

# Michaël Aklin

@ [michael.aklin@epfl.ch](mailto:michael.aklin@epfl.ch) | [pasu.epfl.ch](https://pasu.epfl.ch) | ☎ +41 21 693 53 85  
✉ EPFL CDM MTEI PASU, ODY 2.04, Odyssea, Station 5, CH-1015 Lausanne

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## Current Positions

### *Primary position*

2023-... Associate Professor of Economics and Management of Innovation  
Holder of the Chair of Policy & Sustainability  
EPFL - Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Lausanne

### *Academic administration*

2023-... Co-managing director, Enterprise for Society Center (E4S), EPFL-IMD-University of Lausanne  
2023-... Co-director, MSc in Sustainable Management and Technology, EPFL-IMD-University of Lausanne

## Former Positions

### *Former primary positions*

2019-23 Associate Professor of Political Science (and Public Policy, by courtesy), University of Pittsburgh  
2015-19 Assistant Professor of Political Science (and Public Policy, by courtesy), University of Pittsburgh  
2014-15 Postdoctoral Fellow, Browne Center for International Politics, University of Pennsylvania

### *Former administrative duties*

2021-23 Director of Graduate Admissions and Placement, Department of Political Science, Pittsburgh  
2018-21 Director of Undergraduate Studies, Department of Political Science, Pittsburgh

## Affiliations

2023-... Associated member, Laboratory for Analysis of Governance and Public Policy in Europe, University of Lausanne  
2019-... Research Fellow, Kigali Collaborative Research Center, Rwanda  
2018-... Affiliated, Initiative for Sustainable Energy Policy, Johns Hopkins University  
2017, '18 Visiting scientist, Sciences Po, Paris  
2008-13 Visiting scientist, Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research

## Education

2014 PhD, Politics, New York University  
2008 MA, Political Economy, University of Essex  
2007 Licence, International Relations, Graduate Institute of International Studies

### *Additional training*

2024 ETH Domain - Advanced Academic Leadership Program, IMD

## Books

[2] Aklin, Michaël, Patrick Bayer, S.P. Harish, and Johannes Urpelainen. 2018. *Escaping the Energy*

*Poverty Trap: When and How Governments Power the Lives of the Poor.* MIT Press.

🗨 Reviewed by [Caitlin Robinson](#), [Elizabeth Chatterjee](#)

- [1] Aklin, Michaël and Johannes Urpelainen. 2018. *Renewables: The Politics of a Global Energy Transition*. MIT Press.

🗨 Reviewed by [Foreign Affairs](#), [Nina Kelsey](#), [Varun Sivaram](#), [Josh Busby](#), [Dustin Mulvaney](#)

