Call for Papers: The Climate Factory in the Global South

By:

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The Southern Centre for Inequality Studies, University of the Witwatersrand and Princeton University Joint Symposium calls for papers for its "*The Climate Factory in the Global South*" holding from **1-2 April 2027** at **Johannesburg, South Africa**.

Across the Global South, the urgency of climate action is converging with longstanding developmental challenges around growth, industrialization, employment, inequality, and energy security. Nowhere is this convergence more visible and contested than in the material sites of production: factories, supply chains, mines, logistics systems, and industrial infrastructures.

As states, firms, and international actors invest in climate transitions and new forms of industrial policy, these “climate factories” are becoming strategic terrains where technological, social, and political futures are being assembled and contested.

This symposium proposes the concept of the climate factory as a way of understanding climate transition not only as an environmental or policy challenge, but as a reorganization of production itself. The transition from fossil-fuel energy systems to renewable energy, the shift from internal combustion engines to electric vehicles, the restructuring of battery and mineral value chains, and the emergence of new industrial and geopolitical alignments are reshaping patterns of accumulation, labour processes, state intervention, and global inequality.

The theme of this symposium aims to generate a more robust interdisciplinary encounter across the social sciences, and to address the critical and varied roles of Global South countries and regions in the global energy transition. Therefore, the symposium will bring together scholars working across sociology, economics, political economy, development studies, environmental studies, geography, labour studies, and related fields to explore how climate transitions are unfolding in middle-income and developing countries. We are particularly interested in comparative and empirically grounded work on sites and processes of production focused on countries in the Global South, including but not limited to Brazil, Egypt, Morocco, Indonesia, India, Malaysia, Mexico, Thailand, Senegal, and South Africa.

Format

The symposium will be an in-person event involving approximately 20–25 participants, including a small number of invited policymakers and practitioners. Confirmed keynote speakers include: Thea Riofrancos, Kunal Sen, and Justin Yifu Lin. The format will emphasize pre-circulated papers, designated discussants, extended thematic discussions, and comparative and interdisciplinary dialogue. Travel and accommodation costs will be covered.

Submission Guidelines

Please submit:

- An abstract of no more than 500 words
- A short biographical note (150 words maximum)
- Full Curriculum Vitae

Important Dates

● Abstract submission deadline: 30 September 2026

● Notification of acceptance: 30 October 2026

● Full papers due: 15 February 2027

● Symposium dates: 1-2 April 2027

Organizers

The symposium is jointly convened by the Southern Centre for Inequality Studies (SCIS), University of the Witwatersrand, and Princeton University's School of Public and International Affairs and Center for Policy Research on Energy and the Environment, led by Benjamin Bradlow (Princeton) and Imraan Valodia (Wits)

Submission and Enquiries

Please send abstracts and any queries to Lindiwe.Mdlalose@wits.ac.za Submissions from scholars based in the Global South is particularly encouraged.

View online: Call for Papers: The Climate Factory in the Global South

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