

Amory Gethin

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Personal Information

Citizenship: French
Born in 1995

DOCTORAL STUDIES

2020-Present – Paris School of Economics, PhD in Economics

Dissertation title: Political Change and Inequality.

Advisor: Thomas Piketty.

2022-2023 – University of California, Berkeley

Visiting Student Researcher

Sponsor: Emmanuel Saez.

2022 – Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Visiting Student Researcher

Sponsor: Abhijit Banerjee.

2021 – Harvard Business School

Visiting Student Researcher

Sponsor: Vincent Pons.

PRE-DOCTORAL STUDIES

2016-2018 – MSc in Economics, Paris School of Economics

Summa Cum Laude.

2013-2016 – Multidisciplinary Degree, Paris Sciences et Lettres

Summa Cum Laude. Specializations: Economics, Philosophy.

2013-2016 – BA in Economics, Paris Dauphine University

Summa Cum Laude.

BOOK

Political Cleavages and Social Inequalities. A Study of 50 Democracies, 1948-2020.

Co-edited with Clara Martínez-Toledano and Thomas Piketty.

Harvard University Press, November 2021. 656 pages.

Website: World Political Cleavages and Inequality Database: <https://wpid.world>.

Translations: [French](#) (EHESS/Gallimard/Seuil, April 2021), [Dutch](#) (De Geus, January 2022), Spanish (forthcoming), Portuguese (forthcoming).

PUBLICATIONS

Brahmin Left versus Merchant Right: Changing Political Cleavages in 21 Western Democracies, 1948-2020 (with C. Martínez-Toledano & T. Piketty)

Quarterly Journal of Economics 137, no. 1 (2022): 1–48. Lead article. [[pdf](#)] [[appendix](#)]

Abstract: This article sheds new light on the long-run evolution of political cleavages in 21 Western democracies. We exploit a new database on the socioeconomic determinants of the vote, covering over 300 elections held between 1948 and 2020. In the 1950s and 1960s, the vote for social democratic, socialist, and affiliated parties was associated with lower-educated and low-income voters. It has gradually become associated with higher-educated voters, giving rise in the 2010s to a disconnection between the effects of income and education on the vote: higher-educated voters now vote for the “left,” while high-income voters continue to vote for the “right.” This transition has been accelerated by the rise of green and anti-immigration movements, whose distinctive feature is to concentrate the votes of the higher-educated and lower-educated electorates. Combining our database with historical data on political parties’ programs, we provide evidence that the reversal of the education cleavage is strongly linked to the emergence of a new “sociocultural” axis of political conflict.

Why is Europe More Equal than the United States? (with T. Blanchet & L. Chancel)

American Economic Journal: Applied Economics, forthcoming. [[pdf](#)] [[appendix](#)]

Abstract: This article combines all available survey, income tax, and national accounts data to produce pretax and posttax income inequality series in twenty-six European countries from 1980 to 2017. Our estimates are consistent with macroeconomic growth rates and comparable with U.S. distributional national accounts. Inequality grew in nearly all European countries, but much less than in the U.S. This rise was concentrated at the top end of the income distribution and was most pronounced in Eastern Europe. Contrary to a widespread view, we demonstrate that Europe’s lower inequality levels cannot be explained by more equalizing tax-and-transfer systems. After accounting for indirect taxes and in-kind transfers, the U.S. redistributes a greater share of national income to low-income groups than any European country. “Predistribution”, not “redistribution”, explains why Europe is less unequal than the United States.

Wealth Inequality in South Africa, 1993-2017 (with A. Chatterjee & L. Czajka)

World Bank Economic Review 36, no. 1 (2022): 19-36. [[pdf](#)] [[appendix](#)]

Abstract: This article estimates the distribution of personal wealth in South Africa by combining microdata covering the universe of income tax returns, household surveys, and macroeconomic balance sheet statistics. South Africa is characterized by unparalleled levels of wealth concentration. The top 10% own 86% of aggregate wealth and the top 0.1% close to one-third. The top

0.01% of the distribution (3,500 individuals) concentrate 15% of household net worth, more than the bottom 90% as a whole. Such levels of inequality can be accounted for in all forms of assets at the top end, including housing, pension funds, and financial assets. There has been no sign of decreasing inequality since the end of apartheid.