## Articles

- [36] Aklin, Michaël. The Political Logic of Just Transition Policies. *Climate Policy* 25:3, 319-334 [\[link\]](#)
- [35] Pelz, Setu, Alexandra Krumm, Michaël Aklin, Vagisha Nandan, and Johannes Urpelainen. 2024. The spatial and economic footprint of the coal industry in rural Jharkhand, India. *Energy Policy* 186: 113973 [\[link\]](#)
- [34] Lim, Junghyun, Michaël Aklin, and Morgan Frank. 2023. Location is a major barrier for transferring US fossil fuel employment to green jobs. *Nature Communications* 14: 5711 [\[link\]](#)
- 📖 See my column at [VoxEU](#). Featured in [Science Magazine](#), [Forbes](#), [News Wise](#), [Technology Networks](#)
- [33] Blankenship, Brian, Michaël Aklin, Vagisha Nandan, and Johannes Urpelainen. 2022. Jobs for a Just Transition: Evidence on Coal Job Preferences from India. *Energy Policy* 165: 112910 [\[link\]](#)
- [32] Aklin, Michaël, Julia Gray, and Eric Arias. 2022. Inflation and Mass Preferences Over Currency Policy. *Economics & Politics* 34(1): 5-40 [\[link\]](#)
- [31] Pelz, Setu, Michaël Aklin, and Johannes Urpelainen. 2022. Supply preferences and productive electricity use constraints among micro and small enterprises in Bihar, India. *Energy for Sustainable Development* 67: 151-162 [\[link\]](#)
- [30] Aklin, Michaël. 2021. Do High Electricity Bills Undermine Public Support for Renewables? Evidence from the European Union. *Energy Policy* 156: 112400 [\[link\]](#)
- [29] Aklin, Michaël. 2021. The Off-Grid Catch-22: Effective Institutions as a Prerequisite for the Global Deployment of Distributed Renewable Power. *Energy Research & Social Science* 72: 101830 [\[link\]](#)
- [28] Aklin, Michaël and Johannes Urpelainen. 2021. The Evolving Role of Solar-Based Lighting Solutions in Rural India: Global Lessons for Distributed Renewables. *Energy for Sustainable Development* 163: 113-118 [\[link\]](#)
- [27] Aklin, Michaël, Namrata Chindarkar, Johannes Urpelainen, Abhishek Jain, and Karthik Ganesan. 2021. The Hedonic Treadmill: Electricity Access in India Has Increased, But So Have Expectations. *Energy Policy* 156: 112391 [\[link\]](#)
- [26] Aklin, Michaël, Brian Blankenship, Vagisha Nandan, and Johannes Urpelainen. 2021. The Great Equalizer: Inequality in Tribal Energy Access and Policies to Address It. *Energy Research & Social Science* 79: 102132 [\[link\]](#)
- [25] Pelz, Setu, Michaël Aklin, and Johannes Urpelainen. 2021. Electrification and productive use among micro- and small-enterprises in rural North India. *Energy Policy* 156: 112401 [\[link\]](#)
- [24] Aklin, Michaël, Chao-yo Cheng, Johannes Urpelainen. 2021. Inequality in Policy Implementation: Caste and Electrification in Rural India. *Journal of Public Policy* 41(2): 331-359 [\[link\]](#)
- [23] Aklin, Michaël and Andreas Kern. 2021. The Side Effects of Central Bank Independence. *American Journal of Political Science* 57(3): 643-658 [\[link\]](#)
- [22] Aklin, Michaël and Matto Mildenberger. 2020. Prisoners of the Wrong Dilemma: Why Distributive Conflict, Not Collective Action, Characterizes the Politics of Climate Change. *Global Environmental Politics* 20(4): 4-27 [\[link\]](#)

