



ACEIR
AFRICAN CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE
FOR INEQUALITY RESEARCH



ARUA
African Research
Universities Alliance



ACEIR is a research centre of the African Research Universities Alliance (ARUA). With country partners in eastern, western and southern Africa, ACEIR aims to contribute to deep, multidimensional and interdisciplinary understandings of inequality in each country context, and a continental and global understanding of how inequalities can be overcome.



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WELCOME TO THE ACEIR NEWS BULLETIN

MAY 2021

This month marks ACEIR's third year since it was established as a centre of excellence of the African Research Universities Alliance (ARUA). Speaking at the [launch workshop](#) in 2018, Prof. Ernest Aryeetey, secretary-general of ARUA,

explained that the “main objective [of the centres] is to improve on the quality and quantity of African research and enhance the voice of Africans in global debates”.

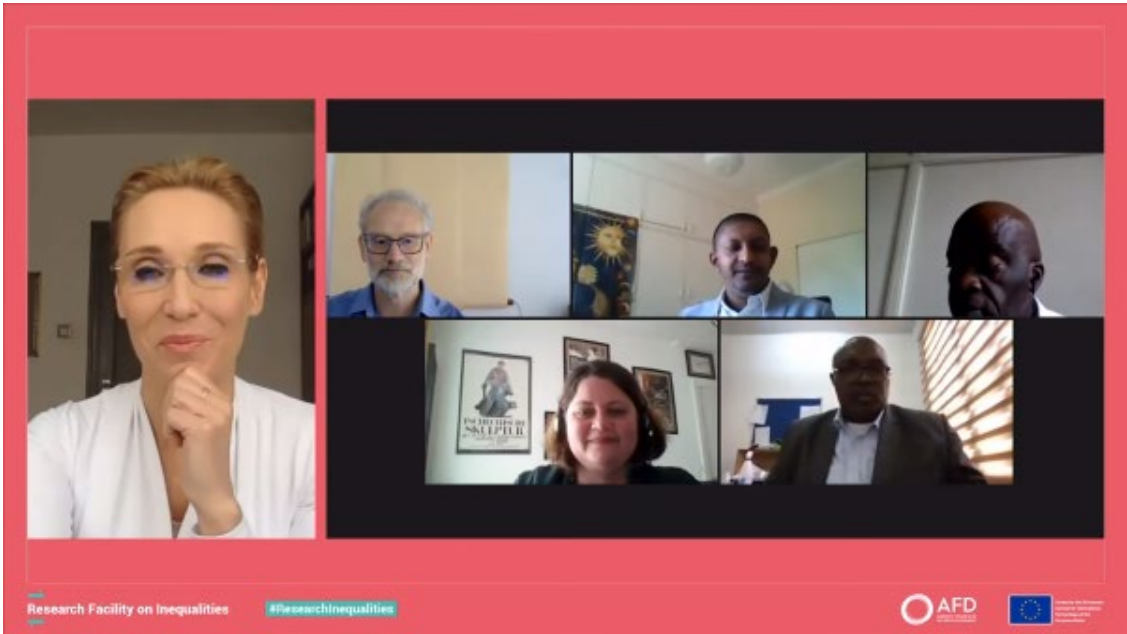
This news bulletin reflects the strides that ACEIR is making in advancing this goal, in particular:

- ACEIR’s contributions to foreground African inequalities at a recent high-level international conference hosted by the European Union and the Agence Française de Développement.
- An upcoming debate on historical inequalities and economic transformation in South Africa, to be hosted in partnership with the French embassy in South Africa, to feed into the Africa–France Summit in October.
- A forthcoming ACEIR webinar on recent trends and patterns in spatial and national inequalities in sub-Saharan Africa, planned for Africa Day.
- A new ACEIR working paper that takes stock of what can be said about African inequality to promote better analysis and better policymaking for addressing inequality on the continent.
- And, a recent journal article by ACEIR researchers that reflects on inequality in the South African context in relation to the new book, ‘Capital and Ideology’ by renowned economist, Prof. Thomas Piketty.

Also read about the most-recent webinars of the Transforming Social Inequalities Through Inclusive Climate Action project; the full open-access book ‘Inequality in the developing world’ (Oxford University Press) that ACEIR’s director co-edited; and recent media articles by ACEIR researchers.

With more ACEIR research nearing completion in the coming months, we are looking forward to share news of these, and related publications and policy dialogues, during the second half of 2021. Until then, we hope you remain safe and productive while countries continue to grapple with the COVID-19 pandemic globally.

