

China-Africa Urban Studies Workshop: Starting from the South

Cape Town, 25-27 March 2015

Venue: iKhaya Lodge, Gardens, Cape Town <http://www.ikhayalodge.co.za>

Background: In late 2013 professors Xiangmeng Chen and Garth Myers devised a proposal to the Urban Studies Foundation for competitive funding for a China-Africa urban studies workshop. The successful bid, developed in collaboration with Gordon Pirie and Susan Parnell of the African Centre for Cities, called for a meeting to debate efforts to re-locate the center of urban theory-making southward in the globe through a comparative analysis of urbanization policies and patterns in South Africa and eastern China. Such alternative theorizing requires well-conceived comparative empirical research that can offer timely insights. To establish the grounds for such future research, the workshop aimed to draw participants together to focus on three specific empirical themes which feature strongly in research in both contexts and which will bear comparative examination:

- 1) the role of the state in orchestrating development, and civil society responses to this. Contrasts may be drawn between adaptive and nuanced state interventions, with wider support and consent; and forms of conflict and contestation
- 2) comparative examination of the impacts on contemporary urban development of migration to cities under the *hukou* system in Chinese cities and the legacy of influx controls during the apartheid regime in South Africa
- 3) comparative examination of the growth of peri-urban settlements (e.g. informal and satellite cities); fostering cross-cultural global South comparative urban studies to develop in-depth, nuanced accounts of contemporary urbanization.

The workshop proposal further emphasized support for global South advanced dissertation students and early career faculty from the two countries, while promoting dialogue between established senior and junior scholars to foster further collaboration. Although some papers and presentations follow directly on these themes, the organizers have incorporated other themes; in particular, two presentations examine infrastructure issues critical to rapid urbanization in the regions of focus.

Programme:

Day 1 (March 25): A full day research symposium highlighting the work of recent PhDs and junior faculty. The event is structured around prepared paper presentations, but should also include opportunities for the presenters for one-on-one engagement with a senior scholar on how to take forward their work for publication. This day will

also include an opening keynote talk to set out the agenda for the workshop and lay out the broader intellectual context for alternative forms of comparison in urban studies.

Day 2 (March 26): A day for field explorations – there will be a morning field trip that will consist of a walking tour from the venue through the city centre, including a visit to the District Six Museum, and an afternoon field trip by bus to selected sites in Cape Town which highlight workshop themes. In the morning, presenters from the first day will also have the option of consulting with senior scholars on their papers.

Day 3 (March 27): The third day will include three keynote addresses from senior scholars, and several other papers from senior scholars. The day will conclude with a wrap-up panel, discussing future networks for global south urban studies, and detailing the publication strategy.

DRAFT PROGRAMME

Day 1 (Wednesday March 25)

9 am Welcome and Keynote 1

a) Garth MYERS, “Starting from the South: Alternative Visions of Comparative Urbanism”

10:15 am Session 1: Migrants, Influx control, and spatial planning

b) Yuan REN, “Improve Migrants’ Soft-Welfare in Urban China: Factors with Subjective Well-Being (SWB) and Social Policy Implications”

c) Warren SMIT, “Influx control and South African cities: understanding the impacts and addressing the challenges”

Discussant: Sophie OLDFIELD

12:30 pm Lunch

2 pm Session 2: Housing: informality, consolidation and upgrading

d) Zhengli HUANG, “Villages in the City: Informal Settlements and Their Identity in Urbanization of Kenya and China”

e) Liza CIROLIA, “Housing, informality, consolidation and upgrading”

Discussant: Yan YANG

4:15 pm Focus on Urban Infrastructure, Part 1:

f) Yina ZHANG (and Xiangming CHEN), “Integration on the Fast Track: High-Speed Rail and Demographic Dynamics in the Yangtze River Delta Region”

Day 2 (Thursday March 26)

Fieldtrips & Liaisons

9-11:30 am In-town walking fieldtrip in the morning (District 6 Museum and the city) and/or one-on-one liaison of junior and senior scholars.

2-4:30 pm: city fieldtrip (bus-based)

7 pm Conference Dinner at iKhaya Lodge

Day 3 (Friday March 27)

9 am Keynote 2

g) Ivan TUROK, “Urbanisation processes in the BRICS”

10:15 am Keynote 3

h) Jenny ROBINSON

11:30 am Focus on Urban Infrastructure, part 2

i) Ning Liu, “Opportunities of space-making in urban infrastructure: a comparative view between Cape Town and Shanghai”

12:40 Lunch

2 pm Session 3: Urban Labor Markets and Inequality

j) Xiangming CHEN (with Yuan REN and Chang LIU), “In But Not of the City: Shallow Urbanization, Massive Migration, and Social Integration in China’s Cities”

k) Owen CRANKSHAW

Discussant: Gordon Pirie

4: 15 pm Keynote 4

1) Phil HARRISON

5:30 pm Closing Remarks: Vanessa Watson