- 📖 Featured in [L'Actualité](#), [The Atlantic](#), [Bloomberg](#), [New York Magazine](#), [New York Times](#) (1), [New York Times](#) (2)
- [21] Bayer, Patrick and Michaël Aklin. 2020. The European Union Emissions Trading System reduced CO2 emissions despite low prices. *PNAS* 117(16): 8804-8812 [\[link\]](#)
- 📖 Featured in [Ars Technica](#), [BBC](#), [Brookings](#), [Financial Times](#), [Washington Post](#)
- [20] Rosenberg, Meital, Daniel Armanios, Michaël Aklin, and Paulina Jaramillo. 2020. Evidence of Gender Inequality in Energy Use from a Mixed Methods Study in India. *Nature Sustainability* 3: 110–118 [\[link\]](#)
- 🏆 Winner of the [2021 Research Impact on Practice Award](#) (Academy of Management)
- 📖 Featured in [Business Standard](#), [The Hindu](#), [Times of India](#)
- [19] Aklin, Michaël and Johannes Urpelainen. 2020. Trials and Tribulations: Lost Energy Access Gains in Rural India. *Energy for Sustainable Development* 55: 190-200 [\[link\]](#)
- [18] Aklin, Michaël and Andreas Kern. 2019. Moral Hazard and Financial Crises: Evidence from American Troop Deployments. *International Studies Quarterly* 63(1): 15-29 [\[link\]](#)
- 📖 Featured on [NPR](#)
- [17] Aklin, Michaël. 2018. How Robust Is the Renewable Energy Industry to Political Shocks? Evidence from the 2016 U.S. Elections. *Business & Politics* 20(4): 523–552 [\[link\]](#)
- [16] Aklin, Michaël, S.P. Harish, and Johannes Urpelainen. 2018. A Global Analysis of Progress in Household Electrification. *Energy Policy* 122: 421-428 [\[link\]](#)
- [15] Aklin, Michaël, Chao-yo Cheng, Johannes Urpelainen. 2018. Social Acceptance of New Energy Technology in Developing Countries: A Framing Experiment in Rural India. *Energy Policy* 113: 466-477 [\[link\]](#)
- [14] Aklin, Michaël, Chao-yo Cheng, Johannes Urpelainen. 2018. Geography, Community, Household: Adoption of Distributed Solar Power across India. *Energy for Sustainable Development* 42: 54-63 [\[link\]](#)
- [13] Aklin, Michaël, Patrick Bayer, S.P. Harish, and Johannes Urpelainen. 2018. Economics of Household Technology Adoption in Developing Countries: Evidence from Solar Technology Adoption in Rural India. *Energy Economics* 72: 35-46 [\[link\]](#)
- [12] Aklin, Michaël, Patrick Bayer, S.P. Harish, and Johannes Urpelainen. 2017. Does Basic Energy Access Generate Socio-Economic Benefits? A Field Experiment with Off-Grid Solar Power in India. *Science Advances* 3(5): 1-8 [\[link\]](#)
- 📖 Featured in [The Economist](#), [Reuters](#)
- [11] Aklin, Michaël. 2016. Re-Exploring the Trade and Environment Nexus Through the Diffusion of Pollution. *Environmental & Resource Economics* 64(4): 663-682 [\[link\]](#)
- [10] Aklin, Michaël, Chao-yo Cheng, Johannes Urpelainen, Karthik Ganesan, and Abhishek Jain. 2016. Factors Affecting Household Satisfaction with Electricity Supply in Rural India. *Nature Energy* 1(16170): 1-6 [\[link\]](#)
- [9] Aklin, Michaël, Patrick Bayer, S.P. Harish, and Johannes Urpelainen. 2015. The Political Economy of Energy Access: Survey Evidence from India on State Intervention and Public Opinion. *Energy Research & Social Science* 10: 250-258 [\[link\]](#)
- [8] Aklin, Michaël, Patrick Bayer, S.P. Harish, and Johannes Urpelainen. 2015. Quantifying Slum Electrification in India and Explaining Local Variation. *Energy* 80(1): 203-212 [\[link\]](#)
- [7] Aklin, Michaël, Patrick Bayer, S.P. Harish, and Johannes Urpelainen. 2014. Information and Energy Policy Preferences: A Survey Experiment on Public Opinion about Electricity Pricing Reform in Rural India. *Economics of Governance* 15(4): 305-327 [\[link\]](#)

- [6] Aklin, Michaël and Johannes Urpelainen. 2014. The Global Spread of Environmental Ministries: Domestic-International Interactions. *International Studies Quarterly* 58(4): 764–780 [\[link\]](#)
- [5] Aklin, Michaël, Patrick Bayer, S.P. Harish, and Johannes Urpelainen. 2014. Who Blames Corruption for the Poor Enforcement of Environmental Laws? Survey Evidence From Brazil. *Environmental Economics and Policy Studies* 16(3): 241-262 [\[link\]](#)
- [4] Aklin, Michaël and Johannes Urpelainen. 2014. Perceptions of Scientific Dissent Undermine Public Support for Environmental Policy. *Environmental Science & Policy* 28: 173-177 [\[link\]](#)
- [3] Aklin, Michaël and Johannes Urpelainen. 2013. Political Competition, Path Dependence, and the Strategy of Sustainable Energy Transitions. *American Journal of Political Science* 57(3): 643-658 [\[link\]](#)
- [2] Aklin, Michaël, Patrick Bayer, S.P. Harish, and Johannes Urpelainen. 2013. Understanding Environmental Policy Preferences: New Evidence from Brazil. *Ecological Economics* 94: 28-36 [\[link\]](#)
- [1] Aklin, Michaël and Johannes Urpelainen. 2013. Debating Clean Energy: Frames, Counter Frames, and Audiences. *Global Environmental Change* 23(5): 1225-1232 [\[link\]](#)

