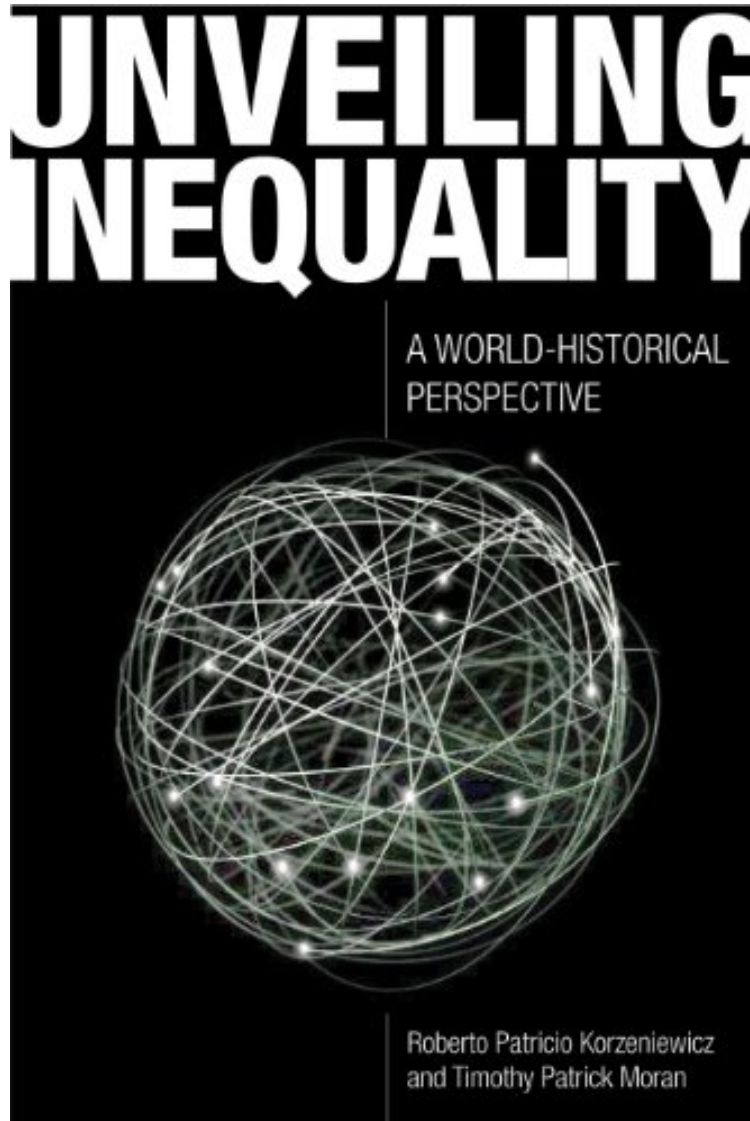


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Unveiling Inequality: A World-Historical Perspective

Roberto Patricio Korzeniewicz, Timothy Patrick Moran
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Roberto Patricio Korzeniewicz, Timothy Patrick Moran : Unveiling Inequality: A World-Historical Perspective before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Unveiling Inequality: A World-Historical Perspective:

3 of 4 people found the following review helpful. A must read to understand inequality in a comprehensive mannerBy Cahit C. TanyolFor people who are familiar with the writings of Immanuel Wallerstein or other authors who work within the framework of the world systems approach Korzeniewicz and Moran's criticism of taking the nation-state as a unit of analysis will be familiar. The authors of this book take issue with the common treatment of inequality as a social problem of disparate societies while in reality world inequality needs to be analyzed through the interaction

between high inequality and low inequality areas of the world economy. KM argue that there is historical continuity in inequality. Areas that experienced high and low inequality in the 18th century show similar levels of inequality in the 20th and the 21st century. The authors argue that the new institutional literature on inequality often ignore the long historical interaction between the high income and low income areas of the world economy when they propose improvements focusing on more secure property rights etc. in the developing world. In other words, most of the high income inequality areas such as Latin America and the Caribbean were in fact created specifically to have institutions that created high social inequality in the form of plantation economies and slavery. In fact, the authors point out that the institutions that depended on high inequality such as slavery proved to be very profitable in their time and it was only later in industrial economies that depended on mass education that low income inequality became advantageous to value creation. The work is a major contribution to the study of inequality from a global perspective. The authors argue that while many ascriptive characteristics in history (race, gender etc) defined the barriers to entry that sustained levels of inequality, today the most important ascriptive characteristic that sustains it is citizenship. In their words: National citizenship remains the single most important variable that can be used to predict the eventual position of a person within global stratification- in spite of frequent claims that in our globalized world national boundaries have ceased to matter. (p.100) A highly recommended read for anyone interested in the issues of inequality and economic development!

Despite the vast expansion of global markets during the last half of the twentieth century, social science still most often examines and measures inequality and social mobility within individual nations rather than across national boundaries. Every country has both rich and poor populations making demands—via institutions, political processes, or even conflict—on how their resources will be distributed. But shifts in inequality in one country can precipitate accompanying shifts in another. Unveiling Inequality authors Roberto Patricio Korzeniewicz and Timothy Patrick Moran make the case that within-country analyses alone have not adequately illuminated our understanding of global stratification. The authors present a comprehensive new framework that moves beyond national boundaries to analyze economic inequality and social mobility on a global scale and from a historical perspective. Assembling data on patterns of inequality in more than ninety-six countries, Unveiling Inequality reframes the relationship between globalization and inequality within and between nations. Korzeniewicz and Moran first examine two different historical patterns—“High Inequality Equilibrium” and “Low Inequality Equilibrium”—and question whether increasing equality, democracy, and economic growth are inextricably linked as nations modernize. Inequality is best understood as a complex set of relational interactions that unfold globally over time. So the same institutional mechanisms that have historically reduced inequality within some nations have also often accentuated the selective exclusion of populations from poorer countries and enhanced high inequality equilibrium between nations. National identity and citizenship are the fundamental contemporary bases of stratification and inequality in the world, the authors conclude. Drawing on these insights, the book recasts patterns of mobility within global stratification. The authors detail the three principal paths available for social mobility from a global perspective: within-country mobility, mobility through national economic growth, and mobility through migration. Korzeniewicz and Moran provide strong evidence that the nation where we are born is the single greatest determining factor of how we will live. Too much sociological literature on inequality focuses on the plight of “have-nots” in wealthy nations who have more opportunity for social mobility than even the average individual in nations perennially at the bottom of the wealth distribution scale. Unveiling Inequality represents a major paradigm shift in thinking about social inequality and a clarion call to reorient discussions of economic justice in world-historical global terms.

About the Author ROBERTO PATRICIO KORZENIEWICZ is professor of sociology at the University of Maryland, College Park, and profesor titular at the Escuela de Politécnica y Gobierno of the Universidad Nacional de San Martín (Argentina). TIMOTHY PATRICK MORAN is associate professor of sociology and director of Graduate Studies at State University of New York-Stony Brook