NEWS | Inequality diagnostics for African countries



African inequalities foregrounded by ACEIR researchers at international conference

ACEIR’s inequality trends reports, for Ghana, Kenya and South Africa to date, have featured prominently at a high-level conference hosted recently by the European Union (EU) and the Agence Française de Développement (AFD). The final conference of the Research Facility on Inequalities provided the opportunity to share results of the Facility’s studies since 2018 and draw conclusions and make recommendations for public policy. ACEIR’s work has been one of the 23 research projects funded via the AFD as part of the Research Facility.

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UPCOMING EVENTS | South African inequalities



Africa – France Dialogues

**HISTORICAL INEQUALITIES
AND ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION IN SA**

Given prevailing inequalities, what policies for tomorrow and in the longer term?
What can we learn from the South African experience for the rest of Africa?

Speakers: Ms Busi Mavuso (BLSA), Ms Shaeera Kalla (University of Johannesburg), Prof. Michael Sachs (Wits university),
Dr Tashmia Ismail-Saville (Youth Employment Service). Moderator: Mr Ayabonga Cawe (Xesibe Holdings)

20 MAY | 9:30AM

Registration: <http://bit.ly/Register-AfricaFranceDialogue>



Debate ahead of the Africa–France Summit:
Historical inequalities and economic transformation
in South Africa

20 May 2021, 09h30 – 12h00 CAT

To be hosted by the French embassy in South Africa and ACEIR, this online event is one of a series of debates across the continent that are directed by philosopher and historian, Prof. Achille Mbembe, at the request of the President of France.

Proposals that emerge out of the debates will be summarised by Prof. Mbembe to feed into one of the highlights of the forthcoming Africa–France Summit in October: a discussion between Pres. Emmanuel Macron and youth representatives from Africa, France and the diaspora.

Four debates will take place in South Africa, focusing on culture and arts, gender equality, geopolitical issues, and economics. The ACEIR-partnered event will focus on the latter, and specifically on inequalities. These inequalities are a major issue in South Africa and of great concern in all African contexts as they severely constrain the life possibilities for Africa's youth. This situation has worsened due to the Covid-19 crisis.

#AfricanInequalities
#AfricaFranceDialogues
#AfricaFranceSummit

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UPCOMING EVENTS | Africa Day webinar on inequalities in sub-Saharan Africa



Background image: Mukuru (Kenya) courtesy Johnny Miller, [Unequal Scenes](#), used with permission

Recent trends & patterns in spatial & national inequalities in sub-Saharan Africa

25 May 2021, 13h00 – 14h00 CAT

Each year, Africa Day is celebrated in acknowledgement of the successes of the Organisation of African Unity (now the African Union) in the fight against colonialism and apartheid, as well as the progress that Africa has made while reflecting on the common challenges that the continent faces in a global environment.

ACEIR's contribution to the day's reflections, on 25 May, will be by hosting a webinar on recent trends and patterns in spatial and national inequalities in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). By using comparable data from the Demographic and Healthy Surveys, Dr. Muna Shifa (ACEIR researcher based at UCT's Southern Africa Labour and Development Research Unit - SALDRU), will discuss recent within-country spatial and national inequality estimates in 24 SSA countries.

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UPCOMING EVENTS | Climate change adaptation interventions & their effect on vulnerability in developing countries



This webinar is part of a series hosted by Transforming Social Inequalities Through Inclusive Climate Action (TSITICA), a joint project of .ACEIR and the ARUA Centre of Excellence in Climate & Development. It will be presented by guest speakers, Prof. Siri Hallstrøm Eriksen from the Norwegian University of Life Sciences, and Dr. Lisa Schipper from the University of Oxford. Drawing on a [recent journal article](#), the discussion will focus on some of the reasons why adaptation projects result in reinforcing existing vulnerability, redistributing vulnerability, or creating new vulnerability; the relationship between adaptation and social inequities; and how to rethink adaptation.

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NEW ACEIR PUBLICATIONS

[Inequality in sub-Saharan Africa: A review paper](#)

Rocco Zizzamia, Anda David, Murray Leibbrandt

ACEIR working paper series no. 8, April 2021

Recent years have seen distributional issues becoming more central because of the importance of inequality in inclusive growth within the African continent. Therefore, this review takes stock of what can be said about African inequality to promote better analysis and better policymaking for addressing inequality on the continent. The authors' assessment of the drivers of inequality in Africa pays particular attention to the themes of intra-household inequality and gender, and of inequality of opportunity and social mobility in Africa. The complexities of household formation and composition, for example the high frequency of polygamous households in some countries, are at the heart of access to resources and, therefore, important for the accurate assessment of inequality in any African context.