### **Working Paper Series**

- Aklin, Michaël, Mark T. Buntaine, and Matto Mildenberger. 2023. Conditionality and the Politics of Climate Change. *IGCC Working Paper* [\[link\]](#)
- Aklin, Michaël and Vera Z. Eichenauer. 2022. Power Shifts, Emigration, and Population Sorting. *KOF Working Papers* 502 [\[link\]](#)
- Aklin, Michaël, Andreas Kern, and Mario Negre. 2021. Does Central Bank Independence Increase Inequality? *World Bank Policy Research Working Paper* 9522 [\[link\]](#)

### **Book Chapters**

- Aklin, Michaël and Patrick Bayer. 2023. The Politics of Sustainability: Energy Efficiency, Carbon Pricing, and the Circular Economy. In Daniel Scholten (ed). *Handbook on the Geopolitics of the Energy Transition*. Edward Elgar. [\[link\]](#)
- Aklin, Michaël. 2022. Renewable Energy, Energy Poverty, and Climate Change: Opportunities and (Many) Challenges. In Jeannie Sowers, Stacy D. VanDeveer, and Erika Weinthal (eds). *Oxford Handbook on Comparative Environmental Politics*. Oxford University Press [\[link\]](#)
- Aklin, Michaël. 2018. International Relations Theories and Climate Change Politics. In Urs Luterbacher and Detlef Sprinz (eds). *Global Climate Policy: Actors, Concepts, and Enduring Challenges*. MIT Press [\[link\]](#)
- Aklin, Michaël, Eric Arias, Emine Deniz, and B. Peter Rosendorff. 2015. Domestic Politics of Trade Policy. In Robert Scott and Stephen Kosslyn (eds). *Emerging Trends in the Social and Behavioral Sciences*. John Wiley and Sons [\[link\]](#)

### **Book Reviews**

- Aklin, Michaël. 2023. Review of *Twisting in the Wind: The Politics of Tepid Transitions to Renewable Energy*, by Oksan Bayulgen. *Perspective on Politics* 21(2): 763-764. [\[link\]](#)
- Aklin, Michaël. 2022. Review of *Political Economies of Energy Transition: Wind and Solar Power in Brazil and South Africa*, by Kathryn Hochstetler. *Political Science Quarterly* 137(2): 424–426 [\[link\]](#)

### **Reports**

- Gaudard, Ludovic, Louisa Savereide, and Michaël Aklin. 2024. Techno-Economic Evaluation of Clean Cooking Technologies in Displacement Contexts. UNHCR Report.

Viswamohan, Anjali, Shruti Sharma, Michaël Aklin, and Tom Moerenhout. 2022. Targeting Agricultural Electricity Subsidies in Haryana. IISD/GSI Report [\[link\]](#)

Bijlani, Diksha, Michaël Aklin, Brian Blankenship, Vagisha Nanda, and Johannes Urpelainen. 2022. Jharkhand Rural Energy Access: Enduring Challenges in Quality, Affordability, and Billing. ISEP and Oak Foundation [\[link\]](#)

Sharma, Shruti, Tom Moerenhout, Michaël Aklin, and Kavya Bajaj. 2021. How to Target LPG Subsidies in India: Evaluating policy options in Jharkhand. IISD/GSI Report [\[link\]](#)

Sharma, Shruti, Tom Moerenhout, and Michaël Aklin. 2020. How to Target Residential Electricity Subsidies in India. IISD/GSI Report [\[link\]](#)

Aklin, Michaël. 2019. Global Progress in Electrification. ISEP Policy Brief 2019-2 [\[link\]](#)

Aklin, Michaël, Patrick Bayer, S.P. Harish, and Johannes Urpelainen. 2017. Small off-Grid solar systems displace kerosene, but evidence for social and economic impact remain weak. ISEP Policy Brief 2017-1 [\[link\]](#)

Jain, Abhishek, Sudatta Ray, Karthik Ganesan, Michaël Aklin, Chao-Yo Cheng, and Johannes Urpelainen. 2015. Access to Clean Cooking Energy and Electricity. New Delhi: Council on Energy, Environment and Water [\[link\]](#)