Growing Cleavages in India? Evidence from the Changing Structure of Electorates, 1962-2014 (with A. Banerjee & T. Piketty)

Economic and Political Weekly 54, no. 11 (2019): 34-44. [[pdf](#)]

Abstract: This paper combines surveys, election results and social spending data to document a long-run evolution of political cleavages in India. The transition from a dominant-party system to a fragmented system characterized by several smaller regionalist parties and, more recently, the Bharatiya Janata Party, coincides with the rise of religious divisions and the persistence of strong caste-based cleavages. Education, income and occupation play a diminishing role (controlling for caste) in determining voters' choices. There is no evidence of the new party system being associated with changes in social policy. In India, as in many Western democracies, political conflicts seem to be increasingly focused on identity and religious–ethnic conflicts rather than on tangible material benefits and class-based redistribution.

WORKING PAPERS

How Large are African Inequalities? Towards Distributional National Accounts in Africa, 1990-2017 (with L. Chancel, D. Cogneau, A. Myczkowski, and A.-S. Robilliard)

Revision Requested, World Development. [[pdf](#)]

Abstract: This article makes a first attempt to estimate the evolution of income inequality in Africa from 1990 to 2019 by combining surveys, tax data, and national accounts in a systematic manner. Income inequality in Africa is very high (the region's top 10% income share nears 55%), on par with regions characterized by extreme inequality, such as Latin America and India. Most of continent-wide income inequality comes from the within-country component rather than from average income gaps between countries. Inequality appears highest in a large Southern Africa and lowest in Northern and Western Africa. Among institutional determinants, this geographical pattern seems to bear witness for the long shadow of settler colonialism. Among more proximate determinants, dualism between agriculture and other sectors and mineral rents stand out as key determinants of income concentration levels across Africa. Overall, inequality remained fairly stable between 1990 and 2019, with the exception of Southern Africa, where it increased significantly.

Can Redistribution Keep Up with Inequality? Evidence from South Africa, 1993-2019 (with A. Chatterjee and L. Czajka).

World Inequality Lab Working Paper 2021/20, September 2021. [[pdf](#)] [[slides](#)]

Abstract: Can government redistributive policies successfully curb rising inequality and foster inclusive growth in emerging economies? This paper sheds new light on this question by combin-

ing survey, tax, and historical administrative data to measure the incidence of taxes and transfers on the distribution of growth in South Africa since the end of the apartheid regime. Our new database is fully consistent with macroeconomic totals reported in the national accounts and allocates the entirety of government revenue and expenditure to individuals, including indirect taxes and in-kind transfers. We document a dramatic divergence in the growth of top and bottom income groups: between 1993 and 2019, the pretax income of the top 1% rose by 50%, while that of the poorest 50% fell by a third. However, the widening of pretax income gaps was almost fully compensated by the growing size and progressivity of the tax-and-transfer system, effectively mirroring a “chase between rising inequality and enhanced redistribution.”

WORK IN PROGRESS

Revisiting Global Poverty Reduction: Public-Private Complementarities and the Rise of Public Goods

Who Benefits from Public Goods? Evidence from South Africa

Social Movements and Public Opinion (with Vincent Pons)

Global Posttax Income Inequality (with Carmen Durrer & Matthew Fisher-Post)

Racial Inequality in South Africa, 1913-2019 (with Léo Czajka)

Inflation and Political Preferences (with Clara Martínez-Toledano & José-Luis Peydro)

Social Bases of Redistribution in India (with Poulomi Chakrabarti)

Disentangling the Dynamics of Political Change in Western Democracies

BOOK CHAPTERS

Political Cleavages and Social Inequalities in Fifty Democracies (with Clara Martínez-Toledano and Thomas Piketty), in A. Gethin, C. Martínez-Toledano, and T. Piketty (ed.), *Political Cleavages and Social Inequalities: A Study of Fifty Democracies, 1948-2020* (Harvard University Press, 2021).

