



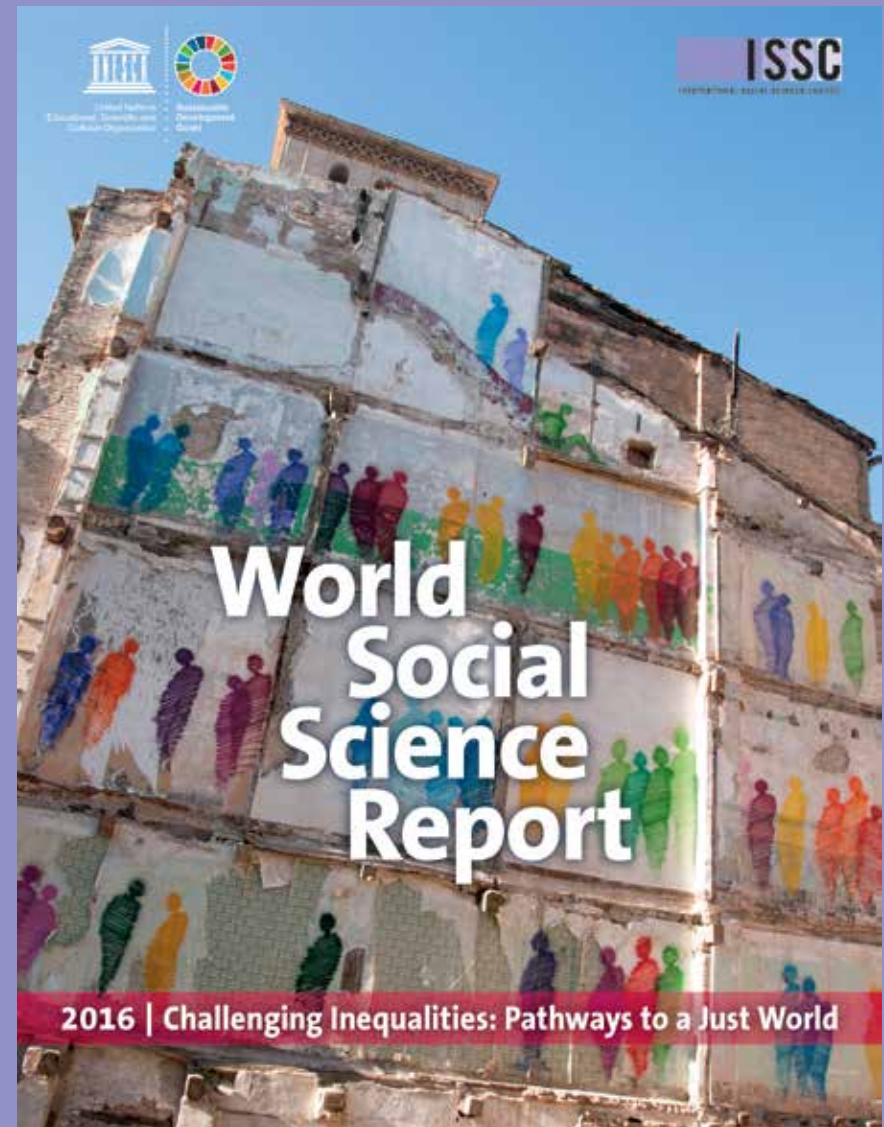
international social science council

World Social Science Report 2016 | Challenging Inequalities: Pathways to a Just World

Mathieu Denis, Executive Director
Monday, 17 October 2016

Download the full report:

- 107 authors from 40 countries
- 74 cutting-edge social science contributions on inequalities
- Research agenda for the next 10 years
- Prepared with the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) and co-published with UNESCO
- Summary published in English, French and Spanish
- Open Access download available en.unesco.org/wssr2016



The background | World Social Science Reports address important social science challenges, take stock of social science contributions and capacities, and make recommendations for future research, practice and policy.

2010 | Knowledge Divides

- Co-published with UNESCO
- Articles from 48 authors
- Summary published in English, French, Russian, Spanish, Chinese and Arabic.



2013 | Changing Global Environments

- Co-published with UNESCO and OECD
- Articles from 151 authors
- Summary published in French, Spanish and Portuguese
- Over 13 launches worldwide



2013 ISSC General Assembly decides 2016 Report should focus on inequality

2014 Expert meeting held in partnership with UNESCO

2015 Scientific Advisory Committee meets for the first time

2015 Agreement with Institute of Development Studies (IDS), editorial team formed

2015 World Social Science Forum held in Durban, South Africa

2015 Commissioning articles

2016 Editing, peer-review, layout, publication, translations

Published September 22 2016

The context | Inequality looms large in the minds of governments, businesses and civil society



