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PARIS SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS

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Assistant Director: Roxana Ban

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Personal information

Born in August, 1992
Citizenship: French, Syrian

GRADUATE STUDIES

2017-present PhD in Economics, Paris School of Economics
Expected Completion Date: June 2022

References:

Professor Thomas Piketty
Paris School of Economics
thomas.piketty@psemail.eu

Professor Noam Yuchtman
London School of Economics
n.yuchtman@lse.ac.uk

Professor Ekaterina Zhuravskaya
Paris School of Economics
ekaterina.zhuravskaya@psemail.eu

PRIOR EDUCATION

2013-2015 M.S Economics, “*Analysis and Policy in Economics*,” Paris School of Economics
2012-2013 B.A. in Economics and B.A.in Sociology, Sorbonne University
2012-2016 Ecole Normale Supérieure Paris-Saclay
2010-2012 Preparatory Class B/L, Lycée Henri IV, Paris

RESEARCH VISITS

2021-2022 Aix-Marseille University
2019-2021 Harvard University, sponsored by Alberto Alesina
2018-2019 London School of Economics, *European Doctoral Program in Quantitative Economics*
2016-2017 UC Berkeley, *Center for Equitable Growth*, sponsored by Emmanuel Saez

RESEARCH AFFILIATION

World Inequality Lab (WIL)
Association for Analytic Learning about Islam and Muslim Societies (AALIMS)
Aix-Marseille University (AMSE)

RESEARCH FIELDS

Development Economics, Political Economics, Economic History, Applied Microeconomics

PUBLICATIONS

Articles

“Extreme Inequality: Evidence from Brazil, India, the Middle-East and South Africa”
American Economic Association: Papers & Proceedings, 2018, vol. 108, p. 119-123,
with Lucas Chancel and Marc Morgan

Abstract: This paper presents new findings about inequality dynamics in Brazil, India, the Middle East, and South Africa from the World Inequality Database (WID.world). We combine tax data, household surveys, and national accounts in a systematic manner to produce estimates of the distribution of income, using concepts coherent with macroeconomic national accounts. We document an extreme level of inequality in these regions, with top 10 percent income shares above 50 percent of national income. These societies are characterized by a dual social structure, with an extremely rich group at the top, whose income levels are broadly comparable to their counterparts in high-income countries, and a much poorer mass of the population below top groups. We discuss the diversity of regional contexts and highlight two explanations for the levels observed: the historical legacy of social segregation and modern economic institutions and policies.

“Measuring Inequality in the Middle East, 1990-2016: The World’s Most Unequal Region?”
Review of Income and Wealth, vol.65, 2019, p.685-711

Abstract: In this paper we combine household surveys, national accounts, income tax data and wealth data in order to estimate income concentration in the Middle East for the period 1990–2016. According to our benchmark series, the Middle East appears to be the most unequal region in the world, with a top decile income share as large as 64 percent, compared to 37 percent in Western Europe, 47 percent in the US and 55 percent in Brazil. This is due both to enormous inequality between countries (particularly between oil-rich and population-rich countries) and to large inequality within countries (which we probably under-estimate, given the limited access to proper fiscal data). We stress the importance of increasing transparency on income and wealth in the Middle East and of developing mechanisms of regional redistribution and investment.

Book Chapters

“Measuring Inequality in the Middle East” with Facundo Alvaredo and Thomas Piketty, in the *Routledge Handbook on Middle East Economy*, edited by Hassan Hakimian, forthcoming 2021

“Political Cleavages and Social Inequalities in Algeria, Iraq, and Turkey, 1990-2019” with Amory Gethin, Thomas Piketty, Juliet-Nil Uraz, in *Political Cleavages and Social Inequalities. A Study of 50 Democracies, 1950-2020*, edited by Amory Gethin, Clara Martinez-Toledano, and Thomas Piketty, *Harvard University Press*, forthcoming 2021

WORKING PAPERS

“Charismatic Leaders and Nation-Building“ (Job Market Paper)

***Abstract:** Can a leader play a role in nation-building? Between 1923 and 1938, Mustafa Kemal “Atatürk”, the founder of modern Turkey, visited more than a quarter of all Turkish cities to explain the ongoing nation-building reforms to the population. I create a novel historical database, with detailed information on the locations and dates of this propaganda effort in order to assess Atatürk's impact on cultural change and support for the reforms. Exploiting time and geographic variation in Atatürk's visits, I first find that they led to a persistent increase in the use of first names in “Pure Turkish”, the new language introduced by the state as part of its homogenizing endeavor, indicating a successful establishment of the new national order locally. The effect is stronger in districts with more nationalistic associations, higher literacy rates and where Atatürk met with local elites, suggesting that co-optation and coordination of the elite are key mechanisms. Second, I find that visited districts are more likely to form a cultural branch of Atatürk's party. Overall, my findings suggest that a one-off exposure to a leader can impact culture and contribute to the legitimization of a nation in the making.*