Political Cleavages, Class Structures, and the Politics of Old and New Minorities in Australia, Canada, and New Zealand, 1963-2019, in Gethin, Martínez-Toledano, and Piketty, *Political Cleavages and Social Inequalities*. [[working paper](#)]

Historical Political Cleavages and Post-Crisis Transformations in Italy, Spain, Portugal and Ireland, 1953-2020 (with Luis Bauluz, Clara Martínez-Toledano, and Marc Morgan), in Gethin, Martínez-Toledano, and Piketty, *Political Cleavages and Social Inequalities*. [[working paper](#)] [[appendix](#)]

Party System Transformation and the Structure of Political Cleavages in Austria, Belgium, the Netherlands and Switzerland, 1967-2019 (with Carmen Durrer de la Sota and Clara Martínez-Toledano), *in* Gethin, Martínez-Toledano, and Piketty, *Political Cleavages and Social Inequalities*. [[working paper](#)] [[appendix](#)]

Caste, Class, and the Changing Political Representation of Social Inequalities in India, 1962-2019 (with Abhijit Banerjee and Thomas Piketty), *in* Gethin, Martínez-Toledano, and Piketty, *Political Cleavages and Social Inequalities*. [[working paper](#)]

Democracy and the Politicization of Inequality in Brazil, 1989-2018 (with Marc Morgan), *in* Gethin, Martínez-Toledano, and Piketty, *Political Cleavages and Social Inequalities*. [[working paper](#)] [[appendix](#)]

Extreme Inequality and the Structure of Political Cleavages in South Africa, 1994-2019, *in* Gethin, Martínez-Toledano, and Piketty, *Political Cleavages and Social Inequalities*. [[working paper](#)]

Political Cleavages and the Representation of Social Inequalities in Japan, 1953-2017, *in* Gethin, Martínez-Toledano, and Piketty, *Political Cleavages and Social Inequalities*. [[working paper](#)]

Social Inequality and the Dynamics of Political and Ethnolinguistic Divides in Pakistan, 1970-2018 (with Sultan Mehmood and Thomas Piketty), *in* Gethin, Martínez-Toledano, and Piketty, *Political Cleavages and Social Inequalities*. [[working paper](#)]

Democratization and the Construction of Class Cleavages in Thailand, the Philippines, Malaysia, and Indonesia, 1992-2019 (with Thanasak Jenmana), *in* Gethin, Martínez-Toledano, and Piketty, *Political Cleavages and Social Inequalities*. [[working paper](#)]

Inequality, Identity, and the Structure of Political Cleavages in South Korea, Taiwan, and Hong Kong, 1996-2016 (with Carmen Durrer de la Sota), *in* Gethin, Martínez-Toledano, and Piketty, *Political Cleavages and Social Inequalities*. [[working paper](#)]

Social Inequalities and the Politicization of Ethnic Cleavages in Botswana, Ghana, Nigeria, and Senegal, 1999-2019 (with Jules Baleyte, Yajna Govind, and Thomas Piketty), *in* Gethin, Martínez-Toledano, and Piketty, *Political Cleavages and Social Inequalities*. [[working paper](#)]

Political Cleavages and Social Inequalities in Algeria, Iraq, and Turkey, 1990-2019 (with Lydia Assouad, Thomas Piketty, Juliet-Nil Uraz), *in* Gethin, Martínez-Toledano, and Piketty, *Political Cleavages and Social Inequalities*. [[working paper](#)]

La fiscalité peut-elle contrecarrer la hausse des inégalités ? Le cas français, 1990-2018, *Regards Croisés sur l'Economie* 2020/1.