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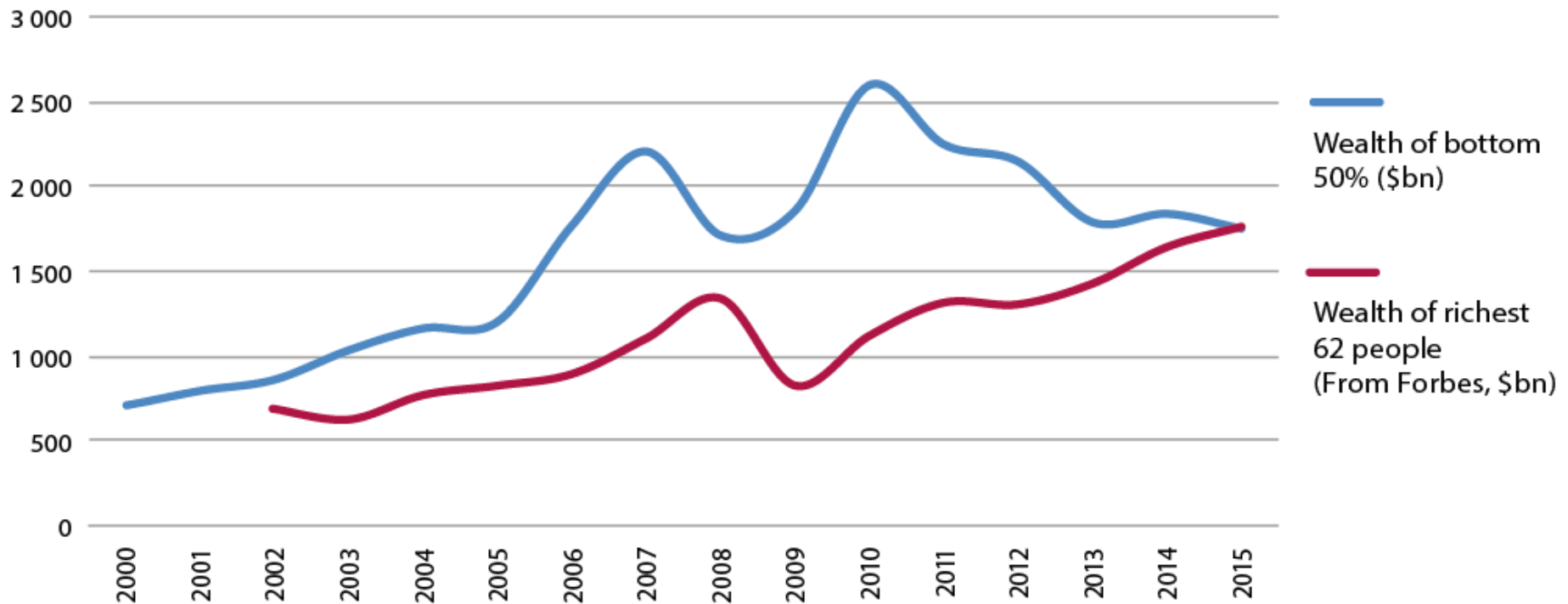
*'We pledge that
no one will be left
behind'*

Preamble to the 2030 Agenda for
Sustainable Development



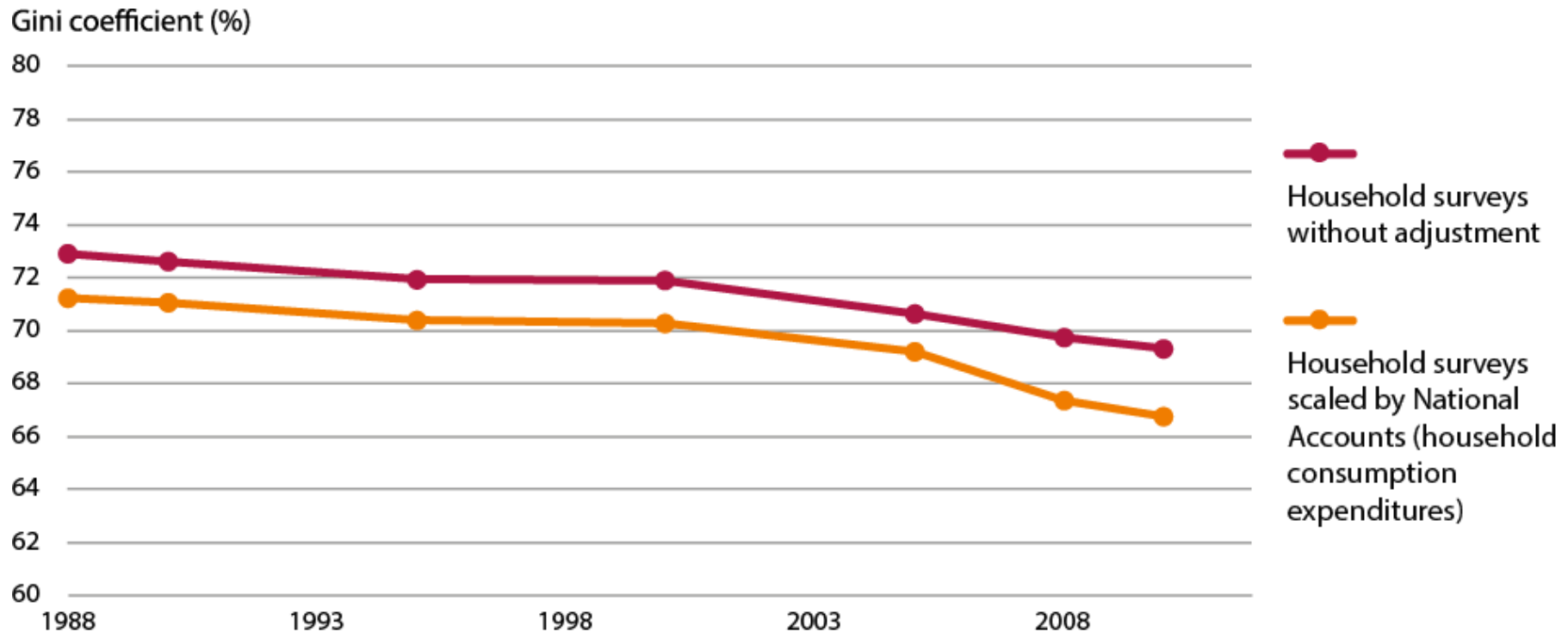
Key messages | Economic and political power are increasingly concentrated in the hands of a small number of people. This can threaten growth, social cohesion and the health of democracies.

