

2nd Annual IGC Cities Research Conference

– Making infrastructure work for growth

Date: 28-29 January, 2016

Location: Tower 2, London School of Economics (LSE), London

Background

Today, 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 by-in. This would in turn would strengthen the research portfolio from IGC cities network and generate findings with a high policy impact.

Day 1 – RESEARCH

8.30-
9.00

Registration and coffee

9.00-
9.15

Words of welcome

speaker tbc

Presenters

Simon Franklin (LSE)

Access to credit and large household investments in urban Africa: Evidence from a housing lottery

Natalie Picarelli (LSE)

Little Boxes All the Same - Evaluating Low-Cost Housing in South African Metro Areas

9.15-
10.45

New perspectives and fresh ideas

Guillermo Alves (Brown University)

Slums in a system of developing world cities

Nick Tsivanidis (Chicago Booth)

Commuting Technologies, City Structure and Urban Inequality: Evidence from Bogotá's TransMilenio

Martina Kirchberger (Columbia University)

Pollution, Crime, and Mistrust across Space: Evidence from Sub-Saharan Africa

Santiago Truffa (UC Berkeley Haas School of Business)

Geographic Determinants of Skill Sorting

10.45-
11.00

Tea and coffee

Academic presenters:

Tony Venebles and **Vernon Henderson**

Topic tbd

11.00-
12.30

City structure and land use

Costas Arkolakis (Yale)

Optimal city structure

Discussant:

Naomi Hausman (Hebrew University of Jerusalem)

12.30-
13.00

Lunch

Academic presenters:

Paul Novosad (Dartmouth College)

Rapid Urbanization and Rural Structural Transformation

Adam Storeygard (Tufts)

13.00-
14.30

Transportation and infrastructure

The Heterogeneous Effects of Transportation

Investments: Evidence from sub-Saharan Africa 1960-2010

Discussant

Nathaniel Baum-Snow (Brown)

14.30-
14.45

Tea and coffee

14.45-
16.15 **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)

16.15-
17.15 **Keynote remarks**

Speakers to be announced shortly

17.15-
18.00 *Drinks reception*

Day 2 – POLICY

8.30-
9.00 *Registration and coffee*

9.00-
9.30 **What economic research has left to tell us about cities**

Recap of research presented day 1

Round table discussions about which policy challenges that need answers in 5-10 years, and how economic research can contribute to finding the answers.

Session lead by **Ed Glaeser & Gharad Bryan**

Chair:
Ed Glaeser (Professor, Harvard)

9.30-
11.00 **Policy challenge 1: Housing and land use**

Panellists
Craig Kesson (Director, Office of the Mayor of Cape Town)
Paul Collier (Professor, Oxford)
Nasir Javed (CEO, Urban Unit, Government of Punjab)
More participants announced shortly

11.00-
11.30 *Tea and coffee*

11.30- 13.00	Policy challenge 2: Transport and infrastructure	<i>Chair:</i> James Robinson (Professor, University of Chicago) <i>Panellists:</i> Patricia de Lille (Mayor, Capetown) Nathaniel Baum-Snow (Professor, Brown) <i>More participants announced shortly</i>
13.00- 13.30	<i>Lunch</i>	
13.30- 15.00	Policy challenge 3: Water and sanitation	<i>Chair:</i> Oriana Bandiera (Professor, LSE) <i>Panellists</i> Judith Tukahirwa Tumusiime (Deputy Executive Director, Kampala Capital City Authority, Uganda) Marcella Alsan (Associate professor, Stanford) <i>More participants announced shortly</i>
15.00- 15.30	<i>Tea and Coffee</i>	
15.30- 17.00	Policy challenge 4: Financing city provision	<i>Chair:</i> Adnan Khan (Professor, LSE and Research Director, IGC) <i>Panelists:</i> Patrick Musoke (Deputy Director Strategy Management and Business Development, Kampala Capital City Authority, Uganda) Ali Cheema (Professor, Lahore University of Management Science) <i>More participants announced shortly</i>
17.00- 17.30	Closing remarks	