 (0) Sí
 (1) No
- 21 () 11. Escrito por:
 (0) Reportero del periódico
 (1) Reportero de agencia noticiosa
 (2) Agencia noticiosa
 (3) Sin identificar
 (4) Columnista
 (5) Persona privada (lector)
 (6) No se puede clasificar
- 22 () 12. El contenido es:
 (0) Noticia
 (1) Artículo Informativo / Educativo
 (2) Editorial / Comentario
 (3) Carta de lectores
- 23-30 () 13. La información concierne principalmente:
 (01) Alineación - Ruta Oficial
 (02) Uso de terrenos afectados
 (03) Ajuste del Plan Vial
 (04) Otros modos de transporte
 (05) Impacto Ambiental
 (06) Arribo a estaciones
 (07) Diseño del Sistema
 (08) Contratos
 (09) Financiamiento / costo / beneficio
 (10) Usuario
 (11) Aspectos legales
 (12) Seguridad
 (13) Político Partidista
 (14) Ruta alterna / Operación / Características del
 Servicio
 (15) Impacto Social / Personas Afectadas
 (16) Otro _____
 (17) Otro _____
 (18) Otro _____
- 31-38 () 14. Agencias / Organizaciones mencionadas de Puerto Rico:
 (01) Departamento de y transportación y Obras públicas

- (02) Autoridad de Carreteras
- (03) Municipio de San Juan
- (04) Municipio de Bayamón
- (05) Municipio de Guaynabo
- (06) Río Piedras
- (07) Santurce – Hato Rey
- (08) Autoridad de Energía Eléctrica
- (09) Centro Médico
- (10) Hospital de Veteranos
- (11) Universidad de Puerto Rico
- (12) Gobierno Federal
- (13) Gobierno Estatal
- (14) Gobierno Municipal
- (15) Departamento de Recursos Naturales – DRN
- (16) Edificio del Tren Urbano
- (17) Junta de Planificación
- (18) Autoridad Metropolitana de Autobuses - AMA
- (19) _____
- (20) _____
- (21) _____
- (22) _____
- (23) _____
- (24) _____
- (25) _____
- (26) No Menciona
- (27) No especifica

39-46 () 15. Organizaciones / Grupos Privados Mencionados:

- (01) _____
- (02) _____
- (03) _____
- (04) _____
- (05) _____
- (06) _____
- (07) _____
- (08) _____
- (09) _____
- (10) _____
- (11) No menciona
- (12) No especifica

47-50 () 16. Dato estadístico relevante:

17. El Artículo:

- (1) Definitivamente respalda el Tren Urbano**
- (2) Parece respaldar al Tren Urbano**
- (3) Parece Oponerse al Tren Urbano**
- (4) Definitivamente es crítico del Tren Urbano**
- (5) Ni se opone ni respalda el Tren Urbano**
- (6) Se opone y lo respalda**