International Journal of Environmental Sciences
ISSN: 2229-7359
Vol. 11 No. 7s, 2025
https://www.theaspd.com/ijes.php

Income Inequality Challenges Economic Stability and Social Cohesion

Nashrurrahman, Abdul Hamid Paddu, Sanusi Fattah, Anas Iswanto Anwar
Universitas Hasanuddin, Makasssar, Indonesianash.djalil@gmail.com

Abstract:
Income inequality has been identified as a significant threat to economic stability and social cohesion in various countries. Increasing income inequality can trigger instability, both in economic and social aspects, including conflict, societal disintegration, and declining economic growth in the long term. Therefore, this article aims to analyze the impact of income inequality on economic stability and social cohesion in various countries with a comprehensive approach. This study uses a systematic literature review (SLR) method by reviewing various empirical studies from international databases such as the World Bank, IMF, and leading scientific journals. Through SLR, this article identifies patterns and key findings related to the relationship between income inequality, economic growth, and various social indicators in a global context. The systematic review results indicate a significant relationship between income inequality increased risk of economic instability and decreased social cohesion, especially in developing countries. Based on these findings, this article suggests implementing income redistribution policies and increasing access to public services as steps to reduce the negative impacts of income inequality and strengthen socio-economic stability at the national and global levels.

Keywords: *Income Inequality, Economic Stability, Social Cohesion, Redistributive Policies, Developing Countries.*

INTRODUCTION

Income inequality has become one of the major issues faced by countries around the world in recent decades. Although global economic growth has shown an overall upward trend, the distribution of the benefits of this growth tends to be uneven. In many countries, the wealthy elite receive a much larger proportion of income compared to the rest of the population, while the middle and lower classes have experienced income stagnation (Flaherty & Rogowski, 2021). According to a report from the World Inequality Database, in developed countries such as the United States, income inequality has increased significantly since the 1980s, with the richest 1% of the population now controlling more than 20% of total national income. This phenomenon is not only happening in developed countries, but also in developing countries, where income inequality continues to grow due to lack of access to quality education, health services, and fair economic opportunities (Aiyar & Ebeke, 2020).On the other hand, high-income inequality not only impacts the economic aspect but also creates social tensions. Societies facing extreme inequality tend to experience greater social polarization, where the gap between the rich and the poor worsens social relations and public trust in government institutions (Stewart et al., 2020). In many cases, this income inequality alsocontributes to political instability and increased social tensions, as seen in the waves of protests in various countries, from Latin America to Europe and Asia. Inequality also hinders social cohesion, where fragmented societies are more prone to internal conflict and find it difficult to work together to achieve national development goals (Snower & Bosworth, 2021).Furthermore, income inequality also has implications for sustainable economic growth. Research shows that countries with high inequality often have slower economic growth in the long run (Burgess et al., 2021; Halter et al., 2014; Shin, 2012). When large segments of the population do not have equitable access to resources and opportunities, a country's economic potential is limited (Aghion et al., 1999; Bapuji et al., 2024). Extreme income inequality exacerbates a society's inability to invest in education, health, and innovation, which are critical factors for long- term growth (Beck et al., 2007; Bhattacharjee et al., 2017; Glomm & Ravikumar, 1992). In addition, the concentration of wealth in the hands of a few individuals can reduce overall consumption, hinder domestic demand, and ultimately slow the rate of economic development (Fargione et al., 2011; Paiella &

