

# Álvaro Zúñiga-Cordero

Rue de Bruxelles 61, 5000 Namur, Belgium

[a.zuniga-cordero@psemail.eu](mailto:a.zuniga-cordero@psemail.eu) ◇ [alvaro.zunigacordero@unamur.be](mailto:alvaro.zunigacordero@unamur.be) ◇ [zunigacordero-a.github.io](https://github.com/zunigacordero-a)

Last updated: April 15, 2026

## RESEARCH INTERESTS

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Economic Inequality; Political Economy; Trade; Migration; Applied Econometrics.

## ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

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**University of Namur (UNamur)** 2024–present

Postdoctoral Researcher, Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions COFUND | C2W

**World Inequality Lab (WIL), Paris School of Economics (PSE)** 2023–present

Coordinator of Studies for Central America and the Caribbean

**Centre d'Économie de la Sorbonne (CES), Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne**

Teaching and Research Fellow (ATER) 2022–2023

## EDUCATION

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**Ph.D. in Economics** 2024

Paris School of Economics (PSE) & Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne

Thesis: *Three essays on income inequality in Costa Rica*. Defence date: June 25, 2024.

Supervisor: Ariell Reshef (Paris 1, PSE).

Thesis committee: David Margolis (Paris 1, PSE) and Thomas Piketty (EHESS, PSE).

Referees: Matilde Bombardini (UC Berkeley) and Noam Yuchtman (LSE, Oxford).

Jury members: Olle Folke (Uppsala) and Sergei Guriev (Sciences Po).

**European Doctoral Program in Quantitative Economics (EDP)** 2021–2022

London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE)

**Master of Economics: Analysis and Policy in Economics (APE)** 2018

Paris School of Economics (PSE) & School for Advanced Studies in the Social Sciences (EHESS)

Thesis: *Income Inequality in Costa Rica: An Inquiry Towards Distributional National Accounts*

Supervisor: Facundo Alvaredo; Referee: Thomas Piketty

## PUBLICATIONS, BOOK CHAPTERS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

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Chancel, L., Gómez-Carrera, R., Moshrif, R. & Piketty, T. (2026). [World Inequality Report 2026](#). World Inequality Lab. *Contributor*.

Chancel, L., Piketty, T., Saez, E., Zucman, G. et al. (2022). [World Inequality Report 2022](#). World Inequality Lab. *Contributor*.

Barrera, O., Leiva, A., Martínez-Toledano, C. & Zúñiga Cordero, Á. (2021). "Social Inequalities, Identity, and the Structure of Political Cleavages in Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Mexico, and Peru, 1952–2019". In A. Gethin, C. Martínez-Toledano & T. Piketty (eds.), [Political Cleavages and Social Inequalities: A Study of Fifty Democracies, 1948–2020](#). Harvard University Press.

## WORKING PAPERS

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### **Distributional National Accounts Costa Rica: Inequality Measures from the National to the Local Level, 2000–2022**

Solo-authored paper, ready to be submitted. 9 citations ([Google Scholar](#)).

### **Income Shocks, Economic Inequality, and Political Realignment: Voter Turnout and the Shift to a Multi-Party System in Costa Rica**

Co-authored with [Ronald Alfaro-Redondo](#), job-market paper. 1 citation ([Google Scholar](#)).

### **Equality and Development: A Comparative and Historical Perspective, 1800–2025**

With the members of the World Inequality Lab. World Inequality Lab Working Paper No. 2025/25. Under revision at *American Economic Review*. ([Link](#)).

### **Social Inequalities, Identity, and the Structure of Political Cleavages in Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica, Colombia, Mexico, and Peru, 1952–2019**

With [Oscar Barrera](#), [Ana Leiva](#) and [Clara Martínez-Toledano](#). WID.world Working Paper No. 2021/11 ([HAL](#)). 5 citations ([Google Scholar](#)). Media coverage by *El País* regarding Colombia and *El País* regarding Chile.

## SELECTED WORK IN PROGRESS

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### **Climate Shocks, Income, and Voting**

Co-authored with [Lorenzo Trimarchi](#) and [Juan Robalino](#). *Draft in progress*.

### **Housing Shocks and Local Elections: Evidence from Short-Term Rentals in Italy**

With [Lorenzo Trimarchi](#) and Giorgio Ferroni. *Data assembled*.

### **Changes in the Offer of Higher Education and Labour Market Outcomes**

The effect of regional university campuses on the location choices of multinational companies in Costa Rica (2000–2022). *Data assembled*.

### **Wealth and Income Inequality of Central America and the Caribbean**

With [Ignacio Flores](#) and [Yajna Govind](#). *Grant awarded for data processing*.

