

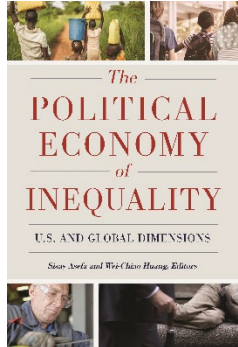


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The Political Economy of Inequality U.S. and Global Dimensions

Sisay Asefa and Wei-Chiao Huang, Editors

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KALAMAZOO, Mich. – Nowadays, when discussions turn to inequality, the focus is likely on income inequality. And for good reason. As much recent, highly-publicized research has shown, extreme inequity in earnings is an increasingly consequential issue facing nations—both rich and poor. Yet other forms of inequality also exist, together what may be referred to as social inequality. These forms are generally characterized by large gaps in accumulated assets, discrepancies in access to quality education, unstable family life, lack of access to banking services, poor employment prospects, lack of health care services, and underrepresentation for political and legal matters.

As a new book from the Upjohn Press shows, all issues related to inequality are interrelated and, together, pose the risk for societal and political unrest should they be left unresolved. Therefore, attention to all forms is highly warranted. In ***The Political Economy of Inequality: U.S. and Global Dimensions***, editors Sisay Asefa and Wei-Chiao Huang present a notable group of scholars who address a variety of social inequality issues by observing the root causes of these under-addressed types of inequality along with offering policies aimed at mitigating their impacts. Included are:

- **The Political Economy of Inequality: Introduction**, by Sisay Asefa and Wei-Chiao Huang. Asefa and Huang provide a brief overview of the topic and then offer detailed descriptions of the following chapters. This chapter is available for download at https://research.upjohn.org/up_press/260/.

- **The New Inequality: The Distribution of Retirement and Older Working Time in OECD Countries**, by Teresa Ghilarducci. Besides discussing how inequality skews political power and therefore public spending, Ghilarducci also shows how recently-adopted policies have forced many older workers to work more years and longer hours during their retirement years.
- **The Economics and Politics of the Fall and Rise of Income Inequality in the United States**, by Charles L. Ballard. Ballard describes the “Great Compression” just prior to WWII, a period when inequality lessened in the U.S., and the more recent “Great Divergence,” when inequality soared in the U.S. He argues that both are the result of political decisions and that race is a key factor in influencing those decisions.
- **America’s Unequal Playing Field: The Gaps between Poor and Rich Children’s Resources**, by Mary E. Corcoran. Growing up wealthy in the U.S. has many advantages beyond just economic ones. As Corcoran shows, not only does growing up rich afford access to safe neighborhoods with good schools, wealthy families also tend to be more stable, have fewer single parent households, and their children have higher student achievement scores and college attendance and graduation rates.
- **Why Has Income Inequality Increased while Education Inequality Has Decreased in Many Developing Countries?** by David Lam. Lam argues that inequality in schooling is integrally connected to income inequality. But, despite there being a closing of the gap in schooling in recent years in several African and Asian nations, income inequality in those nations continues to grow. Lam explains why.
- **Institutions, Structures, and Policy Paradigm: Toward Understanding Inequality in Africa**, by Howard Stein. Stein provides a thoughtful alternative to the mainstream explanation for the inequality endemic in many African countries. He places blame for this on a variety of powerful institutions and how Africa is integrated into the global economy.
- **Income Inequality, Progressive Taxation, and Tax Expenditures**, by James R. Hines Jr. Hines discusses the effect of tax schemes and tax expenditures on inequality and then makes three provocative points concerning the efficiency and equity of tax systems.

This chapters presented in this book are based on papers presented at the 2017–2018 Werner Sichel Lecture Series, an annual event organized by Western Michigan University’s Department of Economics and cosponsored by the W.E. Upjohn Institute.

The Political Economy of Inequality: U.S. and Global Dimensions, Sisay Asefa and Wei-Chiao Huang, editors, is published by the W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research. February 2020. 192 pp. \$20 paper 978-88099-671-6 / ebook 978-0-88099-673-0. Opinions expressed are solely those of the authors. We encourage you to request a review copy of this book.
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