

Inequality Regimes: A Global History

Thomas Piketty
NYU, Spring 2020

Syllabus & Reading List

(check [on line](#) for updated version)

- Email : piketty@psemail.eu
- Teaching: Mondays 9.30am-12am, from March 23 to May 4 2020 (7 lectures), NYU, Maison Française
- Office Hours: Mondays 2pm-3.30pm

- “[Inequality Regimes: A Global History](#)” offers a global perspective on the history of inequality regimes.
- The first lectures will analyze the transition from ternary societies (based upon functional military-religious-economic social structure: warriors-priests-workers) to proprietarian societies (based upon a sharp demarcation between property rights and political rights), and the rise of modern slave and colonial societies
- The following lectures will study how proprietarian societies have evolved during the 20^c into a variety of social-democratic, communist, post-communist and post-colonial societies.
- The last lecture will focus upon the joint evolution of inequality regimes and party systems in electoral democracies during the late 20^c and early 21^c, stressing in particular the interaction between inequality dynamics and the structure of political cleavages and ideology (class-base vs identity-based).

- The course is organized in 7 lectures of 2,5 hours each
- To validate the course, students are required :
 - (1) to attend and actively participate to all classes;
 - (2) to take the exam (the exam will require a good working knowledge of the material covered in the lectures and in the compulsory * readings)

A quick roadmap of the lectures

- Lecture 1: Development, state formation & inequality in the long run: from ternary to proprietarian societies
- Lecture 2: Property rights & development, 18c-19c: European variants (France, Britain, Sweden)
- Lecture 3: Slave societies, abolitions & colonialism (Caribbean, US, Brasil, Africa)
- Lecture 4: Colonial societies, state formation and comparative development (India, China, Japan)

- Lecture 5: The Great Transformation of the 20th century: from proprietary to social-democratic societies
- Lecture 6: Post-communist societies (Russia, China, Eastern Europe) and the rise of global capitalism
- Lecture 7: Social inequality and party systems in historical perspective: Europe, US, India

How to use the reading list

- The lecture slides contain many references to books (which themselves include more extensive bibliographies). Aim is to provide an introduction to the existing historical literature for students who plan to specialize in these areas. **You are not expected to read everything!**
- You should at least read the “**compulsory readings**” (denoted with a *, **typically one-two readings per lecture**), as well as a selection of books and articles based on your own tastes. **But please read!**

Reading list: general references

There is no formal textbook for this course, but I will largely follow the following book :

- **T. Piketty, *[Capital et idéologie](#), Seuil 2019**
*[Capital and ideology](#), Harvard UP 2020

I also recommend the following general references in economic history:

- F. Braudel, *Civilisation matérielle, économie et capitalisme, 15^e-18^e s.*, 1979 (3 vol.) (*Civilisation and capitalism, 15th-18th c.*, 1981-1984)
- K. Pomeranz, *The Great Divergence - China, Europe and the Making of the Modern World Economy*, Princeton UP 2000 ([Intro.-Chap.5-6](#))
- A. Maddison, [The World Economy - A Millennial Perspective](#), OECD 2001
- P. Lindert, *Growing Public - Social Spending and Economic Growth since the 18th Century*, Oxford UP 2004
- J. Goody, *The Theft of History*, Cambridge UP 2006

Reading list: lecture by lecture

This reading list only includes the main references. **Compulsory readings are denoted with ***. More detailed references are provided in the lecture slides.

Lecture 1: Development, state formation & inequality in the long run: from ternary to proprietarian societies

- ***Capital and ideology, intro. and chap.1-3**
- World Inequality Report 2018 (summary) (full report)
- M. Arnoux, *Le temps des laboureurs. Travail, ordre social et croissance en Europe (11^e-14^e siècle)*, Albin Michel 2012
- R. Blaufard, *The Great Demarcation: The French Revolution and the Invention of Modern Property* (Oxford UP 2014)

Lecture 2: Property rights & development, 18c-19c: European variants (France, Britain, Sweden)