### **Survey Evidence on Redistributive Preferences in the Americas: From Taxing the Rich to Support for International Transfers**

*Grant awarded for survey implementation*.

## RESEARCH GRANTS

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Mini-Grant (x2), World Inequality Lab (WIL), France, <b>10,000 EUR</b>	2025
Mobility and Congress funding, Fund for Scientific Research (FNRS), Belgium, <b>4,200 EUR</b>	2025
APSA Travel Grant, APSA, United States, <b>400 USD</b>	2025
Mobility and Congress funding, Fund for Scientific Research (FNRS), Belgium, <b>1,500 EUR</b>	2024
ADRES Grant Program, ADRES, <b>400 EUR</b>	2024
Research Grant EUR PGSE, PSE & French National Research Agency (ANR), <b>2,360 EUR</b>	2022
International Mobility Grant, PSE, <b>5,500 EUR</b>	2021
Research Grant EUR PGSE, PSE & French National Research Agency (ANR), <b>2,400 EUR</b>	2021
Aid for the International Mobility of Doctoral Students, Université Paris 1, <b>3,000 EUR</b>	2020
Research Grant EUR PGSE, PSE & French National Research Agency (ANR), <b>1,500 EUR</b>	2019
Ph.D. Grant, Doctoral School 465 Économie Panthéon-Sorbonne, <b>100,000 EUR</b>	2018–2022

## TEACHING EXPERIENCE

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### Paris School of Economics (PSE)

International Trade (graduate, in English), with T. Verdier & M. Parenti	2023–2025
International Trade (graduate, in English), with T. Verdier	2022–2023

### Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne

Introduction to Econometrics (undergraduate, in French), with C. Doz & T. Broer	2022–2023
International Trade (undergraduate, in English), with L. Marchal	2022–2023
Introduction to Econometrics (undergraduate, in French), with C. Doz & T. Broer	2019–2020
International Trade (undergraduate, in French), with L. Fontagné & M. Bas	2018–2020
Introduction to Economics (undergraduate, in French), with N. Canry, O. Havrylchuk & A. Greulich	2018–2019

## SERVICE AND PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

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### Refereeing

*Journal of Law, Economics and Organization (JLEO)*  
*European Association of Young Economists (EAYE)*

### Academic and Professional Service

Steering Committee member, Virtual Inequality Brownbag Seminar (VIB), CID (Michigan), PSE, LSE, WZB, UvA, EUI	2020–2021
Ph.D. Students' Representative, Paris School of Economics	2019–2021
APE Master's Students' Representative, Paris School of Economics	2017–2018

### Volunteer Activities

Board Member (President), Costa Rican National Committee, United World Colleges	2003–2013
Facilitation Team Member, Regional Programme "Agentes de Cambio", Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES)	2009–2011

## PRESENTATIONS AT SEMINARS, CONFERENCES AND SUMMER SCHOOLS

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**2026:** Department of Political Science (KU) (*invited*) (*scheduled*); Ibero-America Institute (Göttingen) (*invited*); PGPELG (UC San Diego) (*invited*); BPER Lab (UC Berkeley); ASSA–AEA Annual Meeting 2026.

**2025:** Graduate Students in International Political Economy (GSIPE Online) ([Link](#)); Environmental Politics and Governance Online Seminar (EPG Online) ([Link](#)); American Political Science Association (APSA); GSIPE APSA Pre-Conference Workshop; Regional Economic Inequalities Conference (IfW–Kiel); Business and Democracy Seminar (CBS); Society for the Study of Economic Inequality (ECINEQ); European Political Science Association (EPSA); Lofoten International Symposium on Inequality and Taxation (LISIT); Department of Economics Seminar (UNamur); Economics and Finance Workshop for PhD & Post-doctoral Students (QMUL); AYEW – Applied Young Economists Workshop (Monash-Warwick) ([Link](#)); La Strada Seminar (Bocconi); Scuola Superiore Sant'Anna (*invited*); APSA Comparative Labour Workshop (Online); Trade Tea Seminar (Bocconi); III/LIS Comparative Economic Inequality Conference (LIS); ASSA–AEA Annual Meeting 2025.

**2024:** Programa Estado de la Nación (PEN); EEA–ESEM (Erasmus School of Economics); PhD Economics Virtual Seminar (EVS) ([Link](#)); European Public Choice Society (EPCS); Department of Economics Seminar (UNamur); Applied Economics Seminar (PSE); WIL Internal Seminar (PSE); ADRES Job Market Conference (ENS–Saclay); PjSE–CNRS Retreat.

