

Lydia ASSOUD

Born in August, 1992

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EDUCATION

2017-present	PhD in Economics, Paris School of Economics Thesis Advisors: Thomas Piketty and Ekaterina Zhuravskaya Fields of Interest: Political Economy, Development Economics, Economic History
2013-2015	MSc “Economic Policy Analysis”, Paris School of Economics
2012-2013	BSc in Economics and BSc in Sociology, Sorbonne University
2012-2016	Ecole Normale Supérieure Paris-Saclay

RESEARCH VISITS

2021-2022	Aix-Marseille School of Economics
2019-2020	Harvard University, <i>sponsored by Alberto Alesina</i>
2018-2019	London School of Economics, <i>European Doctoral Program in Quantitative Economics</i>
2016-2017	UC Berkeley, <i>Center for Equitable Growth</i>

WORKING PAPERS and WORK IN PROGRESS

“Rethinking the Lebanese Economic Miracle: The Extreme Concentration of Income and Wealth in Lebanon 2005-2014”, World Inequality Lab – Working Paper N° 2017/13 (*submitted*)

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 on 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.

“Charismatic Leaders and Nation-Building: Atatürk’s Role in the Formation of the Turkish National Identity”

Abstract: Can leaders shape identity and legitimize new social orders? I address this question by studying the role of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of modern Turkey, in spreading a new national identity. Using a generalized difference-in-differences design, which exploits time and geographic variation in Kemal’s visits to districts, I test whether exposure to a charismatic leader affects citizens’ take-up of the

new Turkish identity. I find that people living in visited districts are more likely to embrace the common identity, as proxied by the adoption of first names in "Pure Turkish", the new language introduced by the state. I show that Kemal was more efficient in rallying people, compared to İsmet İnönü, his Prime Minister, suggesting that he had an idiosyncratic effect. Results are mostly driven by places where he met with local elites and where he made a speech. Overall, the findings are consistent with the Weberian view that charismatic authority can legitimize new social orders.

“**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

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 behaviors in these three countries through their interaction with the voting system and the structure of inequalities. 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.*

PUBLICATIONS

“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

“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.

BOOK CHAPTERS

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

“*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, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, forthcoming 2021.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

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

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Referee for Quarterly Journal of Economics, Economic Journal, Journal of Comparative Economics, The Economics of Transition.

FELLOWSHIPS AND GRANTS

2021 ACES “Gerard Roland Fellowship” and Aix-Marseille School of Economics fellowship
2020 ACES “Gerard Roland Fellowship”, runner-up
2019 El-Erian Fellowship, Carnegie Middle East Center
2018 European Doctoral Program Scholarship LSE (One year)
2017 French Ministry of Research, full Scholarship (Three years)
2015 French Embassy in Turkey (MICEL), full Fellowship (One year)
2012 Ecole Normale Supérieure Paris-Saclay, full Scholarship (Four years)

CONFERENCES, SEMINARS AND INVITED TALKS

2021 AALIMS-MIT graduate student workshop, Middle East Initiative Harvard Kennedy School, Economic History Seminar (PSE), Applied Lunch Seminar (PSE), 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), 2nd 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); Bogazici University, Galatasaray University.

2018 Carnegie Middle East Center; World Bank; Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Paris; EHESS.

2017 Applied Lunch seminar (PSE); WID First Conference (PSE); American University of Beirut; Saint-Joseph University, Beirut;

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)

Last updated: August 2021