



SOUTHERN CENTRE FOR INEQUALITY STUDIES SYMPOSIUM

UNDERSTANDING INEQUALITY IN
THE GLOBAL SOUTH

10-11 APRIL 2019

Venue: Wits Club, Braamfontein Campus West,
Wits University, Braamfontein, Johannesburg

UNIVERSITY OF THE
WITWATERSRAND,
JOHANNESBURG



SOUTHERN CENTRE FOR
INEQUALITY
STUDIES



Introduction to the Southern Centre for Inequality Studies

Wits University has embarked on a multi-partner research and policy project focusing on understanding and addressing inequality in the global South, and building a collaborative southern institution to strengthen and sustain this work. Our starting premise is that while technical solutions to addressing inequality are very important, they will not be politically feasible unless the social and political forces driving high levels of inequality are clearly understood and addressed. Inequality is a global problem, and studying and addressing it in South Africa will also enable us to enter into a dialogue about inequality in other settings across the global south.

The project is conceptualised around four main areas of substantive work:

1. To identify key areas where inequality shapes the life chances of individuals.
2. To understand, through a focus on the structure of the economy and society, and political, economic and cultural processes, the production, reproduction and intersection of power relations and inequality.
3. To imagine and lock in an alternative configuration of power relations that generates affirmative state action, provides greater equality of access to relevant resources and fundamentally alters the structure of power relations in society.
4. To develop a research and policy agenda for the inclusive growth of productive forces.

SCIS Inequality Symposium

Following from two years of engagement with South African researchers, the SCIS is proud to host our first international symposium which brings together researchers from across the global South to discuss methodological and substantive issues relating to the study of inequality, and in particular to develop a Southern approach to inequality studies. The creation of new knowledge relating to inequality is in itself determined by patterns of inequality in research and knowledge creation – following a core-periphery pattern. Northern institutions set the agenda and epistemological framework for knowledge creation, and use the south as the site of research and observation. This approach is problematic for various reasons. The first is that it removes the agency from the South to set the intellectual and policy agenda for the study of inequality. It is a form of epistemological imperialism. For the content of research and knowledge production, too, there are important concerns. The first is that this approach assumes, to a certain extent, a universalism in the causes of inequality, and the origins of that universalism are located squarely in the global North. While this may be true to a certain extent, it is a very strong assumption when it underpins the research agenda. It is particularly dangerous because while inequality may *look* similar in the North and the South, it is our hypothesis that the reproduction of inequality in the South may be determined by factors that are quite different, and possibly which are particular to the South, and of course is shaped by the way the South articulates with the North. To take one example, the reproduction of inequality in the South is certainly determined by the historic process of colonialism, which has left a very different legacy in the global South compared to the North.

The global south is emerging at the forefront in the use of socio-economic rights and the law to achieve social change. The changing geography of economic and political power in the world system is in fact closely related to the emergence of a new geography of global inequality in which

more than 70 percent of the world's poor now live in middle-income countries. And crucially, widening inequalities between and within countries is coupled with the persistence of poverty. The objective of this conference is a comprehensive and broadly shared understanding of how inequality is produced and reproduced in South Africa and in comparable countries in the global south, and the identification of the sources of power that can address and overcome this inequality.

Conference Programme

Wednesday 10 April			
08:00-09:00	Arrival and registration		
09:00-09:15	Official welcome and introduction to the SCIS	Imraan Valodia	Wits University
09:15-10:15	Setting the agenda for a Southern approach		
	Chairperson: Imraan Valodia		
Presentations:			
	Inequality studies: developing a Southern perspective	Edward Webster, Imraan Valodia and David Francis	Southern Centre for Inequality Studies
	Studying inequality in the South	Jesse de Souza in conversation with Edward Webster	
10:15-10:45	Tea break		
10:45-12:30	Session 1 – Conceptualising, measuring and understanding inequality in the global South		
	Chairperson: Edward Webster		
<p>How we think about inequality is at the core of any project seeking to address it. What do we mean by equality and inequality? Inequality of what? Is inequality ever necessary? Why? Secondly, how do we measure these various types of inequality? These questions will be interrogated in this theme and will provide conceptual and theoretical guidance to the project as a whole.</p>			
Presentations:			
	The philosophy of inequality	Daryl Glaser	Wits University
	Why should we care about inequality?	Alice Krozer	Colegio de Mexico
	Thinking about inequality in the South	Dilip Menon	Wits University
	Measuring inequality	Sarah Ssewanyana	Economic Policy Research Centre, Kampala, Uganda
Response:			
		Vimal Ranchhod	University of Cape Town