## Media

Le casse-tête de la loi sur l'électricité, *Le Temps*, May 29, 2024 [\[link\]](#)

Green jobs for fossil fuel workers: The implications of geography and skills for the clean energy transition, *VoxEU*, December 23, 2023 [\[link\]](#)

Enable a just transition for American fossil fuel workers through federal action, *Brookings*, August 2, 2022 [\[link\]](#)

Le mieux est l'ennemi du bien: les bienfaits de la loi sur le CO2 compensent ses carences, *Le Temps*, October 20, 2020 [\[link\]](#)

Middle-Income Countries Big Winner from Off-Grid Energy. Who's Next? *Power for All*, November 22, 2018 [\[link\]](#)

Six Nuclear Reactors Worth of Off-Grid Renewable Energy Deployed in Last 10 Years – But Sub-Saharan Africa Lagging, *Power for All*, November 20, 2018 [\[link\]](#)

How India's impressive electrification compares with South Asian nations, *The Print*, September 13, 2018 [\[link\]](#)

Off-grid power not a silver bullet for rural India, *Swissinfo*, August 16, 2017 [\[link\]](#)

Off-grid solar power and the future of rural electrification in India, *Ideas for India*, July 17, 2017 [\[link\]](#)

Can solar micro-grids deliver basic electricity access in Indian villages? *Ideas for India*, April 17, 2015 [\[link\]](#)

La Suisse doit reprendre l'initiative en Europe avec une politique énergétique proactive, *Le Temps*, October 31, 2014 [\[link\]](#)

How (not) to talk about climate change, *Washington Post* (Monkey Cage), May 22, 2014 [\[link\]](#)

## Grants

External funding since 2010 (as PI, co-PI, or team member) (total: about \$2m): *Swiss National Science Foundation*, *Carnegie Corporation of New York*, *Heinz Endowments*, *International Growth Centre* (2x), *Oak Foundation*, *Shakti Foundation*, *ClimateWorks*, *Browne Center*, *British Academy*.

## Talks & Guest Lectures

†: research presentation    §: guest or public lecture

- 2025 Graduate Institute<sup>†</sup>, University of Pittsburgh<sup>†</sup>
- 2024 Stockholm School of Economics<sup>†</sup>, University of Bern<sup>†</sup>, University of Geneva<sup>†</sup>, UNHCR<sup>§</sup>, UNCTAD<sup>§</sup>, Deep Climate Conversations<sup>§</sup>, ETHZ/University of Lausanne<sup>†</sup>, UCSB<sup>†</sup>, AGAP/ASOU<sup>§</sup>, Beyond the Lab<sup>§</sup>, Sapienza<sup>§</sup>
- 2023 UCSB<sup>†</sup>, UT Austin<sup>†</sup>, Petralia<sup>†</sup>, ETHZ<sup>†</sup>, Teaching and Learning for Change/HE-Sustainability<sup>§</sup>
- 2022 IDB<sup>†</sup>, Petralia<sup>†</sup>, Columbia<sup>†</sup>, IIT Kanpur<sup>†</sup>, Environmental Politics & Governance<sup>†</sup>, University of Toronto<sup>§</sup>, Université de Montréal<sup>§</sup>, University of Pennsylvania<sup>§</sup>, University of Lucerne<sup>§</sup>, Pitt-Carnegie Mellon University<sup>§</sup>, APSA
- 2021 University of British Columbia<sup>§</sup>, University of Lucerne<sup>§</sup>
- 2020 World Bank (CPLC)<sup>†</sup>, University of Lucerne<sup>§</sup>
- 2019 ETHZ<sup>†</sup>, NYU<sup>†</sup>, University of Lucerne<sup>†</sup>, EPFL<sup>§</sup>, MPSA
- 2018 UCSB<sup>†</sup>, ETHZ/KOF<sup>†</sup>, NYU<sup>†</sup>, University of Pennsylvania<sup>†</sup>, Strathclyde<sup>†</sup>, MPSA, APSA
- 2017 Sciences Po<sup>†</sup>, NYU<sup>†</sup>, MPSA, APSA
- 2016 Heidelberg<sup>†</sup>, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign<sup>†</sup>, Princeton<sup>†</sup>, Environmental Politics & Governance
- 2015 Washington University in St Louis<sup>†</sup>, University of Pennsylvania<sup>†</sup>, IPES, MPSA
- 2014 ETHZ/University of Zürich<sup>†</sup>, Université de Montréal<sup>†</sup>, APSA, IPES, MPSA
- 2013 University of Pittsburgh<sup>†</sup>, Columbia University<sup>†</sup>, Yale<sup>†</sup>, APSA, IPES, MPSA
- 2012 IPES, MPSA
- 2011 Princeton University<sup>†</sup>, IPES, MPSA
- 2010 University of Potsdam<sup>†</sup>
- 2009 International Scientific Conference on Climate Change, Copenhagen