- ***Capital and ideology, chap.4-5**
- T. Piketty, G. Postel-Vinay, J.L. Rosenthal, Wealth Concentration in a Developing Economy: Paris and France, 1807-1994, AER 2006
- E. Bengtsson et al, Wealth Inequality in Sweden 1750-1900, Economic History Review 2017,
- ***E. Bengtsson, The Swedish Sonderweg in Question: Democratization and Inequality in Comparative Perspective, c. 1750–1920, Past and Present 2019**

Lecture 3: Slave societies, abolitions & colonialism (Caribbean, US, Brasil, Africa)

- ***Capital and ideology, chap.6-7**
- N. Draper, *The Price of Emancipation: Slave-Ownership, Compensation and British Society at the End of Slavery*, CUP 2010
- N. Barreyre, *L'or et la liberté – Une histoire spatiale des Etats-Unis après la guerre de sécession*, Ed. EHESS 2014 (*Gold and freedom – The political economy of reconstruction*, Univ. Virginia Press 2015)
- ***D. Cogneau, Y. Dupraz, S. Mesplé-Somps, Fiscal Capacity and Dualism in Colonial States: The French Empire 1830-1962, WP 2018**
- F. Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation: Remaking France and French Africa, 1945-1960*, PUP 2014

Lecture 4: Colonial societies, state formation and comparative development (India, China, Japan)

- *Capital and ideology, chap.8-9
- N. Dirks, *Castes of Mind. Colonialism and the Making of Modern India*, Princeton UP 2001
- S. Bayly, *Caste, Society and Politics in India*, Cambridge UP 1999
- N. Bharti, Wealth Inequality, Class and Caste in India, 1961-2012 (WID.world 2018) (long version)
- K. Karaman, S. Pamuk, Ottoman State Finances in European Perspective, Journal of Economic History 2010
- M. Dincecco, The Rise of Effective States in Europe, JEH 2015

Lecture 5: The Great Transformation of the 20th century: from proprietary to social-democratic societies

- ***Capital and ideology, chap.10-11**
- K. Polanyi, The Great Transformation. The Political and Economic Origins of our Time, 1944
- T. Piketty, G. Zucman, Capital is Back: Wealth-Income Ratios in Rich Countries, 1700-2010, QJE 2014 (database)
- E. McGaughey, The Codetermination Bargains: History of German Corporate and Labour Law, Columbia Journal of European Law 2017
- C. Goldin, The Human Capital Century and American Leadership: Virtues of the Past, Journal of Economic History 2001

Lecture 6: Post-communist societies (Russia, China, Eastern Europe) and the rise of global capitalism

- ***Capital and ideology, chap.12-13**
- F. Novokmet, T. Piketty, G. Zucman, From Soviets to Oligarchs: Inequality & Property in Russia 1905-2016, JOEI 2018 (WID.world WP)
- F. Novokmet, T. Piketty, L. Yang, G. Zucman, From Communism to Capitalism: Private vs Public Property and Inequality in China and Russia, AEA Papers and Proceedings, 2018 (WID.world WP)
- T. Piketty, L. Yang, G. Zucman, Capital Accumulation, Private Property and Rising Inequality in China, 1978-2015, AER 2019 (WID.world WP)
- F. Alvaredo, L. Assouad, T. Piketty, Measuring Inequality in the Middle East, 1990-2016: the World's Most Unequal Region?, RIW 2019 (WID.world WP)

Lecture 7: Social inequality and party systems in historical perspective: Europe, US, India

- ***Capital and ideology, chap.14-17**
- T. Piketty, Brahmin Left vs Merchant Right: Rising Inequality and the Changing Structure of Political Conflict. Evidence from France, Britain and the US 1948-2017, WID.world WP, 2018
- A. Gethin, C. Martinez-Tolenado, T. Piketty, Political Cleavages & Inequality. Evidence from Electoral Democracies 1950-2018, WID.world, 2019
- A. Banerjee, A. Gethin, T. Piketty, Growing Cleavages in India? Evidence from the Changing Structure of Electorates 1962-2014, Economic and Political Weekly, 2019 (WID.world WP)