Pistaferri, 2017).The long-term economic and social impacts of income inequality tend to undermine social order and hinder sustainable development. On the economic dimension, chronic income inequality widens the gap between social groups, creating limited access to adequate education and employment opportunities, especially for low-income groups (Kearney & Levine, 2014). This results in an "inequality trap," where generations growing up in inequality find it difficult to improve their standard of living because they have limited access to essential economic resources (Gall, 2007; Jerrim & Macmillan, 2015). Income inequality also encourages high risk-taking tendencies by marginalized groups, such as economic migration or unsecured informal sector work, which in turn limits overall economic productivity and resilience (Rosser et al., 2000).The social impacts of inequality also trigger a cycle that is detrimental to society in the long run. High inequality increases societal distrust of institutions and exacerbates social conflict, especially when the wealthy are perceived to dominate public policies and resources (Rothstein & Uslaner, 2005). This stark inequality creates a sense of injustice, which often triggers waves of social discontent and protest in countries with weak democracies or high corruption (Engler & Weisstanner, 2021). Persistent inequality also reduces levels of social cohesion, which has the effect of reducing people's willingness to contribute to collective development and increasing the potential for internal conflict (Cruz et al., 2022; Sampson et al., 1997).In the long run, extreme income inequality can threaten the sustainability of the economic system itself. With low levels of public trust and declining levels of aggregate consumption, the economic system becomes vulnerable to recession and stagnation (Choi, 2019). Countries with high inequality tend to be more vulnerable to economic crisis cycles due to weak purchasing power, which hampers domestic sector growth and investment (Stockhammer, 2015).

Moreover, increasing inequality threatens the achievement of sustainable development goals (SDGs) that prioritize economic inclusion and reducing inequality. If not addressed, the long-term impacts of this inequality will become increasingly complex and difficult to resolve, slowing global development and increasing the risk of prolonged economic and social crises (Liu et al., 2021).

The relevance of the study of income inequality to the current global economic and social situation is very high, especially in the context of economic recovery after the COVID-19 pandemic. This pandemic has exacerbated existing inequalities, with the richer groups being better able to survive and recover quickly, while low-income groups are increasingly affected, both economically and in terms of health (Blundell et al., 2022; Shah et al., 2020).

This widening inequality is a major concern in global discussions on equitable and sustainable economic recovery. A World Bank report shows that inequality of income and opportunity across countries has increased sharply during the pandemic, especially in developing countries that face limited access to vaccines, health services, and adequate economic support (Kunyenje et al., 2023). This underscores the need to rethink more inclusive development models and reduce inequality as an integral part of global economic recovery.Rising inequality also has implications for global social stability. Many countries are facing social protests and increasing political polarization, often rooted in feelings of economic injustice among citizens (KLEINER, 2018). This phenomenon is increasingly relevant with rising political tensions in various parts of the world, where economic inequality fuels dissatisfaction with governments that are perceived as unresponsive or unfair. Social conflicts, often accompanied by rising economic nationalism, protectionism, and inter-communal tensions, worsen relations between countries and hinder global cooperation in addressing common challenges, such as climate change and global health (Gazzotti et al., 2021).The study of inequality is also very relevant in the context of sustainable development goals (SDGs), especially the goal of reducing inequality and creating inclusive prosperity. Increasing inequality threatens the achievement of SDG targets and slows down development efforts aimed at eradicating poverty, improving the quality of education, and increasing access to health and equitable economic opportunities (Asadullah et al., 2020; Kara et al., 2021). Therefore, a deep understanding of income inequality and its impacts is crucial in formulating global policies that can face this complex challenge.

The findings of this study can provide perspectives for policymakers to consider fairer redistribution policies