“Rethinking the Lebanese Economic Miracle: The Extreme Concentration of Income and Wealth in Lebanon 2005-2014” World Inequality Lab – Working Paper N° 2017/13 (single-authored) *Revise & Resubmit at the Journal of Development Economics (minor revisions requested)*

***Abstract:** I combine household surveys, national accounts and unique personal income tax records to produce the first estimates of the national income distribution in an Arab country, Lebanon. I find that income is extremely concentrated over the 2005-2014 period: The top 1 and 10 percent of the adult population received almost 25 and 55 percent of national income on average, placing Lebanon among the countries with the highest levels of income inequality in the world. Results are robust to sensitivity analysis and suggest that one should not give up on tracking the dynamics of wealth and income concentration in a developing country, as long as the assumptions made are clearly and systematically stated. The extreme level of inequality found question the long-lasting narrative of the “Lebanese economic miracle” that showcases the country as a paragon of economic success in the Middle East. They also confirm results from a large literature that emphasizes how the Lebanese sectarian based mode of governance has allowed the ruling elite to extract large rents on most economic activities in the last decades at the expense of the majority of citizens.*

“Political Cleavages and Social Inequalities in Algeria, Iraq, and Turkey, 1990-2019” World Inequality Lab – Working Paper N° 2021/12, with Amory Gethin, Thomas Piketty and Juliet-Nil Uraz (PSE)

***Abstract:** This paper draws on political attitudes surveys to document the evolution of political cleavages in light of inequality dynamics in Algeria (2002-2018), Iraq (2005-2018), and Turkey (1991-2018). We investigate how social divides and ethno-religious conflicts shape voting behavior in these three countries. Our findings suggest that identity-based voting remains highly interconnected with social disparities and does not offer extensive explanatory power on its own, except in the extreme case of the Iraqi sectarian political system. Socioeconomic factors play a differentiated role depending on the historical and institutional context and have increasingly been at the heart of popular mobilizations outside of the electoral arena.*

RESEARCH PAPERS IN PROGRESS

“Sectarianism and Preferences for Redistribution in Lebanon,” with Augustin Bergeron (Stanford University) and Salma Mousa (Yale University)

“Uneven Centuries: The Long-Run Evolution of the Turkish Educational System (1870-2020)”

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Spring 2020	Harvard University Teaching Assistant for Nathan Nunn, EC 1393 Poverty and Development (Undergraduate)
2015-2016	Galatasaray University, Istanbul Lecturer, Political Economy (Undergraduate)
2014	Ecole Normale Supérieure Paris-Saclay Teaching Assistant, “Statistics and Applied Mathematics” (Undergraduate)

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Referee for	<i>Quarterly Journal of Economics, Economic Journal, Economics of Transition, Journal of Comparative Economics</i>
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INVITED TALKS

2021 <i>*scheduled</i>	Middle East Initiative, Harvard Kennedy School; Bonn Macrohistory & Macrofinance Webinar*
2019	Boğaziçi University, Galatasaray University
2018	World Bank, Carnegie Middle East Center, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Paris, American University of Beirut; Saint-Joseph University, Beirut;

CONFERENCES, SEMINARS

2021 <i>*scheduled</i>	AALIMS-MIT graduate student workshop, POMEPS, Economic History Seminar (PSE), Applied Lunch Seminar (PSE), 3rd LSE Political Economy of Turkey Workshop, North American Winter Meeting of the Econometric Society*
2020	Political Economy Workshop (Harvard); Economic History Seminar (Harvard) MENA Workshop (MEI, Harvard), ASREC, Applied Lunch Seminar (PSE), 2 nd LSE Workshop on Political Economy of Turkey
2019	WIP seminar (PSE); Political Economy Lunch Seminar (LSE); ECINEQ (PSE); Political Economy and Culture Lunch Seminar (Harvard); Applied Lunch Seminar (PSE);
2017	Applied Lunch seminar (PSE); WID First Conference (PSE); American University of Beirut; Saint-Joseph University, Beirut;

HONORS, FELLOWSHIPS AND RESEARCH GRANTS

2021	Agence Française de Développement AFD (26,000€) with Augustin Bergeron (Stanford)
2021	“Gérard Roland Fellowship,” Association for Comparative Economic Studies
2021	Aix-Marseille School of Economics 4 th year full-fellowship
2020	“Gérard Roland Fellowship,” ACES, runner-up, research grants (5,000\$)
2019	“El-Erian Fellowship,” Carnegie Endowment for International Peace
2018	OSE Research Grant, Paris School of Economics (10,000€)
2018	European Doctoral Program Scholarship LSE (One year)

2017	French Ministry of Research, full Scholarship (Three years)
2017	Center for Equitable Growth and IRLE, UC Berkeley (One year)
2015	French Embassy in Turkey (MICEL), full Fellowship (One year)
2012	Ecole Normale Supérieure Paris-Saclay, full Scholarship (Four years)

COMPUTER SKILLS AND LANGUAGES

IT skills	Stata, R, GIS, Latex, Office
Languages	French (native), English (fluent), Spanish (intermediate), Turkish (intermediate), Arabic (basic in classic, intermediate in Syrian dialect)