12:30-13:30	Lunch		
13:30-15:15	Session 2 – The structure of the economy		
	Chairperson: Imraan Valodia		
<p>Here we examine the role that power plays in shaping economic inequality, and particularly the role that market power, economic concentration and regulation play in shaping economic and social outcomes. This theme focuses on several important areas of research which relate to the structure of the economy. These include macroeconomic policy, economic regulation, competition and concentration, ownership and financialisation. These broad areas are linked fundamentally by questions of structure – the structure of ownership of assets, for example. This theme will explore how the structure of the economy, in South Africa and in the global South, continues to reproduce inequality in various dimensions.</p> <p>Focus areas: macroeconomic structure; industrial concentration; ownership; competition and economic regulation.</p>			
Presentations			
	Economic power, markets and regulation	Sumayya Goga, Pamela Mondliwa, Jason Bell and Simon Roberts	Centre for Competition, Regulation and Economic Development: University of Johannesburg
	Trends in macroeconomic policy in the Global South from WW2 to the Global Financial Crisis and beyond	Vishnu Padayachee	Southern Centre for Inequality Studies
	Inegalitarian growth: India and Brazil compared	Gerry Rodgers, Alexandre de Freitas Barbosa, Maria Cristina Cacciamali	Institute for Human Development, New Delhi and University of São Paulo
	Macroeconomic policies and inequality	Bernadette Wanjala	Strathmore Business School, Nairobi
Responses			
		Vamsi Vakulabharanam	University of Massachusetts
		Dennis Davis	Wits University
15:15-15:30	Tea break		

15:30-17:00	Session 3 – Land, class and rural economies		
	Chairperson: Jackie Dugard		
<p>Central to understanding inequality in the global South are questions of the articulation between the rural and urban, patterns of land ownership, and rural economies. This theme interrogates questions of property, rural economies and the spatial dimensions of class and how they reproduce inequality.</p> <p>Focus areas: property ownership and land reform; the environment; rural labour markets and livelihoods; the articulation between rural and urban.</p>			
Presentations			
	Land, class formation and the rural economy	Akua Britwam and Ben Scully	University of Cape Coast, Ghana and Wits University
	Equal citizenship and property rights in South Africa's former homelands	Aninka Claassens	Land and Accountability Research Centre, University of Cape Town
	Indigenous/Tribal Peoples in India's Rural Transformation: The History of Dispossession and Inequality	Virginus Xaxa	Formerly with Tezpur University, Assam
	Land Reform, Rural Inequality and Agrarian Change: The Case of Isidenge, Stutterheim, Eastern Cape	Sonwabile Mswana and Luvuyo Wotshela	University of Fort Hare
17:00-17:45	Reflections on day one		
Sreenivasan Subramanian	Independent Scholar, Chennai		
Goran Therborn	University of Cambridge		
17:45-18:00	Closing and overview of day two		
	Tamara Naidoo: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung		
18:00	Cocktail function and supper at the Wits Club		

