

Immiserizing Growth: A Conference

**Toronto, Canada
May 26-27, 2017**

CALL FOR PAPERS

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) encapsulate the idea of reducing deprivation in different dimensions as a key objective of development policy. Thus, one component of the very first goal is to “Reduce at least by half the proportion of people living in poverty in all its dimensions,” echoing the first Millennium Development Goal. Following this trend, the World Bank has set out as one of its goals the elimination of extreme poverty. The empirical development literature for its part finds a correlation between economic growth (increases in per capita income) and reduction in deprivation in a range of dimensions, specifically income poverty but also non-income deprivation. However, it is also recognized that there is a large variation around the average relationship and that in some cases there may be no impact whatsoever of growth on absolute deprivation. How important are such cases, and why do they happen? Indeed, how widespread are cases where, for significant numbers of people, economic growth is accompanied by a worsening of absolute deprivation in income or non-income dimensions and what explains this phenomenon? In some data sets around 10-15% of observed spells have growth coinciding with increases in poverty. Even when aggregate poverty declines, this may hide immiserization for many. An exploration of such “immiserizing” economic growth is important not only because of the ethical imperative of reducing absolute deprivation for everybody, but also because an exploration of the extreme phenomenon could shed light on socio-economic mechanisms which may illuminate the distributional impact of economic growth throughout the distribution. A background paper discussing many of these issues can be accessed at: http://www.trentu.ca/ids/documents/Q2WP66_Shaffer.pdf

The conference organizers are Paul Shaffer (Trent University) Ravi Kanbur (Cornell University) and Richard Sandbrook (University of Toronto).

We are interested in theory and in recent or historical evidence on immiserizing growth, including: (i) Cross-Country Analyses; (ii) Country Studies; (iii) Micro-level Studies. Such analyses may focus on the extent or magnitude of IG, its political and economic causes along with politically feasible policy responses. We welcome submissions from any disciplinary orientation with preference for interdisciplinary analyses. Contributions can range from brief policy-oriented notes of 5-10 pages to longer academically-oriented pieces of 25-30 pages (or 3-5 page proposals for such papers).

Submissions should be sent electronically to Paul Shaffer (paulshaffer@trentu.ca) by December 31, 2016. Decisions will be conveyed by January 31, 2017.

The conference will meet the travel costs of one presenter per paper accepted. The papers presented at the conference will in turn be considered for publication in a special issue of a journal or a volume.