International Journal of Environmental Sciences
ISSN: 2229-7359
Vol. 11 No. 7s, 2025
https://www.theaspd.com/ijes.php
and support inclusive growth in order to achieve better stability and social cohesion at the global level. How does income inequality affect economic stability and social cohesion in various countries? How can this instability lead to social conflict and slow economic growth? What policies can be implemented to address income inequality and its impacts? It is very interesting to discuss. This study aims to explore and analyze the relationship between income inequality economic stability and social cohesion, using a systematic literature review approach. By reviewing empirical literature from various countries, especially developing countries, this study is expected to provide insight into the mechanisms of inequality that disrupt social and economic order. In addition, this article also aims to provide policy recommendations that can reduce the negative impacts of income inequality.Income inequality has become one of the major issues faced by countries around the world in recent decades. Although global economic growth has shown an overall upward trend, the distribution of the benefits of this growth tends to be uneven. In many countries, the wealthy elite receive a much larger proportion of income compared to the rest of the population, while the middle and lower classes have experienced income stagnation. (Flaherty & Rogowski, 2021). According to a report from the World Inequality Database, in developed countries such as the United States, income inequality has increased significantly since the 1980s, with the richest 1% of the population now controlling more than 20% of total national income. This phenomenon is not only happening in developed countries, but also in developing countries, where income inequality continues to grow due to the lack of access to quality education, health services, and fair economic opportunities (Aiyar & Ebeke, 2020).On the other hand, high-income inequality not only impacts the economic aspect but also creates social tensions. Societies facing extreme inequality tend to experience greater social polarization, where the gap between the rich and the poor worsens social relations and public trust in government institutions(Stewart et al., 2020). In many cases, this income inequality also contributes to political instability and increased social tensions, as seen in the waves of protests in various countries, from Latin America to Europe and Asia. Inequality also hinders social cohesion, where fragmented societies are more prone to internal conflict and find it difficult to work together to achieve national development goals (Snower & Bosworth, 2021).Furthermore, income inequality also has implications for sustainable economic growth. Research shows that countries with high inequality often have slower economic growth in the long run (Burgess et al., 2021; Halter et al., 2014; Shin, 2012). When large segments of the population do not have equitable access to resources and opportunities, a country's economic potential is limited (Aghion et al., 1999; Bapuji et al., 2024). Extreme income inequality exacerbates a society's inability to invest in education, health, and innovation, which are critical factors for long-term growth (Beck et al., 2007; Bhattacharjee et al., 2017; Glomm & Ravikumar, 1992). In addition, the concentration of wealth in the hands of a few individuals can reduce overall consumption, hinder domestic demand, and ultimately slow the rate of economic development (Fargione et al., 2011; Paiella & Pistaferri, 2017).The long-term economic and social impacts of income inequality tend to undermine social order and hinder sustainable development. On the economic dimension, chronic income inequality widens the gap between social groups, creating limited access to adequate education and employment opportunities, especially for low-income groups (Kearney & Levine, 2014). This results in an "inequality trap," where generations growing up in inequality find it difficult to improve their standard of living because they have limited access to essential economic resources (Gall, 2007; Jerrim & Macmillan, 2015). Income inequality also encourages high risk-taking tendencies by marginalized groups, such as economic migration or unsecured informal sector work, which in turn limits overall economic productivity and resilience (Rosser et al., 2000).The social impacts of inequality also trigger a cycle that is detrimental to society in the long run. High inequality increases societal distrust of institutions and exacerbates social conflict, especially when the wealthy are perceived to dominate public policies and resources (Rothstein & Uslaner, 2005). This stark inequality creates a sense of injustice, which often triggers waves of social discontent and protest in countries with weak democracies or high corruption (Engler & Weisstanner, 2021). Persistent inequality also reduces levels of social cohesion, which has the effect of reducing people's willingness to contribute to collective development and increasing the potential for internal conflict (Cruz

et al., 2022; Sampson et al., 1997)In the long run, extreme income inequality can threaten the sustainability of the economic system itself. With low levels of public trust and declining levels of aggregate consumption, the economic system becomes vulnerable to recession and stagnation (Choi, 2019). Countries with high inequality tend to be more vulnerable to economic crisis cycles due to weak purchasing power, which hampers domestic sector growth and investment (Stockhammer, 2015).