Total wealth \$bn
(Current FX, Money of the Day)



Wealth of bottom 50 per cent versus wealth of richest sixty-two people (Source: Oxfam, 2016)

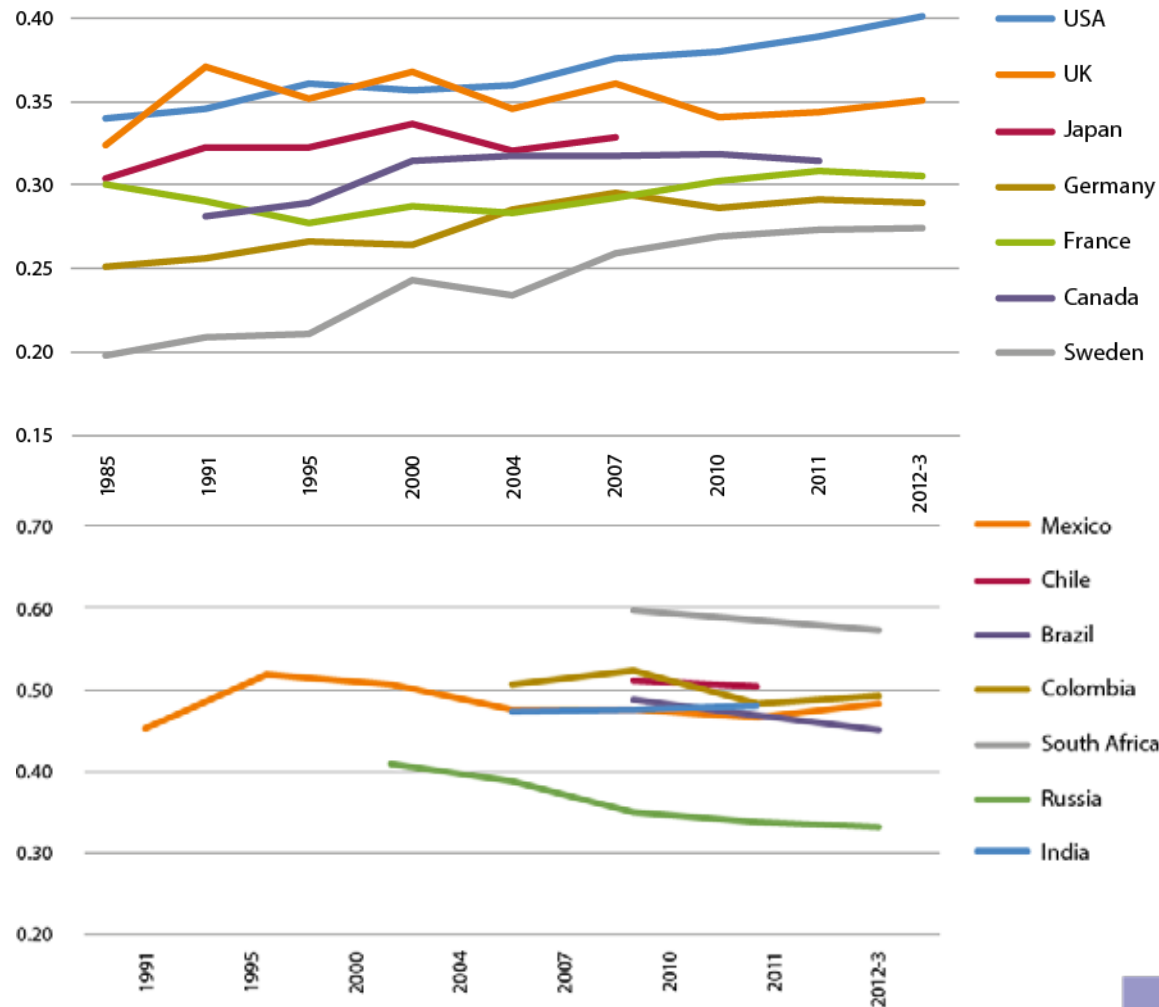
Key messages | Global economic inequality declined during the first decade of this century, largely due to the reduction of poverty in countries like China and India. This favourable trend could however be reversed if inequality within countries continues to increase.