Apports et limites de la théorie des jeux, *Regards Croisés sur l'Economie* 2019/1. [[url](#)]

Qu'apportent les théories économiques à la compréhension du commerce international?
(with E. Mien), *Regards Croisés sur l'Economie* 2017/2. [[url](#)]

POLICY AND RESEARCH NOTES

A Wealth Tax for South Africa: A Proposal to Help Finance COVID-19 Pandemic Measures (with Aroop Chatterjee and Léo Czajka), in *Wealth tax: Perspectives in a post-pandemic world*, United Nations International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth, Policy in Focus 19(3), December 2021. [[pdf](#)]

A Wealth Tax for South Africa (with Aroop Chatterjee and Léo Czajka), World Inequality Lab Working Paper 2021/02, January 2021. [[pdf](#)]

Building the World Political Cleavages and Inequality Database: A New Dataset on Electoral Behaviors in 50 Democracies, 1948-2020 (with Clara Martínez-Toledano and Thomas Piketty), World Inequality Lab Technical Note 2021/01. [[pdf](#)]

Has the European Model Withstood the Rise in Inequalities? Inequalities and Redistribution in Europe, 1980-2017 (with Thomas Blanchet & Lucas Chancel), World Inequality Lab Issue Brief 2019/3, April 2019. [[english](#)] [[français](#)] [[deutsch](#)]

Rising Inequalities and Political Cleavages in Spain (with Clara Martínez-Toledano and Marc Morgan), World Inequality Lab Issue Brief 2019/4, April 2019. [[pdf](#)]

Extreme Inequality, Democratisation and Class Struggles in Thailand (with Thanasak Jenmana), World Inequality Lab Issue Brief 2019/1, March 2019. [[pdf](#)]

Brazil Divided: Hintsights on the Growing Politicization of Inequality (with Marc Morgan), World Inequality Lab Issue Brief 2018/3, October 2018. [[english](#)] [[french](#)]

Foreign Income and Assets in Comparative Perspective: Highlights from the World Inequality Database, World Inequality Lab Issue Brief 2018/1, June 2018. [[pdf](#)]

Building a Global Income Distribution Brick by Brick (with L. Chancel). World Inequality Lab Technical Note 2017/5, December 2017. [[pdf](#)]

Confiance et Anticipations au Lendemain de l'Élection Présidentielle de 2017, CEPREMAP Observatoire du bien-être, October 2017. [[pdf](#)]

Du Mal-Être au Vote Extrême (with Thanasak Jenmana), CEPREMAP Observatoire du bien-être, September 2017. [[pdf](#)]

Google: Espace Politique, Espace de Préoccupations (with T. Jenmana, Y. Algan, E. Beasley and C. Senik), CEPREMAP Observatoire du bien-être, June 2017. [[pdf](#)]

OTHER CONTRIBUTIONS TO COLLECTIVE WORKS

Translator of *Political Cleavages and Social Inequalities: A Study of 50 Democracies (1948-2020)* from English to French (\approx 600 pages).

Member of the *World Inequality Report 2018* research team. [[url](#)]

Contributor to Y. Algan, E. Beasley, and C. Senik, *Les Français, le bonheur et l'argent*, Collection du CEPREMAP n. 46, 2018. [[url](#)]

Best research project award at École des Mines de Paris (2015) for “A socio-technical analysis of the French *écotaxe*” (with M. Fresnel, D. Futscher-Pereira, E. Raineau-Rispal, and C. Wren), presented on a dedicated website. [[url](#)]

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

2018-2020 – Research Economist, World Inequality Lab, Paris School of Economics.

2020 – Visiting Fellow, Southern Centre for Inequality Studies, Johannesburg.

2017-2018 – Research Assistant to Prof. Facundo Alvaredo, Lucas Chancel, and Thomas Piketty, World Inequality Lab, Paris School of Economics.

2017 – Research Assistant to Prof. Yann Algan, Elizabeth Beasley, and Claudia Senik, CEPREMAP, Paris School of Economics – Sciences Po Paris.

2017-2020 – Member of the editorial board of *Regards croisés sur l'économie*. [[url](#)]

SEMINARS AND CONFERENCES

2022 – American Economic Association Annual Meeting; Harvard Labor and Public Finance Workshop; Harvard Comparative Politics Workshop; International Institute of Public Finance Annual Congress; UC Berkeley Public Economics Seminar; UC Berkeley Institute for Research on Labor and Employment Seminar.