Moreover, increasing inequality threatens the achievement of sustainable development goals (SDGs) that prioritize economic inclusion and reducing inequality. If not addressed, the long-term impacts of this inequality will become increasingly complex and difficult to resolve, slowing global development and increasing the risk of prolonged economic and social crises (Liu et al., 2021). The relevance of the study of income inequality to the current global economic and social situation is very high, especially in the context of economic recovery after the COVID-19 pandemic. This pandemic has exacerbated existing inequalities, with the richer groups being better able to survive and recover quickly, while low-income groups are increasingly affected, both economically and in terms of health (Blundell et al., 2022; Shah et al., 2020). This widening inequality is a major concern in global discussions on equitable and sustainable economic recovery. A World Bank report shows that inequality of income and opportunity across countries has increased sharply during the pandemic, especially in developing countries that face limited access to vaccines, health services, and adequate economic support (Kunyenje et al., 2023). This underscores the need to rethink more inclusive development models and reduce inequality as an integral part of global economic recovery.Rising inequality also has implications for global social stability. Many countries are facing social protests and increasing political polarization, often rooted in feelings of economic injustice among citizens (KLEINER, 2018). This phenomenon is increasingly relevant with rising political tensions in various parts of the world, where economic inequality fuels dissatisfaction with governments that are perceived as unresponsive or unfair. Social conflicts, often accompanied by rising economic nationalism, protectionism, and inter-communal tensions, worsen relations between countries and hinder global cooperation in addressing common challenges, such as climate change and global health(Gazzotti et al., 2021).

The study of inequality is also very relevant in the context of sustainable development goals (SDGs), especially the goal of reducing inequality and creating inclusive prosperity. Increasing inequality threatens the achievement of SDG targets and slows down development efforts aimed at eradicating poverty, improving the quality of education, and increasing access to health and equitable economic opportunities (Asadullah et al., 2020; Kara et al., 2021). Therefore, a deep understanding of income inequality and its impacts is crucial in formulating global policies that can face this complex challenge. The findings of this study can provide perspectives for policymakers to consider fairer redistribution policies and support inclusive growth in order to achieve better stability and social cohesion at the global level.

The findings of this study can provide perspectives for policymakers to consider fairer redistribution policies and support inclusive growth in order to achieve better stability and social cohesion at the global level. How does income inequality affect economic stability and social cohesion in various countries? How can this instability lead to social conflict and slow economic growth? What policies can be implemented to address income inequality and its impacts? It is very interesting to discuss. This study aims to explore and analyze the relationship between income inequality economic stability and social cohesion, using a systematic literature review approach. By reviewing empirical literature from various countries, especially developing countries, this study is expected to provide insight into the mechanisms of inequality that disrupt social and economic order. In addition, this article also aims to provide policy recommendations that can reduce the negative impacts of income inequality.

METHODOLOGY

This study used the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta- Analyses) protocol to guide the process of systematic screening, selection, and reporting of literature review results (Moher et al., 2009). The PRISMA approach was chosen to ensure that the steps in this SLR meet transparency standards and can be repeated with a similar process in the future. This protocol helps in detailing the study selection criteria, search methods, and screening flow presented in a PRISMA diagram, making it easier for readers to trace the literature selection process carried out (Page et al., 2021).

In the article selection process, several inclusion and exclusion criteria have been set to ensure the relevance and quality of the reviewed studies. The inclusion criteria applied include (1) studies examining the impact of income inequality on economic stability and social cohesion, (2) studies using empirical data from both developing and developed countries, (3) articles published in English, and (4) articles published between 2000 and 2023, to ensure contemporary relevance. Exclusion criteria included: (1) conceptual or theoretical articles that did not present empirical data, (2) studies that were not relevant to the topic of income inequality, economic stability, or social cohesion, and (3) articles that were not available in full, such as articles with only abstracts or articles that were not fully accessible.The literature search was conducted in several major databases, including Scopus, World Bank, IMF, and Web of Science. The search process used a variety of keywords that were relevant to the research topic, such as “income inequality,” “economic stability,” “social cohesion,” and “redistributive policies.” To ensure broad search coverage, each keyword was matched with synonyms or relevant terms, as well as Boolean operators to obtain more specific search results. This search step resulted in several initial articles that were then further filtered based on title and abstract.