The evolution of global inequality of living standards from 1988 to 2010 (average of various recent estimates) (Sources: Anand and Segal (2014), Bourguignon (2015), Lakner and Milanovic (2015).)

Key messages | Inequalities within countries are rising

Evolution of Gini coefficients, high-income and middle income countries (Source: OECD Income Distribution Database, Luxembourg Income Study (LIS) Database).



Key messages | Reducing inequalities is a requirement for human rights and justice, and is essential for success in other global priority areas, such as environmental sustainability, conflict resolution and migrations.

- **High and rising inequality can act as an impediment to economic growth**, and dissipates the impact of growth on poverty reduction (Kanbur, 24).
- **Inequalities can limit our ability to respond to crises**. The effective management of the Ebola crisis was hindered by visible inequalities between local and expatriate medical staff, and between communities and elites, which undermined trust (Wilkinson and Brima, 31).
- Current affluent lifestyles depend upon an unsustainable use of fossil fuels and raw materials. **Reducing inequalities requires using resources differently** (Fleurbaey and Klasen, 40).
- **Inequalities are producing new manifestations related to nutrition and health**: the 'stuffed and starved' phenomenon of chronic undernourishment alongside rising obesity (Hossain, 33).
- There is a growing consensus that **systemic inequality between identity groups may spur conflict**, and evidence that countries with high levels of group- based inequalities are more likely to experience civil war (Østby, 25).

Key messages | Current levels of inequality threaten our capacity to address other global priorities.



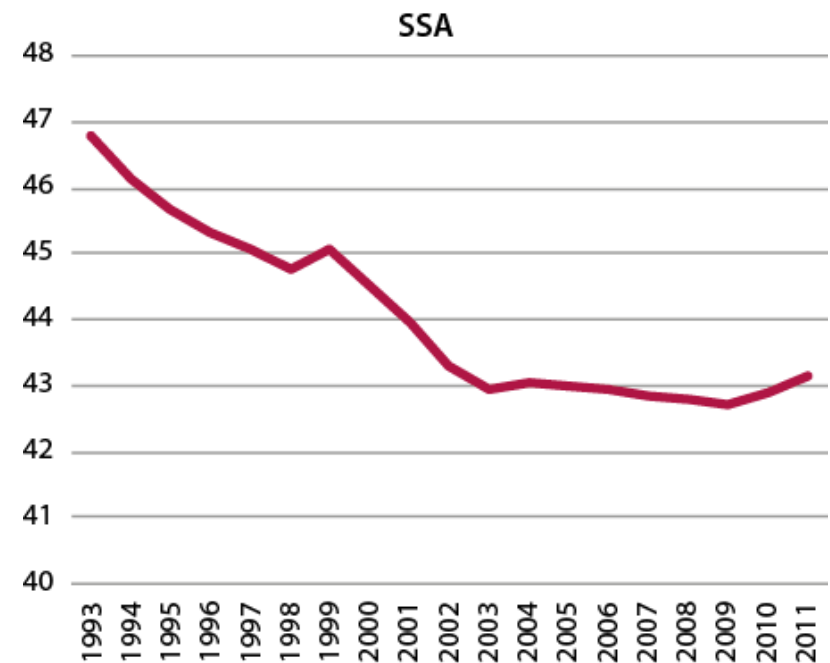
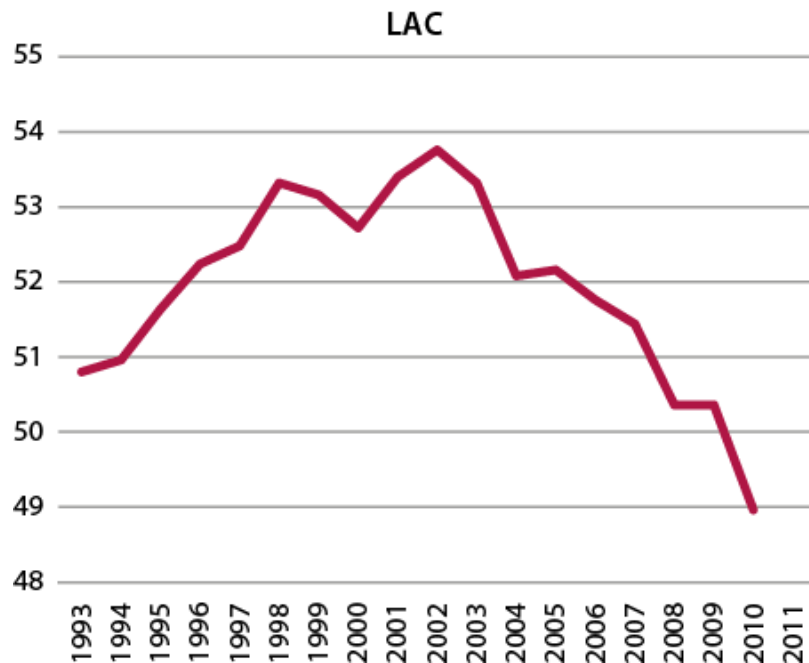
Interaction of Inequality Goal 10 and the other SDGs (Source: Gaventa, 22)

Key messages | Inequalities should not be understood and addressed only in relation to income and wealth. They interact across seven key dimensions: economic, political, social, cultural, environmental, spatial and knowledge.

