

Call for Papers for the 35th IARIW General Conference, Copenhagen, Denmark, August 20-25, 2018

The IARIW Council has selected the 15 theme sessions below for the 35th General Conference to be held in Copenhagen, Denmark August 20-25, 2018. IARIW members are invited to submit proposals for papers for these sessions.

In addition to proposals for the theme sessions, proposals may be submitted in all areas of interest to the membership, including: inequality; poverty; time use; real estate and housing prices; happiness and well-being; prices; wealth; household issues; social benefits, and measurement challenges for official statistics.

The web portal for submissions will be open effective April 30, 2017. The deadline for submissions is September 30, 2017.

Globalization and ‘Inclusive Growth’

Organizer: Suresh Chand Aggarwal (University of Delhi, India)

Inclusive growth as a development objective has been a long-cherished goal of many economies around the world. It has received renewed recognition in view of rising global inequalities because of high growth in some economies and near stagnation in many others. The idea for the session is to identify and analyze the impact of globalization on inclusive growth. How has rapid growth in some economies, especially the emerging economies, as well as the negative impacts of the Great Recession of 2008, affected different households within an economy and across economies? Inclusive growth is about more than income inequality. It encompasses the opportunities created or lost, as well as the redistribution of available opportunities during the process of acceleration or deceleration of growth. Inclusive growth could be captured through an opportunity index based on a social welfare function.

The research papers may address the following questions:

- What opportunities are opened or closed to different types of households during slow and high phases of growth in areas such as income, employment, education, and health, etc.?
- Has growth been all encompassing or have its fruits been enjoyed only by a section of society, leading to widening inequalities of opportunities in countries such as India, China, Russia, etc.?
- Similarly, have developments in the United States, Europe and other regions which recently experienced the Great Recession had a higher cost for certain types of households as compared to others?
- How do we measure “inclusiveness”?
- How can the benefits of growth acceleration and costs of growth deceleration be more evenly distributed?

- What policies could help to create more ‘equitable’ distribution of benefits and cost of growth?

Skills, Employment and Productivity - Measurement and Analysis

Organizers: Deb Kusum Das (University of Delhi, India), Wendy Li (Bureau of Economic Analysis, United States) and Sabrina Wulff Pabilonia (Bureau of Labor Statistics, United States)

Under the trend of globalization and automation, skill development is important to generate employment and enhance workers’ productivity. Hence, it is an effective way to combat poverty and maintain firms’ competitiveness. The purpose of this session is to establish the centrality of skill development to maintain both productivity and employment growth – in developing as well as in developed economies. Papers are invited which attempt to develop indicators of skills, to measure the impacts of automation on skill development, and to study various measurement issues associated with it. Further, papers which explore the linkage between skill development, productivity and employment both at the level of the economy and its sectors, particularly industries, from an analytical perspective are also welcome.

Measuring Capital and Wealth

Organizers: Robert Inklaar (University of Groningen, Netherlands) and Mary O’Mahony (King’s College, United Kingdom)

The capital (or wealth) available in an economy is of central importance for economic growth, well-being and sustainability. This session will be devoted to advances in the measurement of capital and wealth. We envisage a wide range of perspectives on capital, including (but not limited to) areas such as:

- The measurement of intangible types of capital, such as intellectual property or organizational capital.
- The measurement of human capital, for instance in relation to differences in health status, the quality of education or the return to experience.
- The measurement of natural resource capital.
- The relationship between micro- and macro-level measures of capital and wealth.

Papers that actively engage outstanding issues of measurement are particularly encouraged, but we welcome theoretical and applied papers on capital and wealth in general.

Human Capital and Innovation

Organizers: Wendy Li (Bureau of Economic Analysis, United States) and Sabrina Wulff Pabilonia (Bureau of Labor Statistics, United States)

This session will cover the role of human capital in innovation and growth. We are interested in papers that explore how human capital within firms or at universities spurs innovation regionally or across regions, how digitization affects the mobility of skilled labor and employment

structure, and how international venture capital flows affect cross-border startups. Additionally, papers on knowledge centers, entrepreneurial activity, patents, and effective management practices are also welcome.

Is Productivity Growth Slowing Down?