The articles obtained from the initial search results were screened through three stages. In the first stage, articles were screened based on title and abstract to identify initial relevance to the inclusion criteria. The second stage involved a full screening of articles to ensure that the content of the articles was relevant to the topic being studied. In the final stage, eligible articles were further processed for the extraction of relevant data, such as inequality indicators, main research findings, analytical methods used, and information related to redistribution policies and their impacts (Bickman & Rog, 2009)

The data collected from the selected articles were analyzed using a thematic approach. Thematic analysis allows the identification of common patterns, relationships between variables, and key findings from the reviewed literature. Thus, this study was able to group the various study findings based on emerging themes, such as the relationship between income inequality and economic stability, social cohesion, and the effectiveness of redistribution policies. The results of this analysis were then used to compile a synthesis of findings that focused on the impact of income inequality on economic and social stability in a global context.

DISCUSSION

The synthesis of the findings of this literature review shows that income inequality has a significant impact on economic stability, especially in developing countries (Yang et al., 2020). High inequality limits low-income groups' access to economic resources such as education, health services, and employment opportunities (Elenbaas, 2019; Ilie et al., 2021). This causes many individuals from these groups to be unable to improve their economic conditions, which ultimately suppresses a country's economic capacity to develop sustainably (Acheampong et al., 2021).Inequality also reduces the potential for investment in sectors that support long-term growth, such as education and innovation. When a large portion of the population is unable to invest in improving the quality of life, the rate of national economic growth tends to slow down, hampering efforts to reduce poverty and improve the welfare of society as a whole (Solga, 2014). In addition, the concentration of wealth in the hands of the elite causes low domestic demand, which has an impact on decreasing economic activity (Rinz, 2022). In this situation, economic growth in countries with high inequality becomes slower and more fragile, increasing the risk of prolonged and recurring economic crises (Breunig & Majeed, 2020).The social impact of income inequality is deeply concerning as it fosters significant social polarization, exacerbating the gap between the rich and the poor, and undermining social interaction and trust. Consequently, it becomes increasingly challenging for individuals from diverse economic backgrounds to integrate, further widening the social and economic disparities between them (Peng & Wu, 2022; Stancato et al., 2024). High inequality also impacts trust in public institutions. When people feel that public policies favor elite groups, dissatisfaction arises which can trigger social conflict and complicate social stability. As a result, people become less trusting of governments that are considered unfair in managing resources (Fehr et al., 2020).

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, this inequality has become even more apparent. The pandemic has widened socio-economic gaps, disproportionately affecting low-income groups in terms of health and economics (Rasul et al., 2021). This condition exacerbates polarization and increases the risk of political instability in various countries, strengthening the argument that economic inequality can hinder social cohesion in times of crisis (Petersen et al., 2022).Income inequality threatens the achievement of several key goals in the sustainable development goals (SDG), especially in terms of poverty eradication and inclusive prosperity. High inequality limits access to education, health services, and fair employment opportunities, which are essential factors for achieving these goals (Eliakimu & Mans, 2022). In addition, rising inequality slows progress toward sustainable development, preventing low-income people from benefiting from economic growth. As a result, this inequality reduces the country's potential to achieve equitable prosperity across all levels of society (Niessen et al., 2018).These findings emphasize the need for effective redistribution policies to create inclusive economic growth, strengthen social cohesion, and ensure long-term economic stability. The implementation of these policies is expected to reduce the impact of inequality and support the achievement of SDG targets more comprehensively.

Practical Implications This study emphasizes the need for structural policy interventions to effectively address income inequality. Sustainable redistribution policies, such as progressive tax reforms, need to be implemented to reduce the economic gap between groups. In addition, increasing access to education, health, and economic opportunities for low-income groups will strengthen social stability and encourage more equitable economic growth. Such interventions can reduce social polarization and strengthen public trust in government institutions.Theoretical Implications of these findings enrich the literature that discusses the impact of income inequality on social cohesion and economic stability, especially in developing countries. This study reveals how income inequality affects social and economic structures in depth, adding insight into the relationship between inequality and socio-economic dynamics. Literacy in this literature also helps identify the mechanisms that trigger the cycle of inequality, which is relevant for future research to develop inclusive economic models. This study has limitations because it only accesses English-language articles, and faces obstacles in obtaining local literature that is not indexed in international databases.