2021 – Workshop on Political Inequality and Representation, Bergen; World Inequality Conference, Paris; Paris School of Economics Informal Seminar; Harvard Growth Lab General Seminar; National Tax Association's Annual Conference on Taxation, Detroit; Applied Young Economist Webinar, Monash/Warwick; International Conference on the Shadow Economy, Tax Behaviour and Institutions; Annual Conference of the Research Federation on the Theory and Evaluation of Public Policies, Évry Paris-Saclay University; SA-TIED Policy Dialogue on Economic Inequality in South Africa; CEVIPOF General Seminar, Paris; Virtual Lunch Seminar, Stellenbosch University; Applied Economics

Lunch Seminar, Paris School of Economics; Virtual Inequality Brownbag, Center for Inequality Dynamics; International Macro History Seminar, Graduate Institute Geneva; Debates on Equality, World Inequality Lab; CUNY Comparative Politics Workshop, New York.

2020 – University of Cape Town – Southern Africa Labour and Development Research Unit; Wits Institute for Social and Economic Research, Johannesburg; Faculty of Economics, Wits University, Johannesburg; Southern Centre for Inequality Studies, Johannesburg.

2019 – École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales Workshop on Inequality and Preferences for Redistribution; University of Bergen Workshop on the Roots of Political Inequality and the Working of Democratic Representation; European Union Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Brussels; United Nations Workshop on the 2019 Human Development Report, New York; Annual Meeting of the Society for the Study of Economic Inequality, Paris School of Economics.

FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS

2020-2023 – Paris School of Economics and Paris 1 University full doctoral fellowship.

2021 – Paris School of Economics International mobility grant.

2020 – Southern Centre for Inequality Studies research fellowship.

2020 – National Institute for the Humanities and Social Sciences Innovative Research Papers Award for “A Wealth Tax for South Africa” (with A. Chatterjee and L. Czajka).

REFEREEING

American Journal of Political Science, Comparative Political Studies, Electoral Studies, International Tax and Public Finance, Structural Change and Economic Dynamics, World Development.

SELECTED MEDIA INTERVENTIONS

“How Culture War KILLS Class Politics,” *Breaking Points*, 12/2021. [[video](#)]

“Not so black and white: Unpicking inequality in South Africa,” *The Economist*, 09/2021. [[url](#)]

"How politics became a contest dominated by two kinds of elite" (with C. Martínez-Toledano & T. Piketty), *The Guardian*, 08/2021. [[url](#)]

"Educated voters' leftward shift is surprisingly old", *The Economist*, 05/2021. [[url](#)]

"La librairie de l'éco", *BFM Business*, 05/2021. [[video](#)]

"Débats de l'égalité", *World Inequality Lab*, 04/2021. [[video](#)]

"Taxing wealth in a context of extreme inequality legacy: The case of South Africa" (with A. Chatterjee & L. Czajka), *VoxEU*, 04/2021. [[url](#)]

"Coronavirus: why South Africa needs a wealth tax now" (with A. Chatterjee & L. Czajka), *The Conversation*, 04/2020. [[url](#)]

"Can Indian Democracy Tackle Social Inequalities?" (with A. Banerjee & T. Piketty), *Paris School of Economics 5 papers in 5 minutes*, 03/2020. [[url](#)]

"Why US inequality is higher than Europe's" (with T. Blanchet & L. Chancel), *Project Syndicate*, 11/2019. [[url](#)]

"How did Europe do on SDG 10.1?" (with T. Blanchet & L. Chancel), *United Nations Development Program*, 05/2019. [[url](#)]

"Forty years of inequality in Europe: Evidence from distributional national accounts" (with T. Blanchet & L. Chancel), *VoxEU*, 04/2019. [[url](#)]

"Thailand's democratic foundations remain weak" (with T. Jenmana), *Bangkok Post*.

"A quem interessa aumentar a desigualdade?" (with T. Piketty, P.P. Zahluth Bastos, M. Morgan), *Valor Econômico*, 2019. [[url](#)]

"Classe média espremida pesou na eleição" (with M. Morgan), *Valor Econômico*. [[url](#)]