Organizer: Nicholas Oulton (London School of Economics, United Kingdom)

Abstract: The OECD has recently produced evidence that the growth of labour productivity is slowing down in large advanced economies and that the start of the slowdown preceded the financial crisis. At the same time there have been two related debates in the academic literature. The first is between technology pessimists (led by Gordon) and technology optimists (e.g. Brynjolffson). The second is between proponents of the secular stagnation thesis (Summers) and sceptics (Eichengreen). A number of questions around this debate are in need of answers. 1. How strong is the statistical evidence that the slowdown preceded the financial crisis? Or are we just seeing the aftershocks of the financial crisis? 2. Will the slowdown disappear as the crisis is overcome, just as slow growth in the 1980s gave way to faster growth in the 1990s? 3. How general is the slowdown, i.e. can we see it in emerging markets as well as advanced countries? 4. Will ICT continue to power labour productivity growth generally or will its effects gradually die away? 5. Will other forms of innovation take up the slack? This session invites papers addressing any or all of these issues, from either a macro or a micro perspective.

The Digital Economy - Conceptual and Measurement Issues

Organizers: John Verrinder (Eurostat), Marshall Reinsdorf (International Monetary Fund), and Wendy Li (U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis)

The "digital economy" that has emerged in recent years has given consumers access to many free or low cost products and to new kinds of peer-to-peer and "sharing economy" service providers, and greatly expanded access to information. Digitalization has also transformed how we shop and communicate, expanded buyers' access to varieties, enabled many goods and services to have new features that improve their quality, and made data a new kind of factor of production. Intangibles, such as brand equity, have also become more important.

There is a strong interest in the size and development of the digital economy (in current and constant price terms), and consequent impacts on growth, productivity and employment, both at the macro and micro levels. This has accelerated in recent years as 'e-platforms' have disrupted one traditional market after another. The new business models of the digital economy present both conceptual questions and measurement challenges for traditional statistical collections, but also offer new opportunities for obtaining source data that did not exist before.

This session will therefore examine the conceptual and measurement challenges for national accounts and price statistics posed by digitalization and strategies for meeting these challenges.

Distributional Diversity in the National Accounts

Organizers: Dennis Fixler (Bureau of Economic Analysis, United States), and Jorrit Zwijnenburg (OECD)

The last couple of years have seen an increased interest in the development of distributional measures within the system of national accounts, along with increased research on including heterogeneity and diversity in macroeconomic models and results (see Krueger, Mitman and Perri (2016)). The OECD has set up an international Expert Group on Disparities within National Accounts (EG DNA) to develop methodology to breakdown household income, consumption and savings within the SNA into income quintiles; a High Level Expert Group on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress sponsored by the OECD (HLEG) has been set up as a follow-up to the Stiglitz report (Stiglitz et al. (2009)); a recent project has started at the World Wealth and Income Database that includes Emmanuel Saez, Thomas Piketty and Gabriel Zucman; the Washington Center for Equitable Growth recently sponsored an expert meeting to explore possibilities for the compilation of distributional results in the United States; and the ECB is working on linking data from the Household Finance and Consumption Survey with financial accounts data to derive distributional results on wealth. There have also been several country-specific efforts; Australia, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands have already released official reports with DINA measures, and the US has created distributional measures of personal income using the National Income and Product Account structure.

Past IARIW conferences have included papers discussing the compilation of distributional measures and some of the challenges in this compilation process (including the special OECD/IARIW conferences and the current conference session “Integrating Micro and Macro Approaches to National Income Analysis”). Although these sessions have already provided relevant guidance for some of the issues in the compilation process, more discussion is still required to further develop some of the concepts used, examine methods to deal with specific NA related items, solve gaps between micro and macro statistics, demonstrate the importance of distributional measures, and evaluate the alternative data sources.

The current projects use a variety of concepts and methods to distribute different aggregate measures such as personal income, GDP, market income, etc. This session would bring together researchers who are actively estimating these measures to discuss conceptual differences between some of the projects and some of the remaining measurement issues in the compilation process that still pose challenges to arrive at robust results. These include conceptual discussions on the basis for disposable income and the treatment of some specific items such as pension and insurance transactions, as well as methodological issues such as methods to account for the top of the distribution, how to distribute government transfers (in kind) and imputed flows such as FISIM and imputed rent, account for the under-reporting of receipt of income in the household surveys, and create internationally comparable measures with the national accounts structure. This session would also include compilation of other measures of diversity such as gender and family type to demonstrate how aggregate measures of economic activity are distributed across the country’s population.

Pushing the Boundaries of the SNA

Organizer: Kyle Hood (Bureau of Economics Analysis, United States)

In this session, we seek to reassess or refine the boundaries that are defined by the 2008 SNA. This can mean (but is not limited to) reassessing the boundaries between current production and investments based on improved data availability, computational power, and economic theory; redefining or refining the boundary between natural and produced resources; improving our conception of the impact of anticipated and unanticipated price changes; or expanding the transaction boundaries to include certain types of losses that are anticipated by one party or another. The focus will be on improving the SNA by increasing its congruence with economic theory, or by making its estimates better reflect economic reality as viewed by industry experts or consumers.