CONCLUSION

This systematic review shows a significant association between income inequality and the risk of economic instability and weakened social cohesion. High inequality reduces public trust in government and exacerbates social polarization. The study suggests redistributive policies, such as improving access to education and healthcare, to mitigate the negative impacts of inequality.

These findings provide important contributions to policymaking in developing countries, especially in the post-COVID-19 economic recovery effort, where inequality has widened socio- economic gaps.

In conclusion, income inequality has significant impacts on economic and social stability, especially in developing countries. High inequality limits access to essential resources such as education and health for low-income groups, slows overall economic growth and increases the risk of economic instability. Socially, inequality drives polarization, reduces public trust in institutions, and has the potential to trigger tensions and conflicts within societies, especially in the context of a pandemic that has exacerbated economic gaps. In practical terms, these findings underscore the importance of redistributive policies and structural interventions, such as progressive tax reforms and more equitable access to basic services, to narrow socio-economic gaps and create inclusive growth. From a theoretical perspective, this study enriches the literature on the effects of inequality on social cohesion and economic stability and provides new insights for further research that develops more inclusive and sustainable economic development models.

References

Acheampong, A. O., Dzator, J., & Shahbaz, M. (2021). Empowering the powerless: Does access to energy improve income inequality? *Energy Economics*, *99*, 105288. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eneco.2021.105288
Aghion, P., Banerjee, A., & Piketty, T. (1999). Dualism and Macroeconomic Volatility. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, *114*(4), 1359–1397. https://doi.org/10.1162/003355399556296
Aiyar, S., & Ebeke, C. (2020). Inequality of opportunity, inequality of income and economic growth. *World Development*, *136*, 105115. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2020.105115
Asadullah, M. N., Savoia, A., & Sen, K. (2020). Will South Asia Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030? Learning from the MDGs Experience. *Social Indicators Research*, *152*(1), 165–189. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-020-02423-7
Bapuji, H., Ertug, G., Soundararajan, V., & Shaw, J. D. (2024). Invisible Inequalities: Barriers, Challenges, and Opportunities. *Journal of Management*, *50*(3), 835–848.https://doi.org/10.1177/01492063231205294
Beck, T., Demirgüç-Kunt, A., & Levine, R. (2007). Finance, inequality and the poor. *Journal of Economic Growth*, *12*(1), 27–49. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10887-007-9010-6
Bhattacharjee, A., Shin, J. K., Subramanian, C., & Swaminathan, S. (2017). Healthcare investment and income inequality. *Journal of Health Economics*, *56*, 163–177. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhealeco.2017.08.007
Bickman, L., & Rog, D. (2009). *The SAGE Handbook of Applied Social Research Methods*. SAGE Publications, Inc. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781483348858
Blundell, R., Costa Dias, M., Cribb, J., Joyce, R., Waters, T., Wernham, T., & Xu, X. (2022). Inequality and the COVID-19 Crisis in the United Kingdom. *Annual Review of Economics*, *14*(1), 607–636. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-economics-051520-030252
Breunig, R., & Majeed, O. (2020). Inequality, poverty and economic growth. *International Economics*, *161*, 83–99. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.inteco.2019.11.005
Burgess, M. G., Carrico, A. R., Gaines, S. D., Peri, A., & Vanderheiden, S. (2021). Prepare developed democracies for long-run economic slowdowns. *Nature Human Behaviour*, *5*(12), 1608–1621. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-021-01229-y
Choi, S. (2019). Is the Current Trend of Income Inequality Sustainable? *Sustainability*, *11*(19), 5329. https://doi.org/10.3390/su11195329
Cruz, P., Joffre, R., Bernard, C., Egan, N., Roux, B., & Winkel, T. (2022). Social adaptive responses to a harsh and unpredictable environment: insights from a pre-Hispanic andean society. *Ecology and Society*, *27*(2), art29. https://doi.org/10.5751/ES-13207-270229
Elenbaas, L. (2019). Perceptions of economic inequality are related to children's judgments about access to opportunities. *Developmental Psychology*, *55*(3), 471–481. https://doi.org/10.1037/dev0000550
Eliakimu, E. S., & Mans, L. (2022). Addressing Inequalities Toward Inclusive Governance for Achieving One Health: A Rapid Review. *Frontiers in Public Health*, *9*. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2021.755285
Engler, S., & Weisstanner, D. (2021). The threat of social decline: income inequality and radical right support. *Journal of European Public Policy*, *28*(2), 153–173. https://doi.org/10.1080/13501763.2020.1733636
Fargione, J. E., Lehman, C., & Polasky, S. (2011). Entrepreneurs, Chance, and the Deterministic Concentration of Wealth. *PLoS ONE*, *6*(7), e20728. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0020728
Fehr, D., Rau, H., Trautmann, S. T., & Xu, Y. (2020). Inequality, fairness and social capital. *European Economic Review*, *129*, 103566. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.euroecorev.2020.103566
Flaherty, T. M., & Rogowski, R. (2021). Rising Inequality As a Threat to the Liberal International Order. *International Organization*, *75*(2), 495–523. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818321000163
Gall, T. (2007). Lotteries, inequality, and market imperfection: Galor and Zeira go gambling. *Economic Theory*, *34*(2), 359–382. https://doi.org/10.1007/s00199-006-0171-x
Gazzotti, P., Emmerling, J., Marangoni, G., Castelletti, A., Wijst, K.-I. van der, Hof, A., & Tavoni, M. (2021). Persistent inequality in economically optimal climate policies. *Nature Communications*, *12*(1), 3421. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-021-23613-y
Glomm, G., & Ravikumar, B. (1992). Public versus Private Investment in Human Capital: Endogenous Growth and Income Inequality. *Journal of Political Economy*, *100*(4), 818–834. https://doi.org/10.1086/261841
Halter, D., Oechslin, M., & Zweimüller, J. (2014). Inequality and growth: the neglected time dimension. *Journal of Economic Growth*, *19*(1), 81–104. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10887-013-9099-8
Ilie, S., Rose, P., & Vignoles, A. (2021). Understanding higher education access: Inequalities and early learning in low and lower-middle-income countries. *British Educational Research Journal*, *47*(5), 1237–1258. https://doi.org/10.1002/berj.3723