- In many countries, economic and political resources are concentrated in the hands of a small elite, threatening the health of democracies (Byanyima, 67) and widening social and economic inequalities, especially when these inequalities are combined with autocratic and non-representative political systems (Hanieh, 19).
- Inequalities in access to knowledge remain significant, and interact with other dimensions of inequality. In Nigeria, just 3 per cent of the poorest girls living in rural areas completed lower secondary school in 2013, compared with 17 per cent of the boys. In contrast, 95 per cent of the richest boys in urban areas completed lower secondary school (Antoninis, Delprato and Benevot, 10).
- Life in the Anthropocene is creating new inequalities on environmental lines. The development of markets for natural resources has increased poverty and inequality in certain places (Fincher, 13). Less equal societies have greater carbon emissions per dollar of GNP (Power, Wilkinson and Pickett, 37). Inequality and environmental unsustainability are deeply interlinked; tackling one without addressing the other is unlikely to succeed (Leach, 27; Narain, 29).
- Enduring forms of inequality are associated with identities, such as race, caste and ethnicity, which are themselves facets of cultural inequality. Gender pervades all these; in many settings we see women and girls facing persistent material disadvantages, discriminatory social norms, violence, and restrictions on voice and participation.

The Report reminds us that the future of inequality is unwritten. It details cases of changes in rules, and of initiatives at various levels, that are building a fairer world.

Key messages | In recent years, some countries have succeeded in reducing or at least halting rising inequalities. Simultaneous, integrated policy actions in different spheres are needed to tackle multiple inequalities, and there is no one-size-fits-all solution.



Gini trends in sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean, 1993–2011 (Source: Cornia and Martorano (2012)).

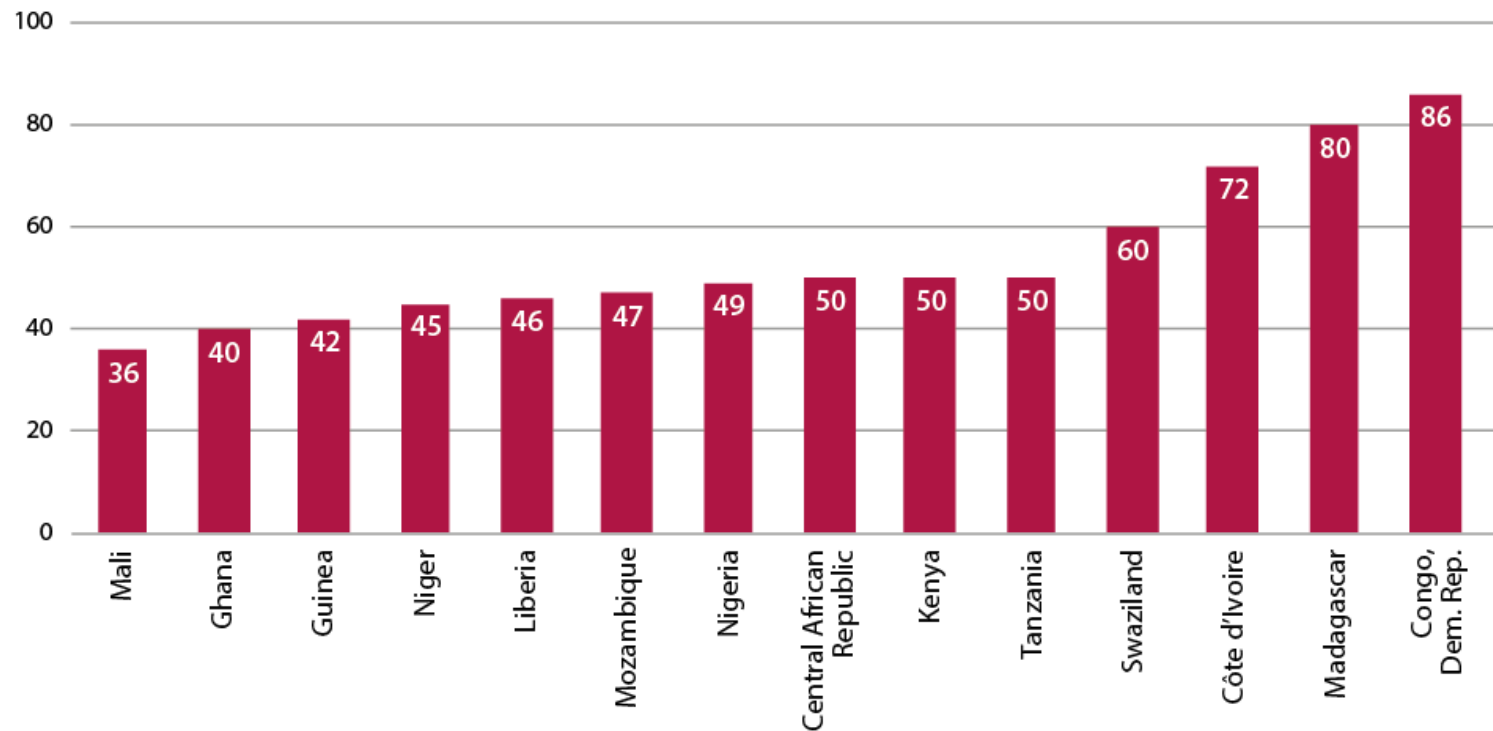
Key messages | Responses to inequality must recognize and address the specific historical legacies and the deep-rooted cultural practices that shape inequalities in different places.

