IARIW-World Bank Conference on

New Approaches to Defining and Measuring Poverty in a Growing World: An Overview

Background and Motivation

The International Association for Research in Income and Wealth (IARIW), established in 1947, organizes conferences on topics related to income and wealth throughout the world, generally in partnership with national statistical offices.[1] In addition to its biennial General Conference, the IARIW also organizes special or regional conferences in non-General Conference years. In 2019, the IARIW in partnership with the World Bank will be hosting a special conference on the measurement of poverty and well-being in Washington, DC November 7-8, 2019.

Reducing extreme poverty has for decades been a cornerstone of international economic development, as evidenced by this objective being at the forefront of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and now the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The World Bank, which reports on progress in reducing poverty for the MDGs and SDGs, estimates that in 2015, 736 million people lived in extreme poverty (defined as living on less than $1.90 per person per day in 2011 PPP terms). Despite this large count of people who live in extreme poverty, the proportion of the population that is living in extreme poverty has fallen from more than 35 percent in 1990, to 10 percent in 2015.[2] Extreme poverty as measured by the international poverty line is less than 3 percent in more than half the countries of the world. As the global proportion of people in extreme poverty declines further, this definition of global poverty may become increasingly less important as countries and development organizations define poverty in more socially relevant and useful ways for policy makers.

Objective of Conference

While focusing on a fixed, singular, and specific definition of poverty (i.e. the headcount of all people globally who live on less than $1.90 per person per day in 2011 PPP terms) has helped to unify the policy objectives of a wide variety of international agencies, the global

[1] For example, national statistical offices that have co-organized special conferences with the IARIW include the National Bureau of Statistics of China (2007), Statistics South Africa (2011), the Brazilian statistical office (IBGE) (2013), the Egyptian statistical office (CAPMAS) (2015), and the Bank of Korea (2017). The IARIW also organizes special conferences with universities (University of New South Wales, 2013), research institutes (Indian Centre for Research on International Economic Relations, 2017) and international organizations such as the OECD (2011 and 2015). Since 2006 IARIW General Conferences have been co-organized with Statistics Finland (2006), Statistics Slovenia (2008), the Swiss Federal Statistical Office (2010), the US Bureau of Economic Analysis (2012), Statistics Netherlands (2014), the Federal Statistical Office of Germany (2016) and Statistics Denmark (2018). In 2020, the General Conference will be co-organized with Statistics Norway.

[2] World Bank. Poverty and Shared Prosperity Report 2018: Piecing Together the Poverty Puzzle. Washington, DC: World Bank Publications, 2018. http://www.worldbank.org/en/publication/poverty-and-shared-prosperity

success in reducing extreme poverty is likely to create both a need for improved methodologies to effectively identify the shrinking population of the extreme poor and space for new concepts to capture those who continue to be poor by other definitions. This opening for new approaches to identifying and defining the poor offers opportunities and risks for all policy makers. The social sciences literature on poverty measurement is abundant in diverse conceptualizations of poverty, while advances in data sciences offers a vast array of data capture methods and tools to identify the poor. The purpose of this proposed special conference is to draw lessons from these literatures to help inform and shape how the international development community moves forward in defining, measuring and monitoring poverty.

Papers are invited that contribute to a discussion of the following issues, among others:

- On the connections between health, wealth, income and consumption. How best to measure wellbeing for poverty-reduction policies in low and middle-income countries.

- Policy or measurement implications of adopting elements of the recommendations of the Atkinson Commission on Global Poverty, for example
  - Implications of fixing spatial price differences with the 2011 purchasing power parity indices, or alternative approaches for capturing cross-country price differences
  - Comparisons of multi-dimensional poverty indices and overlaps with consumption poverty
  - The costs and benefit of greater detail on within household distribution of wellbeing, the value of identifying poor individuals rather than poor households
  - Ways to improve harmonization of income and consumption based measures of poverty; implications of the differences.
  - How to conceptualize a measure of total error in global or national poverty counts, moving beyond sampling error
  - Quantifying the missing poor, i.e. those poor people not captured in poverty estimates
  - On the connections (or disconnects) between national accounting systems and national poverty statistics

- The value of data for improved policy to reduce poverty
  - Can we quantify the value of poverty data, of open data? Can we link improvements in poverty monitoring to improved policy?
  - New methods or instruments for improved data capture on dimensions of wellbeing linked to poverty measurement
  - The costs and benefits of panel or retrospective data for improved policy design
  - How measurement error in poverty measurement affects policy inference, how measurement error differs across poverty concepts, the trade-offs between conceptual refinements and measurement challenges

- On the optimal frequency of poverty measurement, the trade-offs associated with lighter but more frequent measurement
- How to support the costs of poverty monitoring systems in low-population countries
- Identifying weak links or blind spots in data architectures for poverty measurement, on the importance of complimentary data such as Census, CPI, NIA, PPP data for poverty measurement

- Lessons learned from high-income countries to improve the measurement and monitoring of poverty in low and middle income countries
  - What historical lessons learned from currently rich countries in poverty reduction provide useful guidance for low-income countries?
  - As low-income countries become richer, how will they need to change their approach to poverty monitoring (eg. Issues of respondent burden, increased rates of nonresponse, greater need for improved poverty targeting, greater use of technology in data capture)
  - How changing demography and geography as a country grows, both in terms of age structure and level of urbanization, can change poverty policies and data capture methods

Size, Date and Location

The number of delegates attending IARIW special conferences in the past has been between 100 and 150. A similar number is expected for this conference. The conference will take place November 7-8, 2019 at the World Bank headquarters in Washington, DC.

Conference Program

The conference will take place over a two-day period. The conference program will include paper sessions, keynote addresses, and panels. It is expected that there will be 20-30 papers presented in plenary sessions. If there are a large number of high quality submissions, parallel sessions may be organized. There will be a dinner the evening of the first day of the conference.

Program Committee

A program committee composed of experts in the areas of global and national poverty measurement, with representation from the data sciences will be established to oversee the development of the conference program. The role of the committee will be to identify potential keynote speakers, to identify conference panels, and to review and make decisions on the submissions for paper. The work of the committee will be done by email. The Chair of the program committee is Dean Jolliffe from the World Bank. Confirmed members include Tim Smeeding from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Stephen Jenkins from the London School of Economics and Maria Grazia Pittau from Sapienza University of Rome. Additional members will be added.

Organizational Responsibilities

The organization of the conference will be divided between the IARIW secretariat and the World Bank. The IARIW secretariat will assume responsibility for conference registration and website. The World Bank will assume responsibility for local arrangements.

There will be no registration fee for the conference, but all delegates, except those invited by the World Bank, must be IARIW members, or join the IARIW. Delegates are responsible for their own travel and hotel costs. Financial assistance for paper presenters will be available on a needs basis.

Selected papers from IARIW special conferences will be published in a supplementary issue of the *Review of Income and Wealth*.

Call for Papers

Persons interested in presenting a paper at the conference ae invited to submit a proposal (up to 2,000 words) at http://iariw.org/paper_submission2019washington.php. The deadline for submissions is March 31, 2019.

Timelines

November 26, 2018	Announcement of Call for Papers
March 31, 2019	Deadline for Receipt of Paper Proposals
April 30, 2019	Decisions on Proposals and Release of Preliminary Conference Program
May 15, 2019	Deadline for Applications for Financial Assistance
May 31, 2019	Decisions on Financial Assistance
October 15, 2019	Deadline for Receipt of Papers for Posting on IARIW Website
November 6-7, 2019	Conference
January 31, 2020	Deadline for Submission of Papers for RIW Special Issue
Spring 2021	Release of RIW Supplementary Issue