Jerrim, J., & Macmillan, L. (2015). Income Inequality, Intergenerational Mobility, and the Great Gatsby Curve: Is Education the Key? *Social Forces*, *94*(2), 505–533. https://doi.org/10.1093/sf/sov075

Kara, A., Zhou, H., & Zhou, Y. (2021). Achieving the United Nations' sustainable development goals through financial inclusion: A systematic literature review of access to finance across the globe. *International Review of Financial Analysis*, *77*, 101833. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.irfa.2021.101833

Kearney, M., & Levine, P. (2014). *Income Inequality, Social Mobility, and the Decision to Drop Out of High School*. https://doi.org/10.3386/w20195

KLEINER, T. (2018). Public opinion polarisation and protest behaviour. *European Journal of Political Research*, *57*(4), 941–962. https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-6765.12260

Kunyenje, C. A., Chirwa, G. C., Mboma, S. M., Ng'ambi, W., Mnjowe, E., Nkhoma, D., Ngwira, L. G., Chawani, M. S., Chilima, B., Mitambo, C., Crampin, A., & Mfutso-Bengo, J. (2023). COVID-19 vaccine inequity in African low-income countries. *Frontiers in Public Health*, *11*. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2023.1087662

Liu, S., Haucke, M. N., Heinzel, S., & Heinz, A. (2021). Long-Term Impact of Economic Downturn and Loneliness on Psychological Distress: Triple Crises of COVID-19 Pandemic. *Journal of Clinical Medicine*, *10*(19), 4596. https://doi.org/10.3390/jcm10194596