Unconditional Basic Income

Organizers: Utz-Peter Reich (University of Applied Sciences, Mainz, Germany) and Ilja Kristian Kavonius (European Central Bank)

In May 2016 the Swiss people were called upon to vote on an unusual proposal, the introduction of a national law on unconditional basic income. Unconditional basic income is an income to which every citizen of a nation has a legal claim, on no condition (such as a labour contract, property ownership, or earlier contributions), and it is paid in addition to any income received from elsewhere.

New as it is in actual politics the issue is not new in social discussions, in general. Many citizen organizations advocate, and work for it. It is time the economic and social sciences take up the topic and deal with it, investigating advantages and possibilities, and revealing disadvantages and risks of the institution. Research must combine both micro and macro aspects. Micro studies of income and of time use may deal with topics such as work incentives and disincentives, administrative efficiency, and affordability while macro-statistics may look for consistency of funding, and integration with social welfare, within the overall economy using social accounting matrices, for example.

Timely Indicators of the Distribution of Income and Wealth

Organizers: Richard Tonkin (Office for National Statistics, United Kingdom) and Sofiya Stoyanova (Office for National Statistics, United Kingdom)

In order to properly understand changes in households' material living conditions, it is important to have measures which reflect the experience of the typical household, such as the median, as well as other indicators which can provide a description of the distribution. However, the complexities involved in collecting, processing and analysing household financial survey data (or data from administrative sources) mean such indicators are typically only available with a significant time lag.

The aim of this session is to highlight innovative approaches for providing more timely information on material living conditions, in order to meet growing demand from users of statistics. This may include work involving microsimulation and nowcasting, on the use of current income data rather than for previous periods, or making use of subjective or other proxy measures, along with the extent to which these are reliable indicators of living conditions.

Disability Measurement and prevalence and its Implications

Organizer: Surajit Deb (University of Delhi, India)

Given the nature of deprivations that disabled persons face related to the non-observance of their education, employment, income and social rights, the group may be the largest marginalized group in both the developing and developed world. The post-2015 development framework adopted a social rights based approach in accordance with the guidelines of United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The United Nations Statistical Commission is presently working through the Inter Agency Expert Group and the High Level Group in framing the indicators framework to measure the progress made by disabled persons in Social Development Goals (SDGs) implementation.

Disability is referenced in various parts of the SDGs in areas of education, growth and employment, inequality, accessibility of human settlements, as well as data collection and monitoring of the SDGs. The SDG goals that focus on persons with disabilities are: Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all; Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all; Goal 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries; Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable; and Goal 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.

Unfortunately, disability has remained an umbrella concept and disabled persons are never a standardized group (World Bank 2010: World Disability Report, WHO 2015: World Health Survey). While physical disabilities are observable, mental disabilities and disorders are not always revealed. But one element that remains common to the group is that they are poor, have limited education and employment and are therefore deprived of health opportunities. Given this background, a session on the measurement and prevalence of disability and its implications is proposed. Possible themes include: i) understanding the prevalence and nature of disability, ii) relevance of disability related SDG targets and the state of country/regional preparedness, iii) disability and health, education or job outcomes, or iv) the nexus between disability and poverty.

Improving the Measurement of Household Finances in Surveys

Organizers: Thomas Crossley (University of Essex, United Kingdom); Paul Fisher (University of Essex, United Kingdom); and Joachim Winter (University of Munich, Germany)

Understanding the spending, saving and borrowing of households is critical for assessing living standards and the sustainability of economic growth, including whether the current recovery is

being driven by unsustainable consumer spending. Data limitations constrain our understanding of household financial circumstances and behaviour, and current micro data pose a number of unresolved puzzles. For example, household expenditure surveys in the UK and the US suggest that households with the lowest incomes spend as much as households with much higher incomes.

It is however not known whether this pattern is the result of measurement error in expenditure or in income, or whether it reflects genuine borrowing or dissaving (and if so, whether that is sustainable). Having data about the assets and debts of a household over time, in addition to income and expenditure, would help to resolve this puzzle. Similar surveys indicate that richer households save larger proportions of their incomes. However aggregate savings rates have not increased over time as real incomes have increased. Again, this discrepancy could again be due to measurement error or reflect true behaviours. Friedman of course suggested years ago that the association between saving and income in micro-data was due to transitory income fluctuations. However, econometric attempts to isolate the relationship between “permanent” income and saving have not confirmed this. Better micro data on household finances is critical to making progress in this area.

