



A 'People, Places, Engagement and Change' Research Cluster Seminar  
5 November 2010, 3–5pm

## The Great Contraction: The implications for cities and universities

**Josef Konvitz**

Directorate of Public Governance and Territorial Development, OECD, and  
Honorary Professor in the School of Education, University of Glasgow

*Venue:* Seminar Room 3 in the Woolfson Medical Building, University Avenue

The crisis of 2008 has brought other, structural trends to light which are independent of the crisis, but aggravate its effects: depopulation or the withdrawal of economic activity from many rural areas and urban districts, the ageing of the population, pressure on public space, and limitations on what education and innovation – so often the source of solutions in the past – can deliver. Call this “The Great Contraction”. The sources of growth in the future, at least in most of the Western world, are no longer those which operated throughout most of the 20th century. In an introduction to this sweeping subject, Professor Konvitz will focus particularly on the spatial dimensions, because changes which are long-term and often fairly abstract can also be seen, literally, on the ground. This is the biggest challenge to silo-based policy in decades. The seminar will include the implications for universities and their public mission as the regional basis for development gains in importance.

*About the speaker:* Josef Konvitz is Head of Regulatory Policy in the OECD’s Directorate for Public Governance and Territorial Development. The Regulatory Policy Division carries out studies on risk and regulation, regulatory management indicators, administrative simplification, multi-level regulatory coherence, and public service delivery. Professor Konvitz has directed country reviews of regulatory reform of Australia, China, Russia, France, Sweden, and Switzerland, and monitoring exercises of Japan, Mexico and Korea. He was responsible for the updating of OECD recommendations on regulatory reform, now the 2005 Guiding Principles for Regulatory Quality and Performance, and for the preparation of the APEC-OECD Integrated Checklist for Regulatory Reform. Since 2008 he has supervised co-operation between the OECD and Mexico on Regulatory Reform.

Professor Konvitz joined the OECD in 1992 in the Urban Affairs Division after nearly twenty years on the faculty of Michigan State University. His work on urban policy at the OECD has included reviews of Metropolitan Melbourne and Metropolitan Athens, as well as the Urban Renaissance Reviews (Belfast in 1999, Krakow in 2000, Canberra and Glasgow in 2001, Berlin and Kitakyushu in 2002). He directed a study on urban indicators, the Ecological City project, and a major report on Distressed Urban Areas; he organised the OECD-Australia Conference on Cities and the New Global Economy; and he supervised country reviews of Japan, Mexico and Germany related to urban policy and infrastructure.

Professor Konvitz holds degrees from Cornell University (BA with Honours in History, 1967), and Princeton University (PhD in History, 1973).

**To reserve a place, please email [Allie.Neave@glasgow.ac.uk](mailto:Allie.Neave@glasgow.ac.uk)**

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