Moher, D., Liberati, A., Tetzlaff, J., & Altman, D. G. (2009). Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses: The PRISMA Statement. *PLoS Medicine*, *6*(7), e1000097. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pmed.1000097

Niessen, L. W., Mohan, D., Akuoku, J. K., Mirelman, A. J., Ahmed, S., Koehlmoos, T. P., Trujillo, A., Khan, J., & Peters, D. H. (2018). Tackling socioeconomic inequalities and non-communicable diseases in low-income and middle-income countries under the Sustainable Development agenda. *The Lancet*, *391*(10134), 2036–2046. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(18)30482-3

Page, M. J., McKenzie, J. E., Bossuyt, P. M., Boutron, I., Hoffmann, T. C., Mulrow, C. D., Shamseer, L., Tetzlaff, J. M., Akl, E. A., Brennan, S. E., Chou, R., Glanville, J., Grimshaw, J. M., Hróbjartsson, A., Lalu, M. M., Li, T., Loder, E. W., Mayo-Wilson, E., McDonald, S., … Moher, D. (2021). The PRISMA 2020 statement: an updated guideline for reporting systematic reviews. *BMJ*, n71. https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.n71

Paiella, M., & Pistaferri, L. (2017). Decomposing the Wealth Effect on Consumption. *The Review of Economics and Statistics*, *99*(4), 710–721. https://doi.org/10.1162/REST_a_00629

Peng, Z., & Wu, L. (2022). Association of income relative deprivation and sleep duration in China. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *13*. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.1008259

Petersen, J., Hettich, N., Baumkötter, R., Wild, P. S., Pfeiffer, N., Münzel, T., König, J., Lackner, K. J., & Beutel, M. E. (2022). The burdens of poverty during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Frontiers in Sociology*, *7*. https://doi.org/10.3389/fsoc.2022.995318

Rasul, G., Nepal, A. K., Hussain, A., Maharjan, A., Joshi, S., Lama, A., Gurung, P., Ahmad, F., Mishra, A., & Sharma, E. (2021). Socio-Economic Implications of COVID-19 Pandemic in South Asia: Emerging Risks and Growing Challenges. *Frontiers in Sociology*, *6*. https://doi.org/10.3389/fsoc.2021.629693

Rinz, K. (2022). Labor Market Concentration, Earnings, and Inequality. *Journal of Human Resources*, *57*(S), S251–S283. https://doi.org/10.3368/jhr.monopsony.0219-10025R1

Rosser, J. B., Rosser, M. V., & Ahmed, E. (2000). Income Inequality and the Informal Economy in Transition Economies. *Journal of Comparative Economics*, *28*(1), 156–171. https://doi.org/10.1006/jcec.2000.1645

Rothstein, B., & Uslaner, E. M. (2005). All for All: Equality, Corruption, and Social Trust. *World Politics*, *58*(1), 41–72. https://doi.org/10.1353/wp.2006.0022

Sampson, R. J., Raudenbush, S. W., & Earls, F. (1997). Neighborhoods and Violent Crime: A Multilevel Study of Collective Efficacy. *Science*, *277*(5328), 918–924. https://doi.org/10.1126/science.277.5328.918

Shah, G. H., Shankar, P., Schwind, J. S., & Sittaramane, V. (2020). The Detrimental Impact of the COVID-19 Crisis on Health Equity and Social Determinants of Health. *Journal of Public Health Management and Practice*, *26*(4), 317–319. https://doi.org/10.1097/PHH.0000000000001200

Shin, I. (2012). Income inequality and economic growth. *Economic Modelling*, *29*(5), 2049–2057. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.econmod.2012.02.011

Snower, D. J., & Bosworth, S. J. (2021). Economic, social and political fragmentation: Linking knowledge-biased growth, identity, populism and protectionism. *European Journal of Political Economy*, *67*, 101965. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ejpoleco.2020.101965

Solga, H. (2014). Education, economic inequality and the promises of the social investment state. *Socio- Economic Review*, *12*(2), 269–297. https://doi.org/10.1093/ser/mwu014