This session will examine recent developments in the collection of micro/survey data on household finances. We are particularly interested in two kinds of developments:

- (1) Incorporating new technologies for collecting financial data. This would include, for example, the measurement of expenditures with receipt or bar code scanners, or incorporating data from “financial aggregators” (like *mint.com*)
- (2) Collecting all of income, consumption and wealth from the same households, and using the identity (income – minus consumption = change in wealth) as an coherence tool to improve the quality of the data (in the same way that National Accounts data are improved by reference to accounting identities.)

Mobility, Opportunity and the Importance of Longitudinal Data

Organizer: David Johnson (University of Michigan, United States) and Markus Grabka (DIW Berlin)

The presentations at the 34th General Conference suggested that we need to examine the inequality of opportunity. The only way to examine the opportunity of people and their social mobility is to use longitudinal data. 2018 will mark the 50th anniversary of the Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID), the longest running household panel survey in the US. Beginning in 1968, the PSID has collected data on the same families and their descendants, making it the cornerstone of data infrastructure for empirically based social science research. Other countries have established longitudinal surveys, such as the German Social Economic Panel (GSOEP), the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) Survey. In addition, researchers have linked administrative tax data over time to construct longitudinal panels.

Because of their long history and unique design of following adults and children, panel surveys are uniquely positioned to address the next generation of emerging social and behavioral research questions and related policy issues, including the opportunities faced by children and adults, the effects of early life events on later life outcomes; and the changing dynamics of

economic status and poverty, and the social and economic mobility – both inter and intra-generations.

This session will celebrate the importance of longitudinal surveys and data. Papers will focus on exploiting the unique aspects of these data, which could include measuring mobility, constructing measures of opportunity and its distribution and changes over time, longitudinal or life-time measures of income and poverty, and multi-generational poverty and well-being. The session will include papers that make innovative use of longitudinal data – either surveys or administratively linked data.

A Quarter Century Passes: A Retrospective Look at East Central Europe Economic Transitions – and Country Stories Inspired by Them

Organizers: Thesia I. Garner (Bureau of Labor Statistics, United States), Martina Mysikova (Institute of Sociology of the Czech Academy of Sciences, Czech Republic), and Tomas Zelinsky (Technical University of Kosice, Slovakia)

In the fall of 1989, people in East Central Europe (ECE) and other countries in the region began to experience the freedoms that they had known decades before. With these freedoms came changes that have affected individuals, families, and households. Early on there was optimism with expectations of market economies. In some countries this optimism continued while in others it wavered with the increasing demands of the self-provision of previously government provided goods and services. Different countries made different choices regarding movements toward open markets, greater choices in consumer demand, opportunities in labour markets, and the challenges of production.

These choices have influenced country policies, economic structures, labor markets, and institutions. The transition from centrally planned to market economies was new to economic theory with no “prescriptions”. The earlier turbulent processes were later followed by external factors such as joining the EU and other international organizations; these forced the countries to apply the policies of these institutions and lose part of their national powers. Further changes in the global economy that these countries have had to face -- such as the financial and economic crisis, technological changes, globalization, and international migration -- have influenced the well-being of societies in both positive and negative ways. Lessons learned from transition processes in these countries have served as an inspiration to other countries around the world (such as the Balkan countries and former republics of the Soviet Union) experiencing economic transition, and at the same time can serve as a source of inspiration for countries facing transition now or in the future.

The goal of this session is to examine the role of past choices and external factors through the lens of the present as we evaluate well-being today with a look to the future. Papers in this session will identify changes in incomes, deprivation, and well-being in ECE societies resulting from different choices. Another papers ill analyze both successful and unsuccessful implementation stories from countries inspired by ECE countries transition processes. Preference will be given to papers that incorporate multidimensional perspectives.

The Use of Financial Accounts and Balance Sheets in Enhancing Central Bank Policy Analysis and Tools

Organizer: Ilja Kristian Kavonius (European Central Bank)

The current economic crisis has increased the interest of central banks in balance sheet analysis and in distributional issues. Additionally, there is an increasing interest in understanding balance sheet exposures and the transmission mechanisms of balance sheet exposures.

Financial accounts framework provides one possible avenue for this type of analysis. In recent years, different types of analysis for the macro-prudential analysis have been developed in which for instance who-to-whom networks are used to analyse balance sheet exposures. Different tools have been developed to enhance the analysis of indebtedness and distresses of various sectors. Moreover, there are various initiatives to deepen the analysis either by linking the macroeconomic balance sheets with micro data or by creating supranational network of balance sheets.

Proposals discussing either new statistical features or the use of the financial accounts framework in developing tools and analysis for macro-prudential, economic or monetary policy purposes are invited for this session.