

Call for Papers

**International Workshop on Inequality and Middle Class Development in Africa**

Cape Town, 05-06 May 2016

The [GIGA](#) German Institute of Global and Area Studies, in cooperation with the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation ([IJR](#)) and the Southern Africa Labour and Development Research Unit ([SALDRU](#)) at the University of Cape Town, invites submissions for a two-day workshop on *Inequality and Middle Class Development in Africa*.

The changing skylines of Africa's capitals, the suits and ties of its dealmakers, the chauffeured cars, and the growing visibility of global brands in many of its capitals exemplify Africa's good news growth story of the past decade. The one-sided image of the "old Africa" is making way for a more nuanced view that sees opportunity in countries that offer greater political stability and increased openness to investors from around the world than ever before. The continent's rising middle class has emerged as a central protagonist in this narrative. Yet, when reading the reports by management consultants, investor advisory groups and some academic studies, it seems that the historic role played by the middle class in the developed North as the backbone of democracy and economic growth has frequently been superimposed to the African context without substantial knowledge about this emergent middle. Empirical evidence on which to substantiate these ideas remains scarce, not least because of severe data limitations and ambiguities in the understanding and measurement of this group. Critical voices have raised concerns about Africa's rising inequality, which is rather slowing the number of poor moving into the ranks of a middle class.

**Conference themes**

Against the background of a renewed interest in the impact of the distribution of income and wealth on socioeconomic development, this workshop invites scholars and practitioners to deliberate on the understanding of middle class formation and segmentation and to discuss the potential of the middle class to foster inclusive growth and play a transformative socio-political role in their respective countries. In particular, the workshop will address the following overarching and interrelated themes:

- 1. Measurement of social class and economic inequality:** approaches to defining and measuring the middle class within the African context.
- 2. Economic development:** Economic behavior of the middle class and its effects on economic growth.
- 3. Labor market:** the role of labor market characteristics and dynamics for income inequalities, social mobility and middle class formation.
- 4. Political attitudes and behavior:** political thinking and engagement of the middle class and its role for democracy.

Other papers of relevance to inequality and middle class development are also welcome.

Two **keynote lectures** will be delivered by:

[PROF. MTHULI NCUBE](#) from the Blavatnik School of Government, at the University of Oxford. Prof. Ncube, a former Chief Economist and Vice President of the African Development Bank has published several influential books and articles on economic growth and policy, the emerging middle classes, financial markets, and regional integration and trade in Africa.

[PROF. STEPHAN KLASEN](#), Head of Chair of Development Economics, and Head of Ibero-America Institute for Economic Research at the University of Göttingen. Prof. Klasen has published several leading articles mostly on issues of poverty, inequality, environment, and gender.

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**Other confirmed speakers and panelists** include PROF. MURRAY LEIBBRANDT, Professor in the School of Economics at the University of Cape Town and Director of SALDRU; PROF. HENNING MELBER, Senior Advisor at The Nordic Africa Institute and the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation, visiting and extraordinary Professor at the Universities of Pretoria and of the Free State South Africa, DR. DANIELLE RESNICK, Senior Research Fellow at the Development Strategies and Governance Division at the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), and DR. ABEBE SHIMELESS, Manager of Development Research Division at the African Development Bank.

## Paper submission

Please email your submission (extended abstract and/or full paper) together with the “application form” to [inequality-middleclass-workshop@giga-hamburg.de](mailto:inequality-middleclass-workshop@giga-hamburg.de) in a pdf or Word file and indicate “Workshop 2016” in the subject heading. Abstracts should have more than 400 words but should not exceed three pages. The application form can be found on the Workshop homepage: <https://giga.hamburg/de/veranstaltung/inequality-and-middle-class-development-in-africa>. The **submission deadline** is **21 February 2016**. Notification of acceptance will be sent out by the end of February 2016. The deadline for full paper submission is **24 April 2016**. All participants may be requested to serve as discussants.

## Workshop formats and costs

Paper presentations will be given in thematic parallel sessions and a guided poster session. Additionally, interactive workshop formats will deliver inputs on data and measurement issues and foster dialogue and collaboration between participants. All participants are invited for a joint dinner on the first day of the Workshop. There is no participation fee, but note that travel and accommodation costs will not be covered. However, limited funding is available to provide **five lump sum travel grants of 300,- Euro each** for participants based at African institutions, which will be awarded competitively. Please indicate your application for a travel grant in your submission Email and the application form.

## Organizing Committee

- [Jan Hofmeyr](#), Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, Cape Town
- [Dr. Lena Giesbert](#), Institute of African Affairs, GIGA Hamburg
- [Apl. Prof. Dr. Jann Lay](#), Acting Director, Institute of African Affairs, GIGA Hamburg
- [Prof. Murray Leibbrandt](#), Director, SALDRU and School of Economics at the University of Cape Town

## Timeline

Submission of paper abstracts	21 February 2016
Notification of acceptance	End of February
Submission of papers	24 April 2016
Conference	5-6 May 2016

## Contact

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In South Africa: IJR Policy and Analysis Programme, Wendy Mpatsi, Phone: +27 (0)21 202 4022, Email: [wendy@ijr.org.za](mailto:wendy@ijr.org.za)

**Venue** Townhouse Hotel, 60 Corporation Street, Cape Town, South Africa

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