## Languages

English (fluent), French (native speaker), Swiss German (native speaker), German

## Teaching

### *Undergraduate (BSc and BA)*

Climate Change and Public Policy [Pitt]  
Global Environmental Politics [Penn, Pitt]  
Politics of COVID (course coordinator) [Pitt]  
Politics and Financial Crises [Pitt]  
Sustainability [EPFL]

### *Graduate (MSc and PhD)*

Econometrics [EPFL, Pitt]  
Technology, Sustainability, and Public Policy [EPFL]  
International Political Economy of Developing Countries [Pitt]  
Political Economy of Growth [Pitt]

### *Executive education/EMBA*

Innovation and Public Policy [EPFL]

## Sustainable Innovation [EPFL]

### PhD Advising

	<i>Name</i>	<i>Initial placement</i>	<i>Latest</i>
2024	Valentina González-Rostani Qing Chang	University of Southern California (AP) University of Pittsburgh SCI (postdoc)	
2023	Junghyun Lim	Princeton (postdoc)	UNC Chapel Hill (AP)
2022	Ignacio Mamone	Nielsen	Accenture
2021	Josh Counselman	ACA Group	
	External examiner	ETH Zurich (2023), NTNU (2022), Aalto (2022)	

### MSc Advising

∗: academic master's thesis

	<i>Name</i>	<i>Thesis host</i>
	Olivier Dallemagne	EPFL*
2025	Sven Mahon	Zephyre
	Shara Vigneswaran	Romande Energie
	Shiqi Yang	Solar Impulse
	Marc Chavanne	Leclanché
2024	Jingqi Liu	Hilti
	Noé Lopez	Persistent
	Francesco Tripoli	MIT*

### Service

#### *Academia*

2025	11th Annual Environmental Politics & Governance (EPG) conference, co-organizer
2018-...	Environmental Politics & Governance (EPG), International Steering Committee
2023	EPSA, chair of the Public Policy and Public Administration track
2022	IPES, co-organizer
2018-21	Virtual IPES, committee member
2018	APSA, committee member for best book award, <i>International Collaboration</i> section

#### *EPFL*

2024-...	Academic advisor, Science and Policy Action Network (SPAN)
2024-...	Sustainable Energy Systems Engineering, Academic leadership of the System Modelling module
2023-...	College of Management, Direction committee
2023-...	College of Management, Doctoral committee
2023-...	Constellation on energy, sustainability and climate (C-ESC), committee member
2023-...	Coalition for Green Energy and Storage (CGES), working group on technology assessment

- 2023-... College of Management, faculty search committee (2x)
- 2023-... Forum on Sustainable Economy (E4S-UBS), steering committee
- 2024 School of Basic Sciences, faculty search committee (statistics)
- 2024 AVP-SAO, public engagement officer, search committee
- 2023-24 European Society for Engineering Education (SEFI), International Scientific Committee

*University of Pittsburgh*

- 2022-24 Arts & Sciences tenure council
- 2020-23 Arts & Sciences promotion and tenure committee (ad hoc)
- 2021-23 Arts & Sciences undergraduate council
- 2016-19 Arts & Sciences grant committee

Last updated: March 11, 2025