Thursday 11 April			
08:00-09:30 Session 4 – Space, cities and the environment			
Chairperson: Devan Pillay			
<p>Given the rapid urbanisation in the global South, urban spaces play an increasingly important role in producing and reproducing inequality both spatially and economically. Climate change is reshaping both urban and rural space, and is putting increasing pressure on citizens across the global South. This theme will examine the infrastructures of urban inequality, how space shapes inequality, and will interrogate the link between climate change and inequality.</p> <p>Focus areas: urban space and inequality; the relationship between infrastructure and inequality; informality; the environment and climate change.</p>			
Presentations			
	Infrastructures of urban inequality in the global South	Melanie Samson, Margot Rubin, Laila Smith, Alex Wafer, Sian Butcher, Stefania Merlo and Avril Joffe	Wits University
	Accelerating transition and addressing infrastructure vulnerabilities in peri-urban areas in Dar es Salaam	Nathalie Jean Baptiste	Technische Universitat Darmstadt, Germany
	Gender, informal employment and urban spaces	Michael Rogan and Caroline Skinner	Rhodes University
	A just transition? The environment, climate change and inequality	Jacklyn Cock	Wits University
Response			
		Sarah Charlton	Wits University
09:30-10:00 Tea break			
10:00-11:30 Session 5 – Work, households and the labour market			
Chairperson: Simon Roberts			
<p>There is a growing appreciation that the unit of economic analysis in many important socio-economic questions is the household, rather than the individual. In this theme, we look the relationship between paid and unpaid labour both within and without the household, and the implications for the persistence of structural inequalities. We examine the role of education in the reproduction of inequality, and interrogate the structure of the labour market. Central to understanding work in the South is the role of informality, both informal employment and the</p>			

informal economy, in shaping the world of work. At all times, of course, we must be aware of the role of class forces in producing and reproducing inequality.

Focus areas: social reproduction; informality; education; gender; labour markets; social policy

Presentations

	Minimum wages – tackling labour market inequality	Patrick Belser, Imraan Valodia, Kim Jurgensen and David Francis	International Labour Organisation and Wits University
	Education and labour markets in the global South	Stephanie Allais	Centre for Researching Education and Labour, Wits University
	Gender, women and work	Hibist Kassa	Southern Centre for Inequality Studies
	World of Work in the Era of Neo-liberal Reforms: Some Reflections on India's Organised Manufacturing Sector	Praveen Jha and Chandan Kumar Sharma	Jawaharlal University, New Delhi

Response

	Katja Hujo	UNRISD
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11:30-13:00 Session 6 – Developing alternatives

Chairperson: Vishnu Padayachee

As we seek to understand in greater detail how inequality is produced and reproduced in the global South, we also need examine ways in which we can develop alternatives to overcome inequality. In particular, we need to be aware of power, and to understand both how power produces and reproduces inequality, and to identify sources of power which can be harnessed to confront and perhaps address inequality.

Focus areas: coalition building; mass resistance and protest; alternative forms of ownership.

Presentations

	Building counterpower in the workplace: South Africa's inequality paradox	Edward Webster	Southern Centre for Inequality Studies
	Human rights and the fight against inequality	Radhika Balakrishnan	Professor Women's and Gender Studies, Rutgers University
	Inequality and social policy: Some evidence from India	Himanshu Himanshu	Jawaharlal University, New Delhi
	Health and inequality	Nick Stacey	Wits University

13:00-14:00	Lunch		
14:00-15:30	Session 7 – Foregrounding inequality studies: key tools		
	Chairperson: Edward Webster		
Moving towards a truly interdisciplinary approach to the study of inequality requires us to consider various critical issues which cut across the thematic division covered in the preceding panels. Here we look at foundational issues for the study of inequality.			
Presentations			
	The Constitution and inequality	Cathi Albertyn	Wits University
	Redistribution, social policy and fiscal economics in the global South	Michael Sachs	Southern Centre for Inequality Studies
	Wealth and ownership	Aroop Chatterjee	Southern Centre for Inequality Studies
	Intersectionality/difference	Danai Mupotsa	Wits University
15:30-16:00	Tea break		
16:00-17:30	Session 8 – Locating inequality studies in the global south: the role of philanthropy		
Panel discussion: Chaired by Bheki Moyo			
	Bethule Nyamambi	TrustAfrica	
	Nicolette Naylor	Ford Foundation	
	Jessica Sklair	University of Sussex	
	Christoph Schmocker	Julius Baer Foundation	
Friday 12 April			
09:00-13:00	Voluntary Dlala Nje walking tour of inner-city Johannesburg		

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