**2023:** Conferencia de Economistas CR (BCCR-UCR); ECINEQ (AMSE); Central Bank of Costa Rica (BCCR); Applied Economics Seminar (PSE); European Doctoral Program Jamboree (PSE); GPET Day (PSE); Research Institute in Economic Sciences (IICE-UCR); Doctorissimes (Paris 1).

**2022:** Student Labour Seminar (LSE); PSPE Work in Progress Seminar (LSE); International Inequalities Institute PhD Seminar (LSE); London Inequality Workshop (KCL); LACIR Workshop (IDB-LACIR); GSIE Seminar (Paris 1 & PSE).

**2021:** Virtual Inequality Brownbag Seminar (VIB) (Online); GSIE Seminar (Paris 1 & PSE); Institutional Economics Seminar (UNA); Interdisciplinary Dialogues in Sociology and Economics (UCR); World Inequality Conference (PSE & WIL).

**2020:** Social Research Institute (IIS-UCR); Programa Estado de la Nación (PEN).

**2019:** Research Methods for Sustainable Development Summer School (Columbia University); Inequality by the Numbers (CUNY); Migration Economics (PSE Summer School).

#### EXTRA-CURRICULAR STUDIES

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Arabic Initiation Diploma,  
Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales (INALCO) 2018–2020  
Stockbroker preparation course, Fundeval, Bolsa Nacional de Valores 2012  
Stock market analysis; Accountancy and financial analysis; Statistics for Economics with SPSS,  
Department of Economics, UCR 2010

#### OTHER PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

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**Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), United Nations**  
Short-term Consultant, Social Statistics Unit, Statistics Division 2023

**Paris School of Economics (PSE)** 2019–2020  
Research Assistant to Professors Hillel Rapoport and Ariell Reshef

**World Bank, Development Research Group (DECRG)** 2017–2018  
Short-term Consultant (Task Team Lead: Pierre Bachas)

**Harvard Kennedy School (HKS)** 2017  
Research Assistant to Pierre Bachas, Anders Jensen and Gabriel Zucman

**Paris School of Economics (PSE)** 2016–2017  
Research Assistant to Professor Karen Macours

**Central Bank of Costa Rica, Economic Research Department** 2013–2015  
Junior Researcher, Doctoral Training Programme in Economics

**HSBC Costa Rica / Banco Davivienda Costa Rica** 2011–2013  
Balance Sheet Management Trader (BSM), Global Markets Rotational Programme, GBM

**Central Bank of Costa Rica, Department of Macroeconomic Statistics** 2010–2011  
Paid Internship

### Chapters in National Reports

- Capítulo 5: Educación superior. In *Noveno Informe Estado de la Educación* (2023).
- Capítulo 2: Balance: Equidad e integración social. In *Informe Estado de la Nación 29* (2023).
- Capítulo 5: Balance: Fortalecimiento de la democracia. In *Informe Estado de la Nación 29* (2023).
- Capítulo 5: Balance: Fortalecimiento de la democracia. In *Informe Estado de la Nación 28* (2022).
- Capítulo 5: Balance: Fortalecimiento de la democracia. In *Informe Estado de la Nación 27* (2021).
- Capítulo 5: Balance: Fortalecimiento de la democracia. In *Informe Estado de la Nación 26* (2020).

### Working papers

- Perfiles y trayectorias laborales de las personas graduadas*, with Román Forastelli, M., Pérez, E. & Jiménez, B. (2025).
- Trayectoria laboral de las personas graduadas universitarias en Costa Rica 2001–2021*. (2023).
- Desigualdad y participación política, elecciones presidenciales: Costa Rica 2002–2018*. (2021).
- Desigualdad y participación política elecciones presidenciales y municipales: Costa Rica 2002–2020*. (2020).

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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**Languages:** Spanish (native); English & French (fluent); Arabic, German & Mandarin (basic).

**Computer Skills:** R, Stata, Python, QGIS, Matlab, SAS, EViews, SPSS, Visual Basic.

### Honours and Awards:

Ph.D. Grant of the Doctoral School 465 Économie Panthéon-Sorbonne (2018–2022).  
Scholarship of the International University City of Paris (CIUP) (2016–2017 and 2017–2018).  
Social Security Scholarship to pursue master's studies in France (2015–2017), Campus France.  
17th Ship for World Youth (SWY), Government of Japan & United Nations University.  
Li Po Chun United World College of Hong Kong (UWC), full scholarship.