- There was a fall in global inequality in the first decade of the 2000s, due to a decline in inequality between countries. However, this decline in global inequality might slow down, or possibly be reversed, if inequality within individual nations continues to increase (Bourguignon, 4).
- Inequalities and discriminations based on gender, such as gender violence, and constraints on voice and participation, continue to exist in every country and socio-economic group, cutting across all other forms of inequality. Men continue to comprise the majority of high earners and political elites. Even when formal rules guarantee a 'seat at the table' for women, informal rules may impede their participation in political debates and decision-making (Razavi, 14; Kabeer, 8; Mathie et al., 64; Nazneen, 51).
- Ethno-racial discrimination, which can be internalized by indigenous groups, is leading to lower aspirations, lower educational achievements and eventually lower incomes than for non-indigenous groups. Despite a significant reduction in extreme poverty, the income gap between indigenous and non-indigenous people in Peru has not changed over ten years (Pasquier-Doumer, 34).
- While a century of democratization has made the USA more politically equal for black people and other minorities, the disparity in income between black and white households has been remarkably stable over the past forty years. Racial disparity remains significant in other domains, such as access to education, health and justice (Harris, 20).
- In Africa as elsewhere, control of and access to natural resources has for centuries underpinned social stratification and the production of inequalities (Murombedzi, 9; Olukoshi, 48).
- The increase of economic inequality in the period from 1998 to 2008 resulted primarily from the growth in incomes of the top 1 per cent, particularly in rich countries (Milanovic, 5). At the same time, globalization, deindustrialization and the polarization of the labour market in Western economies mean that the middle classes are experiencing a slow but consistent erosion of their standard of living (Chauvel and Hartung, 38).

Key messages | Collective action by citizens is opening spaces for additional solutions to inequality that can inspire inclusive policy innovation

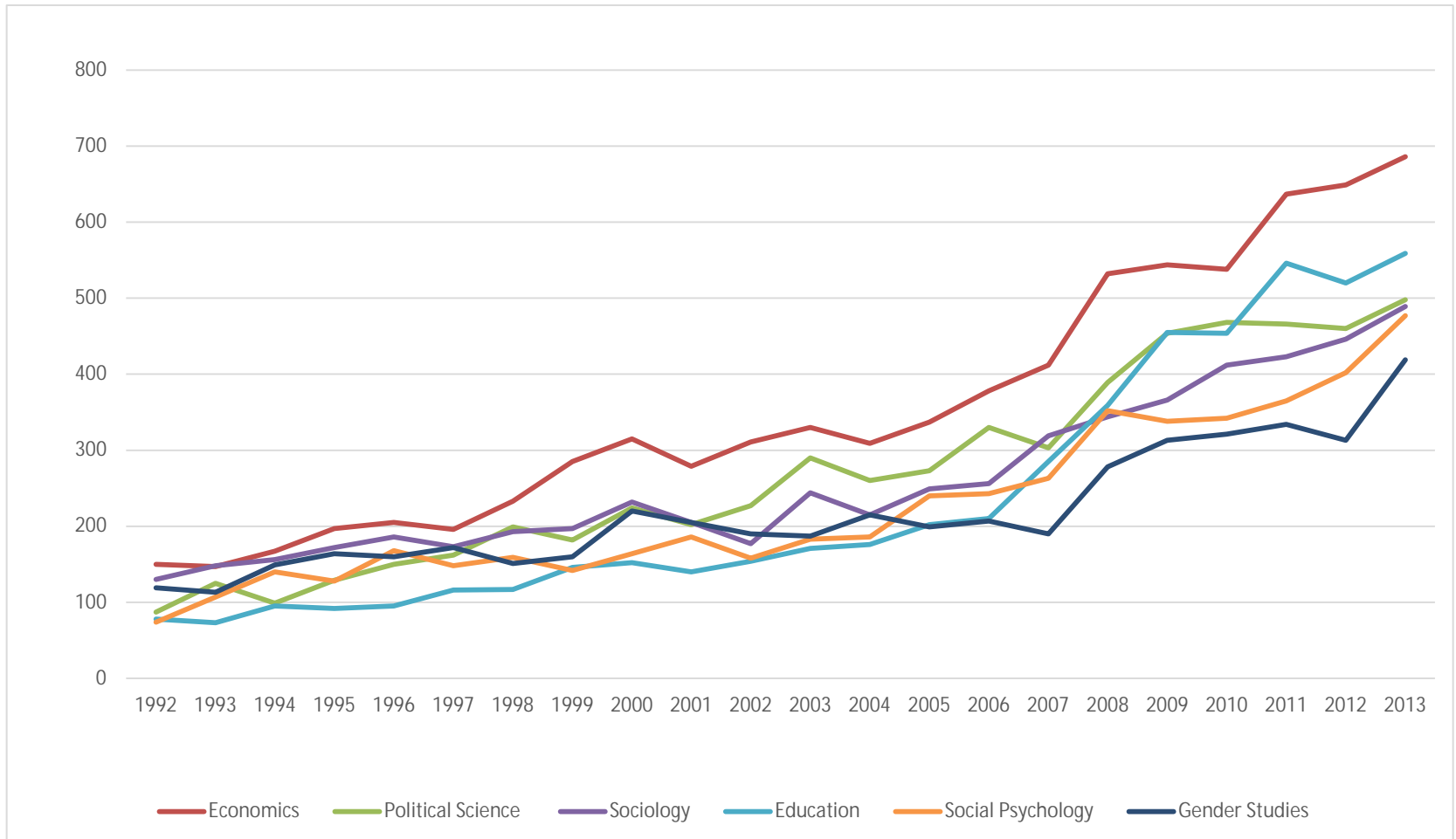
- **New alliances of stakeholders can build broad support for change.** The mobilization of doctors, patient groups and political forces around the design of a Patient's Bill of Rights was a significant contributor to a new Health Insurance Law on universal coverage in Egypt (Bayoumi, 30).
- **Grass-roots mobilization and political action can often be effective** in breaking down deeply connected economic, social and political inequalities (Gaventa and Runciman, 12).
- In India, Indonesia, Ethiopia and Brazil, **local initiatives empower poor and vulnerable adults**, especially women, to diversify their income sources and access microcredit. They are instrumental in the development of solidarity and self-help networks among the individuals concerned (Mathie et al., 64).
- **Public participation can increase the political will to reduce inequality.** A high level of public participation in Brazil's 'Zero Hunger' effort was crucial to the country's turnaround to reduced inequality (Green, 66).

