



Invitation to Attend the CSLS Seminar Series on Living Standards

The Middle Class: A Useful Category for Policy Analysis?

Philip Cross and Munir Sheikh
4:00-5:30 PM
Thursday, April 9, 2015
Karsh Room, Rideau Club
99 Bank Street, 15th floor
Ottawa, Ontario

(please note that the Rideau Club dress code requires men to wear a jacket)

To attend, please RSVP by April 7, 2015 to andrew.sharpe@csls.ca.

The economic well-being of the middle class is a major issue for Canadian political parties. Yet who exactly constitute the middle class is unclear. Indeed, polls show that the majority of Canadians place themselves in this group.

In a recent report, Philip Cross and Munir Sheikh have provided a detailed examination of the middle class issue. In their presentation drawing from the report, they will review definitions of the middle class, discuss measurement issues associated with the middle class, present income trends for the diverse groups that make up the middle class, and discuss policy implications. They will also comment on the usefulness of the concept of the middle class for policy analysis, suggesting that anxiety over the state of the middle class and its future is actually about the working class.

A key finding is that growth in middle class incomes in Canada have not kept pace with growth in higher incomes over the past three decades and that most of this shortfall originated in the part of the middle class with below average human capital.

Philip Cross does research for various institutes across Canada. He spent 36 years as an economist at Statistics Canada, and served in his last position as Chief Economic Analyst. He writes a bi-weekly column for the *Financial Post* and is a member of the Business Cycle Dating Committee at the CD Howe Institute.

Munir Sheikh is Executive Fellow at the School of Public Policy at the University of Calgary. From June 2008 to July 2010 he served as the Chief Statistician of Canada. He also has served as Deputy Minister of Labour, Deputy Secretary to the Cabinet, Expenditure Review at the Privy Council Office, and Associate Deputy Minister at Health Canada and at Finance Canada. He holds a PhD in Economics from the University of Western Ontario and a MA in Economics from McMaster University.