### REFERENCES

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#### Thomas Piketty

Paris School of Economics & School for Advanced Studies in the Social Sciences (EHESS)  
[thomas.piketty@psemail.eu](mailto:thomas.piketty@psemail.eu)

#### Ariell Reshef

Paris School of Economics & Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne  
[ariell.reshef@psemail.eu](mailto:ariell.reshef@psemail.eu)

#### Lorenzo Trimarchi

University of Namur  
[lorenzo.trimarchi@unamur.be](mailto:lorenzo.trimarchi@unamur.be)

#### Noam Yuchtman

London School of Economics & University of Oxford  
[noam.yuchtman@gmail.com](mailto:noam.yuchtman@gmail.com)

### **Distributional National Accounts Costa Rica: Inequality Measures from the National to the Local Level, 2000–2022**

This paper constructs Distributional National Accounts (DINA) for Costa Rica, providing consistent income distribution series that integrate household surveys, macroeconomic accounts, and administrative records. The first objective is to correct official inequality estimates, which traditionally rely solely on household surveys. Leveraging the high quality of available data, this study combines two complementary administrative datasets: (1) social security microdata to adjust the incomes of wage earners and pensioners, and (2) tax microdata to refine estimates for self-employed workers and capital income. The resulting series show higher inequality than reflected in official figures for 2000–2022, with a marked deterioration in 2020, likely linked to the COVID-19 pandemic. The second objective is to generate revised inequality measures at the local level (county and district). By integrating household surveys, census data, social security records, and electoral data, I produce subnational inequality estimates that enable the analysis of spatial disparities and the impact of structural shocks, such as the 2009 financial crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic. The findings uncover substantial local-level variation that is otherwise obscured in national averages.

### **Income Shocks, Economic Inequality, and Political Realignment: Voter Turnout and the Shift to a Multi-Party System in Costa Rica**

This study uses Costa Rica to examine how income shocks and inequality affect declining voter turnout and the rise of multi-party systems. Since 1998, Costa Rica has experienced a significant decrease in electoral participation, providing a unique perspective to investigate socio-economic factors influencing voter behaviour. By combining electoral registries with social security employer–employee records at the individual level, this research delivers novel evidence from a developing democracy with a robust electoral tradition. The findings indicate a positive relationship between income and voter turnout, significantly moderated by inequality. High inequality increases electoral mobilisation among voters at income extremes, while lower inequality enhances participation among middle-income groups. Individuals experiencing downward income mobility exhibit higher electoral engagement, suggesting economic hardship motivates voter turnout in the short term. These conclusions are validated through three identification strategies: random assignment of voters to polling stations within polling centres, income loss from unexpected mass layoffs, and income variations linked to changes in international agricultural prices. Income shocks have also reshaped electoral dynamics, especially affecting the historical PLN party, which shifted its support from middle-income voters to the poorest and wealthiest segments.

### **Equality and Development: A Comparative and Historical Perspective, 1800–2025**

This paper provides a comprehensive comparative and historical analysis of the relationship between economic development and inequality over more than two centuries, covering over 200 countries from 1800 to 2025. Drawing on newly harmonised historical national accounts, fiscal records, survey data, and administrative sources assembled by the World Inequality Lab, the study documents long-run trajectories of income and wealth inequality across regions and stages of development. The analysis revisits classical hypotheses linking growth, structural transformation, and inequality, and highlights the central role of institutions, political regimes, and policy choices in shaping distributive outcomes. The findings show that development has not followed a uniform inequality path: while some countries experienced declining inequality alongside sustained growth, others combined rapid development with persistent or rising disparities. The paper underscores the importance of taxation, social spending, education, and labour market institutions in mediating the inequality–development nexus, and provides a unified empirical framework to study distributional dynamics over the long run.

## **Climate Shocks, Income, and Voting**

This paper examines the political implications of climate change by analysing how extreme weather events affect electoral outcomes in Costa Rica. Leveraging rich administrative data—including electoral results, individual-level turnout records, employer–employee information, disaster inventories, and geo-localised weather registries—the study integrates high-resolution environmental and electoral data to address a central question: How do extreme weather events affect voting behaviour? The analysis compares regions exposed to climate shocks over time using a difference-in-differences framework with staggered treatment and event-study designs. Preliminary findings suggest that direct experiences with climate change shape voter attitudes and participation, with responses varying by socioeconomic status and political predispositions. In progressive-voting areas, extreme weather increases support for environmental policies, while in conservative regions such events boost backing for evangelical populist alternatives. To explain this divergence, the study examines the timing and spatial distribution of evangelical churches, showing that extreme weather strengthens existing evangelical networks and mobilises electoral support for evangelical populist candidates.