Key messages | While reducing inequalities is important everywhere, a clear priority for action lies in the poorest countries of sub-Saharan Africa, where poverty will continue to be concentrated in the coming decades if inequalities remain as high as they are.

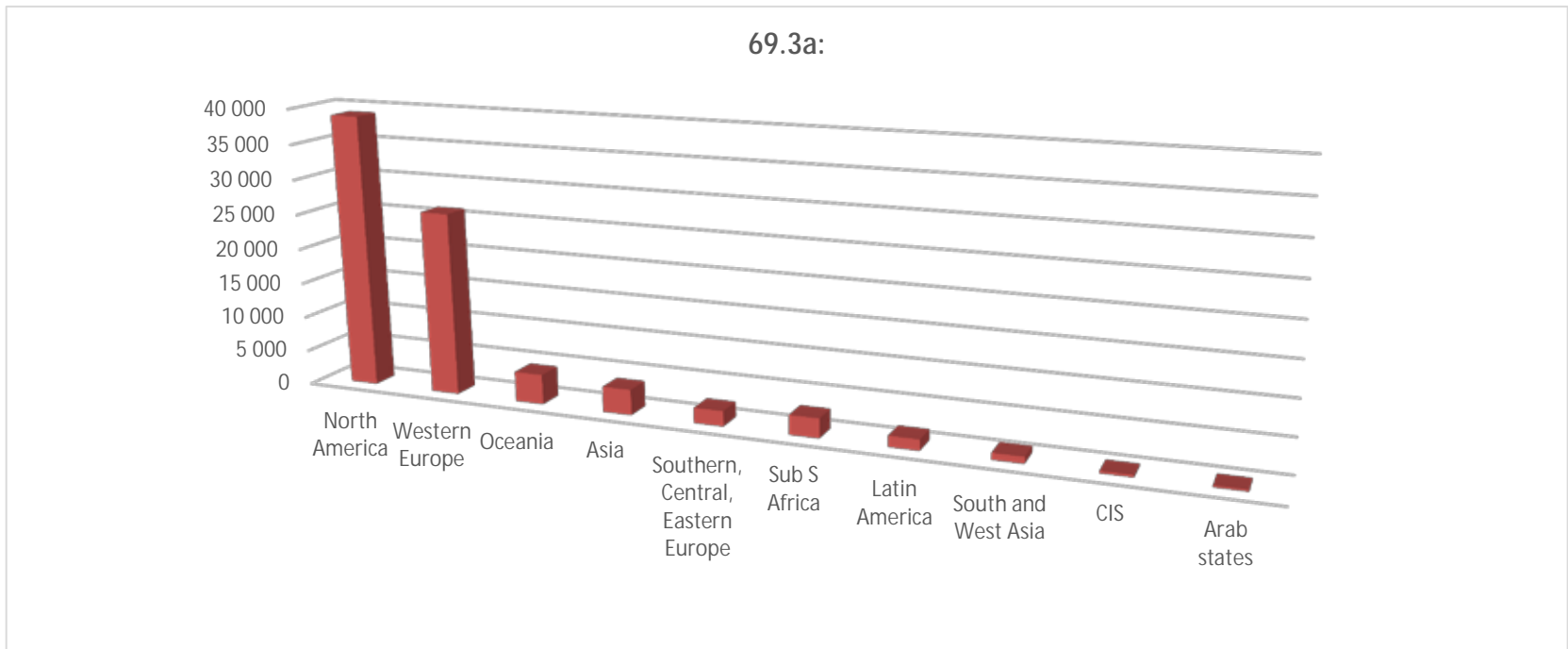


Countries with more than 30 per cent of their population in the bottom global decile (below \$PPP 450 per capita at 2008 prices) (Source: Milanovic, 5)

Number of social science publications produced worldwide on inequality and social justice per subfield, 1992–2013 (fractional counting)



..... And by region



Number of social science and humanities publications on inequalities and social justice per region 1992- 2013

Key messages | A step change towards a research agenda that is interdisciplinary, multiscale and globally inclusive is needed to accompany and inform pathways toward greater equality.