[The impact of taxes and transfers on poverty and income distribution in South Africa 2014/2015](#)

Maya Goldman, Ingrid Woolard, Jon Jellema

ACEIR working paper series no. 7, January 2021

This paper applies the Commitment to Equity (CEQ) Assessment Framework to the 2014/15 Living Conditions Survey for South Africa to analyse the progressivity of the main tax and social spending programmes and quantify their impact on poverty and inequality. The tax and social spending system is progressive: the burden of taxes falls on the richest in South Africa and social spending results in sizable increases in the incomes of the poor. The analysis by gender shows that the fiscal system is partially responsive to women's additional burden of childcare, through social transfers such as the child support grant and public healthcare and education services, and partially responsive to inequality of access to labour opportunities through the progressive direct taxation system. However, these impressive results are partly due to high levels of pre-fiscal inequality in the country and valuing in-kind benefits from free education and health services at the average cost of provision and not taking into account significant variations in the quality of the services

TRAINING & CAPACITY BUILDING | Webinars for shared learning

ACEIR's hub-and-node model is designed to facilitate shared learning on the multi-dimensionality of inequality across and within African countries, and how these relate to contemporary issues such as climate change, social inequality, sustainable livelihoods, etc. Webinars are one of the tools used for shared learning and capacity building within the team, and with our research partners as well as within broader policy research networks.

RECENT WEBINARS | Climate change & inequalities

Transforming Social Inequalities Through Inclusive Climate Action (TSITICA) is a collaborative, multi-country interdisciplinary research project of ACEIR and the [ARUA Centre of Excellence in Climate Development](#) (ARUA-CD), both hosted by the University of Cape Town.

Climate risk, poverty & inequality

29 April 2021

This webinar was presented by the TSITICA project's principal investigators, Prof. Mark New (ARUA-CD) and Prof. Murray Leibbrandt (ACEIR). It covered the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's framing of "climate risk" and its different dimensions, and includes a description of some of the key climate risks that Africa faces. This was followed by a discussion on how these dimensions of risk are

distributed across different groups at different scales, both between and within African countries.



Other recent TSITICA webinars

[Climate change and climate action impact analysis – using computable general equilibrium models, 18 March 2021](#)

The webinar was presented by TSITICA team member, Faaqiqa Hartley, from SALDRU, University of Cape Town. She introduced computable general equilibrium models and how they work, and with examples of how they can be applied to climate change and climate action impact analysis as useful policy simulation tools that can aid in understanding the macroeconomic and economy-wide distributional impacts of climate actions.

[Multidimensional poverty and climate change, 15 February 2021](#)

This talk was hosted by project team member, Prof. David Gordon, from the Bristol Poverty Institute, University of Bristol, United Kingdom, who discussed the measurement and policy challenges that countries face in the post-COVID-19 world to meet the looming poverty, inequality and climate change disasters.

NEW PUBLICATIONS BY ACEIR RESEARCHERS

[Inequality in the developing world](#)

Carlos Gradín, Murray Leibbrandt & Finn Tarp (eds.)

Oxford University Press, March 2021

The full open-access book ‘Inequality in the developing world’, published in March 2021 by Oxford University Press, contains assessments of the measurement and analysis of global inequality by leading inequality scholars, aligning these to comprehensive reviews of inequality trends in five of the world’s largest developing countries — Brazil, China, India, Mexico, South Africa. SALDRU and ACEIR director, Prof. Murray Leibbrandt, was one of the editors alongside Dr. Carlos Gradin and Prof. Finn Tarp from the United Nations University (UNU-WIDER). The country chapters drew on a set of papers from each country that were produced as part of the large international project, Inequality in the Giants, led by UNU-WIDER in partnership with a number of international inequality scholars, including Prof. Leibbrandt.

[Piketty comes to South Africa](#)

Fabio Andrés Díaz Pabón, Murray Leibbrandt, Vimal Ranchhod, Mike Savage
British Journal of Sociology, 2021; 72:106–124. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-4446.12808>

Researchers from ACEIR's South Africa node recently published an article in a special issue of the *British Journal of Sociology* on 'Debating Thomas Piketty's "Capital and Ideology"'. The scholars, based at SALDRU at the University of Cape Town, co-authored the piece with Prof. Mike Savage from the London School of Economics and Political Science. This special issue of the *BJS* was inspired by Prof. Thomas Piketty’s new book, ‘Capital and Ideology’ and the article reflects on inequality in the South African context in relation to the Piketty book.

IN THE MEDIA

[The human tragedy of South Africa’s inequality](#)

Analytical article by Murray Leibbrandt; *New Frame*, 17 May 2021

[#SOSColombia: Remember Sharpeville?](#)

Analytical article by Fabio Andrés Díaz Pabón, Maria Gabriela Palacio; *Mail & Guardian*, 11 May 2021

[What is happening in Colombia?](#)

Analytical article by Fabio Andrés Díaz Pabón, Maria Gabriela Palacio; *The Conversation*, 7 May 2021

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