

## RESEARCH NEWSLETTER

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### Productive Cities in the 21st Century | September 2019

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#### FEATURE STORY

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Kumasi, Ghana. Photo: Jonathan Ernst / World Bank.

#### Mobility and Economic Inclusion Are Key to Productive Cities in the 21st Century

On September 9 the [6th Urbanization and Poverty Reduction Research Conference](#) brought together leading policy makers and researchers on urbanization from around the globe. This year's conference focused on the most critical asset of any city—its people. While a city's buildings, infrastructure, and spatial design are all

important, cities are fundamentally about the people who live in them, their connections with each other, and the productivity of these connections.

[Story](#) | [World Bank Live: Keynote and Opening Session](#) | [Additional Event Materials](#)

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#### RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

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*This month's research highlights round up papers presented at the 6th Urbanization and Poverty Reduction Research Conference.*

##### ✓ [Cities of Workers, Children or Seniors? Age Structure and Economic Growth in a Global Cross-Section of Cities](#)

*Remi Jedwab, Daniel Pereira, and Mark Roberts, Working Paper, August 30, 2019.*

Research has hitherto focused on a city's skill structure as the primary determinant of its economic growth. This paper shows that a city's population age structure may also matter for its economic growth, finding that, in a global cross-section of large cities, cities with more children and/or seniors per working-age adult grow significantly slower.

##### ✓ [Trade and Informality in the Presence of Labor Market Frictions and Regulations](#)

*Rafael Dix-Carneiro, [Pinelopi Goldberg](#), Costas Meghir, and Gabriel Ulyssea, Working Paper, June 2019.*

This paper develops a model of trade with labor market frictions, regulations and imperfect government enforcement to quantify the misallocation of resources created by Brazil's large informal sector, and to understand the link between globalization, informality and unemployment.

### ✓ [Evaluating the Impact of Urban Transit Infrastructure: Evidence from Bogotá's TransMilenio](#)

*Nick Tsivanidis, University of California, Berkeley, June 2019 | Blog.*

Bogotá's investment in TransMilenio, the world's largest Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system operating since the 2000s, has more than paid for itself, with benefits both in time saved for commuters and improvements in people's choice of housing and place of work.

### ✓ [Measuring Commuting and Economic Activity inside Cities with Cell Phone Records](#)

*Gabriel E. Kreindler and Yuhei Miyauchi, February 21, 2019.*

This paper shows how cell phone transaction data from Dhaka and Colombo can be used to map commuting flows and predict the spatial distribution of wages and incomes in cities.

### ✓ [The Marginal Congestion of a Taxi in New York City](#)

*Daniel Mangrum and [Alejandro Molnar](#), November 12, 2018 (revise and resubmit at the American Economic Review).*

This study evaluates the congestion cost of a taxi deregulation episode in New York City within the larger context of app-based transportation providers. Using data—some not collected or analyzed previously and some entirely new, like digitized aerial imagery—it was possible to document a substantial traffic slowdown in midtown Manhattan since 2013 and its primary cause, the substantial increase in ridehail vehicles.

### ✓ [Improving Mobility in Developing Country Cities: Evaluating Bus Rapid Transit and Other Policies in Jakarta](#)

*Arya Gaduh, Tadeja Gračner, and Alexander D. Rothenberg, Syracuse University, October 2018.*

This paper evaluates options for reducing congestion in the city of Jakarta by either expanding the TransJakarta Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system, which was designed to improve mobility for commuters in the greater Jakarta metropolitan area but did not increase transit ridership, or implementing congestion pricing and/or reducing fuel price subsidies.

### ✓ [Gender-Segmented Labor Markets and the Effects of Local Demand Shocks](#)

*Juan Pablo Chauvin, Inter-American Development Bank Discussion Paper 605, February 2018.*

Because of gender segmentation in the labor market and joint mobility constraints for couples, local labor demand shocks can lead to very different outcomes depending on whether the new jobs go to males or to females. A spatial equilibrium model with gender segmentation in the labor market, validated with data from Brazil between 1991 and 2010, finds that regions grow faster in population and become more expensive when local shifts in demand favor male over female employment.

To access the latest Policy Research Working Papers, please click [here](#).

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## RELATED BLOG

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### **Is the rule of law good for women? Evidence from micro-entrepreneurs in Lusaka, Zambia**

*Nava Ashraf, Edward Glaeser, and Alexia Delfino, IGC blog, March 11, 2019.*

The rapidly growing cities of the developing world can be an engine for private sector growth (Krugman, 1991; Glaeser, 2011). However, the positive externalities of living in urban areas become lost opportunities when people cannot safely trade with each

other. This can happen either because of lack of mutual confidence or weakness in the rule of law.

[Read the blog](#)

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

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- **October 28, 2019:** [Policy Research Talk: Elite Capture](#)
- **December 9, 2019:** [Policy Research Talk: The Unintended Consequences of Cash Transfers](#)
- **March 16–20, 2020:** [Land and Poverty Conference 2020: Institutions for Equity and Resilience](#)

To see more events, please click [here](#).

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## BLOGS FROM THE RESEARCH DEPARTMENT

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### September 2019 global poverty update from the World Bank

[R. Andres Castaneda Aguilar](#), [Tony Fujs](#), [Christoph Lakner](#), [Minh Cong Nguyen](#), and [Espen Beer Prydz](#) | *Data blog*, September 24, 2019.

The September 2019 global poverty update published today includes revised survey data which lead to minor changes in the most recent global poverty estimates. The next major update of global and regional poverty estimates is scheduled for March 2020. As part of the September update, we are also releasing the Stata command [povcalnet](#) and the R package [povcalnetR](#), which allow users to estimate poverty at any poverty line for the world, regions or sets of countries, by querying the World Bank's database of household surveys directly from within Stata/R. The commands also retrieve inequality statistics provided by the database. Finally, the [PovcalNet](#) website now provides metadata on the [comparability of poverty estimates](#) within countries over time, compiled by the Country Poverty Economists in the World Bank's Poverty and Equity Global Practice.

[Read the blog](#)

### What development economists talk about when they talk about reproducibility ...

[Luiza Andrade](#), [Guadalupe Bedoya](#), [Benjamin Daniels](#), [Maria Jones](#), [Florence Kondylis](#) | *Development Impact*, September 16, 2019.

Can another researcher reuse the same code on the same data and get the same results as a recently published paper? This may sound like a low bar for reproducibility: this is presumably how the paper was written in the first place! Yet, at the AER, only 2 out of 5 accepted papers pass this "computational reproducibility" check on the first pass. Clearly, we all have a lot of work to do to live up to reasonable reproducibility standards—and the new AEA data policy guidelines underscore the scope of this effort. This question motivated teams from the World Bank, 3ie, BITSS/CEGA, J-PAL, and Innovations for Poverty Action (IPA) to host researchers from the US Census Bureau, the Odum Institute, Dataverse, the AEA, and several universities at the first Transparency, Reproducibility, and Credibility research symposium last Tuesday.

[Read the blog](#)

### Making farmers better off by tackling the whole of the value chain

[Markus Goldstein](#) | *Development Impact*, September 12, 2019.

There are a fair number of interventions out there that work with an entire value chain with a set of interventions. The first (and second) time I was asked to evaluate one of these, my response was how hard, even impossible, it might be. I have since been

enlightened, first with David's post on Monday and also from reading an exciting new paper by Macchiavello and Miquel-Florensa.

[Read the blog](#)

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