Priority 1: Increase support for knowledge production about inequality, and processes of social inclusion and exclusion, in those places most affected by them.

Priority 2: Improve our ability to assess, measure and compare the dimensions of inequality over time and across the world.

Priority 3: Deepen our understanding of diverse experiences of inequality.

Priority 4: Deepen our understanding of how multiple inequalities are created, maintained and reproduced.

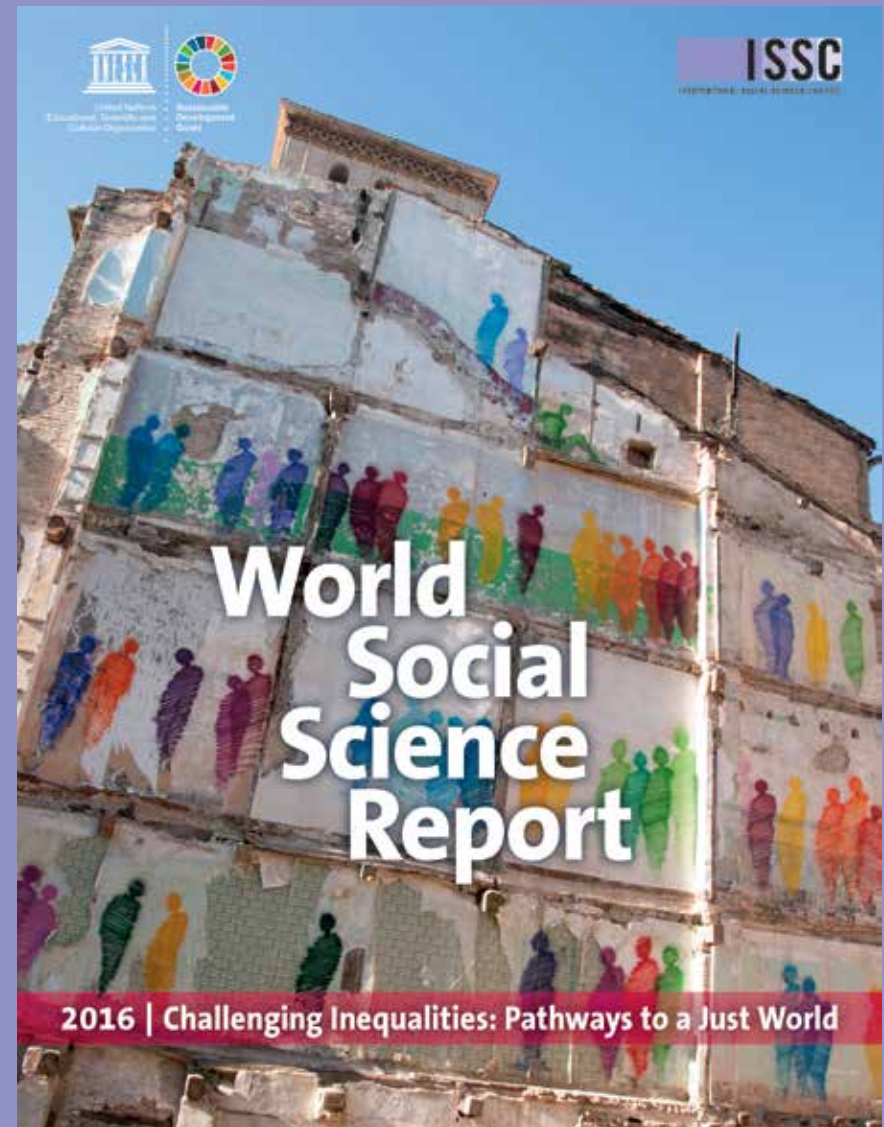
Priority 5: Deepen our understanding of how local and global forms of inequality connect and interact.

Priority 6: Promote research on how to move towards greater equality.

Priority 7: Support cross-cutting syntheses and theory on inequality and equality.

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Thank you | issc@worldsocialscience.org



Photo: Icy & Sot