

2nd Annual IGC Cities Research Conference

– Making infrastructure work for growth

Date: 28-29 January, 2016

Location: London School of Economics (LSE), London

Background

Today, for the first time in history, more than 50% of the world's population live in towns and cities. While the growth in urbanisation so far has mainly been led by developed countries, developing countries across the globe are starting to urbanise at an increasingly impressive rate. This trend is expected to continue, and has the potential to increase productivity, improve governance and ultimately drive national economic growth to lift people out of poverty. However, for cities in Africa and South Asia to reach its full potential, the downsides of density must be handled. Establishing a functioning infrastructure along with investment into effective service provision, transportation networks, adequate water and sanitation, and affordable housing will all be important goals in generating economic growth and increasing the quality of life for its inhabitants.

But what are the main policy challenges for developing countries in doing so, and how can research help tackle these? In 5-10 years, what would governments and local city councils need to deal with in order for their cities to grow and prosper? And what role could academic findings play in informing the final decisions?

Following the success of the Cities Conference in May 2015, the IGC Cities Research Group will be hosting its second conference to strengthen the community of scholars and policy makers working on cities and urbanisation in developing countries. Whereas the conference in May served to set the agenda for future research and established the initial network of policy makers and researchers, this 2nd conference will further the agenda and push the newly formed community to set out to answer the most pressing policy questions using sound academic approaches.

Suggested aim and structure

The conference will present current academic research on cities and development, as well as provide a forum for leading academics and policymakers to come together to discuss potentials for cooperating on solving main policy challenges. As the first Cities Conference identified infrastructure to be one of the main issues to be dealt with, this second conference aims to build further on that by focusing on infrastructure broadly, to also include transportation, housing, sanitation, land allocation, zoning and other issues.

Day 1 of the conference would be devoted to presenting existing and new research on the main topics set out above. This day will be quite heavily academic focused, and might not be relevant for all participants to attend. Day 2 will be more strongly policy oriented and highlight the most pressing policy questions that developing countries will be facing in the next 5-10 years, and outline how existing and future research can answer these questions. Building on the presented research, the day will be structured around such key policy questions, as identified by policy makers in IGC countries ahead of time, and initiate a joint debate on how to answer these questions. Ideally, academics could also contribute to this discussion by coming prepared with an idea of how the questions could be attempted to be answered in the future (i.e. what data needed etc.).

Expected outcome

Overall, the event is expected to stimulate debate or new thinking on cities and urbanisation, both from academics on what type of questions and knowledge frontiers to be pushing and from policy makers on how to tackle some of the upcoming policy challenges. The conference would work to increase matchmaking opportunities between the two groups by engaging both parties in discussions around mutually beneficial questions. Ideally, this would generate further research with a clear policy buy-in. This would in turn would strengthen the research portfolio from IGC cities network and generate findings with a high policy impact.

Draft agenda

Day 1 – research focused

8.30-9.00	<i>Registration and coffee</i>	
9.00-9.15	Words of welcome	Jonathan Leape (Executive Director, IGC)
9.15- 10.45	New perspectives and fresh ideas	<p><i>Presenters (tbc)</i></p> <p>Natalie Picarelli (LSE) <i>Little Boxes All the Same - Evaluating Low-Cost Housing in South African Metro Areas</i></p> <p>Guillermo Alves (Brown University) <i>Slums in a system of developing world cities</i></p> <p>Nick Tsivanidis (Chicago Booth) <i>Commuting Technologies, City Structure and Urban Inequality: Evidence from Bogotá's TransMilenio</i></p> <p>Martina Kirchberger (Columbia University) <i>Pollution, Crime, and Mistrust across Space: Evidence from Sub-Saharan Africa</i></p> <p>Santiago Truffa (UC Berkeley Haas School of Business) <i>Geographic Determinants of Skill Sorting</i></p>
10.45-11.00	<i>Tea and coffee</i>	
11.00-11.30	Introduction	<i>Speakers</i> Ed Glaeser and Gharad Bryan
11.30-13.00	Transportation and infrastructure	<p><i>Academic presenters:</i></p> <p>Paul Novosad (Dartmouth College) <i>Rapid Urbanization and Rural Structural Transformation</i></p> <p>Adam Storeygard (Tufts) <i>The Heterogeneous Effects of Transportation Investments: Evidence from sub-Saharan Africa 1960-2010</i></p> <p><i>Discussant</i> Nathaniel Baum-Snow (Brown)</p>
13.00-13.30	<i>Lunch</i>	
13.30-15.00	City structure and land use	<p><i>Academic presenters:</i></p> <p>Tony Venebles and Vernon Henderson <i>Topic tbd</i></p> <p>Costas Arkolakis (Yale)</p>

Optimal city structure

Discussant:
tbc

15.00-15.15 *Tea and coffee*

15.15-16.45 **Lesson's from the past**

Academic presenters:

Marcella Alsan (Stanford)

Watersheds in Infant Mortality: The Role of Effective Water and Sewerage Infrastructure, 1880 to 1915

Stephen Redding (Princeton)

Estimating Neighborhood Effects: Evidence from War-Time Destruction in London

Discussant:

Jeremiah Dittmar (LSE)

16.45-17.00 **Closing remarks and summary of Day 1**

Speaker tbc

17.00-18.00 *Drinks reception*

18.30-20.00 **IGC Public Lecture**

Chair: *tbc*

Speakers:

Patricia De Lille (Mayor, Cape Town)

Jennifer Semakula Musisi (Executive Director, Kampala Capital City Authority)

Lalao Ravalomanana (Mayor, Antananarivo)

Day 2 – policy focused

8.30-9.00	Registration and coffee	
9.00-10.00	What economic research has left to tell us about cities	<p>Recap of research presented day 1</p> <p>Round table discussions about which policy challenges that need answers in 5-10 years, and how economic research can contribute to finding the answers.</p> <p>Session lead by Ed Glaeser & Gharad Bryan</p>
10.00-11.00	Policy challenge 1: Housing and land use	<p>Chair: Ed Glaeser (Professor, Harvard)</p> <p>Panellists Immaculata Mwanja Senje (Assistant Director, Department of Rural and Town, Ministry of Lands, Housing and Human Settlements Development, Tanzania) Craig Kesson (Director, Office of the Executive Mayor, Capetown)</p> <p>More participants to be confirmed shortly</p>
11.00-11.30	Tea and coffee	
11.30-13.00	Policy challenge 2: Water and sanitation	<p>Chair: Ahmed Mushfiq Mobarak (Professor, Yale)</p> <p>Panellists George Ndongwe (Director, Lusaka Water and Sewerage Company, Zambia) Marcella Alsan (Associate professor, Stanford)</p> <p>More participants to be confirmed shortly</p>
13.00-14.00	Lunch	
14.00-15.30	Policy challenge 3: Transport and infrastructure	<p>Chair: James Robinson (Professor, University of Chicago)</p> <p>Panellists: Patricia de Lille (Mayor, Capetown) Nathaniel Baum-Snow (Professor, Brown)</p> <p>More participants to be confirmed shortly</p>
15.30-16.00	Tea and Coffee	

16.00-17.00 **Policy challenge 4:
Financing city
provision**

Chair:

Adnan Khan (Professor, LSE and Research Director, IGC)

Panelists:

Patrick Musoke (Deputy Director Strategy Management and Business Development, Kampala Capital City Authority, Uganda)

More participants to be confirmed shortly

17.00-17.30 **Closing remarks**

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